



Happy



Rights Day!

“To deny people their human rights is
to challenge their very humanity.”

- Nelson Mandela

Turquoise Harmony Institute wishes everyone
a happy Human Rights Day!

TURQOISE
HARMONY INSTITUTE

Turquoise Harmony Institute, Dr Aydin Inal

“Islam does not approve of terrorism in any form. Terrorism cannot be used to achieve any Islamic goal. No terrorist can be a Muslim, and no real Muslim can be a terrorist. Islam demands peace, and the Qur’an demands that every real Muslim be a symbol of peace and work to support the maintenance of basic human rights”

Fethullah Gulen

Protecting the rights of human beings is at the root of many legal, moral and religious systems. There is a fairly widely shared notion among major world religions that human beings are created in the image of the attribute of God and therefore they occupy a special place in the order of creation. It is also widely accepted that human beings have inherent rights that cannot and should not be violated by anyone or any authority.

On this Human Rights day, we have asked faith leaders to share their wisdom with us they responded generously. We are sharing them with you and hope that on this Human Rights Day, we move a step further toward recognising that every human being enjoys equal basic rights regardless of their race, gender, colour, religion, ethnicity and nationality.

We wish everyone a happy Human Rights Day.

Riaan de Villiers, Groote Kerk

Human rights is rooted in our belief that all human beings were created in the image of God and made to live lives that are at peace with God, ourselves, one another and all of creation. Jesus instructed his followers to love God and one another as we love ourselves, therefore we are called to respect, further and protect the inalienable right of every person to be fully human, whilst continuing to work together to build and establish a society where the conditions and freedoms needed to flourish are extended and upheld for all of humanity.

Rabbi Greg Alexander, Rabbi Malcolm Matitiani and Rabbi Emma Gottlieb, Temple Israel

Ohev Tzedakah uMishpat - We ask the One who Loves Justice to support our pursuit of human rights. May You bless us with the strength and courage to fight against injustice and oppression in all its forms. We ask for Your guidance and wisdom as we work to uphold the dignity and worth of all people, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or nationality. May Your compassion and mercy inspire us to be advocates for the voiceless and to stand up for the marginalised and oppressed.

We pray that You will bring peace and justice to our world, and that all people will be able to live with dignity, equality, and freedom.

Rev Dr Robert Steiner, Rondebosch United Church

A Beautiful Question

The poet David Whyte reminds us that in "fiercely difficult and un-beautiful moments" we are to practice "the art of asking the beautiful question, of ourselves, of our world, or of one another". It involves, "turn[ing] to the part of us that has never wanted a life of simple calculation."

What is the beautiful question that surfaces for you on Human Rights Day? As a faith community, we keep encircling the question with which the following Hasidic story begins: There once was a rabbi who was asked by his students, "Master, how should one determine the hour in which night ends and day begins?" One student suggested, "Is it when a person can distinguish a sheep from a dog in the distance?" "No," said the rabbi, "It is not." A second student ventured, "Is it when one can distinguish a date tree and a fig tree from afar?" "It is not that either," replied the teacher. "Please tell us the answer," the students begged, "How should one determine when night has ended and day begun?" "It is when you look into the face of a stranger and see your sister or brother," said the rabbi. "Until then, night is still with us."

We give thanks for the wonderful vision of the Turquoise Harmony Institute and all its members, who encourage us to see the brother and sister in every human being. May the night end!

With every blessing from the Rondebosch United Church in Cape Town!

Sheigh Ismail Keraan, Al Azhar Masjid

As our beloved country once again celebrates Human Rights Day, one cannot ignore the clouds of uncertainty, fragmentation and mistrust that have gathered and permeated the South African societal landscape.

Unfortunately, the storms unleashed by these human-manufactured clouds have disappointingly once again resulted in our society mutating into an exploitative one since the new political dispensation of 1994. This, of course, is a result of egotism, greed, materialism, and most importantly, a lack of ethical and moral consciousness. Although long overdue, there may still be time to reverse this situation from an exploitative scenario to a cooperative one.

For as the Quranic scripture counsels:

“And let your co-operation be towards goodness and piety, and let your co-operation not be towards transgression (sin) and enmity” (5:2)

Let us then conduct a deep self-analysis and reflection to arrive at the realization of the beauty of being human. To recognize the amazing diversity of cultures in our country woven together producing the beautiful tapestry that is the South African landscape of humanity.

For upon deep reflection, our myopic lens will give way to a real perception of the solid cooperative edifice our beloved South African landscape of humanity can be. On such basis, the realization of the foolishness of our current actions will become apparent as pointed out by the saying:

“We were all human once until; Racism disconnected us, Blind religious perceptions separated us, Politics divided us, and Wealth classified us” – (Anon)

Let our celebration this year be the actualization that Human Rights Day heralds the very important message that a society without an ethical and moral consciousness has forsaken its humanity.

Let us embark upon this absolutely important effort by placing our trust and hope in the ONE that brought existence into existence.

May we be successful insha allah.

Happy Human Rights Day

Pastor G de Vries Bock, Lutheran Church, Belgravia

Human rights for all people, particularly the vulnerable and the oppressed.
10 December is Human Rights Day, marking the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In South Africa, 21 March has been declared HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (HRD). While it is important to celebrate this day, we as believers are aware that it is also, a sad day because there are still millions of people in the world and in our country whose rights are not protected or fulfilled.

Our Christian values shape our understanding of people as bearers of the image of God and the whole of creation as a gift of which we must take care. All people are created in God's image as equals in rights and dignity.

We believe that the Interfaith or Faith Based Organizations (FBO) have a particularly unique role both to directly support people that are affected by human rights violations and in advocating for and claiming human rights as part of their narrative and mandate in their work and service to the world.

Ephesians 4: 3 "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
Henry Beecher once said, "Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith." Let this journey be a journey of faith – For Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Let our faith move mountains, let our Love breakdown walls, and Let our Prayers move the hand of the Almighty. Unity is Power, Unity in Diversity is our Identity. We have each other !

I end with the word of giants in the human rights struggle:

I've devoted my life to seeing equality for blacks, and at the same time, I've denied the needs of my family. Please understand that I take these actions, not out of selfishness or arrogance, but to preserve a South Africa worth living in for blacks and whites." Steve Biko
"You must not lose faith in Humanity, Humanity is an Ocean; if a few drops of the Ocean are dirty, the Ocean does not become dirty" Mahatma Gandhi
"I'm a human being, first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole" Malcom X

"The destruction of the earth's environment is the human rights challenge of our time"

Desmond Tutu

I Thank you !

Rabbi Sam Thurgood, Hertzlia School

For this human rights day, our prayer is to see the fulfilment of the words of the prophet
Yeshayahu (Isaiah 2:4) in his vision of peace and coexistence:

"they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation
shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"

Jenny Canau, Kaygu Samye Dzong, Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Centre.

All human beings were born on this land we call earth. There are no natural borders on this
planet earth. Why then do we create mental separation and classifications of foreigners,
migrants, and refugees? All forms of discrimination are mental constructs to justify
enslavement, massacres, and genocide throughout time . It's time to reflect on our attitudes
and beliefs. Do they promote harm or benefit? In this way, we can take small actions in our
daily lives that bring about respect, dignity, justice and peaceful living. My wish is for our 8
billion people to strive to live with a deep sense of inter-connectedness by promoting
human rights for all ♥

By Shiekh. Fakhruddin Owaise

The Holy Qur'an states: "And We have honoured the children of Adam" (17:70). And the blessed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "He is not one of us who does not honour our elders and be kind to our younger (Tirmidhi). Under the guidance of these Divine injunctions, Muslims are taught to honour all human beings and in fact all of God's beautiful creation. Therefore in the religion of Islam, caring of God's creation goes hand in hand with worshipping the Creator. In fact, it is considered act of worship. This year Human Rights day coincides with the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan which is indeed the time of the year in which this piety and universal compassion is displayed the most by Muslims. It is indeed a glorious month of prayer and charity, pleasing to the Creator and creation.

Nizamiye Mosque

Human rights and specifically the rights of individuals are strictly protected in Islam. It is agreed upon that even God does not negate the rights of an individual unless the person who has been wronged forgives the perpetrator. Although the central message of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been that of mercy and forgiveness, the rights of an individual are protected and they cannot be forsaken for any reason.

To protect the rights of individuals and even the environment, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) established rules of engagement which protect the rights of civilians in warfare. Before His time wars often ended tragically leading to the decimation and destruction of lands, houses, animals and human life.

We should also bear in mind that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) fought wars as a last resort such as defending his people and their rights, land and honour. The time his army spent in actual battle does not exceed a day in total. He spent much time in negotiating to make peace before battle breaks out.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), before any battle, addressed His Companions and reminded the following instructions to clarify who the civilians were:

- a. Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman (As Sunan Abu Dawood)
- b. Do not kill the monks in the monasteries (Musnad, Ibn Hanbal)
- c. Do not attack a wounded person. (Musnad, Ibn Hanbal)
- d. Do not loot, plunder and pillage, burn the crops and trees (Bukhari)
- e. Do not mutilate, maim, or harm the corpses (Bukhari)
- f. Fight with only those who attack you (Musnad, Ibn Hanbal)

The Holy Qur'an reiterates that Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) was sent as a Mercy to mankind and he has displayed this in his words and actions.

***On behalf of Turquoise Harmony Institute
We would like to give a special thanks to :***

- Riaan de Villiers- Groote Kerk
- Rabbi Greg Alexander, Rabbi Malcolm Matitiani & Rabbi Emma Gottlieb-Temple Israel
- Rev Dr Robert Steiner, Rondebosch United Church
- Sheikh Ismail Keraan, Al Azhar Masjid
- Pastor G de Vries Bock, Lutheran Church, Belgravia
- Rabbi Sam Thurgood, Hertzlia School
- Jenny Canau, Kaygu Samye Dzong, Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Centre.
- Shiekh. Fakhruddin Owaise
- Nizamiye Mosque

