### 12/07/1986

### IWDM Study Library

# National Concern and Success of the Individual

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

By national concern we have in mind nationalism and tendencies toward nationalism by not just the United States but all nations.

We have to understand that in our religion, Al-Islam, nationalism is not a concern. In the whole of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, we find no evidence whatsoever to support nationalism as a Muslim concern. Nationalism is not a Muslin concern.

# What Is Nationalism?

Nationalism means the concern for or the importance placed on the nation. In our religion, importance is not placed on the nation, importance is placed on Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. And Allah calls us to faith and duty. In our religion, we have no duty to the nation except that justification be on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

Now we know that we have to accept certain circumstances in our lives, if we live in a society or nation with a political or government order. If that nation is not Islamic, then we have no responsibility directly for the order of that nation. But we are to work to 'Contribute good wherever we can, and to influence the good processes and work against the bad processes.

# We Must Promote Right

We have an obligation to promote what is right, and to work against, prohibit or resist what is wrong, whether we live under a Muslim or non-Muslim government. We have that obligation.

But if we live under a non-Muslim government, we have no direct obligation to that government. Do you understand that? Our obligation will be based upon how much good that nation advocates. That will be the extent of our involvement as a supporter of that nation. When that nation has more evil in it than good and its effect on the life of the people is worse than is good, then we should take a stand against that nation, no matter what the consequences are.

# Don't Say You Are Weak

Allah says don't say that you are small, weak and oppressed. He says: "see you not that My earth is vast," meaning that if you are too weak to do something about an evil, that's denying you or your life, then you should try to leave it and find another place or land. Allah's earth is vast. There is plenty of space on the earth.

So Allah is saying there will be no excuse in the Judgment, if you say, "oh, we were a minority, we were too small, we were weak, our oppressors were too powerful, we couldn't help ourselves."

We find the United States taking in a lot of immigrants, especially Asians, during these times, because of its guilt feelings about the Viet Nam war. It's taking in a lot of Asians and Koreans because of the conflict there and America's role in that conflict.

Many others are also coming into this country, even the Afghan. We had a brother from Afghanistan to visit us recently. He told us that there were a hundred families in Chicago, who had recently come to the United States for refuge. Those people are acting in accord with their religion. Whether that's the real motive or not, I don't know, but our religion says don't give up your life because of bad circumstances. It tells us to try to find better circumstances if we can't deal with the problem.

# Nationalism Has Been An Evil

So our national concern is really with nationalism, which has been an evil in the life of man. Nationalism has contributed more harm than good, to the life of man in society.

In fact, every nation that I can recall, that was characterized by nationalism became an evil force and influence in the life of man.

Japan, under the god incarnate, Hirohito, became an evil force. It was seeking dominance.

What Hitler advocated was nationalism. It was evil.

What Pharaoh advocated was nationalism and it was evil. Everything centered around the nation and Pharaoh, the nation and the boss, the head of relations. Egyptians were the ruling class and everybody else was inferior. It was nationalism. So we are to avoid tendencies towards nationalism.

# The Nation of Islam

Many of you can't get away from the old idea of the Nation of Islam; that was also a bad development. It took us away from the meaning of our religion. The real meaning of our religion is not nationhood; it's not men and women drilling, marching, training, and everybody working for the Nation. That's not Islam. That's not our religion. That was a bad development. It spoiled the life of the Muslim. We are not to work to build a nation, we are to work to build Islamic life. We want a suitable place for that life, so we have to influence and contribute to the good of a nation so that we will have better circumstances for that life. But don't depend on nationalism.

# Israel Is Nationalistic

Israel is nationalistic, and another evil on man. The devils would like that Muslims become nationalistic, so that you will join them in their wrongdoing, knowing that you can't compete with them in their wrongdoing, because they are the masters at it. They have too many centuries and too many thousands of years ahead of you working on and passing knowledge and information down to their children. They are too advanced in that evil for any newcomers to have any say so or competition whatsoever. You are no competition for them.

# Nationalism Is Encouraged By Oppressors

Nationalism is a thing that oppressors have encouraged. Who were the oppressors of Africa? The Europeans, not the Arabs.

Contrary to what they try to make us believe, our religion went into Africa and it spread mainly because of contact between individuals. An individual Muslim would impress an individual non-Muslim, because of the way he lived, and conducted himself. This is history, 'the way he lived and conducted himself impressed the natives of Africa so much, that the natives right away wanted to know 'what is your religion?' The natives inquired and became Muslims. They saw the Muslims in business, and the Muslims wanted to do business with the Africans, because they had resources.

# The Muslim Was Fair

The Africans learned that the Muslim was fair, honest and upright in business. This also persuaded them to accept the religion. So if the Africans were forced into our religion, where is the history of those wars? Who were the conquerors? When were the wars declared?

We have on the record when the wars were declared from the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, how he had to fight every battle. Why is it that we don’t have on record the battles that were fought in Africa to bring Africans under this religion? Simply because it wasn't done that way. You have to know this in order to defend your life if you are real Muslims.

# Europeans in Africa

The European people came into Africa and created a lot of false nations and powers. They divided Africa against itself by re-mapping it to satisfy their own schemes. They tried the same thing all over the world. But no place has been hurt by that more than Africa.

In ancient times, Egypt and Sudan were one nation or people. But the Europeans came and re-mapped it and now you have Egypt and Sudan. He made Nigeria, Niger and Libya. There was no such thing as a Libyan nation before the European went to Africa and made Libya. Here they have a United States, not a continent of a whole lot of nations. The Africans ought to take a lesson, at least from that reality. They are divided into many states on their continent. The power holders have a United States. They won't allow another nation to come up within their nation. They will not allow their United States to be broken up into other nations. The war between the states settled that question forever. "No", they said, "we're not going to have 13 states separate from the rest of the states, or any Southern states separate from the rest of the states. No, all of you have to belong to one united nation, society or government.

# Our Base Is Religion

We have to learn that our business as Muslims, preachers, teachers, promoters of the faith and religion in the Religious life is not politically, economically, or government based. Our base is religion, but as Muslims, we have a responsibility or obligation to all proper constructions in the life of man, or society. But we don't approach our obligation to government, politics or business from a viewpoint or a standpoint of business or government. We approach it from a standpoint of religion.

# A Comprehensive Religion

Our religion is a comprehensive religion, meaning that it has not left out anything that is needed or required in the life of man in society. But that doesn't mean that our religion has a political role. No! Our religion does not have a political role. But our religion has a requirement for any Muslims coming into the political role. Our religion is the discipliner for all involvement. If you involve yourself in business and politics, our religion is the discipliner but it is not that thing, per se.

This is what we have to understand. And if we really understand what our religion is and live it accordingly, we will progress. There is no way for us not to progress. Allah did this, not Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Adam Smith or some great philosopher. And in doing this, Allah guarantees us success. If we don't have success, there is something we are doing wrong.

# You Can Make Progress

If we are stagnant, held at hay or can't make gains, then something we are doing is wrong. If you know your religion and live it accordingly, you can be in Communist China and make progress, because you will impress the Communist bosses. They are going to look at you, admire you, and in time, respect you. And if you are in a situation where you cannot get respect, your influence is going to grow and grow and grow and eventually topple those people. Not by your direct action but just by the fact that you are living in accord with your religion, which is in accord with the best that's in accord with the best possible for all people. So they recognize it. Their nature recognizes it. Their good sense recognizes it, and they will accommodate your life in their society. There is no problem for Muslim life in America. We made the problems for ourselves, by giving the wrong image of this religion.

# The Individual Is The Key

National concern and the success of the individual. Why have we put it in this kind of language? Why the success of the individual? Simply because individual success is the key. We have made the mistake of trying to bring an organization forward. That's akin to nationalism. In trying to bring an organization forward, you put all of your work and interests into building an organization. That tendency will eventually take away the just treatment that should be coming to that individual. We have promoted the collective life in the wrong way. The way to promote the collective life is to promote the individual life in the collective body.

# We Made A Mistake

We — I mean myself and those I have been associated with — made the mistake of trying to promote the collective life and push an organization forward. That doesn't work for this religion. Allah doesn't want that. Allah doesn't want an organization exalted. He wants the Islamic life exalted.

In order to exalt Islamic life, we have to minimize the organizational authority and power. The more you maximize the organizational authority and power, the more you put at risk the individual life. We have made a mistake.

We should wake up today and see that we have made a mistake. We should go out from today and carry Qur'an and Sunnah to the people. We should put it into the individual's hands. Brothers and sisters both are responsible for this. We will meet together in the masjid to pray. There is no boss in the masjid; the boss is wherever you are. That's Allah, and the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

# Freedom From Oppressors

People with freedom from the oppressor or a power that can become an oppressor, and the beautiful life of Al-Islam, and the beautiful model of Muhammad, the Prophet, cannot be separated, if you understand it.

When good circumstances come for people, they love those who are in the same circumstances. They come together not because they are ordered to come together, but because they love to come together. They love to be with other sisters and brothers who share the same lives, and love the same circumstances. So don't worry about attendance going down. It will go up, when emphasis is put where it's supposed to be.

# Allah Is Merciful

Yes, we've made a mistake. But Allah is Merciful to us. He's helped us all these years. Praise be to Allah.

So we're stressing the success of the individual, because that's where Allah wants the attention. And we want attention on the individual. So let us give to the individual what Allah has given to us, and what the Prophet has shown us. Let us give it to the individual so he or she can have a successful life. No matter where the individual is or what the individual's circumstances are, if the individual has that kind of equipment, he or she is in good shape. In fact, the individual can't be in better shape.

I know what has accounted for my sense of security; it's my faith in this Holy Book, the Qur'an. It's my knowledge of it, and my constant reading of and acceptance of what it says. My effort to follow it to the best of my ability, the model that is in Muhammad, the Prophet, the last Messenger of God, also contributes to my sense of success and security.

# I Fear Only Allah

That's what makes me feel good about myself, the life I've chosen and my future. I don't have doubts about my future. I don't worry about tomorrow. I don't fear men, or governments. I fear Allah. And this is what has produced that sense of security in me. Since I know it has done it for me, I know it can do it for anybody else.

Many of you have experienced the same. So what better can we offer the people than that? I can't carry the Nation of Islam around with me. But I can carry this religion around with me. The faith is living in my heart and mind. It guides and disciplines my whole life. Praise be to Allah.

# How Should Society Be Secured?

How should society be secured? What is the best way to protect society? It can be protected by knowing the role of the individual, and then promoting the dignity of that role.-It is also protected when the individual knows that Allah intended that he or she have the same dignity that He intended for everybody else, and that the individual is the sacred vessel, with inherent rights that the individual possesses by virtue of his creation itself. The individual's human creation entitles him or her to certain sacred rights. This is Al-Islam.

Some of you might be thinking of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. This is Al-Islam. And so it would be very clear that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in his final address, which is also called the Last Sermon and Pilgrimage of the Prophet, said, "your brother's blood, life and property is sacred.''

# The Individual's Rights

The Prophet made it clear to us, that certain things are sacred for the individual in Al-Islam. Now if the Prophet said the individual's property is sacred that means that no authority can take away the right of property ownership from any believer. Every believer has the right to own property in a Muslim society.

His blood is sacred means that his social life is sacred. The blood is symbolic of the social life, with its passions, social order and everything that's of social interest.

We know it's not water that generates the population. It's blood, not water, that generates the population and increases the number in the family or town.

A Muslim must be given the freedom and the right to preside as an authority over his household. And if he wants to extend his social interests beyond his household and organize other activities, he has that freedom.

# The Individual's Social Life

We cannot cut off his social life or aspirations. If the individual wants to extend it to become a great social organizer and social influence in the city or the country, we cannot stop that individual except on Islamic grounds.

The individual has to be guilty of hurting some Islamic value or of violating some Islamic principle or law.

We cannot say you're becoming too big as a social influence. That's not good enough, because Allah has said his blood is sacred. Praise be to Allah. How wonderful the society would be if we lived according to those teachings.

Some of us are afraid to see people get rich. 'Oh, Muslims are not capitalists.' No, we are not capitalists. Capitalists have a bad name. But Allah has not given us anything in the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet to support this idea that it's bad to be rich. That's foolishness. Allah intended that some people be rich. Some people are more qualified for riches than others.

And if we hold back the growth of an individual, because we fear the individual getting too much wealth, we hold back also the good that will come because of his contributions to those who don't have — and will never have — that kind of ambition, aggressiveness and dedication. They are badly in need of men who are aggressive in that way and can bring them goods and open up ways of employment to them, etc.

# Leave The Individual's Freedom Alone

What does this have to do with the success of the individual?

Leave the individual's freedom alone. Respect the freedom of the individual and leave it alone. Only question the individual when he or she comes into conflict with an Islamic principle or value. Allah then calls the individual to question. Allah says, don't envy a people who seem to have a better situation than you. That holds you back. It hurts you. Allah tells us that He gives and is the boss of that.

He's the One who increases and decreases provisions. So don't look at the individual who has more than you with envy in your heart. Be happy that Allah has favored some with wealth, and others with other things of value.

Suppose we apply that same thing to moral goodness, and question the amount of moral goodness a person exercises in his or her life. Would you tell the individual that he or she is exercising too much moral goodness?

Would you tell the individual that he or she isn't supposed to have all of that, or that he or she is not supposed to be that good and to come down to our level? That wouldn't help us morally. We need some people to excel in moral life, so they will be an encouragement to others who just don't have it or a situation for it. It's the same for wealth.

# Again We Made A Mistake

So we made a mistake, and I hope we can turn back to the right way and come away from the idea of nationalism, pushing the organization and depriving individuals of their sacred rights.

Nationalism cannot grow, except upon the loss of individual rights. That's the only way it can grow. They once told us, "brother, you don't count. You haven't given up enough, yet, brother. You haven't given too much." You had given up everything. The brother says, "well, I thought I should pay my rent." "Well, Allah will take care of the rent, brother."

So we have not only knowledge and information, but experience. We've been through it. Well, thank Allah for the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. That's what saved us. Praise be to Allah.

Here is another thing that hurts oppressed people everywhere who have some old fat cat coming through their weaknesses to get their support for him. They support him because he plays to their weaknesses. It might be nationalism, tribal arrogance or hatred for another people, which is weakness too, that the oppressor comes in. That's why Allah says do not let the injury that you have suffered from another people cause you to deviate from doing justice.

Justice is always top priority. Do not allow your hatred for another people — because of their dealings with you — cause you to swerve from justice. And that's easy to do especially if you have a demagogue who will come among you and say: "Look how they treated you, look how you've been abused. Now if you support me, you ain't going to have that no more." So you support him and he gets fatter and fatter, while you get leaner and leaner.

# Temple Meeting

Once I was in a Temple meeting — it was around 1964 — that had a lot of Blackstone Rangers there that Wednesday night. At the conclusion of the meeting, the officials would always ask, who's ready to join the Nation and support its program. One of the gang leaders stood up and said, 'Well, I see Elijah got his, how I gon' get mine? How I gon' tell these boys here how I gon' get mine?'

I believe the enemy sent him in there, but I couldn't forget his question. It stayed with me. How is a common member going to get his? We thought we were going to get ours in the "sweet bye-and-bye," and that we had to sacrifice until the Nation was built and then get ours.

The best way to build a nation is to build individuals. That's the Islamic way. The best way to build a nation, I repeat, is to build individuals. Don't sacrifice individuals for the building of a nation. But build a nation through the individual. Give the individual his or her due respect. Bring the society to respect the individual's rights and to live in accord with that idea, then you have a situation for life to flourish.

The individual begins to be more productive. He or she will have a new sense of self-value or worth. The individual will have a circumstance or situation, with other members of society that encourages the individual to live out his or her great potential, so he or she will be happy to create something to give a service to his or her brother or sister. The individual wants to create a service for his or her brothers and sisters because of love for the people who accommodated the individual's rights. This is the beauty of a true democracy, that we never get a chance to see. We are constantly fighting taxes, and this and that, and we are not seeing the beauty of democracy.

# The Stride Of Nationalists

Hitler and many others made great strides, but their strides were short-lived. The Communist people made great strides, but their real Communist effort was short-lived. You who study know their purest Communist effort was during the time of war. They are no good in the time of peace.

The Communists can't make advances for pure Communism in times of peace. In times of peace, they start borrowing from democracy. If you've been studying them like I have, you know that they borrow from democracy.

Right now they have started giving more opportunity for small businesses in Communist Russia. They've opened up more opportunities and an individual can go into business for him or herself. So that's a little step towards free enterprise, isn't it?