

RACIAL HARMONY IN ISLAM

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيكُمْ وَأَيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Islam is beautiful because it not only concerns theology, but it also concerns humanity. Although all human beings are originally from the family of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), they separated into tribal groups and different races. Allah mentioned this in the Quran in Chapter 49 (Surah Al-Hujurat) verse (ayat) 13:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَكُمُ إِذَا أَنْتَكُمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

Which means: *O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other not that ye may despise each*

other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

When people were in the midst of practicing racism, Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him [pbuh]) was sent by Allah the Almighty to guide them with the true monotheistic faith, to weaken tribalism and to unite society. The Prophet was successful in building plural society. Some of the well-known Prophet's companions like Bilal bin Rabbah, Suhaib bin Sinan al-Rumi and Salman al-Farisi were united in Islam and lived together in harmony despite being non Arabs. The same could be said about the Prophet's (pbuh) wives like Mariah al-Qibtiyyah (an Egyptian) and Sofiyyah binti Huyai (a Jew). When the Prophet (pbuh) successfully opened the city of Mecca, he was proud of the success in abolishing racism, as he mentioned in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imām al-Tirmidhi:

قَدْ أَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ عُيْبَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَفَخَرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ

وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ وَالنَّاسُ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

Which means: “Verily, Allah has removed from you the pride of the time of ignorance with its boasting of ancestors. Verily, one is only a righteous believer or a miserable sinner. All of the people are the children of Adam, and Adam was created from dust.”

In his final sermon (*khutbah*), the Prophet (pbuh) instructed Muslims to stay away from being racists as mentioned in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imām Ahmad:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى
أَعْجَمِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا لَأَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ
إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى

Which means: “There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab. Neither is the white superior over the black, nor is the black superior over the white, except by piety.”

Therefore, Muslims need to understand that the Prophet (pbuh) never denied the need to fight for the rights of one’s own race, provided that he does not oppress others as mentioned in his *Hadith* which was narrated by *Imam* Tirmizi:

عَلِّمُوا مِنْ أُنْسَابِكُمْ مَا تَصِلُونَ بِهِ أَرْحَامَكُمْ، فَإِنَّ صِلَةَ الرَّحِمِ مَحَبَّةٌ فِي الْأَهْلِ، مَشْرَاةٌ
فِي الْمَالِ، مَنْسَأَةٌ فِي الْأَثَرِ

Which means: “Learn enough about your lineage to facilitate keeping your ties of kinship. For indeed keeping the ties of kinship encourages affection among the relatives, increases the wealth, and increases the lifespan.”

The Prophet (pbuh) was aware that the Arabian Peninsula was inhabited by various tribes. To unite them, he appointed leaders from the native Quraish tribe as mentioned in his *Hadith* which was narrated by *Imām* Ahmad:

الْأئِمَّةُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ

Which means: Indeed, the leader must be appointed from among the Quraysh.

The Malaysian constitution indirectly follows the approach of Prophet (pbuh) by appointing the Malays as leaders for all races in this country. Therefore, this approach should not be disputed as it has proven to unite the multiracial community of Malays, Chinese, Indians, etc in our country.

The *Hadith* was recited by *Saidina* Abu Bakr, shortly after the death of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), while the Muslims discussed the appointment of the leader after him at *Saqifah Bani Sa'dah*. Abu Bakr warned all the people whether originally from Mecca or Medina, whether Arab or non-Arab, to accept the Prophet's (pbuh) political guidance. The Quraish was the most respected and most influential tribe in Arabia. The appointment of a leader should take into consideration the indigenous people. In Malaysia, the leaders should be chosen from among the strongest and most influential Malays in the respective states, to ensure the smoothness of the country's administrative affairs in preserving the sanctity of Islam in this country.

Was this racial discrimination because of giving priority to the Quraysh? Was this a form of human rights violation? Indeed, the answer is no, not at all. On the contrary, this was the political wisdom of the Prophet (pbuh), which is the best approach to be followed and upheld in the administration of our country, Malaysia, and the whole world.

Therefore, let us together strengthen the spirit of unity in our country, by celebrating good relations among races. Surely, Allah the Almighty judges our piety, not our skin color. Let us display our noble character towards humankind, so that our country will be continuously safe and our people will live harmoniously. The rights of Muslims in this country must be respected in accordance with the racial unity shown by the Prophet (pbuh) as well as the provisions of the constitution, without being in control of the enemies of Islam. The Muslims must unite because we are bound together as brothers and sisters as mentioned in the Quran in Chapter 49 (Surah Al-Hujurat), verse (*ayat*) 10:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Which means: *The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.*

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيْمِ، وَنَفَعَنِيْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
الْحَكِيْمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِيْ هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ
الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ
الْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِيْنَ.