

# **Minorities and Muslims Rights Matter**

## **Removing Political Chokeholds in Ethiopia**

*By Professor Abdi Khalil*

***“All mankind is from Adam & Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor does a black have any superiority over white, except by piety and good action.”***

*-Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)*

Recent events display impotencies of the Western world that lead to social implosions. Individually, nationally or internationally, if you have even a seed of arrogance in your heart, you are the shareholder of devilish empire. The Western world is infested with arrogance and ignorance. Arrogance from its leaders and ignorance from individuals within households, who are spitting the fire of racism, discriminations, white supremacy and assorted inhumane inequities. The advent of writing histories in the hands of oppressors, aggressors, racists, colonizers and tyrants are falling apart around the globe. Assorted historical falsehoods are being exposed and eradicated swiftly as falsehood by its nature is bound to perish. In fact, this era of advanced communications and social media have exposed in real time the inhumane activities of polluted government institutions; happen to execute assorted covert operations in every corner of the earth.

Dynamic activism have objectively shown the commonality of humanity within the enlightened young generations regardless of race, color, creed and gender. Millennials and COVID 19 generations have decidedly opted to break the walls of racism, discriminations and bigotry in all their forms. The generations have evolved and involved in breaking the vicious cycle of racism within families, households, relatives and colleagues; exposing how ‘Silence is racism,’ ‘Racism is pandemic,’ and ‘White Supremacy is empty soul with toxic mind-set.’

As witnessed, George Floyd’s ‘I cannot breathe’ plea for his life has become the symbol of change and turning point in racial relationships. As universal movement, the resistance has engulfed countries around the world, and largely against repression, racism and assorted forms of inhumane intentions and actions.

Resisting all kinds of inhumane government institutions, operations and white supremacy. Revisiting and correcting historical misinformation, disinformation and false records worldwide are at their peak; and seeking to uphold social justices everywhere; practically, demolishing atrocious landmarks such as statues, emblems and monuments in the capitals and cities across the world. We have seen statues crumbling in the US, the UK, South Africa, France, Senegal and other countries; eradicating reminiscent of genocide and colonialism. Effectively, mobilizing humane forces towards ending arrogance, ignorance, hypocrisy, bigotry, racism and White terrorism.

**‘And, walk not with arrogance,  
Indeed, you cannot tear the earth apart.  
Nor, can you surpass the mountain in height.’ (The Quran, Sura 17, Ayat 37)**

Do you know because of political ‘Chokeholds’, the minorities and the Muslims in Ethiopia cannot breathe for the last 150 years? It is time to eliminate assorted political chokeholds in

Ethiopia. Ethiopia has many controversial statues and monuments depicting tyrannical regimes since 1800's. Statues and monuments in Addis Ababa, Mekelle, Harar, Jimma, Bahr Dar, Hawassa and other cities are largely reminders of torture, agony, pains and sufferings for the majority of ethnics in Ethiopia.

Call it Ethiopia, Habasha, Abyssinia  
Or, United Kingdom of Semites and Cushites  
Territory of 82+ indigenous ethnic groups;  
Home of Orthodox Christianity and Islam  
Though, governed by assorted repressive governance systems;  
Obliterated imperial, socialist and authoritarian regimes  
Seeking for fair government with morality and humanity  
To achieve equity and equality for all its peoples

Would you deny, Ethiopia belongs to all?  
Would you deny, our natural differences as beauty?  
Would you deny, multiculturalism is our spirit?  
Need to respect one other for peaceful coexistence  
By avoiding a fairytale one sided history,  
Glorifying the bygone era of unjust imperial regime  
Rather, move forward with the history of pluralism.

In tandem or in parallel  
Both religions produced their leaders  
Christian Kingdom with 77 dynasties,  
From *King Ela Sehan* installed in 603 AD  
Via *Menilik* to *Emperor Haile Selassie* till 1974;  
Also, existed Islamic kingdoms with 76 dynasties  
From *Amir Haboba* reigned in 969 AD  
Via *Imam Ahmed* to *Amir Abdullahi* till 1887  
In the then Abyssinia and Habasha empires;

Would you deny?  
As Axum was the epi-center of Christianity  
And, the axis of West-North civilization  
Equally, Harar was the Mecca of the nation,  
The hub of Islamic knowledge,  
Business emporium in the horn;  
And, the axis of East-South Civilization  
Trending with many more untold Islamic histories,  
Of Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Harari, Afar, Gurage  
And, several others with relegated historical facts  
Diminished though having significant contributions.

Let's ponder and raise some questions,  
If the Lion of Judah has statues of lions,  
For its repressive governance systems  
And inequality of religions;  
Wouldn't it be time to erect monuments,  
For the many ethnics and nationalities,

Which were deprived of their identities,  
In the capital and in their administrative regions

If the Lion of Judah symbolizes Orthodox Christianity,  
Worshiped by less than half of Ethiopia's population.  
Wouldn't it be time to have Islamic symbols?  
For its worshippers and followers  
Who are over half of the population,  
But, repressed and silenced for centuries

Would you deny?  
If the statue of Ras Mokonnen,  
Who was despotic Governor of Harar,  
Stands within the heart of the city,  
In complement or alternatively  
Need to erect statue of Imam Ahmed,  
Ethiopian heroic and Islamic leader,  
Who galvanized and amalgamated,  
Abyssinia, Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea,  
Lead United Kingdom of Ethiopia for over 15 years;  
Need to celebrate such heroic Ethiopian leaders.  
Also, Imam Ahmed defended his people  
From insidious of insiders and accomplices of outsiders;  
Was victorious over Spanish and Portuguese musketeers,  
Mortified Vasco Dagama's son and other commanders  
Within Abyssinian highlands and its geographies.

Would you deny these facts?  
Unleash the ill-fully treated historical facts  
Designate public holidays,  
Erect landmarks for such heroic leaders  
Recognize and record their contributions,  
To have reflective true history of Abyssinia.

If Orthodox Christians  
Are less than 50 percent of the population,  
Occupy almost a third of Ethiopian lands,  
Then, privileged by the imperial regimes  
Built Churches in every village of the country  
Opened schools and colleges across the territory;  
Named streets, roads, roundabouts and squares,  
Decorated airport walls and floors with Christian symbols  
Designated hospitals and mountains after their Saints.

If less than one percent of Ethiopia's population  
Are Roman Catholic Christians,  
Have huge Cathedrals and business centers;  
Many schools, colleges and universities  
Infiltrated with many schools named after their Saints;  
Maltese, Peter and Notre Dame High schools in 1950s

Opened Catholic University campuses in the cities  
As favored by imperial constitutions  
And, reinforced by Christian government leaders;

If 0.7 percent Ethiopians  
Are Evangelical Christians,  
Having many colleges and radio stations  
University campuses and business entities,  
Symbols and emblems across Palaces,  
In the villages and historical sites;

If socialist and military junta regime,  
The master of Red Terror and tyranny,  
Named streets, roads  
And, squares after its ideologues;  
Idealized its intentions and actions,  
With Red Star at the heart of the nation;

Then, children of arrogance and ignorance,  
Deceptive deacons, unprofessional reporters  
And, so-called Orthodox Human Rights activists;  
Be aware, exposed were your propaganda,  
Hidden agendas and misinformation;

Hear us loud, clear and right  
Multiculturalism has spoken out,  
Equality of religions is declared.  
Ethiopia will be truly Ethiopia,  
If it includes and respects all identities;  
And, moving forward with open arms  
Erect multi-ethnic monuments and statues  
Portray their symbols all over the nation;  
Unblock political and religious chokeholds  
By stopping unholy covert operations,  
Build social trust and harmonious co-existence  
Share top political leadership in turns;  
To have social and political stabilities.

As the world is eradicating brutalities,  
Chokeholds, murders and unethical vaccinations  
Condemning assorted economic and social cruelties;  
Removing colonialist symbols and statues.  
Opting to uphold equity and equality,  
Marching towards morality and humanity.  
Establishing free society as Black Lives Matter  
Also, must be changes and turning points  
In all Ethiopian institutions and entities  
In adopting tenets of universal principles  
As the rights of Muslims and Ethnic Minorities Matter.

Set free Ethiopian Muslims to breathe  
Not only privileges but to give them full rights,  
Honor the Muslim population in the nation,  
To have their share of mosques across the country;  
Islamic research, teaching and conference centers  
Schools, colleges and universities around the nation.  
Eliminate century's old accumulated misinformation  
Mitigate ethno-discrimination, deception and tension  
Build Islamic memorial centers, parks and places;  
Grand mosques, museums and cultural hubs  
Islamic banks, radio and TV stations,  
As well, Haram free entertainment centers

Treat common places as commonwealth  
Renaming *Aabe'yot Ade'babay* with multiple names,  
As *Meskel Ade'babay*, *Eid Ade'babay*  
*Arafa Ade'babay* and *Erecha Ade'babay*  
To avoid a single creed and tribal dominance  
And, eliminate assorted Chauvinisms;  
Reflect, acknowledge and accommodate many.  
Seeking fairness, rights and conflict resolution  
To respect all religions and tribes of the nation.

Why keep foreign named hospitals, squares  
Roundabouts, boulevard and streets  
Be it Churchill, Queen Elisabeth,  
John Melly, Mexico and Pushkin squares,  
Idealizing many more foreign ideologues,  
Symbols of delusions and repressions.  
Time has come to remove, rename or replace,  
To reflect our own heroes and legends  
Inspiring Islamic patriots, leaders and scholars,  
*Aba Jefar*, *Imam Ahmed*, *Lej Iyasu*, *Negashi*,  
Scholars of Shonke, Arsi, Harar, Wollo, Jimma,  
And, many more venerated peacemakers,  
Who are across the regions and in the villages

Ethiopia,  
Land of Habasha  
Piece of Abyssinian Empire  
The cradle of originality  
The mother of diversity;  
The color of multiculturalism  
Home of Christianity and Islam;  
Land of resilience with no substitute  
Wake up and keep your children intact;

Be conscious of all minority values  
Uphold the constitution and rules of laws.

Give up marginalization by brute force  
Stop truncating many historical facts;  
And, undermining activities of Muslims.  
Uphold social justice, equity and equality;  
Love the fabrics of diversity and plurality,  
Tolerance, solidarity, respect and unity,  
To march towards humanity, peace and prosperity.

*Last but not least, CONGRATULATIONS my brothers and sisters. While I am in the process editing this commentary, there comes the good news. Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (or Federal Majlis) has been enacted by Parliament after 50 years of inter-generational Muslims' determinations and struggles. At least one of the many CHOKEHOLDS has been removed. We commend Ethiopian authorities and the Parliamentarians in moving to the right direction and for their collaborative efforts for this historic proclamation. Congratulations my brothers and sisters again!*

**Aselam Aleykum**