

Allah said: ‘What prevented you (O Iblis, the Satan) that you did not prostrate when I commanded?’ Iblis replied: ‘I am better than he (Adam). You created me from fire and him You created from clay.’ (Quran 7:12)

So begins the history of racism. Satan thought himself superior to Adam on account of his origins. Since that day, Satan has misled many of Adam’s descendants into also believing themselves superior to others, causing them to persecute and exploit their fellow man. Quite often, religion has been used to justify the racism. Judaism, for example, despite its Middle-Eastern origins, is readily passed off as a Western religion. But the entry of Jews into all levels of Western society actually betrays Judaism’s elitist reality. A pious reading of the Bible verse: *‘There is no God in all the world but in Israel.’* (2 Kings 5:15) would be to suggest that in those days God, or Allah, was not worshipped except by Israelites. However, Judaism today remains centred around its boast of ‘chosen’ racial superiority.

Say: ‘O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allah to the exclusion of the rest of mankind, then long for death if you are really truthful.’ (Quran 62:6)

Conversely, while most Christians are overwhelmingly non-Jew, Jesus, as the last of the Israelite Prophets, was sent to none *but* the Jews.¹

And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah sent unto you, confirming the Torah before me and bearing glad tidings of a Messenger after me whose name shall be Ahmad (i.e. Muhammad).’ (Quran 61:6)

And likewise every Prophet was sent exclusively to his own people,² every Prophet, that is, except Muhammad.

Say (O Muhammad): ‘O People! I am the Messenger of Allah sent to you all.’ (Quran 7:158)

As Muhammad was Allah’s final Prophet and Messenger, his mission was a universal one, intended for not only his own nation, the Arabs, but all the peoples of the world. The Prophet said: *‘Every other Prophet was sent to his nation exclusively, while I have been sent to all of humanity.’* (Bukhari)

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) but to the whole of mankind as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. But most people know not. (Quran 34:28)

1. The Bible agrees. Jesus is reported to have said: *‘I have not been sent except to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.’* (Matthew 15:24). Hence, every one of his famous twelve disciples was an Israelite Jew. The one biblical passage where Jesus tells them to: *‘Go and preach unto all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.’* (Matthew 28:19), commonly quoted to prove the Gentile mission as well as the Trinity, is not found in any pre-16th century manuscript and thus considered ‘a pious fraud.’

2. **And We sent to every nation a Messenger (saying): ‘Worship Allah (alone) and shun false deities.’ (Quran 16:36)**

BILAL THE ABYSSINIAN One of the first to accept Islam was an Abyssinian slave named Bilal. Traditionally, black Africans were a lowly people in the sight of Arabs who thought them to be of little use beyond entertainment and slavery. When Bilal embraced Islam, his pagan master had him brutally tortured in the scorching desert heat until Abu Bakr, the Prophet’s closest friend, rescued him by buying his freedom.

The Prophet appointed Bilal to call the believers to prayer. The *athan* heard from minarets in every corner of the world since, echoes the exact same words recited by Bilal. Thus, a onetime lowly slave won a unique honour as Islam’s first muezzin.

And We indeed honoured (all) the Children of Adam. (Quran 17:70)

Western romantics hail ancient Greece as being the birthplace of democracy.³ The reality was that, as slaves and women, the vast majority of Athenians were denied the right to elect their rulers. Yet, the Prophet said that a slave could himself be ruler: *‘Obey your ruler even if he be an Abyssinian slave.’* (Ahmad)

SALMAN THE PERSIAN Like most of his countrymen, Salman was raised a devout Zoroastrian. However, after an encounter with some Christians at worship, he accepted Christianity as *‘something better’*. Salman then travelled extensively in search of knowledge, from the service of one learned monk to another, the last of whom said: *‘O son! I do not know of anyone who is on the same (creed) as we are. However, the time of the emergence of a Prophet will shade you. This Prophet is upon the religion of Abraham.’* The monk then proceeded to describe this Prophet, his character and where he would appear. Salman migrated to Arabia, the land of the prophecy, and when he heard about and met Muhammad, he immediately recognised him from his teacher’s descriptions and embraced Islam. Salman became renowned for his knowledge and was the first person to translate the Quran into another language, Persian. Once, whilst the Prophet was amongst his Companions, the following was revealed to him:

It is He (Allah) Who had sent among the unlettered ones (i.e. the Arabs) a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves... and (also to) others (i.e. non-Arabs) among them who have not yet joined them (as Muslims). (Quran 62:2-3)

Allah’s Messenger then placed his hand on Salman and said: *‘Even if the faith was near (the stars of) Pleiades, a man from amongst these (Persians) would surely attain it.’* (Muslim)

SUHAYB THE ROMAN Suhayb was born into privilege in the luxurious house of his father, who was a client governor for the Persian emperor. Whilst still a child, Suhayb was captured by Byzantine raiders and sold into slavery in Constantinople.

3. Democracy is a Middle-Eastern invention, first seen in the civilisation of Ebla in 3rd millennium BC, and then in Phoenicia and Mesopotamia during 11th century BC. It did not appear in Athens until 5th century BC.

Suhayb eventually escaped from bondage and fled to Mecca, a popular place of asylum, where he soon became a prosperous merchant nick-named *‘ar-Rumi’*, the Roman, due to his Byzantine tongue and up-bringing. When Suhayb heard Muhammad preach, he was at once convinced of the truth of his message and embraced Islam. Like all the early Muslims, Suhayb was persecuted by the pagan Meccans. So, he traded all his wealth in exchange for safe passage to join the Prophet at Medina, whereupon the Prophet, delighted to see Suhayb, greeted him thrice: *‘Your trade has been fruitful, O [Suhayb]! Your trade has been fruitful!’* Allah had informed the Prophet of Suhayb’s exploits before their reunion with this revelation:

And there is a type of man who ransoms himself to earn the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is full of kindness to His servants. (Quran 2:207)

The Prophet loved Suhayb a great deal and described him as having preceded the Romans to Islam. Suhayb’s piety and standing among the early Muslims was so high that when Caliph Umar was on his deathbed, he selected Suhayb – a foreigner – to lead them until a successor could be agreed upon.

ABDULLAH THE HEBREW The Jews were another nation that the pre-Islamic Arabs held in contempt. Many Jews and Christians had been expecting a new Prophet to appear in Arabia during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Jews from the Levite tribe in particular had settled in large numbers in and around the city of Medina. However, when the much-anticipated Prophet came not as a Hebrew son of Israel, but as the Arab descendant of Ishmael, the Jews rejected him. Except, that is, for a few like Husayn bin Salam. Husayn was the most learned rabbi and leader of the Median Jews but was denounced and vilified by them when he embraced Islam. The Prophet re-named Husayn, *‘Abdullah’*, meaning *‘Slave of Allah’*, and gave him the glad tidings that he was destined for Paradise. Abdullah addressed his tribesmen saying:

‘O assembly of Jews! Be conscious of Allah and accept what Muhammad has brought. By Allah! You certainly know that he is Allah’s Messenger and you can find prophecies about him and mention of his name and characteristics in your Torah. I for my part declare that he is the Messenger of Allah. I have faith in him and believe that he is true. I (for one) recognise him.’ Allah revealed the following about Abdullah:

And a witness from the Children of Israel testified to this (Quran being from Allah) like (the Torah). So he believed while (most of) you (Jews) are too proud (to believe). (Quran 46:10)

THUS, in the ranks of the Prophet Muhammad’s Companions could be found Africans, Persians, Romans and Israelites; representatives of every known continent. As the Prophet said: *‘Indeed, my friends and allies are not the tribe of so and so. Rather, my friends and allies are the pious, wherever they may be.’* (Bukhari & Muslim)

The universal brotherhood of Islam was championed by the Prophet's Companions after him. When the Companion, Ubada bin as-Samit, led a delegation to Muqawqis, the Christian patriarch of Alexandria, the latter exclaimed: *'Get this black man away from me and bring in his stead another to talk to me! ... How can you be content that a black man should be the foremost among you? Is it not more fitting that he be below you?' 'Indeed no!'*, Ubada's comrades replied, *'Though he is black as you see, he is still the foremost among us in position, intelligence and wisdom; for black is not despised among us.'*

Truly, the believers are but brothers. (Quran 49:10)

It is the *Haji*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, which remains the ultimate symbol of the oneness and brotherhood of man. Here, rich and poor from all nations stand and bow in unison before God in what is the largest gathering of humanity; testifying to the Prophet's words when he said: *'There is truly no excellence for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for a white man over a black man, nor for a black man over a white man; except through piety.'* (Ahmad)

O humanity! We have created you from a single male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another (not that you have pride over one another). Verily, the most honourable of you in the Allah's Sight is the one most pious. (Quran 49:13)

As for nationalism, with its factionalising of Muslims along ethnic and tribal lines, it is considered an evil innovation.

If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your tribe, the wealth you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving hard in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision. And Allah guides not a rebellious people. (Quran 9:24)

The Prophet said: *'... whoever fights under the banner of the blind, becoming angry for nationalism, calling to nationalism, or assisting nationalism, and dies: then he dies a death of jahiliyya (i.e. pre-Islamic ignorance and disbelief).'* (Muslim)

While those who disbelieved placed in their hearts pride and haughtiness – the pride and haughtiness of jahiliyya, Allah sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers. (Quran 48:26)

In fact, the Muslims in and of themselves constitute a single body and supra-nation, as the Prophet explained: *'The parable of the believers in their mutual love and mercy is like that of a living body: if one part feels pain, the whole body suffers in sleeplessness and fever.'* (Muslim)

Thus, We have made you (believers into) a (single) justly-balanced community. (Quran 2:143)

PERHAPS one of the greatest barriers to the acceptance of Islam by many Westerners is the fallacy that it is primarily a religion for Orientals or dark-skinned people. No doubt, the racial injustices against many blacks, be they Abyssinian slaves of pre-Islamic Arabia, or 20th century Afro-Americans, has prompted many to embrace Islam. But this is beside the point. The Prophet Muhammad was himself of pale complexion, described by his Companions as being *'white and ruddy'* – a description many tens of millions of believing Arabs, Berbers and Persians share. Even blue-eyed blondes are not so rare amongst Near Easterners. Furthermore, Europe has more indigenous white Muslims than it has 'coloured' immigrants. The Bosnians, for example, whose numbers were decimated at the end of the 20th century but who, due to their heroism and tradition of tolerance, have contributed most to Balkan peace and stability. Albanians too, descended from Europe's ancient Illyrians, are also largely Muslim. In fact, one of the 20th century's leading Muslim scholars, Imam Muhammad Nasir-ud-Deen *al-Albani*, was, as his title suggests, Albanian.

Truly, We created humans in the best stature. (Quran 5:4)

Whites have been called 'caucasian' ever since anthropologists declared the Caucasus Mountains, home to Europe's highest peaks, to be the 'Cradle of the White Race.' Today, the natives of these mountains are Muslims. Amongst many a lesser-known tribe of fierce mountaineers and fair maidens are the Circassians: famed for their bravery and beauty and who, as Mamluke rulers of Syria and Egypt, helped defend the civilised world and safeguard its holy lands from the ravages of the Mongol hordes. Then there is the brutalised Chechen, arguably the most unwieldy of all God's creatures. While over 1,000,000 American and North European Caucasian whites - Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Germans, Scandinavians and Celts included - now profess Islam. In fact, Islam peacefully entered parts of Europe before Christianity, when: *'In times long ago, when the Russian Slav had not yet started to build Christian churches on the Oka nor conquered these places in the name of European civilisation, the Bulgar was already listening to the Quran on the banks of the Volga and the Kama.'* (Solov'ev, 1965) [On 16 May 922, Islam became the official state religion of the Volga Bulgars, with whom today's Bulgarians share a common ancestry.]

Every faith besides Islam calls for the worship of creation in some way, shape or form. Moreover, race and colour play a central and divisive role in almost all non-Islamic belief systems. A Christian's deification of Jesus and the saints or a Buddhist's deification of Buddha and the Dalai Lamas has people of a particular race and colour being worshipped in derogation of Allah. In Judaism, salvation is withheld from the non-Jew Gentile. Hinduism's caste-system likewise checks the spiritual, socio-political and economic aspirations of the 'unclean' lower castes. Islam, however, seeks to unite and make one all the creatures of the world upon the Unity and Oneness of their Creator. Thus, Islam *alone* liberates all peoples, races and colours in the worship of Allah *alone*.

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the (wonderful) differences of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for people of sound knowledge. (Quran 30:22)

