



Monday, November 17, 2025

## 1. WHAT COUNTS AS “ISLAMIC TEXT ABOUT BLACK INFERIORITY”?

When people argue “Islam says Black people are inferior,” they usually pull from four kinds of texts:

1. Hadith attributed to the Prophet ﷺ that mention Black people or colour.
2. Shi'i narrations from the Imams that target Zanj or Sudan.
3. Qur'anic verses about whitened/blackened faces on Judgement Day, read racially.
4. Later Islamic literature (adab, history, geography, theology) that stereotypes Black Africans as stupid, lustful, fit for slavery, etc.

What follows is a map of the main known texts that have actually been used to claim Black inferiority, plus notes on their status (sound / weak / fabricated / just a description that people weaponise).

## 2. ANTI-BLACK (OR APPARENTLY ANTI-BLACK) HADITH

### 2.1 Adam's shoulders: white = Paradise, black = Hell

Text (summary):

A report in collections like *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* (citing *Musnad Aḥmad*) says:

- God struck Adam's right shoulder, producing white offspring like small ants.
- He struck Adam's left shoulder, producing black offspring like charcoal.
- Those from the right side were told, “To Paradise, and I do not care.”
- Those from the left: “To Hell, and I do not care.” [Sunnah+1](#)

How it's used against Black people

Polemicists (including some Christian-missionary and anti-Islam sites) treat this as direct proof that:

- White people were created for Paradise,
- Black people were created for Hell,

- Therefore Islam teaches built-in Black inferiority. [answering-islam.org+1](http://answering-islam.org+1)

## How Muslim scholarship treats it

- It has been graded ḥasan (good) by some hadith graders, and criticised by others for both chain and matn (content). [Islam Stack Exchange+1](http://Islam Stack Exchange+1)
- Classical and contemporary scholars who accept the chain still insist on symbolic or non-racial explanations (e.g. “black” = sin, “white” = purity), but the colour + paradise/hell pairing is exactly why people weaponise it.

In IC3 terms: this text has been used to claim that IC3-type Blackness is ontologically cursed. Many Muslims now explicitly call this hadith problematic or forged and refuse to use it.

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## 2.2 “Beware of marrying the Zanj; they are a deformed/distorted creation”

Here “Zanj” = Black Africans from the East African coast; in your IC system this is clearly IC3 Black.

### Sunni circulation

One version runs:

“Choose for your sperm, marry those who are suitable, and beware of marrying the Zanj, for they are a deformed creation (khalq mushawwah).” [ahlulsunnah.net+1](http://ahlulsunnah.net+1)

- This wording is reported via chains attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, but major Sunni hadith scholars (e.g. al-Albānī) class it as fabricated (mawḍū‘) or baseless. [THE REDS AND THE BLACKS+1](http://THE REDS AND THE BLACKS+1)

Despite that, the very existence of the narration in hadith collections has let racist preachers and Islamophobes quote it as if it were authentic.

### Shi‘i collections – *al-Kāfī* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*

In the Twelver Shia canon, this shows up tied to Imām ‘Alī:

“Beware of marrying the people of al-Zanj, for they are a distorted creature.” (al-Kāfī, vol. 5, Book of Marriage, ch. “Marriage with Kurds and Sudan”) [thaqalayn.net+1](http://thaqalayn.net+1)

Another hadith in the same chapter says:

- “Do not marry the Zanj and the Khazar; they have wombs indicating disloyalty”, adding negative stereotypes about Indians, Sind and Qand as unintelligent. [Shia Central+1](http://Shia Central+1)

Shia hadith manuals like *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* also preserve similar wording. [ahlulsunnah.net+1](http://ahlulsunnah.net+1)

### How these are used

- Sunni polemicists against Shi‘a use these *al-Kāfī* narrations to say “Shia doctrine is racist.”
- Islamophobes use both the Sunni-ascribed and Shi‘i-ascribed versions to argue that the Islamic tradition brands Black people as “deformed” or “distorted creatures,” unfit for marriage. [Shia Central+1](http://Shia Central+1)

### Response inside the tradition

- Sunni critics point out that the “Prophetic” version has no acceptable chain and is declared worthless by hadith specialists. [THE REDS AND THE BLACKS+1](http://THE REDS AND THE BLACKS+1)

- Contemporary Shia scholars have debated the *al-Kāfi* texts, with some questioning their authenticity or meaning, and others re-reading “Zanj” as a specific rebellious group, not all Black Africans. [Al-Islam.org+1](#)

Still, as texts, they are real, widely accessible, and clearly negative about “Zanj”, so they are repeatedly used as “Islamic evidence” of Black inferiority.

### 2.3 “Do not buy a Negro” and similar Shia narrations

Another cluster in *al-Kāfi* (Book of Marriage, “those disliked for marriage”) contains lines such as:

- “Do not [even] buy anyone who is a Negro... never marry anyone of the Kurds, for they are part of the jinn (demons).” [chiite.fr+1](#)

and

- “Marry not from the Negroes (Zanj) nor the Khazar, for they have near relatives who are unfaithful,” plus “India, Sind and Qind – not one of them is intelligent.” [chiite.fr+1](#)

How these are used

- These texts are straightforwardly racist about Black people and have been used to argue that certain Shi‘i Imams considered Black people inherently defective as slaves and spouses.
- They form part of online dossiers titled things like “Racism in Shia Books” which are then generalised to “Islam is racist.” [Islam Reigns+1](#)

### 2.4 The “Blacks are lazy, stupid, promiscuous, thieves, and deformed” cluster

Researchers like Habeeb Akande and projects like *Illuminating the Darkness: Blacks and North Africans in Islam* have catalogued a group of forged or extremely weak hadith which state that Black people (Zanj, Habash, Sudan) are:

- lazy,
- stupid,
- promiscuous,
- thieves,
- a “deformed” or “distorted” creation. [Facebook+1](#)

Typical examples (paraphrased):

- “Do not mention a Black person except that you say ‘he is such-and-such’” with derogatory completions.
- Reports that expressly link Blackness with sexual immorality and criminality.

How they are used

- These narrations circulate on anti-Black and anti-Islam webpages as proof that the Prophet called Black people morally degenerate. [Facebook+1](#)

## Status

- Hadith critics (classical and modern) often cannot find these in the major Sunni *ṣaḥīḥ* or *sunan* collections at all, or they classify them firmly as fabrications and forgeries that crept into minor collections. [Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research+1](#)
  - Modern Muslim scholarship now speaks openly of “forged anti-Black hadith” that must be identified and discarded, not defended. [Facebook+1](#)
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### 3. HADITH THAT ARE USED AS *IF* THEY PROVE BLACK INFERIORITY

These texts are not explicitly saying “Black people are worse,” but people use them that way.

#### 3.1 One Arab for two Black slaves

In *Sunan al-Nasā’ī* and other collections, a report says:

- A slave came and pledged allegiance (bay‘ah) to the Prophet ﷺ to emigrate.
- The Prophet didn’t know he was a slave.
- His master arrived and demanded him back.
- The Prophet bought him for two Black slaves and from then on always asked, “Is he a slave?” before taking someone’s pledge. [Sunnah+1](#)

How it’s used

- Islamophobic writers quote this as: “One (non-Black) Arab man was worth two Black slaves,” arguing this proves Black slaves were “cheaper” and inferior. [WikiIslam+1](#)

Mainstream reading

- Hadith scholars read it as a legal/biographical report about:
  - rectifying a mistake (accepting a fugitive slave’s pledge),
  - tightening procedure to avoid repeating the mistake.
- They point out that the colour is incidental in the matn; nothing in the hadith says why those two slaves were Black or whether this was a “standard price.” [Islam Stack Exchange+1](#)

But once it’s there in the sources, it gets quoted as Islam’s “exchange rate” for Black lives.

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#### 3.2 The black woman with unkempt hair = plague

A *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* report describes the Prophet ﷺ saying:

- He saw in a dream a Black woman with dishevelled / unkempt hair leaving Madina and settling in another place (al-Juhfa).
- He interpreted her as a symbol of an epidemic/plague moving away from Madina to that area. [Sunnah+2Hadīth Unlocked+2](#)

How it’s used

- Critics say: “Look, disease is symbolised as a Black woman; that means black womanhood is a symbol of filth and plague in Islam.” [Reddit+1](#)

## Responses

- Classical commentary explains that in dream-symbolism, colours and figures often stand in for events (black = night/darkness; woman = “something that bears and moves”), not value judgements about real women of that colour. [SeekersGuidance](#)
- But again, this is a real text that can be lifted out and racialised by hostile readers.

### 3.3 “Satan looks like a sturdy Black man”

This is not in the major hadith collections but appears in early sīra (biographical) material. One often-quoted passage from Ibn Ishāq has:

- The Prophet allegedly saying: “Whoever wants to see Satan, let him look at Nabtāl ibn al-Ḥārith,” describing him as a sturdy Black man with long flowing hair, inflamed eyes... [Reddit](#)

## Use

- This gets cited as proof that the Prophet equated a Black male appearance with Satanic imagery.

## Scholarly issues

- The isnād of the report is disputed; it’s not treated as a canonical hadith.
- Many historians read it as an example of later polemical colouring in the sīra, not solid Prophetic speech.

Still, it’s part of the “Islamic text-space” that people mine for claims about Black inferiority.

## 4. QUR’ANIC COLOUR IMAGERY USED RACISTLY

The Qur’an doesn’t mention “Black race” or “white race”, but it does use black/white imagery:

- 3:106–107 – “On the Day [some] faces will be white and [some] faces will be black” (followed by: those with “blackened” faces are reproached for disbelief). [About Islam+1](#)
- 39:60 – those who lied against God will have blackened faces.
- 16:58 – when a pre-Islamic Arab is given news of a baby girl, “his face becomes blackened” with grief.

## How these verses are used

- Islamophobic sites argue that:
  - White face = good, Black face = bad, so Islam is structurally racist.
- Some writers explicitly link these verses to Black skin, claiming they encode Black inferiority.

## Mainstream exegesis

- Classical and modern tafsīr insist that these are idioms for joy vs humiliation, not skin colour:

- faces “brightened / illuminated” vs “darkened / covered in gloom”. [About Islam+1](#)
- Scholars point out exactly the 16:58 example: no one thinks a father’s literal skin tone changed; it’s an idiom.

Still, because the Arabic literally says “becomes white / becomes black”, the verses are available to be racialised by people who want to read them that way.

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## 5. NON-HADITH ISLAMIC LITERATURE THAT DEGRADES BLACK PEOPLE

Here we move beyond hadith into legal, historical and literary works by Muslim scholars that have been used to justify anti-Black hierarchies.

### 5.1 Ibn Khaldūn’s Muqaddimah

In the *Muqaddimah* (14th century), Ibn Khaldūn famously wrote of sub-Saharan Africans:

- They are “as a rule, submissive to slavery because they have little that is essentially human and have attributes quite similar to dumb animals.” [pieterderideaux+2Wikipedia+2](#)

He also repeats reports that many Black people live in caves, eat herbs, and sometimes eat each other.

How this is used

- Historians use it as a key Islamic-world example of race thinking that justifies Black slavery.
  - Racists and anti-Black voices inside Muslim societies have cited Ibn Khaldūn as “proof” that Black people are naturally suited to slavery and less human. [Sites@Duke Express+1](#)
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### 5.2 al-Abshīhī and the “when the black slave is sated, he fornicates” line

15th-century Egyptian scholar al-Abshīhī wrote in his adab work (and is quoted by later authors):

“Is there anything more vile than black slaves... when the black slave is sated, he fornicates; when he is hungry, he steals.” [pieterderideaux+2Humanities LibreTexts+2](#)

This formula recurs in multiple Arabic authors from the 9th to 15th centuries as a “saying” about Black slaves.

Use

- It crystallises the stereotype that Black = sexually voracious thief, and is often quoted in modern scholarship as a core expression of anti-Black racism in Arab-Islamic sources. [Wikipedia+1](#)
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### 5.3 Medieval geography & climate theory

Medieval geographers and physicians (e.g. al-Dimashqī, Ibn al-Nafīs and others) applied Greek-style “climate” theory:

- Peoples in the far south (Sudan, Zanj) are described as having “dim intelligence” and moral traits close to animals. [internationalpolicybrief.org+1](#)

Combined with the mass importation of Black slaves across the Sahara and Indian Ocean, this produced:



- A literary pattern where Black skin, southern climate, slavery, stupidity and lust all reinforce each other. [Wikipedia+1](#)
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## 5.4 Popular literature and eroticisation of Blackness

In collections like the Thousand and One Nights and later adab, Black male slaves often appear in stock scenes:

- Having sex with white / Arab women,
- Being described as especially well-endowed, lustful and crude. [Wikipedia+1](#)

Though these are not “religious law” or hadith, they are Islamicate texts that helped normalise a racial-sexual stereotype of Black men that later colonial literature would echo.

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## 6. HOW MODERN WRITERS HAVE USED THIS MATERIAL

### 6.1 Islamophobic / anti-Black use

Sites like Answering-Islam, Wikislam and similar repositories collect:

- the Adam shoulder hadith,
- the Zanj “deformed creation” texts,
- the two black slaves hadith,
- the black woman plague dream,
- Ibn Khaldūn’s and al-Abshīhī’s passages,

and present them as a continuous doctrinal line proving that Islam is inherently anti-Black. [answering-islam.org+2Wikislam+2](#)

They rarely mention:

- that several of the hadith are fabricated or rejected,
- that others are dream symbols or transactional reports,
- or that Qur’anic colour imagery has standard non-racial explanations.

### 6.2 Muslim anti-Black racism

Inside Muslim communities, these texts have sometimes been used to:

- Discourage marriage to Black people (especially in parts of the Arab world),
- Justify treating Black people as naturally servile or less intelligent,
- Explain away modern anti-Black racism as “backed by the tradition.”

Historians of Morocco, the Gulf and elsewhere have documented how Blackness and slavery became tightly linked in Muslim societies, aided by these literary stereotypes. [Cambridge University Press & Assessment+2blacfoundation.org+2](#)

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## 7. MODERN SCHOLARLY PUSHBACK

Contemporary Muslim and academic writers on Islam and anti-Blackness do three key things:

1. Separate norms from corruption

- They highlight Qur'anic principles and core hadith like the Farewell Sermon ("no Arab over non-Arab, no white over Black except by piety") as normative, and mark many anti-Black reports as:
  - Forged,
  - Weak, or
  - Products of particular historical slave systems, not divine law. [Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research+1](#)

2. Name and discard forged anti-Black hadith

- Projects like *Illuminating the Darkness* explicitly talk about "the forgery of anti-Black hadiths in the Islamic tradition" and show how they conflict with Qur'anic teaching and the practice of the Prophet with Black companions like Bilāl and Umm Ayman. [Facebook+2Facebook+2](#)

3. Critically read classical authors

- Works on Ibn Khaldūn, al-Abshīhī, etc. now treat their anti-Black statements as racist artefacts of their time, not as binding "Islamic doctrine." [Sites@Duke Express+1](#)

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## 8. HOW CLOSE TO "EXHAUSTIVE" IS THIS?

Given the size of:

- the hadith corpus,
- Shi'i narrations,
- tafsīr,
- adab, geography, fiqh, and popular literature,

no one can honestly list literally every sentence that has ever been used to claim Black inferiority.

What this article has done is:

- Gather the main clusters of hadith and early Islamic texts that:
  - explicitly attack Zanj / Sudan / Negroes as deformed, stupid, promiscuous, or fit for slavery,
  - or are regularly read as implying that (Adam's shoulder hadith, black woman plague dream, etc.),
- Show where they live in the tradition (Sunni / Shia / later literature),
- Explain how they've been used to attack Black people,
- And note the internal Islamic critique that challenges, re-reads, or rejects them.



If you'd like, the next step could be:

- A table listing each text, its original wording, source, grading, and how it's been used against IC3 Black people, or
- A counter-article that collects all the anti-racist texts and shows how they can be mobilised against these anti-Black readings.

Signed

*John Canoe*

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	<b>IC1</b>		W1 UK White W2 White European W9 Other White		<b>Who are you?</b>	
	<b>IC2</b>		W9 Other White Dark European			 <b>BIRTH PLACE</b>
	<b>IC3</b>		B1 Caribbean B2 African B9 Other Black			 <b>LINEAGE</b>
	<b>IC4</b>		A1 Indian A2 Pakistani A3 Bangladeshi A9 Other Asian			 <b>APPEARANCE</b>
	<b>IC5</b>		O1 Chinese O9 Any Other Oriental			 <b>STATE OF MIND</b>
	<b>IC6</b>		M1 White & Black Caribbean M2 White & Black African M3 White & Asian M9 Any Other Mixed			 <b>DNA</b>
	<b>IC7</b>		NS Not Stated			

# UK Government Race and Ethnicity Codes.

# Are you a Racist?

 <b>IC1</b>	<b>W1 UK White</b> <b>W2 White European</b> <b>W9 Other White</b>	 <b>IC3</b>	<b>B1 Caribbean</b> <b>B2 African</b> <b>B9 Other Black</b>	 <b>IC6</b>	 <b>M1 White &amp; Black Caribbean</b> <b>M2 White &amp; Black African</b> <b>M3 White &amp; Asian</b> <b>M9 Any Other Mixed</b>
<b>1 White Race WBRI</b> White British <b>1 White Race WCOR</b> White British - Cornish <b>1 White Race WENG</b> White British - English <b>1 White Race WSCO</b> White British - Scottish <b>1 White Race WWEL</b> White British - Welsh <b>1 White Race WOWB</b> White British Other <b>1 White Race WIRI</b> White - Irish <b>1 White Race WIRT</b> White - Traveller of Irish Heritage <b>1 White Race WEEU</b> White Eastern European <b>1 White Race WEUR</b> White European <b>1 White Race WOTW</b> White Other <b>1 White Race WWEU</b> White Western European	<b>W9 Other White</b> <b>Dark European</b>	<b>3 Black Race BAFR</b> Black - African <b>3 Black Race BANN</b> Black - Angolan <b>3 Black Race BAOF</b> Other Black African <b>3 Black Race BCON</b> Black - Congolese <b>3 Black Race BCRB</b> Black Caribbean <b>3 Black Race BEUR</b> Black European <b>3 Black Race BGHA</b> Black - Ghanaian <b>3 Black Race BNAM</b> Black North American <b>3 Black Race BNGN</b> Black - Nigerian <b>3 Black Race BOTB</b> Other Black <b>3 Black Race BOTH</b> Any Other Black Background <b>3 Black Race BSLN</b> Black - Sierra Leonean <b>3 Black Race BSOM</b> Black - Somali <b>3 Black Race BSUD</b> Black - Sudanese	<b>A1 Indian</b> <b>A2 Pakistani</b> <b>A3 Bangladeshi</b> <b>A9 Other Asian</b> <b>African Asian</b> <b>Bangladeshi</b> <b>Indian</b> <b>Kashmiri Other</b> <b>Kashmiri Pakistani</b> <b>Mirpuri Pakistani</b> <b>Nepali</b> <b>Other Pakistani</b> <b>Other Asian</b> <b>Any Other Asian Background</b> <b>Pakistani</b> <b>Sri Lankan Tamil</b> <b>Sri Lankan Sinhalese</b> <b>Sri Lankan Other</b>	<b>6 Mixed Race MABL</b> Asian and Black <b>6 Mixed Race MACH</b> Asian and Chinese <b>6 Mixed Race MAOE</b> Asian and Any Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Mixed Race MBCH</b> Black and Chinese <b>6 Mixed Race MBOE</b> Black and Any Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Mixed Race MCOE</b> Chinese and Any Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Mixed Race MOTM</b> Any Other Mixed Background <b>6 Mixed Race MOTM</b> Other Mixed Background <b>6 Mixed Race MWAI</b> White and Indian <b>6 Mixed Race MWAO</b> White and Any Other Asian Background <b>6 Mixed Race MWAP</b> White and Pakistani <b>6 Mixed Race MWAS</b> White and Asian <b>6 Mixed Race MWBA</b> White and Black African <b>6 Mixed Race MWBC</b> White and Black Caribbean <b>6 Mixed Race MWCH</b> White and Chinese <b>6 Mixed Race MWOE</b> White and Any Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Other Race OAFG</b> Afghan <b>6 Other Race OARA</b> Arab Other <b>6 Other Race OEGY</b> Egyptian <b>6 Other Race OFIL</b> Filipino <b>6 Other Race OIRN</b> Iranian <b>6 Other Race OIRQ</b> Iraqi <b>6 Other Race OJPN</b> Japanese <b>6 Other Race OKOR</b> Korean <b>6 Other Race OKRD</b> Kurdish <b>6 Other Race OLAM</b> Latin/ South/ Central American <b>6 Other Race OLEB</b> Lebanese <b>6 Other Race OLIB</b> Libyan <b>6 Other Race OMAL</b> Malay <b>6 Other Race OMRC</b> Moroccan <b>6 Other Race OOG</b> Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Other Race OOTH</b> Any Other Ethnic Group <b>6 Other Race OPOL</b> Polynesian <b>6 Other Race OTHA</b> Thai <b>6 Other Race OVIE</b> Vietnamese <b>6 Other Race OYEM</b> Yemeni	<b>7 Not Known Yet</b> <b>7 Rebel Race</b>
 <b>IC2</b>	<b>W9 Other White</b> <b>Dark European</b>	 <b>IC4</b>	<b>A1 Indian</b> <b>A2 Pakistani</b> <b>A3 Bangladeshi</b> <b>A9 Other Asian</b> <b>African Asian</b> <b>Bangladeshi</b> <b>Indian</b> <b>Kashmiri Other</b> <b>Kashmiri Pakistani</b> <b>Mirpuri Pakistani</b> <b>Nepali</b> <b>Other Pakistani</b> <b>Other Asian</b> <b>Any Other Asian Background</b> <b>Pakistani</b> <b>Sri Lankan Tamil</b> <b>Sri Lankan Sinhalese</b> <b>Sri Lankan Other</b>	 <b>IC5</b>	<b>O1 Chinese</b> <b>O9 Any Other Oriental</b> <b>Hong Kong Chinese</b> <b>Chinese</b> <b>Malaysian Chinese</b> <b>Other Chinese</b> <b>Singaporean Chinese</b> <b>Taiwanese</b>
 <b>IC7</b>	<b>NS Not Stated</b> <b>Information Not Yet Obtained</b> <b>Refused</b>	 <b>IC3</b>	<b>7 Not Known Yet</b> <b>7 Rebel Race</b>	<b>7 Not Known Yet</b> <b>7 Rebel Race</b>	<b>7 Not Known Yet</b> <b>7 Rebel Race</b>

