

**“Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah.”
– Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him)**

Dear Colleagues and Faculty,

The Muslim Law Student Association (“MLSA”) of Rutgers Law School - Newark stands in solidarity with our fellow colleagues and friends in the Association of Black Law Students (“ABLS”) and the Black community in America and at large, who have endured hundreds of years of racism and racial violence and abuse. We would also like to direct our deepest condolences and prayers to the family of George Floyd as well as the families and loved ones of other recent victims of violence against Black communities such as Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. For too long has this country watched and mourned the unjustified, undignified deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police.

Over 1400 years ago, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) said: “Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or is oppressed.” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah (God), we help the oppressed, but how do we help an oppressor?” The Prophet said, **“By seizing his hand.”**

It is all too clear why our nation has befallen tragedy after tragedy. Societal norms and institutionalized disparities have planted a rot inside of our core. If Americans fail to acknowledge it, turmoil is sure to follow. The Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) also said “Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then let him change it with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.”

Since the beginning, Islam has upheld a tradition of speaking and acting out against racism. Another prophetic narration tells us the story of the one of the Prophet’s closest companions, Bilal ibn Rabah. There, the Prophet led by example in criticizing one of his own companions, Abu Dharr, an Arab coming from a respected tribe, for referring to Bilal, a man of African ancestry, as “the son of a black woman.” The Prophet told him: “You are the man who still has the traits of ignorance in him.” Abu Dharr, humiliated by his mistake, proceeded to place his head on the ground and told Bilal to step on his cheek so that he may take punishment for his wrongdoing. Bilal refused and chose to lift him off the ground and kiss his head, showing his mercy and humility in the eyes of God.

Today, it is imperative that we follow that example given 1400 years ago and choose not the weakest form of empathy but rather attempt to make real change. As Muslims and as law students, this is not only our duty, but it is a way of life that we have been commanded to adhere to.

WaSalaamu Alaikum
MLSA of Rutgers Law School - Newark