

February 14, 2014

Assalaamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

We are contacting you on behalf of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)¹ with a khutbah request for Black History Month. From the time of our Noble Prophet ﷺ, anti-Black and anti-African racism has plagued Muslim societies and communities. As you are aware, these beliefs go against the messages that are at the heart of our Holy Qur'an and Prophetic traditions.

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 black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood.

—Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, The Last Sermon.

One way that we can raise awareness regarding anti-Black racism today is by continuing to educate ourselves and others. If you have not already, would you please consider speaking about Black Muslim history and anti-Black racism in the ummah during your khutbah on **Friday, February 21st**? As an imam, you are a central figure in many Muslim communities and are thus specially positioned in your community to address these important topics and begin a conversation in your city about an issue that is often not thoroughly addressed. We ask that you take this opportunity to highlight our ethical responsibilities as Muslims to challenge ethnic chauvinism and tribalism.

In the interest of strengthening our brotherhood, we are providing you with a list of topics that we think merit particular attention given what we have observed in our ongoing conversations on social media and with Muslim organizers and activists across the country.

Among the topics that can be explored are as follows:

- How the Prophet ﷺ specifically dealt with incidents among Sahabah (examples: the hesitancy of some companions to follow Usamah bin Zayd into battle, the Prophet's ﷺ suggesting the marriage of Usamah to Fatimah bint Qays, and the refusal of Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf to marry his daughter to Al-Miqdaad bin "Al-Aswad" but Bilal later marrying the sister of bin 'Awf)
- Reminding the believers that the use of racial slurs and name-calling are prohibited in Islam (today, in many Islamic schools and other segments of Muslim society, terms like "abeed", "akata", "adoon", "jareer", and/or "kallu" are frequently used to refer to Black

¹ MuslimARC is an organization working to find ways to creatively address and effectively challenge racism in Muslim communities. Online at www.muslimarc.org.

- individuals²)
- Muslim viewpoints on standing for justice, against oppression, and the duty to strive to rectify any wrongs we see being committed (for example, to speak out when we hear a racial slur being uttered)
 - Our strong tradition of standing with the most marginalized members of society, and reflecting upon how anti-Black racism continues to marginalize Black Americans³
 - Bringing attention to issues currently impacting Black Muslims both in the US and abroad, and including these Muslims in your dua (examples: police brutality and the frequency of extrajudicial killings of Black Americans in the United States,⁴ including that of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah,⁵ and the grave injustices faced by Black Muslims in the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Somalia)
 - The importance of practicing what we preach with regards to community unity and participation (examples: non-Black Muslims welcoming Black Muslims as potential spouses for themselves and their children; ensuring that all Black Muslims feel welcome and included in our masjids; and guaranteeing equal opportunities and treatment in our leadership positions)
 - Analysis of and reminders regarding the Prophet's ﷺ Last Sermon
 - Our responsibilities towards challenging the nafs and examining where we may improve our adab and akhlaq when it comes to racist tendencies
 - Influential Black Muslims in Islamic history (examples: Luqman the Wise, Bilal (RA), or other lesser known Sahabi and Tabi'een)
 - The work of influential contemporary African or Black American Muslims such as Imam Warith Deen Mohammed
 - Lessons from the struggles of African Muslims brought as slaves to the Americas, such as Omar Ibn Said, Ibrahim Abdur Rahman, or the 19th century community of Muslims on the Sapelo Islands

Lastly, we would like to note that February 21 is the day El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) was assassinated in New York City, NY in 1965. As he noted in his Letter from Mecca after completing Hajj, “America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem.”⁶ His life left a profound mark on American society and continues to inspire Muslims around the world. Still today, nearly 50 years after his death, Muslims of all backgrounds note the role his words have had in calling them to Islam and/or strengthening their imaan.

Thus, giving a “Black History Month Khutbah” is a beautiful way for Muslims nationwide to explore and discuss - together - the legacy of Africans and African American Muslims and their

² Dawud Walid, “Intra-Muslim Racism: Confronting Ethnic Slurs and Racism Among American Muslims” January 19, 2014 from <http://www.altmuslimah.com/b/mca/4893/>.

³ 11 Facts About Racial Discrimination, <http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-racial-discrimination>.

⁴ Rania Khalek, “Every 28 Hours an African American is Extrajudicially Executed in the U.S.” April 15, 2013 <http://raniakhalek.com/2013/04/15/every-28-hours-an-african-american-is-extrajudicially-executed-in-the-u-s/>.

⁵ Dawud Walid, “Year Anniversary of Imam Luqman Shooting Today” October 28, 2010 from <http://dawudwalid.wordpress.com/2010/10/28/year-anniversary-of-imam-luqman-shooting/>.

⁶ Malcolm X, “Letter from Mecca” April 1964 from http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/let_mecca.htm.

contributions to the ummah. We humbly request that you join us in this initiative so that we are better able to hold fast to the message of unity and brotherhood in Islam.

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 most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

- The Holy Qur'an, Surat Al-Hujurat, 49:13

Please do not hesitate to contact MuslimARC if you have any questions or to let us know that your congregation will be participating. We are also more than happy to provide you with resources for your khutbah. We encourage you to record your khutbah, if able, and to send a copy or link to the recording to info@muslimarc.org so that others may benefit from your words.

JazakAllah kheir,

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