

# #MuslimAnd I Support BLM: Undoing Anti-Black Racism in Our Communities

The first Muslims that landed in America were Muslims of African descent. From the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the Civil Rights Movement and beyond, Black Muslims have played a pivotal role in the fight for community rights for Black and Muslim bodies. Muslims who are Black experience the same systemic racism that all Black Americans face, in addition to the Islamophobia and religious discrimination faced by many American Muslims and Muslims across the globe. In the context of these overlapping and intersecting sources of discrimination, Black Muslims can find themselves in conflict with their identities. With #MuslimAnd I support BLM, we embrace Muslims who identify as Black/African American and present information for non-Black people of color (POC) & White Muslims to undo their own anti-Blackness, better support the Black Lives Matter movement, and explore ways to become better allies.

## Language used to refer to Black folks (aka the whole abeed thing):

Many members of the Muslim community use slurs and harmful language to refer to Black folks in English and other languages

This can look like:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many non-Black Muslims use the word "Abed/Abeed" to refer to black people</li> <li>• This word literally translates to slave and is harmful to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never use slurs or harmful language</li> <li>• Use affirming and uplifting language</li> <li>• Find out what language Black folk from your part of the world use to refer to themselves in their own language</li> <li>• If family or friends use harmful language, ask them to stop and explain why their use of language is harmful.</li> </ul>

## Arab/South Asian superiority

Many Arab and South Asian Muslims believe or act as if their racial and ethnic identities are superior in comparison to Black Muslims.

Some examples include:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believing that knowing Arabic makes you a better Muslim and assuming Black Muslims do not know Arabic as well</li> <li>• Implying or assuming that Black Muslims do not "know" Islam like Arab or South Asian Muslims do</li> <li>• Focusing on only being in community with other Arabs or South Asians and implying that interacting with people of difference races, specifically Black people, is "bad"</li> <li>• Viewing Muslims of their own cultures as more trustworthy than Black Muslims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge that knowing Arabic does not make someone a better Muslim</li> <li>• There is no requirement to know Arabic to be Muslim</li> <li>• It's not Islamic to treat people as inferior:  <b>"There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an Arab [...] except on the basis of personal piety and righteousness." -Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)</b> </li> <li>• Educate yourself and your community about the importance of diversity and engaging with different communities .</li> </ul>

## Discrimination in Masjids

Many non-Black Muslims engage in conscious and unconscious forms of discrimination in masjids or other community spaces

Some examples of discrimination in Masjids include:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not saying salam back to Black Muslims</li> <li>• Consciously and unconsciously self-segregating by race, language, or ethnicity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come to Masjids and other gathering places with the intention of establishing and maintaining community.</li> </ul>

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving personal items like a purse or phone closer to you when a Black person is near</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively pray side by side with all fellow Muslims, not just the non-Black ones.</li> <li>• Do not assume people are trying to steal your belongings. Make a conscious effort to not associate Black people with crime.</li> </ul>

### Treatment of Converts

Many Muslims treat people who have converted to Islam, particularly Black Muslims who have converted, in their community poorly

Some harmful attitudes and behaviors include:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticizing converts' pronunciation or memorizations</li> <li>• Laughing at converts when they do something wrong or ask questions</li> <li>• Pushing the idea that culture and religion must be intertwined</li> <li>• Using "revert" to refer to all converts</li> <li>• Assuming those who grew up with the religion have a better understanding or are superior to those that did not</li> <li>• Looking down on Black or other Muslims' religious practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer help and assistance for converts to learn traditions and customs if they ask and want your help or assistance</li> <li>• Offer to help genuinely, without making converts feel inadequate</li> <li>• Be considerate of the culture they were raised in, show that it is compatible with Islam</li> <li>• Simply call converts Muslim, no need to qualify it.</li> <li>• Do not look down on religious practices that you may not be as familiar with or that may be different from your practice of Islam</li> </ul>

### Minimizing the experience of Black muslims

Non-Black Muslims often engage in behaviors that minimize the experience of Black Muslims

Some examples include:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saying "all lives matter" in response to "Black Lives Matter"</li> <li>• Responding with "I get racially profiled too" when hearing about Black Muslims' experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asserting that "all lives matter" as a direct response to Black pain has the effect of minimizing Black people's experiences</li> <li>• Anti-Black racism is distinct from anti-Muslim Islamophobia. Black Muslims have to deal with the intersection of both anti-Black racism and Islamophobia. Try to listen to, validate, and learn more about experiences that you may not share with others.</li> </ul>

### Interracial marriage/ relationships

Non-Black Muslims sometimes perpetuate anti-Blackness in their attitudes towards interracial relationships.

They may say harmful things, such as:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Interracial relationships/ marriages are haraam"</li> <li>• "My partner is Black, so I can't be racist"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interracial and interethnic relationships are most definitely not haraam</li> <li>• Even if your partner is Black or Brown, you can and probably do perpetuate racism. Take the time to learn more about racism and undoing your own internalized anti-Blackness</li> </ul>

## Police and Prisons

Many times, non-Black Muslims and Muslim communities act in anti-Black ways through their relationships with police and prisons.

Some examples include:

What we do wrong	What we could do instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining the police force, the military, and other sections of the U.S. Armed Forces</li> <li>• Partnering with local police on political and non-political projects, initiatives, and actions</li> <li>• Calling the police on community members and others, especially Black people</li> <li>• Defending the police when injustice occurs (through statements such as “Not all police.”, “They shouldn’t have resisted.”, “I have had good experiences with police; so they can’t be that bad.”)</li> <li>• Focusing on punitive justice, from the way we raise our children, interact with loved ones, and view our (and other people’s) mistakes, rather than focusing on restorative justice and forgiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and donate to Muslim organizations that are working to end the prison industrial complex (e.g. Believers Bail Out)</li> <li>• Learn about the ways in which law enforcement is targeting the Muslim community on local, national, and international levels (e.g. CVE)</li> <li>• Understand how calling the police on others, especially Muslims and people of color, can harm and even kill them</li> <li>• Center and partner with Black Muslim organizers and activists to end policing</li> <li>• Read Quran and Hadith/ liberation theology to understand the importance of dismantling oppressive systems, such as the prison industrial complex</li> </ul>