# 1983

# IWDM Study Library

# Interview: Role of the Quran Houston TX

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Kamalud-Din: To another 30-minute session of American Muslim mission in focus. We want to thank you for tuning in on our program, and we hope that you will stay with us through the entire program. We have with us a very special guest and I'm sure most of you are familiar with our guest now, and his name is Imam W. Deen Mohammed. He is the resident Imam of the Masjid Honorable Elijah Muhammad in Chicago, Illinois. At this time, I want to thank you brother Imam for taking time out from your very busy schedule. I know you're very busy to come down and be with us on our program.

IWDM: Thank you for welcoming me.

Kamalud-Din: I would like to begin because I want to take advantage of the short time that we have. What I want to talk about is the Holy Quran. I want to talk about what is the role that the Holy Quran have in a Muslim community. Is it the foundation or is it the criteria for setting up a model community? I would just like to know.

IWDM: Yes. First, maybe I should speak as an individual or a person, and give our listeners who are not acquainted with our religion idea of the influence of Quran in our life. Muslims, perhaps are more in touch with their-- In fact, I would say Muslims are, on the whole, more in touch with their holy book than other people and that’s because Muslims use the holy book in their prayers, or say it aloud or either silently, and we have to recite portions of our holy book when we pray.

Muslims are in touch with their holy book daily, and five times daily. We pray five times daily. Every time we pray, we have to recite the holy book. We're in touch with our holy book, and the scripture come into your mind that often every day and five times daily makes it bigger than anything else because what else are we doing daily and five times daily? I heard one Imam say-- Well, he said some people eat three times a day. He said some people take a snack too, nice snack. He said but five times, he says that's a lot of eating.

If you pray five times a day, then you are feeding on the sacred source, you're feeding on your scripture, mentally, and spiritually, and many other ways. Your feeding on your scripture, and our Quran, our scripture, our holy book it has guidance for every aspect of life not just for one aspect of life, but for every aspect of life. Let me mention the need to work. Christians, when I was a young child, Christians used to be conscious of the sin of not being active, not being gainfully employed and lawfully employed.

If you didn't have a job they'd say, "Hey, are you a bum? If you're not a bum what are you doing? Something criminal?" How come you're not working?” I remember when Christians where I lived were very much aware of this idea, this need to be gainfully employed, and that to not be employed or to not do something in the form of work is a sin. G-d says those who are idle, their brothers, their company for satan.

We find that the Quran says when you go to the mosque for the congregational prayers on Friday. Says answer the call, and go to the mosque for the congregational prayers on Friday, but when the congregational services are over return to your different jobs. Right? Return to the business activities. Here we find our religion require us not only to be morally good or spiritually motivated by faith, but it require that we also be active in the material world in a lawful and constructive way.

We recite-- we recite that when we pray. Five times daily we're reciting something of the Quran, and eventually, you're going to recite something from the chapter called Jumaa, and in that chapter is where G-d tell you when you leave Jumua service, congregation service, go and do business. Get into some constructive work or some involvement. That is also helping be a material foundation of society.

We can't just look at the spiritual foundation of society, we have to look at the whole life and make a contribution to the whole life and be involved in the whole life. The Quran is the source for that. The Quran is our source. It tells us what the life should be, what our obligations are, and G-d's saying fulfill all your obligations. You can't fulfill some of them. I just can't fulfill spiritual, I got to fill all my obligations. If I'm going to obey the G-d's word in my holy book.

When it comes to the role of Quran in the community life, then really it says the same thing, but it obligates us to work together. G-d say, "Go all together and be united as a people." Don't work against each other, and I see this as really, I would say, a natural growth that comes on man. Men have had to participate in bigger fields of activity. If you-- nature and demand on life to work and demand on life to live in some kind of orderly fashion or society, it throws man into bigger circles or bigger fields, fields of cooperation.

In the big field of cooperation, there's no room for individualism. There's no room for people to live on islands. You live on your island, but that has to be a small part of your life. You live on your island and you go home and go to bed, but when the sun is up you can't live on your island, you have to live with people. Again-

Kamalud-Din: That's beautiful.

IWDM: -the Islamic life is a community life. G-d says you are a community. G-d says in our book, you are one community, meaning that you should be united, you should be cooperating with each other, and I am your Lord, I am your Lord. Your Lord is also one, so worship only me. Now, that's a great-- that's a profound message there.

Kamalud-Din: Yes, it is.

IWDM: That's a great message there. Why? because what plagues the effort to cooperate big “I”s and little “u”-- people who want to be worshipped--

Kamalud-Din: Class distinction.

IWDM: Class distinction, people who want to be worshipped. That's okay to have class distinction, but don't make the class distinction deities. Don't make it a G-d, a G-d out of it. Some people they just are so fascinated by what they think is the end thing in life, in the image of man. Man's own styles, his own ideas. They are so fascinated by that that they become worshipers. Worshippers, idolizers of personalities, individuals, lifestyle, and Allah warns us in our holy book against this by telling us that, "I am your Lord, one Lord. I am your Lord and worship only me."

Kamalud-Din: You know they even have set up images of men in the society for people to worship as a deity. Al-Islam doesn't have that, any images.

IWDM: No, that's true, but I don't think too many people of-- I think we have more people-- that's very serious because it is in religion and the religion says even the Bible says do not make any image.

Kamalud-Din: That's what I am referring to.

IWDM: Like no image of the heavens, or in the earth, or in the water. Don't make any image.

Kamalud-Din: It covers it all. [laughs]

IWDM: That's right. You have touched upon something that is very serious and delicate. I think most of us-- we have made gods without knowing we fashion a god. When I can do nothing but spend time on my own self. I have no time for you. I have no time for my neighbor. I have no time for own. Some people don't have time for their own children. When you get so wrapped up in yourself and so desperately tied up and just occupied and just protecting yourself and securing yourself and promoting yourself, you have made yourself a god, and the Quran speaks about that.

People who make their own inclinations their god. Return-- we're getting back to the question the role of the Quran in the community. Our community is awakened with Athan. The Athan declares that G-d is bigger than anything we can imagine.

Kamalud-Din: That's beautiful.

IWDM: More important than us, more important than our life, more important than society. G-d is bigger than us and us bigger than our society. G-d is bigger than our whole society. The whole society has to conform to the will of G-d. Then in the morning before the sunrise, it awakens the community. It says, "G-d is bigger," yes. Then it says, at the end of it, it says, "Prayer is better than sleep." Let's awaken the community to its responsibilities.

In the last words that follow after prayers-- that's the end of the Athan. That's in the end of the Athan, but lastly, at the very end, it says, "Liven up to prayer." Liven up to what? Development. Development. So development-- we speak of the developing nations. After all of that, we think of America say America is a developed nation. That's true, but if it doesn't keep developing it won't be a developed nation for long.

Kamalud-Din: That's true. That's quite true.

IWDM: All civilized societies they're in the process of developing something all the time. Developing resources, developing their potential, all the time. This is required of us. All of this address the need not only for the individual to be attended to but for the needs of the society to be attended to. Really they are the same, the only difference is you have a whole lot of individuals, and if they're going to make progress they have to respect each other and cooperate with each other.

Kamalud-Din: That's right. Listening to you, I have a lot of people who asked the question. They seem to think that Al-Islam is for a particular race of people. Most of them think that's a religion of the black man--

IWDM: Well, you know why? Is because it was popularized here in the United States by Elijah Muhammad and his followers who will call black Muslims, and who did preach separatism. That's why they think that way. If, well, I don't know. When I remember reading some earlier materials, when I was a young man, on our religion, and it made me think that our religion was for Arabs. What I learned from Western sources made me think that Al-Islam was just Arabs' religion.

I was happy I know that well. My father, he says, "No, this is our too-- Muslim you know." I don't know. I think we just have the two extremes. The fact of the matter is that you have Africa, and maybe 50% or more of those nations over there are Muslims. You have the Middle East, Arabia, all Muslims. Practically, they're all Muslims-- Egypt, everybody knows the glorious history of the ancient Egyptians in there.

Egyptians are all Muslims. Almost 100% Muslims, almost. There are few non-Muslims over there. Then you go out the way from the Middle East and Africa, and you go to Europe and you find Europeans, whites, Albanians, Muslims. Czechoslovakia, Muslim. Yugoslavia has Muslims.

Kamalud-Din: A lot of people don't know that.

IWDM: Yes. Spain has a number of Muslims still there, in Spain. You see. The Turks are practically 100% Muslims. They're white folks. Then you go to Asia and you'll find the Indians, millions of Indians, many millions. You'll find the Indonesians, hundreds of millions. In fact, perhaps the greatest single population we had the largest single population that we have is the Indonesians now.

Because the Indians are divided. Pakistanians, a lot of them are Muslims and a lot of Indians are Muslims. If their numbers are put together maybe that number would be bigger than Indonesia. Indonesia is the largest single Islamic population, Indonesians.

Kamalud-Din: It is something to think about.

IWDM: Yes. Muslims are all races. When we make Hajj the annual pilgrimage, which focuses on the Muslim community, and again it comes back to the community. The Quran then is the strongest force in our life. We have two influences in our life that are dominating and directing the Muslim life, the Word of G-d, this is the Quran, and how it was lived or demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad.

Kamalud-Din: That's right. I was fortunate enough to go on Hajj because you're responsible for one time for me going--

IWDM: How was that? I didn't pay your way.

Kamalud-Din: No, no. You encourage all of us to go, you see.

IWDM: Well, I wasn't responsible for it somebody encourage me.

Kamalud-Din: That's true. What happened is when I went over there and I saw all of these people, from all over the world, all gathered in one place. That was really something.

IWDM: It is.

Kamalud-Din: That had an impact on me.

IWDM: It is something.

Kamalud-Din: That changed my whole life-- I mean, it was already changed, but it brought about a greater desire in me.

IWDM: I think what fascinated me more than anything else was the size of that-- to meet the hundreds of thousands of people there but going around the Kaaba. You know that move around the Kaaba. You'd see the people moving and it looks to me I suggest thing. I'd like to see a picture in something. I like to associate a picture. To me, several things came to my mind. I said, "Well, these people are going around here, and it looks like they're caught up into something and they can't get out of it."

Because they're all circling together. What they're circling, the Kaaba. Whatever that Kaaba is, that's an attraction. I saw the Kaaba as an attraction there. Attraction, pulling them and they can't resist it, we just have to go around. When I learned the Kaaba was symbolic of the best nature in us. I said that's what we should be gathered to.

Kamalud-Din: That's right and I can see how it's ruining up our society.

IWDM: That's right. And another thing. Another thing came to my mind was a whirlpool, I'm just saying what came I my mind. Not that this is correct, it's not. This is my own life. I thought of a whirlpool, circling like that is like water. Water when it circles in a whirlpool. The drain brings all the water at that point, and makes it circle there.

Kamalud-Din: That's right. I got that same picture.

IWDM: Yes. That kind looks like that.

Kamalud-Din: You know, after learning that the human nature in human beings, water is a symbol of that in the physical world. There's a relationship between the nature of people and water, you see. It works characteristically.

IWDM: Human being shed tears, that's water. If you speak too long, you have to wet your mouth.

Kamalud-Din: That's true.

Kamalud-Din: So water is very important.

IWDM: It's true.

Kamalud-Din: I have one more question I want to ask you. It's concerning-- say we were talking about the Quran. Usually, when we talk about the Quran we always say, "And the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammed." I would like for you to--

IWDM: Because he has associated these two together. He says, in his farewell address, he said, "I'll leave you with two things, that if you hold on to these two things, you will not go wrong. First, it's the Quran, and second is my Sunnah." Sunnah is an Arabic term. It means how he lived that Quran. How he lived that life.

Kamalud-Din: I noticed from studying the life of Prophet Muhammed, and studying some of the things you do. Most of the things you do I should say. I noticed you follow that very closely.

IWDM: I try. I have a duty to follow the Prophet.

Kamalud-Din: I appreciate that. Also, we have this land in Georgia in the world we had a convention a few months ago. We've named it Elijahville.

IWDM: That is because it was under Elijah Mohammed's leadership, may G-d forgive him his sins, resting in peace. It was under his leadership that that land was purchased. It wasn't completely paid for since his passing. We have paid it. It's completely paid for now. It's paid. We paid the land off the lands clears. It's our land. Yes, sir.

Kamalud-Din: That's good feeling.

IWDM: He himself never got an opportunity to learn Arabic language. He was first made acquainted with the Quran from the hands of a man who had confused the idea of our religion. The Honorable Elijah Mohammed wasn't responsible for that confused idea of our religion. It was the one who gave him that idea. You see. If he was who did it and then he gave one of us that confused idea, mixed-up idea he was responsible. Honorable Elijah Muhammad was not educated. He only received as formally.

Formally, he received only three years of education and I don't know how much education you would call that in the south when he was a young boy, and he came up north. He never went to school after that. He learned in the streets, he learned from experience and he became a very intelligent person-

Kamalud-Din: Yes, he was.

IWDM: -and I would say an educated, very educated person, but it was self-taught, self-experience. To know of the world what Islam was in the outside the borders of the United States, he didn't know. But he-- I believe, he was very sincere in what he was trying to do and he did lead us to a better idea of our own human worth.

Kamalud-Din: He did.

IWDM: Yes, he did. He did discipline us. Many of us who didn't have any discipline.

Kamalud-Din: That's what started me up.

IWDM: Yes, and taught us good morals and taught us to respect each other, respect our families and accept our obligation to the family obligations. We think that a man who did that much good for us, even though he did introduce the religion in a confused way, we think he deserved to have that land that he helped us acquire, be named after him, so we call it ElijahVille.

That's an opportunity for a lot of us to fulfill something that has to be fulfilled in us. We have just not proved to the white man. We want to be satisfied ourselves, that we can build a town. There's an opportunity. 4,000 acres of land, or better. That's an opportunity for us to build a town. We have consulted the people in the area, we have consulted the towns in the area and we've learned that they favor our idea, so what we want there will be welcomed.

We hope to build a small town in Georgia and it will be called ElijahVille, G-d willing and we hope to show, demonstrate there the ability of poor ordinary people, Blacks to take the land and make it productive and also build homes and make a small town there and manage it themselves, and perhaps only in that situation will we have crime rate reduced.

Kamalud-Din: That's right, because I can see the need for some kind of model to be set up in our society.

IWDM: It has to be. We were all grouped in that situation. I believe we won't have the freedom, the relief of spirit, the ease in our souls. I don't believe we'll have that until the same people, the ordinary common people, descendants, the children of those slaves, demonstrate ability to establish neighborhoods, to run neighborhoods and manage their affairs by themselves, supervise their life. The Irish have proved-- the Irish have proven that. These people who are in this country, they live in communities. Don't they?

Kamalud-Din: That's right.

IWDM: The Irish community, and why should we want to break that up?

Kamalud-Din: No reason why we should.

IWDM: We shouldn't want to break that up.

Kamalud-Din: No.

IWDM: No. That's America for us to live in our own community and for us to be united as Americans, but for us to have our own distinguished life, cultural life if you choose, and that's what we want. That's what we're going to have. With G-d's help, with the welcome from our American fellowmen.

Kamalud-Din: I think there'd be a lot of people to be happy to hear that, and one of you are part of it. I really think so.

IWDM: It will be good for America because I think that kind of demonstration will take a lot of Blacks who don't need to be on welfare role, off the welfare. It will give them a new way of looking at life and new hope and then give them the energy and the courage they need to go and tackle.

Kamalud-Din: I know it was a miracle to me. It worked wonders on me.

IWDM: It worked wonders on me.

Kamalud-Din: Brother Imam, we don't have very much time left. What I would really like to do at this point is to let the people know about your new book, Religion on the Line. I'm always talking about it, but would you like to have something to say concerning that book?

IWDM: Certainly. A Religion on the Line is-- contains the talk that we had on a show in Los Angeles, where representatives of the three great religions came together, even Protestants and Catholic represented came together to discuss these human conditions and human problems and also our religion. Since I'm an American, I'm not a foreigner, I'm an American.

Kamalud-Din: That's right.

IWDM: I'm an American and also a Muslim. I think what we have here is a good opportunity for people to see our religion separate from the problem of east and west. Separate from the problem of Israel and Arabs. It gives them an opportunity to look at religion without all of these distractions that are really, politically created or has nothing really to do with the essence of our religion. They're just political kinds of situation that have been created, that make people respond politically rather than to the purity of their religion.

Kamalud-Din: Brother Imam I've read it several times and what you're saying is absolutely true. I want to thank you for being on our program again and we're always honored to have you.

IWDM: I hope to come back.

Kamalud-Din: Thank you very much. Dear beloved people, I want to leave you. I haven't got the time to say some of the things I'd like to say to you, but I want you to be sure and tune in on our next program. I'll leave you with As-Salaam-alaikum which means may the peace of Almighty G-d be upon you and we'll see you on our next program. Thank you.

Recorded Voice: The American-Muslim Mission in focus.