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Opening Remarks
Faith in Action on Racial Equity
A Panel Discussion (hosted by FCAC-SSTCi)

Racial equality is the belief that individuals, regardless of their racial characteristics, are morally, politically, are legally equal and should be treated as such. Furthermore, it is the belief that different racial groups, as groups, are equal, with none being inherently superior or inferior in intelligence, virtue, or beauty. If I may quote what the Qur'an says: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things," [49:13]

And what the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "All mankind is from Adam and 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 black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (taqwa) and good action. Know that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood.

What do we mean by racial equity? We mean the societal conditions in which:

- The distribution of resources and opportunities is neither determined nor predicted by race, racial bias, or racial ideology.
- The structures, systems, practices, and cultural narratives in society provide true situational fairness and equal opportunity.
- There is a democratic commitment to dismantle the false narrative of white supremacy and address the legal, political, social, cultural, and historical contributors to inequity.
- Families and individuals are able to thrive and flourish in the intersections of all aspects of their identity, including race, religion, gender, orientation, ability, and socioeconomic background.
- All people, cultures and identities are equally valued and recognized under the belief that strength comes through the diversity and expression of our shared humanity.

We can also define racial equality as an outcome. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live.

Now, when we achieve social equity:

People, including people of color, are owners, planners, and decision-makers in the systems that govern their lives.

We acknowledge and account for past and current inequities, and provide all people, particularly those most impacted by racial inequities, the infrastructure needed to thrive.

Everyone benefits from a more just, equitable system.

So, how do we get there? And what we are doing at ISWA:

1. Starting with the Personal: Actively learn, hold ourselves accountable, maintain humility, and be courageous in all aspects of our work with respect and honor for the lived experience of colleagues of color. Be an example to others.
2. Show evidence of this commitment in our internal operations, strategic plans and processes, and ways we engage with our staff and volunteers. Get involved in registration drives to enroll all eligible to vote.
3. Vote for candidates that reflect racial equity, and social justice within the community
4. Speak truth to power and amplifying voices of the communities we serve to hold philanthropic decision makers and policy makers responsible for meaningful progress on racial equity. Be vocal against racial injustice and prejudice in our mosque, church, and synagogues.
5. Let us be a model and lead social change and racial justice in the world.
6. By inclusion of people of color in our decision-making bodies.