



40 Hadiths on Social Justice

SH. OMAR SULEIMAN



Lecture Notes

Chapter 32: Racism, Supremacism & True Patriotism

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Abu Hurairah (ra) reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Allah, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestors. One is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors. They are merely fuel in Jahannam; or they will certainly be of less account with Allah than the beetle which rolls dung with its nose.

[Sunan Abi Dawud]

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنْ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عِبِّيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَفَخَّرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِ تَقِيٍّ وَفَاجِرٍ شَقِيٍّ أَنْتُمْ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ لِيَدْعَنَّ رَجَالٌ فَخَرَهُمْ بِأَقْوَامٍ إِنَّمَا هُمْ فَحَمٌ مِنْ فَحَمِ جَهَنَّمَ أَوْ لِيَكُونَنَّ أَهْوَنَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ الْجِعْلَانِ الَّتِي تَدْفَعُ بِأَنْفِهَا النَّعْنَ "

[سنن أبي داود]

Introduction

- Last week we discussed immigration and refugees. One of the main factors in how refugees are treated is racism and nationalism.
- Islam has an explicit anti-racism tradition. The Ahadith against racism are abundant.
- The main Hadith has many themes in it:
 - Paradigm shift in how people are viewed: "One is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner."
 - Unity: "You are all the children of Adam"
 - Humility: "Adam came from dirt"
 - Compares the arrogance of racism to the disgrace of rubbing your nose in the dirt.
- In the premodern era, race and group membership were determined largely by cultural traits, especially language and shared customs, rather than by skin color.

- For example, Abu Dharr was considered black yet he still called Bilal (ra) "O son of a black woman" in one incident because Bilal was a non-Arab black man. This is discussed further in the class on Bilal (ra)
- In another Hadith, the prophet (ﷺ) condemned tribalism saying: دَعُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُنْتَنَةٌ. "Leave it because certainly it is filthy."
- Structural racism isn't just political, it is also sociological. For example, Quraysh used to swear by the forefathers. The prophet (ﷺ) forbade them from this.
 - Hadith: " مَنْ كَانَ حَالِفًا فَلَا يَحْلِفُ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ " . وَكَانَتْ قُرَيْشٌ تَحْلِفُ بِأَبَائِهَا فَقَالَ " لَا تَحْلِفُوا بِأَبَائِكُمْ "
 - "It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'Whoever swears, let him not swear by anything other than Allah.'" The Quraish used to swear by their forefathers, and so he said: "Do not swear by your forefathers."
- Hadith: It was narrated that Jundab bin 'Abdullah said: "The Messenger of Allah [SAW] said: 'Whoever fights for a cause that is not clear, advocating tribalism, getting angry for the sake of tribalism, then he has died a death of Jahiliyyah.'"
- Hadith: There are 4 traits of Jahiliya (Days of Ignorance) that will always remain in the Ummah: 1. Boasting about ones ancestors deeds and virtues, defaming others on the basis of their lineage, seeking to be given rain by means of the stars (referring to superstitions), ritualistic mourning over the dead." (Sahih Muslim)
 - The manifestations may change but these diseases will remain.

Spiritual Equality

- A person's true value is based on their spirituality/Taqwa. The Ahadith of the prophet (ﷺ) affirm spiritual equality.
 - Surah Hujurat Ayah 13: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ
- Hadith: عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ قَالَ " أَتْقَاهُمْ " . فَقَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ " فَعَنْ نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ " فَيُؤَسِّفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ " . قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ " فَعَنْ

مَعَايِنِ الْعَرَبِ تَسْأَلُونَ خِيَارَهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَفَقُّهُوا " . قَالَ أَبُو أُسَامَةَ وَمُعْتَمِرٌ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .

- Abu Huraira narrated: The people said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Who is the most honorable amongst the people (in Allah's Sight)?" He said, "The most righteous amongst them." They said, "We do not ask you, about this. " He said, "Then Joseph, Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, The son of Allah's Prophet the son of Allah's Khalil (i.e. Abraham)." They said, "We do not want to ask about this," He said, "Then you want to ask about the descent of the Arabs. Those who were the best in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance will be the best in Islam provided they comprehend the religious knowledge."
- Taqwa/Piety is in the heart according to the prophet (ﷺ). It is not accessible to anybody which means that we treat everyone equally.

Racism

- The manifestation of the disease of racism is that one group of people is designated as the 'out group' or all but one group of people are designated as the 'in group'. This creates a massive imbalance in all levels of society.
- The Shaytan is the first racist in history. He refused to obey Allah (swt)'s command to prostrate to Adam because Adam was created from dirt while Shaytan was created from fire.
- Ibn Qayyim called racism a form of Shirk

Patriotism, Tribalism, and Nationalism

- Wanting good for your people (قوم) as opposed to Ummah) is not discouraged so long as it is not to the detriment of others. Not through a call of privilege but rather through a call of living up to our best ideals (which include helping others).
- The prophet (ﷺ) never stopped being a Hashimite but he didn't look down on other tribes.
- During battles, the prophet (ﷺ) allowed people to fight alongside their family/tribe. Similarly, he would send people to their own tribes to call people to Islam.

- Allah (swt) mentions the prophets referring to their people as **يا قوم** despite them not accepting Islam.
- The prophet (ﷺ) validated the identities of Aws and Khazraj (tribes of the Ansar) except when they were used as calls against the others.
- Dr Salah al-Sawy: **Walā'** (religious loyalty) and all it entails of love and support for our coreligionists does not conflict with national identity and the love and affection its social bonds naturally generate. We believe that we are a part of the Muslim ummah (global community) in light of our religion, and a part of our respective local societies in light of our citizenry and human relationships. We do not believe there is an inherent conflict between a religious and national identity, so long as one's country does not criminalize religiosity or curtail the right to practice one's religion or call to it. We also believe that living together should naturally weave a social fabric between people of a shared homeland, allowing for harmonious coexistence between them, regardless of how different their beliefs may be. This involves an ethos of kindness, justice, and security against harm. It also necessitates a reciprocation of social responsibility that is shared by all, and observes the sanctity of people's lives, wealth, honor, and public spaces which cannot be touched except by the current laws or governing bodies of that land.
- The prophet (ﷺ) would call tribes to their best values. If a people of a tribe were known for generosity, the prophet (ﷺ) encouraged that identity.
- Often times, racism is disguised as nationalism.
- Religious Supremacism: Muslims are allowed, actually they must, believe in the correctness and superiority of their religion, while not acting intolerantly of those of other faiths, nor knowing of where people will end up on an individual level. Yes, salvific exclusivity is held by Islam as by others, but that does not mean demonizing non-Muslims nor dooming them on an individual level. After all, a person cannot know liability in the hereafter of themselves so how can he/she know it of others?

Islamic Attitude Towards Race

- Malcolm X, "Letter from Mecca": 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.

- Gandhi felt that Islam, more than Hinduism, had a clear and absolutist vision of human brotherhood. On the contribution of Islam to India, he said, “Islam’s distinctive contribution to India’s national culture is its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold. I call these two distinctive contributions. For in Hinduism the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophized. Similarly, though philosophical Hinduism has no other god but God, it cannot be denied that practical Hinduism is not so emphatically uncompromising as Islam.”
- Blackness was disparaged in some parts of Muslim history and black people struggled, but unlike Europe, Black Muslims were able to rise to the top of leadership at all levels of scholarship (‘Ataa bin Abi Rabi’ah, first Mufti of Makkah), run dynasties (Mamluk dynasty), lead armies (Tariq ibn Ziyad), etc.
- Bilal married Haala bint Awf (from a noble family of the Arabs). He was the head of the treasury and the first Muadhin.
- The first shaheeda (martyr) of Islam was a black woman.
- The Prophet would call Umm Ayman (black woman and former slave) his mother after his mother.
- The adopted son of the Prophet Zayd was black.
- Usama bin Zayd was the first commander of an army after the prophet (ﷺ)’s passing. None of the Sahabah complained because of his skin color.
- The first shaheed (martyr) of Badr was Mihja’.
- Story of Ubadah Ibn As-Saamit
 - He was one of the first Ansar and a black man. He accompanied the prophet in every battle and was one of writers of revelation.

- The Muslim forces laid siege to the Babylon Fortress in 641CE (in the area known as Coptic Cairo today) where al-Muqawqis, the Egyptian Ruler was holed up. General Amr ibn Al-'As sent a delegation of ten men, headed by Ubadah ibn as-Samit, to speak with al-Muqawqis.
- Ubadah was black, and when the delegation travelled by boat to al-Muqawqis and entered his place, Ubadah stepped forward and al-Muqawqis was alarmed because of his blackness.
- He said, "Take this black man away from me and let someone else come and speak to me!"
- They said: "This black man is the best of us in knowledge and wisdom. He is our leader and the best of us, and has been appointed over us. We all refer to his opinion, and our leader has appointed him over us and ordered us not to go against him. And to us, a black man and white man are the same!"
- Al-Muqawqis said to the delegation, "How could you accept this black man as the best among you? Rather he should be the least among you."
- They said, "No; even though he is black as you can see, he is the best in status among us, one of the foremost among us and one of the wisest. And to us, a black man and white man are the same!"
- Al-Muqawqis said to Ubadah, "Come forward, O black man, and speak to me gently, for your blackness alarms me, and if you speak harshly that will alarm me further."
- Ubadah went forward and said, "I have heard what you said. Among my companions whom I left behind are a thousand men who are all as black as me, and even blacker than me and more terrifying to behold. If you saw them you would be even more alarmed. My youth has gone, but nevertheless I would not be scared if one hundred men of my enemy wanted to face me all at once, and the same is true of my companions, for our hope and our desire is to strive in jihad for the sake of Allah, seeking the pleasure of Allah..."

- When al-Muqawqis heard that, he said to those who were around him: “Have you ever heard anything like what this man is saying? His appearance alarmed me but his words alarm me more than his appearance. Allah has sent this man and his companions out to destroy the world! I think that they are bound to prevail over the entire world.”
- Story of Sa’d al-Aswad: He was black Arab from Bani Sulaym. He came to the Prophet, Peace and blessings of God upon him, and asked him if his dark complexion and unpleasant features would prevent him from entering Paradise. The Prophet, Peace and Blessings of God upon him, responded that they would not, as long as he was mindful of his Lord and believed in Him. Sa’d immediately accepted Islam. Sa’d then explained to the Prophet, Peace and Blessings of God upon him, that he had searched assiduously for a wife, but had been rejected by all and sundry because of his dark complexion. The Prophet, Peace and Blessings of God upon him, sent Sa’d to marry the daughter of ‘Amr bin Wahb, a recent convert from Bani Thaqif, who retained many pre- Islamic prejudices.
- Story of Julaybeeb
 - He was looked down upon in society for many reasons. No one would consider him for marriage. So RasulAllah went to a father of a beautiful righteous woman and said, “I would like to marry your daughter, not to myself but to Julaybib.” He said let me talk to her mom. He went to her: and told her the prophet wants to marry your daughter to Julaybib. She started to scream: JULAYBIB! at the top of her lungs. I will never marry her to Julaybib! The daughter heard the prophet (ﷺ)’s recommendation and insisted on marrying him. Uthman (ra) paid his Mahr for him.
 - After a battle, the prophet (ﷺ) asked every tribe: “Are you missing anybody?” Nobody was missing anyone but the prophet (ﷺ) said: “However, I am missing Julaybib.” They found him dead and next to 7 of the opposing army that he was able to kill. The prophet (ﷺ) stood over him full of emotion and said, “He is from me and I am from him.” three times. The Prophet (ﷺ) picked him up in his arms, dug his grave, and buried him in it.

- Umm Mihjan was the woman who cleaned the masjid. The prophet did not find her too insignificant for a special Hanaza.
- Allah sent Jibreel to pray on Najashi in absentia.
- Muhammad ibn Maslamah, a black non-Arab, was a governor under all 4 of the righteous caliphs

Conclusion

- The prophet (ﷺ) sought to erase the racist attitude that existed by leading by example, putting people in positions of religious/political leadership, and through marriage and social/family interactions. He taught everyone to find their own individual value in their Taqwah and not denigrating others based on their class/tribe/race
- This goes back to the first Hadith: What exists today is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner.