

In the light of ahadith

H/Sharif (A)

CONDEMNATION OF DISCRIMINATING PREJUDICE  
IN ISLAM

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In one of his public sermons, Ali a.s. once declared:

"OH PEOPLE 1 RIGHT FROM FIRST, NO BODY CAME TO THIS WORLD AS A SLAVE-BOY OR SLAVE-GIRL. ALL ARE BORN FREE.... THIS MOMENT SOME MONEY HAS ARRIVED AND I INTEND TO DISTRIBUTE EQUATABLY"

Thereafter, he commenced distribution and to everyone he gave three dinars. A man from Ansars (helpers) received three and thence a black slave came forward and he too was paid three dinars. The man from Ansars raised his voice in objection saying:

"OH AMIR-ALMOMINEEN ! THIS WAS A SLAVE WHOM I SET FREE ONLY YESTERDAY. WHY DO YOU TREAT ME AND HIM AS EQUAL ?"

Ali a.s. in reply explained:

"I HAVE GONE THROUGH THE BOOK OF ALLAH AND HAVE FOUND NO DISTINCTION OF ONE PERSON OVER ANOTHER"

(Al Kafi p.469)

One of the outstanding features of Islam, that it came to eradicate all sorts of discriminating prejudices prevalent in those times. It proclaimed the equality and freedom of mankind right from the outset of his original creation. It came as a universal message inviting whole mankind to accept the truth. It allowed no racial or tribal bias rejecting all kinds of prejudices. The following traditions from the infallibles are worthy noting and merit our serious consideration:

" PEOPLE ARE ALL FREE UNLESS ONE HIMSELF IMPOSES ~~XXXX~~ SERVITUDE OVER HIS MIND"

النَّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ أَحْرَارٌ إِلَّا مَنِ أَقْرَبَ  
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بِالْعَبْوَدِيَّةِ

(Wasail p.243)

" ONE WHO CALLS TO ANY (RACIAL-TRIBAL) PREJUDICE IS NOT FROM US"

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى  
عَصَبِيَّةٍ

The aim of the Prophetic message being to establish a universal Islamic Ummah hence right from first, the community built up by the Prophet consisted of devoted Muslims of different origins and races. Shaib from Rome, Bilal from Abyssinia, Salman from Iran, Khobab from Egypt and Ali a.s. was from the Arabs.

It is mentioned that one day a quarrel had erupted between a black slave <sup>and</sup> with Abdulrahman Ibne Auf, who was considered to be one of the wealthy Arabs of that time. Abdulrahman in state of much rage told the slave:

"OH YOU THE SON OF A BLACK MAN"

And when this incidence was reported to the Prophet, he became deeply upset and rebuked Abdulrahman in these words:



"NO SON OF A WHITE MAN HAS ANY SUPERIORITY OVER A BLACK ONE EXCEPT WITH PIETY AND OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH"

The following saying of the Prophet is enough condemnation of any racial or tribal prejudice:

"WHOSOEVER CHERISHES IN HIS HEART EVEN A GRAIN OF ANY PREJUDICE, ALLAH WILL RAISE HIM ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT ALONG WITH THE PRE-ISLAMIC IGNORANT ARABS

مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مَمَّةٌ مِنْ خِرَدِكِ  
مِنْ قَصْبِيَّةٍ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ أَقْرَابِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

(Safinatul Bihar p.199)

It is mentioned that during the times of Ali a.s. the date sellers had adopted a system of grading dates into superior and inferior qualities, each grade being sold at a special price. Perhaps in order to narrow the gap between the rich and poor and discourage class society, Ali a.s. refused them to do so but exhorted them to sell both qualities in a mixed form at one price.

(Iran-Islam p.213-214)

Thus we see how Islam lays stress on the fact that everyone in this world is born free and independent and eligible to enjoy equitable equal rights. Pointing to this subject, Ali a.s. is reported to have said:

"PEOPLE ARE BORN AND REMAIN FREE TO ENJOY EQUAL RIGHTS"

النَّاسُ يُولَدُونَ وَيُظَلَمُونَ  
أَحْرَارًا مُتَسَاوِينَ فِي الْحُقُوقِ