

House Negroes Muslims

Back during slavery, there were two kinds of slaves: the **house Negro** and the **field Negro**. The house Negroes, they lived in the house with master. They dressed pretty good, they ate good because they ate his food - what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master. And they loved the master, more than the master loved himself. They would give their life to save the master's house - quicker than the master would. If the master said, "We got a good house here", the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here." Whenever the master said 'we', he said 'we'.

That's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" *We sick!* He identified himself with his master, more than his master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate", the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, *separate*? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?" That was that house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger". And that's what we call them today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then brag about "I'm the only Negro out here." "I'm the only one on my job." "I'm the only one in this school." You're nothing but a house Negro. And if someone comes to you right now and says, "Let's separate", you say the same thing that the house Negro said on the plantation: "What you mean, *separate*? From America, this good **White** land? Where you going to get a better job than you get here?" I mean, this is what you say. "I ain't left nothing in Africa", that's what you say. Why, you left your *mind* in Africa.¹

From 'House Negro' to 'House Muslim'

During the so-called 'Civil Rights' era of the 1960s, Malcolm X argued that one of the ways

¹ Transcript of the speech "Message to the Grassroots" given by Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz (Malcolm X) on November 10, 1963.

in which a so-called 'Negro' could be identified as a 'house Negro' was through the way he or she used language, for example, by referring to the American government as 'our government' as opposed to 'the government'.

In much the same way, in this era of so-called 'Human Rights', one of the ways in which a so-called 'Muslim' can be identified as a 'house Muslim' is through the way he or she uses language. For example, many of the leaders of certain high profile organisations that claim to speak for the mass of so-called Muslims regularly refer to the British government as 'our government' as opposed to 'the government', and wholeheartedly endorse the use of such terms as 'Western Muslim', 'European Muslim', 'British Muslim' etc in reference to themselves, although Allah (*swt*) has explicitly stated in The Qur'an that *He* has named (that is, classified or categorised) those who surrender or submit themselves to Him as *Muslims* plain and simple (22:78). (Although The Qur'an refers to the diversity of human languages and complexions (30:22) (35:28), and recognizes that distinct genealogical and tribal groupings have their ultimate source in God – that is, Allah (*swt*) - (49:13), these facts are simply irrelevant when it comes to understanding the 'ideological' identity of human beings.) When The Creator has already named/classified/categorised His creation, what right does it have to re-name/re-classify/re-categorise itself? Does The Qur'an not state in (33:36) that the believers have no option but to accept decisions in those matters that have been decided upon by Allah (*swt*) and His Messenger? Is the choice of a name/classification/categorisation not an example of such a matter? Allah (*swt*) did not refer to those who surrender or submit themselves to Him as Sunni Muslims, Shi'a Muslims, Progressive Muslims, Traditional Muslims, Moderate Muslims, Radical Muslims, Fundamentalist Muslims, or by any other sectarian name. Furthermore, He certainly did not refer to them as 'Eastern Muslims', 'Western Muslims', 'European Muslims' or 'British Muslims' (or even 'Black Muslims', as the White American press labelled members of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam).

But if the above names (labels, classifications, categories) are invalid, then what justification is there for coining and using the term 'house Muslim'? The short answer to this question is that, just as Malcolm X made use of the terms 'house Negro' and 'field Negro' to shed light on a confused situation, so too the terms 'house Muslim' (and 'field Muslim') can be used to

effect some measure of clarification. At the very least, they can be used to counter the formation of a 'White' Islam.

'House Muslims' and 'Field Muslims'

During slavery, the 'house Negro' belonged to the house of the white slave owner. The 'house Muslim' of today also belongs to the house of a white slave owner, however, in this instance, the 'house' is not a concrete building, but rather a political institution or structure, a globally operating system: **White Supremacy (Racism)**, the dominant system of power relations in the contemporary world.² (In this sense, and given the pre-eminence of American power in the world, one might remark that the 'White House', as a highly visible symbol of this global system, is aptly named.)

White Supremacy is a caste/class/colour-coded system of oppression that is the contemporary manifestation of the unjust power system of the Pharaoh described in The Qur'an:

(28:4) Behold, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and **divided its people into castes**. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Verily, he was of the corrupters. (2:49), (7:141), (40:25).

Interestingly, The Qur'an makes explicit mention of the house (*bayt*) of Pharaoh and states that Pharaoh divided the Children of Israel into different classes/castes, elevating one class/caste – what might be referred to as 'house Slaves' – and subjugating the other – what might be referred to as 'field Slaves'. What happened in Ancient Egypt (*Misr*), what happened in America on the plantations, and what is happening today are all instances of the same phenomenon: enslavement of one group of human beings by another group of human beings. It is crucial to understand this because those who today champion the calls for 'democracy' and 'freedom' are really advocating the forced enslavement of human beings to human beings. However, The Qur'an invites human beings to willingly enslave themselves to The One to Whom alone servitude is due: Allah (*swt*). In this way, the 'field Muslim', that is, the Muslim who rejects White Supremacy (Racism) and commits himself or herself to replacing this unjust system with a just system *for all* (black, brown, red, yellow, and white) based on obedience to Allah (*swt*) – *Al-Islam* – enters the

'house' (*bayt*) of Allah (*swt*), wherein one is safe and secure.

Yet the physically and mentally enslaved (or colonised) 'house Muslim', like the 'house Negro' before him, is incapable of imagining the possibility of a world other than the world of White Supremacy (Racism). This leads him to "play it safe", keep his head down, and scramble for whatever he can lay his hands on within the dominant system ("Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this? Where you going to get a better job than you get here?"). For this reason, the 'house Muslim' willingly supports calls for 'integration' into 'wider [British, European, American=White] society', even though under conditions of White Supremacy (Racism), 'integration' means nothing other than 'assimilation', that is, absorption or incorporation, into a system of oppression. Calls for 'separation' ("Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate") are re-interpreted by the 'house Muslim' as calls for 'segregation' (with all its apartheid overtones), although The Qur'an categorically states that the *deen* (that is, system of power relations) of those who believe in Allah (*swt*) and enslave themselves to Him, is distinct from the *deen* of those who reject Allah (*swt*) and enslave themselves to other than Allah (*swt*) (109:1-6). Thus, the 'house Muslim' resorts to sophisticated (deceitful) language-games in order to hide his subjugation to White Supremacy (Racism) and in this way, ends up, willingly or unwillingly, perpetuating the conditions of his or her own slavery, thereby blocking the sole route to true freedom:

Revolution by Revelation – Al-Qur'an

Further information

For further information on what The Qur'an has to say about a number of issues, please visit the following website: www.bandung2.co.uk

² Linguistically speaking, a 'Muslim' is anyone who submits or surrenders to something – and that does not have to be to Allah (*swt*). Thus, one can be a Muslim to/for White Supremacy (Racism) and, given the current global socio-political situation, this is what is meant by a 'house Muslim'.