

# A Brief History of Racism in America

By Shaykh Abu Aamir Ali al Hudhaify

All praises belong to Allah and I testify that nothing has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone without partners. And I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger, may Allah exalt his rank and bestow upon him peace. As to what follows:

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## Transgression against Native Americans

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The Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French occupiers enslaved the indigenous people of America, wreaking havoc on their lands to search for gold and establish farms. They carried out the greatest piracy in history including murder and kidnapping against the indigenous Americans.

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## The Atlantic Slave Trade

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These are the same people that massacred more than 40 million black Africans. They shackled them in iron and transported them in animal ships to use their blood and bones to build farms, factories, and mines that produced luxury for the white man in America and Europe. Did the Europeans build their civilization upon anything other than the destruction of countries and people? And the descendants of black slaves are still suffering from racial discrimination in the West during present day.

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## Economic reasons for slavery abolition

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There is a book called '*Abolition of slavery*' by a French researcher named Nelly Schmidt. She is the director of a department at the National Center for French Scientific Research and a member of the French committee overseeing the remembrance of the suffering that black slaves endured because of the system of slavery that traded them for centuries. She examines the agony and torment blacks suffered as they were abducted from their country and deported outside their homelands. She said: "The Western countries that later called for the abolishment of slavery was not without personal interest. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Europe sought to abolish slavery and outlaw the slave trades the motives were **economic not humanitarian** because slavery from an economic standpoint became a burden on their capital gains, and this was their greatest motive."

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## Manifestations of Racism in America

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Racism in American has many aspects which are deeply rooted in American society. Racism between whites and blacks was displayed in many forms to include racially segregated cemeteries and restaurants. Some restaurant owners would write on their doors 'No dogs and blacks allowed'! Author Andrew Shapiro in his book '*We're Number One*' commented on blacks in American saying; "They live in America as strangers and foreigners in the land they were born and raised in. This land is all they know. We can look at America consisting of two peoples: the whites who are the dominant majority, and the blacks who are the oppressed minority."

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## The Racial Gap in America's Police Departments

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In New York State where African Americans make up 28.7 % of the population, they make up less than 11.4% of the police force. Those who have obtained positions of leadership are less than 6.6%, according to a report in the Wall Street Journal. The report says despite some advancements, blacks still suffer from obstacles in recruitment, promotions and harassment from their white colleagues who oppose the promotion of their black counterparts. Some of the white officers even refuse to obey the command of their black superiors.

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## Rodney King

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Violence erupted in Los Angeles as television stations played a video of white police officers violently and brutally beating Rodney King, a black man. As a result of the riots 63 people died, 220 were critically wounded, 13,505 people were arrested, 5,537 businesses were destroyed in the fires and financial losses were estimated at 785 million dollars. Twenty-one thousand national guardsmen, and marines were sent in to restore order. Dr. Carl Bell-- President of the Community Mental Health Council said: "Black citizens are still subjected daily to humiliation and violence, and this has become part of their frustration".

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## Justifying Racism with the Bible

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Mamoun Effendi-- a professor at Georgetown University, tries to explain the origins of this racism by saying: "The white man looks at the black man with contempt. He justifies his violence towards him through a cultural system wherein white people killed their black brothers. They would hang them from trees during lynching events of mass violence. They justified it to themselves through their Bible, because black – according to the Southern Christian; is the color of Satan."

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## Racism against other minorities

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Racial discrimination in Western countries, including America is not limited to blacks, rather it includes Asians also. A French News Agency (Agence France-Presse) carried a report from Los Angeles that hate crimes against Asians had risen by 80% last year in California from the previous year. The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus said there were 458 hate crimes against Asians, and most cases are never reported to the police due to the language and cultural barriers. And the police do not keep complete records for these matters.

Taken from the Book, *"Doubts Surrounding Islam and the refutation against them"*

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee