# 1991

# IWDM Study Library

# Central Little Rock Arkansas

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed: As Salamu Alaikum, this means, peace be on you. We trust G-d for the results of all of our works. We praise Him, we believe in Him, and we seek His guidance. I will begin with a kind of thought on just what we've come out of, and I believe that what we've come out of, or coming out of, because for many of us I think we're not out of but we are coming out of it though I believe, is a time when we were influenced to think of our individual selves as the only concern that we should respect. In so doing that, giving in to that kind of influence too many of us lost the value of self, respect for self, and became very self-destructive.

This condition is still on to many of us in the big cities of the north and also on the west coast, East Coast, and I would think in perhaps to some degree in the south too, the tendency to be self-destructive. I'm not feeling too bad about that time, I think we had to come away from other concerns and be brought home to ourselves to be concerned about ourselves, to care about ourselves, to the extent perhaps of even ignoring other very important concerns, home life, respectful for family. I was watching a program on television CNN it was, and one of the news reporters addressed the decade of the 80s which just ended a few years or two years ago as a decade of the Me decade M-E the Me decade.

I feel that that decade was something that not only the masses of people slipped into, but something that our leaders slipped into too, slipped into also. I repeat that I'm not condemning it; I think it was something that had to happen because we had lost focus; we had lost focus on home life, and lost focus on the neighborhood pride, and national pride. There was no way other way to go I don't think except, but just to be wrapped up in ourselves. The religious establishment been hurt by that and many other of our fine institutions that care for the condition of human life, the direction of human life been hurt by that, but thank G-d there's always some institutions, some religious groups that stay in touch with the basic values, stay in touch with the strength of their religion, or the strength of their principles.

Because of that we don't lose a whole society while we are coming through periods of change that bring us to care about nothing but ourselves. Recently, a college student doing a paper asked, "Have we achieved what we set out to achieve?" This question is directed to us as Muslims. We haven't had a chance yet to reply to the student but we are preparing an answer replying to that student. Most likely this has been asked of others and of their efforts during this series of presentations, beginning with presentation given by Dick Gregory. I'm sure that the question of the thought at least has come up, have we achieved what we set out to achieve?

It becomes difficult to keep what we set out to achieve with the turn of events, piling up on yesterday's new problems. Yesterday, in the Agony's of our troubles, we all saw our efforts in the focus of the freedom movement. We didn't belong to the civil rights movement as Muslims, perhaps we belong more to the nationalist movement, but we all thought of ourselves as belonging to the freedom movement. The time given for this address, the question where do we go from here, will have reference to the freedom of movement. Now of the movement or the freedom movement, we ask, have we achieved what we set out to achieve?

Some set out to achieve freedom in the context of democratic non-racist law, or legal system for society. Freedom from all forms of oppression. The burden of being quote I put "black" in quotes because I have some differences with the use of certain language. I have a psychology of my own maybe a philosophy of my own, and that makes me dislike using certain charged words like black and white. The burden of being black in the south and in the north was more than a crisis for legislation, and a crisis for the legal system of the nation, and for the instruments of government. It was a crisis for the souls of the people on both sides of a color division dividing line.

It was a problem of crisis and the souls of the Victims and also the victimizers, those who were consciously victimizing, and those who were going along with it are unconscious of it on the white side, and also, for the black side victims. Victims who have suffered the crisis in the soul. right in the soul. I don't see us being able to correct the wrongs that is being done right now in this day and time, in the name of racism, or under the cover of racism, or race consciousness, without us addressing the state of the souls of African-Americans and European-Americans.

Freedom as we have sought in that context of freedom protected by the law- in my opinion finished unless something new develops to make it important again. I don't think we need to look anymore to legislature, to advance or to protect our freedoms unless something develops to present a problem, and that will happen, but the attention should be given now to the souls of the people. This might sound to you vague, what can we do about the souls of the people? We can do a lot about the souls of the people. When we start to search our own selves, to search our own thinking, to criticize our own thinking, to look for trouble in our own thinking, to look into our own thinking to see how much our own thinking is influenced by those things, those influences and those ideas that we ourselves are hurt by and reject.

Many times, we ourselves are affected by the thing that we are fighting, and the long period of race, troubles in America has brought about a poisoning of the souls of our people, African-American people. A poisoning of our souls that shouldn't be there because most of us when we are questioned we will stand firmly and say, we don't believe in racism, we don't believe in making a person's color or person's race, a reason for a different treatment. I'm sure that what is going on in us is something that we are not aware of or something that we don't have a grip on.

The invitation that I'm making now that I see as a solution is an invitation for us to muster the moral courage in the name of success security, and success for the life we've chosen. The life that you've chosen may be different from the life that I've chosen, but whatever life we choose for ourselves, we want to secure it. If we choose it, we must care about it. Whatever life we've chosen for ourselves, we should want to secure it, we should want to progress it, we should want to see healthy change and more progress for ourselves in that life.

I'm inviting us to not to think that we are in good shape internally. I believe that we are not in good shape internally. I'm speaking of the majority of us, and that is why we are having a lot of problems, this invitation is given to both the races. I'm not speaking just to my race, I'm inviting the other race too, to look internally, just look at yourself internally. This problem that I'm pointing too. One race can't correct it for another; the African-American people are not the ones to correct what is wrong in the souls of the European-Americans or "white" people.

Likewise, whites are not the ones to correct what is wrong in our souls. I'm not saying that we don't benefit each other, certainly, we benefit each other. I've gotten help from white people and I'm sure there are white people that I've had conversations with, and I'm sure they've gotten some help from me. We can benefit each other, but the real problem of race, race consciousness, that is negative, and that makes for trouble in our lives. I don't think that should be corrected or we should seek a correction by bringing our solutions to another race, or they bring their solutions to us, not only that, but us as individuals.

We cannot depend on our movements to correct that for us. We'll get help from our movements; we'll get help from our religions, from our religions, from our church, from our mosque, or whatever. We'll get help from our religious teachings. We’ll get help from the efforts in the society to address this problem of race consciousness, excessive race consciousness, or negative race consciousness in us, but the best help is going to come from ourselves when we ourselves begin to be suspicious of our own thinking that perhaps there's something wrong in my thinking.

When we start to do that I think we're going to get some real help. Where do we go from here? I'm going to in addition to that invitation. I'm going to address some attitudes that I think presents the real problem for us, and they're not problems only in African-American people but, in other people, and most of the people not only here in America, but I think in most of the world. We need to return or maybe we've never even been there, we need to have right attitude toward creation. I believe that we are seeing the great movement of universal concerns, global trends if you familiar with that expression, and the life of the world.

Starting with business, economics, government, but in every aspect of life, I believe that we are beginning to feel the effect of these global trends, these Universal trends, and it's bringing in a time these trends, this new global condition that is coming in. It's bringing about time that won't permit individuals, groups whether they're religious and not religious, political whatever, to survive, not to mention even prosper, but not even to survive without change of attitude. A change of attitude toward creation. We need a change of attitude toward work. A change of attitude toward work. We have been conditioned to think work is a burden, work is a drudgery, work is something that I have to do, work should be something we want to do, work should be something we love to do.

I know the problems of unemployment, not enough jobs, but maybe a lot of that problem the problem of not enough jobs, the problems not enough employment, the problem of not enough business maybe that problem itself is due to bad attitude, bad attitude in part, in big part, is due to bad attitudes toward creation, bad attitudes toward work, bad attitude toward property. Most of us who've come up in families that believe in G-d, to believe a scripture some Scripture, we have been taught most likely a respect for everything, well, we are the few. The great many have never been taught that respect, and especially, since the Me decade, since the time of the Me decade and even until now.

We have not been taught that kind of respect, and I believe that we have a special problem as African-Americans because the circumstances behind us that we have inherited the poison of the bad effects of did not encourage respect for creation, did not encourage respect for property, did not encourage respect for work. Many of us tend to think that we have been forced to work. We think back to the days of slavery, forced labor, and even in times after slavery, times of freedom. We thought of that labor as something we had to do.

Work something we had to do, and many of us dislike doing it because we thought we were being robbed, even though we were being paid that our work was more for the whites than it was for us.

More for the boss than it was for us, and this perhaps is true, but that's not really a problem for African-Americans and European-Americans. When you become acquainted with the world, you'll find that that's a problem of an attitude of a boss taught toward his worker. Now, the system that we have here affected negatively by race consciousness, a negative-poisonist race consciousness, contribute to the mistreatment of the employed person by the employer, but that's not the explanation. The explanation is that bosses will have wrong attitudes toward their workers.

That will go on, and go on, and go on. We don't expect to see a change there; bosses will always have their opinion of their workers, opinion of the person who's doing work for them. I think we have realized a lot of improvement in attitudes, the way we look at perception and attitudes, regarding classes, colors, et cetera. We have a lot of progress to make, but we have made a whole- a lot of progress. I think that if we can encourage each other to question our thinking and attitudes and favor those- that thinking, and those attitudes that favor us securing the life we choose, and progressing the life we choose we will get into a good situation.

We are getting to a very good situation. When I was a little boy in my house with my mother, I used to hear her. She'd wake up before we awake, she would wake us up. Most of the time, she would be the one to wake us up. She'd be in the kitchen cooking; maybe she'd be cleaning the vegetables, preparing the vegetables to cook them or something, or whatever. She wasn't frying eggs. Now, you might say well breakfast, she was preparing vegetables, yes, or maybe getting ready to bake some bread. We had a different kind of eating habit; we didn't eat eggs and bacon, and foods like that in the morning.

We would have wheat bread, homemade rolls. We would be given some fruit, and when she finished that, she started preparing the dinner. She would be cleaning the vegetables, the meats and whatever, preparing it for dinner. She got her everything out of the way earlier and doing the housework too. She'd be cleaning the house, and while she was working in the kitchen, or cleaning the living room or whatever, other bedroom, she would be singing most of the time. If you was raised in an environment like that where your mother sung as she worked, was singing while she's working, and she wasn't moaning, these weren't mournful songs, they were pleasant songs.

She'd be singing pleasant songs while she was working. The attitude that we have toward work means a lot. If we had the right understanding of work. In nature work is an exercise, your body needs that exercise. We'll go out and we'll spend hours jogging to exercise and develop the body, to have a fit body, but we won't spend the same length of time. We won't spend hours trying to find a way to be gainfully employed. They tell us there are no jobs, we give up. We need jobs, our men need jobs, you need to exercise. I did a very surprising thing; I told a large gathering of our people in Chicago, I said, "Look, we have no jobs, a serious problem."

I know it's a serious problem, but until something need be done about it, I said, "I have an answer for you." I said, "Go out and find some work, and if you can't find any work; someone's windows to wash, someone's walls to wash, furniture to clean, whatever you can do, house to be painted. If you can't find anything to do, then go to some brother, or sister, or neighbor, or friend that needs the house painted or the windows washed and ask them can you do it for them. Do it for nothing," and oh boy, the place the place got so silent.

I said, "Do it for nothing." I said, "They are working, you will be helping them, they can't get around to washing the windows, they're working, you're doing nothing, you idle." I said, "So you help them. In doing- in helping them, you will be getting some fulfillment. The work need will be in some measure fulfilled. You have helped them. You come back you don't have a paycheck, but you have something that your nature needs, you have something that your nature needed.

You've been given something, your nature feels good now, you can come back home." I said, "If you keep doing that, G-d will bless you to do that and get a paycheck." Well, I told them that. I met a brother just about two months ago, he reminded me of that talk I gave. He said, "I did it," and he told me that he's in business now, and he's very successful. He has his own business and he's very successful. The attitude toward work, the attitude toward property all has a lot to do with whether we are successful in life or a failure in life. Not to mention attitude toward our children.

Now, I believe that we've already been told that the biggest problem we have is the problem that's of youth, unemployed youth. The destruction that is in the life of our youth. Men, fathers, who have children, here is something very simple you can do, and I'm sure you feel good doing it. Let your children see you working. If you are employed that's excellent, that's so wonderful. Let your children see you working, ask the boss, can you bring your children to work one day so they can see you on your job working. If you're self-employed it's very easy, you don't have to ask anybody.

Take the young men, take your young boys, even take the girls with you sometime. Let them see you working; let them see what you do. They hear what you do, they hear you go to work, but with the life so crowded and as so much nonsense in the life of the atmosphere, and in the environment of the home, and in life of our children in our lives too, they don't give much thought to what you do, they are just told you go to work. Let them see you working. Sometimes in the home there, don't let someone else paint your house if you can afford to paint your own house so the children will see you and invite them to join you, let them help you paint the house.

Don't call in the carpenter all the time, if you can do it yourself try to do to yourself unless you got the money to afford it, then help him. He needs job too; he needs to keep his keep his business. So, do call him if you got the money to do that, but if you don't let your children see you do the work. Let them see you put in a new toilet. Let them see you fix the plumbing. You say, "Well, I can't do that." Get you some plumbing book instructions and try it, let them see you try it. They'll think more of your trying and failing and calling plumber later, than they will of looking at you and seeing you do nothing, but eating come in the house fussing.

Someone says you work, but all they see is someone coming in the house eating and fussing. This is very important that we let our children see us work. I'm not addressing any new thing that I have imagined. I'm going back to the foundation of civilization. Civilization didn't come up from nowhere; civilization came up from healthy productive disciplines that were already in what we call primitive society. Let us go back to the foundation of civilization, the natural healthy disciplines, and let us have a healthy relationship with our children, with our wives, and with our children, with our neighbors.

Let us have a natural healthy relationship with them, and that will mean a lot for changing the bad state of society that we have on us today. I don't give up in the face of the great numbers of unemployed youth that we have. I don't give up, I don't turn to government first, I turned to myself first. I try to see can I give some employment to my children or my friend. He's in the bad situation, no job, he has children. I go and I talk to my friend, and I try to give him some advice, I try to give him some help because much that is missing in our life that we want in our life, it can be had if we will only question the way we think.

You're not going to get much help from the entertainment world; you're not going to get much help from your friends in the streets because all the society are burdened by the same problem. That society, the members of the society are burdened by the same problem. Rarely will you get the kind of help you need from a member of the society or even from the institutions that we have. Rarely will you get the kind of help that we need to address a respect, a need for respect in us for nature, respect in us for creation, respect in us for work, respect in us for a property.

I'm going to conclude this talk by sharing with you a perception that I think is not limited to Muslims or Muslim religion, but I think that all the great religions have this same perception. Might be confused and hard to discover in the texts of the teachings of these great religions, but it's there, and that is this. G-d is creator for the people of faith, G-d is creator. The creation then is the work of G-d. Christians, Muslims, Jews, we all know how the prophets have studied the creation and marveled over the wonders of creation, and it has been the wonders of creation that have made them appreciate, the unknown, unseen Lord, or creator of all that and get closer to him or try to get closer to him.

We all know about that Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The same creator that gave us our scriptures, created this universe. The laws of this universe, the universal laws, the natural laws of matter are the creation of that one Lord and Creator. Shouldn't that make us respect if we really believe in the G-d creator? Shouldn't that make us respect the creation; make us have a healthy appreciation for creation, for the natural environment, for the raw world of nature. I would go further to say, G-d has not only given us the revelation, and the secret wisdom, G-d has given us science.

Science is also the gift of G-d. Man cannot get true science without a respect for the true nature and workings of G-d's creation. He cannot get it. Where should we go from here? We should go to doing more soul-searching, question our thinking, in light of what should be done about the evils in our world that are troubling us most, unhealthy race consciousness, disrespect for family life, criminal behavior, destructive behavior. We should question our own thinking and see maybe if the way I think as a race-minded person might have something to do with.

I might be contributing to these problems, keeping these problems in existence. We should think maybe the way I treat creation, the way I treat property may have something to do with it. The way I treat my own self may have to have something to do with it. Health is a very serious thing. These things are all tied together when it comes to problems in the world, unemployment, ignorance, bad health, disrespect for valuable things. All of those things go together. You were turned down at an employment office, or there's no job in your neighborhood, it may have something to do with one of these serious concerns that we need to respect may have something to do with it.

You won't be turned down only because you don't have the ability to do a job. Many times an employer will welcome the opportunity to train you for the job, to wait until you can grow into the job, but if you're half-crazy because you're taking drugs, if you are not physically healthy, then what he wants with you? If you have a criminal record, he's afraid to hire you. Let us not blame everything on the system directly. Let us search our own selves and I'm not excusing the system, I'm not excusing the government. No, this address is not to excuse anybody or any institution that should accept responsibility.

All of our institutions should accept responsibility, and all of our religions should accept responsibility all of us should accept responsibility, but I'm pointing to an area that I think is very critical, and that is our own thinking, our own attitudes, our own perceptions. Thank you very much. Peace be on you.

Host: Thank you very much. We will take a short break and bring a panel to talk about where do we go from here and address some of the issues that Imam Mohammed talked about? We'll be back in just one moment. Welcome back to our special presentation entitled, "Where do we go from here." Answering that question as Imam Mohammed stated, we have to ask, have we achieved what we set out to achieve? With me to discuss that are, Patricia Gray- Pat gray, with the NAACP, she's the Little Rock boards. Well, she's with the State Board of Higher Education with NAACP.

I also, have Hayward Battle, an attorney, a minister, and also the chair of the board of directors for the Urban League. Of course, we have Imam Warith Deen Mohammed. Thank all of you for joining us here.

I think we have to address the question, have we achieved what we set out to achieve? We have to ask, what exactly did we set out to achieve in the civil rights movement, and even prior to that when the Urban League and the NAACP were formed, and I'll address that question first to Mr. Battle, and what exactly did we set out to achieve?

Mr. Battle: I think Imam Warith Deen Mohammed stated it very succinctly, and that is that yesterday, we were devoted to the freedom movement. We sought to be free from oppression, we sought to have the freedom to go to any establishment, eating establishment or otherwise, that we had the money to go to. I think now, I don't think that we've really obtained all of the goals that we set for ourselves, because what good does it do an individual to have a right to go to, an eating establishment, but you don't have a job and the wherewithal to pay for that meal, or to pay for suit or clothing?

Now, I think the thing has shifted to more of an economic struggle, and that is one of the reasons that the Urban League has established as its goal parity by the year 2000. When you look at the numbers any way you slice it, black income versus white income that gap is widening, steadily, the unemployment rate. When you compare it among black males and white males, again, it's widening even the unemployment rate among our teenagers. We need parity, we need jobs, we need to be paid for an equal day's work, we need to be paid adequately for it.

We need parity in the economic spectrum. We need parity in education we thought that if we integrated the schools that would be enough that our children would obtain a good education, but now that they're desegregated, we find that we're still having gaps in our test scores. Obviously, just sitting next to a white kid is not enough. There are some things that we have to do, but I like what he said about examining ourselves because we need to look inward to many of the problems that we face today. When you look at how well our children are doing in school, I think that the family we need to take responsibility for educating our own children.

We need to look at even the crime rate in our neighborhoods. Most of them particularly here in the state of Arkansas Black's comprise approximately 16% of our state's population, but we make up about 50% of our state's prison population. These are some very real concerns and most of those crimes are black-on-black crimes. There are some things that we need to do for ourselves, we need to get a healthy respect for work, as he said. We need to get a healthy respect for property. We need to have a healthy respect for creation. No, we've not achieve the goals that we've set for ourselves, but I think that the landmark is laded. We have a direction that we need to go toward.

Host: Miss Gray being with the NAACP, where do you think we should be headed, and do you think and your organization think that we have achieved what we set out to achieve?

Miss Gray: Well, first of all, the NAACP mission from the very beginning has been to infuse the minority population as it is called, but it is not, but to infuse African-Americans with a sense of realism about the United States. And in fact, the main goals of the NAACP have been to bring an equality, and education equality, and housing equality in all aspects of the community. The important thing that the NAACP has done over the last 80 some years is to bring civil rights to the forefront by cooperation with other community groups. I think the NAACP has always been recognized as a coalition builder.

In other words, we've never stood out there on the frontlines by ourselves. We've always cooperated with other community groups and to do this, what we have commonly done is to set certain focus areas. The main one at this time I think for us is probably in the area of education because one of the things that we must do with young people is to make sure that they have the self-esteem, not only the education, but the self-esteem to want to progress and to want to do more. I think that the NAACP's mission from the beginning has been to bring about equality, but at this point, we are more concerned I think about education and bringing about that self-esteem because that's the only way we will feel equal.

Host: Being that, we can all agree that we have not achieved Imam Mohammed, why do you think that with the Urban League, with the NAACP all of the movements that we've had, why do you think we still have not achieved what we set out to do in the beginning?

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed: Because we've been taken off track by happenings in the society, the turn of events, political turns of events, turns of events in the civil rights movement, caused by problems in society. Changes of party leadership from in the White House Democrats and Republicans, changes like that sometimes takes us off track, problems of violence in the streets, black on black crime is- was just mentioned. All these developments that add problems to problems, they take us-- they take out our focus away from the original focus.

The original focus was to the honorable people, the slaves they had a desire to be free and honorable, free and noble people. We were raised in our homes most of us to be honorable, to be honest, to be honorable, to have self-respect, to respect others. But these developments take us off course that take the focus away from that concern, but I think the main reason why that these organizations haven't achieved what they set out to achieve is owing to the tendency on the part of man is natural, that's when something happens excitable in his life or exciting, then his attention is drawn to that.

If we don't have someone watching, I think all scriptures say you must have a watch. Keep the watch on folks. If we don't have Watchmen that's what they are, they are watchmen. These institutions are watchmen for us, but the problem, the nature of society, and in these big cities modern cities is of such that we all have to work together, and the biggest failure has been right at home. I'm not blaming the church, or the mosque, or synagogues. I don't think the Jews have too much of a problem, maybe because their numbers are not too obvious, but for Christians and Muslims I know we do have a problem in our home life is not what we want it to be.

I don't think we can blame our religion for that; we have to bring something else for it. We blame the order of society for it. When children are encouraged to listen to TV, to watch TV, and spend time this show and the shows are made so attractive to them, and the children are encouraged to have fun, just have fun, listen to music and have fun. Those influences are too strong for the parents; they're too strong for any one of us, or any combination of us. Those influences are just too strong. I think we have to look at many reasons for it. One reason is that I think the main reason is that some events just take place in turn of events, and there's too much for us, they overwhelm us.

The tension is taken away from purpose. Another problem is that we don't have responsible people in these big industries. They let music destroy the life of people, it shouldn't happen. Then we have to fight for generations almost, to get to clean up the music industry, but this is our life this is natural I rather we'll live in the wilderness than to live in prison somewhere else.

Host: Let's take a look at some of the things that may be keeping us from achieving not to lay blame anywhere, but to look at the circumstances that we're in so that we can best figure out how we're going to come about solving our problems. On our first session, we talked about racism is it still alive NAACP?

Miss Gray: I think it's very much alive. I think we see it every day all we have to do is turn on the television, read the newspaper. I think that the current administration has shown us new elements of racism, much of the racism is showing up in court decisions. It's showing up in court appointments on the federal level. Racism is very much alive, and while we often look to politics as the only place that we might be able to distinguish racism, it's-- we see it every day in Little Rock. I mean in Arkansas we see it across the state. We see it in many cases in the way say that money missing it, U of Fayetteville is treated versus money missing at UAPB. Racism is everywhere.

Mr. Battle: Fine to agree. Absolutely, it's very much alive and well. Seemingly we'll be doing all our lifetime. Particularly within the past eight, 10, 12, years of the Reagan administration, we've seen the recurrence of a resurgence of racism. You've seen the Ku Klux Klan come out and be more visible, and even in the here in the state of Arkansas they're building a national headquarters for that particular organization. It's almost fashionable now. There was a time when particularly in the '60s and the '70s it was not, but people are comfortable with their racism today.

I think in that from that aspect, we're regressing rather than banishing it from our society. We're seeing a resurgence of it even all our college campuses and that's-- those are supposed to be places of enlightenment. Certainly, it gives pause for great concern on our part.

Host: Having done the first show and taking a look at racism, I had some concerns that racism goes both ways. There are African-American racists. Interviewing David Duke in Juana Ridge, said that he's the founder of the NAAWP the National Association for the Advancement of white people, and it's no different from the in NAACP. If he is racist so is that organization, can we see are there black racism Imam Mohammed?

Imam Mohammed: Yes, I have experienced life in my home as a child, and though I give great credit to the intentions and sincerity of the Elijah Mohammed. The late leader my father who passed in 1975 of February of 1975. I have to be truthful with you. The kinds of teaching that I was given as a child, in my home was very much like the kinds of teachings that we know that it's given to children who were children of Ku Klux Klansmen members, very similar, in fact, maybe in some respects it might have been even more dangerous. The reason why we don't feel the effects of that kind of racism the black name racism that was in our teachings, and it was made sacred and holy.

I believe for many of these Klan people their racism is made sacred and holy, by their religion, their interpretation of their religion. I know that there is black racism, and the influence of G-d Elijah Mohammed's teaching on race has gone far and wide even into parts of Africa. There was big trouble in Trinidad because of a person who had been influenced by that kind of thinking. Again, I don't want us to think that the Honorable Elijah Mohammed's teachings has had more negative effect than positives effect because his teachings have had much more positive effect on life of African black people or African American people in the other people of the African American of the African family in other parts of the world.

This teaching has much more positive effect than negative effect, but we have to admit that there is a serious racism or racist teaching, and that makes racists of people that have weaknesses for it. Now, if you don't have a weakness for it, you come out like I did. I came out pretty good, but if you may-- if you got a minute to give me, another minute to give me, I think there is something that we observe and I'm sure many of us observe.

I'm sure Mr. Haywood Battle, and I'm sure Pat Gray too have observed this, that whites they sometimes they like for you to think that their treatment is racist treatment, and they're nothing but just a low-life scum booger. They would like to hide their ugliness under something they think is more acceptable, racism.

Host: What effect do you all think that if any affect at all the newfound African-Americanism, if I may say, is having on our kids and on society as a whole. We are seeing many more whites coming out for their race, and we're seeing blacks coming out for their race? Do you think possibly the teachings of your father and of Malcolm X who believe by any means necessary that the kids that are growing up today are beginning to really believe by any means necessary, and that they are harboring that racism that may not be good for the community, for people as a whole?

Imam Mohammed: Yes, to some degree that's happening, but most of the youngsters that I see that influenced by Malcolm's raw very bitter cutting words. I don't think they're just influenced by that language alone. I find that most of them are also influenced by the positive and sobering kinds of things that Dr. King said, that I'm saying and may of others Mr. Battle is saying. They're not they're not just one track minded I don't think, most these youngsters that I'm meeting them. Most of these youngsters that are following influenced by Malcolm X"s, I would say militant very militant and sharp cutting language, they're thinking.

I think they are thinking more than the kids that are just listening to the music and carrying the boxes upside their ears, I do believe that. There is a danger, what I'm saying there is a danger, but I think that it is not a danger that we have to worry that much about. I think maybe a lot of good future leaders are going to come out of this new development that we see and in the youth. A lot of them coming from the streets and then they accept in a more disciplined life. They're trying to be dignified. I think we ought to have patience with that, watch it, but they have patience with it and maybe a lot of good may come out of it.

Host: You speak about, in your book strategic withdrawal, and what we see is we have African-Americans wanting schools for African-American boys, and we have African Americans wanting to separate to have their own, to find their own identity. Talk to us for a moment about the strategic withdrawal that you speak about, and what's the difference in that and segregation or us pulling back from the community to do what we need to do.

Imam Mohammed: Yes. In battle strategy, just because the leader of the army says, "Let's retreat," it doesn't mean he's a coward all the time and doesn't mean he's being defeated all the time. He may be retreating to a better position from which he can strike. I think that we ought to look at some of the positions that we've had so long, and how we've been treating problems so long, and maybe good battle strategy may suggest to us indicate to us that we need to retreat from that kind of posture, retreat from that position, retreat from that focus on the problem and find one from which we can get better results, that's the idea there.

Host: Out of all the problems that we're having as African-Americans, I think the main thing that keeps coming up and what the real problem is economics, is that the real problem Mr. Battle?

Mr. Battle: Well, that's certainly one of the problems but another that Imam just struck home all and that is this idea of respect and respect for ourselves, respect for our families, respect for our communities. It doesn't do one very much good to have monies if he doesn't respect himself, doesn't respect his heritage. A man with money will simply go out and sell his heritage to obtain more if money is going to be his sole motivation, but we have to get back to a healthy respective of oneself, our values, our heritage, our family, our property.

A respect for creation, and then when we get those kinds of foundations in place, then certainly we can give attention to the economic strata, but if a man that doesn't have that healthy respect, if he has money he'll just spend more money on the wrong kinds of things, more money on drugs, more money on alcohol, more money abusing himself. We need to get some basics in place, and then we can come to terms with the economic problems that stand before us.

Host: Talking about basics and awareness of self, self-respect, what is it going to take for us to get that individually, is it religion?

Mr. Battle: I think that's the start. People fail to realize that the civil rights movement in a very real sense was a spiritual movement. It was good against evil; it is no coincidence that the leaders of that movement happened to be spiritual men. They sought to fight hatred with a spiritual force of love, and in the very real sense men of the evils that we're facing today is spiritual warfare, and we're going to have to fight it with spiritual weapons, that's the way you win spiritual wars, with spiritual weapons. I think that the churches and the mosque. I think that they play a very key role in addressing many of the problems that we face as a people.

Host: Imam if you were here to talk religion if you were here to give a message of religion to people, what would you say?

Imam Mohammed: Take the best of your religion. Just like it should take intelligence dictate, we should take the best of anything. Take the best of your religion. Each man and his religion should take the best of his religion.

Host: What we're going to do now is take questions from the audience. If you have any questions, please come to the microphone and come to the side of the stage, and Martha will let you come up to the microphone. Any questions that you may have for any of our guests, you're welcome to come up and ask those questions at this time. We're talking-set out to achieve, and if you have questions you may ask them now. This is Magee.

Host: I think it may need to be switched up. Yes, turn on your mic. There you go.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Host: Thank you.

Speaker 2: I'm going to direct my statement may be a question, a statement, that you made earlier because I'm really trying to examine myself and where I'm going from here because I would like to know where do we go from here. You mentioned getting the self-esteem so we feel equal. I have a real problem, and I'm wondering if that's a problem with just more than myself, or us as the people. Feeling like we have to do something to feel equal. I feel like G-d created me like He did everybody, and I already feel equal. I'm wondering if that's where we spend a lot of our time, wasting our time.

Miss Gray 3: Let me just say this Ms. Magee. I understand what your problem is, let me explain what I meant by that. What I mean is, unfortunately, a lot of young black children do not feel equal. Why don't they? I think they don't feel equal because unfortunately, a lot of the media that they see whether it is through the advertisements on TV, whether it's through the advertisements in the print media, when you see something good, or when you see something that's supposed to even for young people teenagers, if you see something that's allegedly sexy.

A lot of times is going to be with long blonde hair and blue eyes. I'm not saying that this affects all young black people. I'll tell you one thing one of the reasons that I think the African-American movement as far as teaching young people more about their heritage taking it back to Africa and even just taking it all the way in the United States and in examine everything that has happened good in this country, that does help a lot of the young kids because, unfortunately, what I've seen a lot of kids don't have the right self-esteem.

When they look at a black doll and they look at a white doll and they choose a white doll, to me, that's not good self-esteem.

Speaker 2: I agree with you totally. I guess what and I appreciate Imam Mohammed for making the statement concerning attitudes because I think that directly let us as adults know we have a responsibility for our children to feel equal not because you forget the media, but because G-d created us until we teach our children that if we feel that we ourselves. I think we're going to still have some of the problems. Like I said--

Miss Gray: All parents don't teach their children, that's part of the problem. A lot of kids are raised by the TV. A lot of young working mothers are out, they have no one to watch kids, they don't have time to teach kids. The kids don't go to the church or to the mosque, and therefore, they formulate their ideas about themselves based on what they consistently see.

Speaker 2: Then we could probably say that one thing we could do as we leave here and one direction would be for us as adults to all understand and believe that we are created equal by G-d. If we can just get that into our children, we can solve a lot of the problem.

Miss Gray: I agree.

Speaker 2: Imam Mohammed I want to also thank you for making reference to the young people today, and the positive you're about the first person I've heard in a long time say something positive about today's young people. I know that there is a way for them. I know that we, as adults have to take the time and the responsibility to make sure that they see the way. I appreciate that.

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed: Thank you, sis Magee.

Host: Have we not always given our children the message that they're created equal?

Audience: No.

Host: Not always?

Pat Gray: I feel that many of us have had that understanding early on, but unfortunately, it is not going to cross the board. Another thing that I think can contribute to this is the fact that with integration throughout the years. We have not had as many black teachers. In Arkansas last year, there are only 33% of the black teachers taking the NTE pass. That's not good. What happens is that testing procedure also eliminates more black teachers getting into the pool. What happens is that when kids are in classrooms where there are only two blacks or there could be 20 blacks, but a white teacher who may not care then they're not hugged when they do well, they are not rewarded, they're not giving those self-esteem building type of responses that they need.

I think at one time, maybe when we went to school it was that way, but I don't think it always is that way now.

Host: Coming from an education point of view is separation what's needed to get back to our people teaching our children? Or do we need to continue and change put Afro centric curriculum into the public school districts?

Miss Gray: I think and I'm speaking for myself at this point because I can't tell you what the whole body of the NAACP feels. I can tell you this that I think that here in Little Rock we're very concerned that the Afro centric teachings are included and infused into the school curriculum. At this point in time, it is not that way. I think that is very important. Personally, I do not feel that being totally separate accomplishes anything either because young people have to learn what they're working with, who they're working with. That is the only way in my mind I think we need more supplements.

I think we need more things after school on weekends, more groups doing what groups are doing now that the many good things that the group dignity is doing. They're bringing a lot of self-esteem back into kids. It's a supplement to education.

Host: What are we going to do the Urban League of Arkansas and the NAACP of Arkansas to make sure that those supplements are in the classrooms? What can we do to make sure that our kids are getting that Afro centric curriculum? Mr. Battle?

Mr. Battle: Well, one of the things that we're concerned about is the suspension rate particularly with Little Rock School District. It's not going to do any good to have your kids have an Afro centric curriculum if the kids are being sent home and along the race, they're not going to be there to learn anything. We're concerned about that because just the school district may be 67% black. When you look at the suspension rates, I'm talking about sending them home, they're out of schools. There is to the tune of 95% and that's far too high.

We're going to have to address that. I'm concerned about having them available in class to have access to the education that's being provided. I think that we are going to have to become great, better involved in our school systems not only from the PTA standpoint, but going down there to the Little Rock School Board. Demanding that these curriculums be expanded because if you don't take an interest, you'll get what they want to give you, and that will too often will not suffice.

Host: Can you have a question?

Male Participant 1: Imam Mohammed, attorney Battles, Miss Gray, moderator. I greet you all with the greetings of peace, As salamu alaikum. I'd like to address this question to Imam Mohammed in specific, but in general, to all of you. Imam Mohammed brought up a very interesting and true point when he was talking about examining our own thinking, and then reprogramming that. There is a lot of material out and it seems to be the newest thing that people are pushing about reprogramming the mind, and recognizing how to get the greatest strengths and benefits of that.

On a professional level, you'll find educators going out to IBM and Xerox, trying to get people to reprogram their mind, to think past limitations. Sometimes I think as we as a people do think in limited terms because we've been programmed like that. Is it possible for Imam Mohammed and this board to give us some guiding principles and concepts? I know as Muslims, we have the Quran and the five pillars of faith. We have Iman, we have Salat, Zakat, Sawm, and Hajj, which are belief in G-d. Prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage.

I know all religions have these guiding principles, but I'd like to hear from the panel, what principles we could use to help reprogram, not only our minds but the coming generation so that we could be stronger to meet this challenge that is presented to us today?

Imam Mohammed: Yes. I see two developments. One is the world is becoming just one big living room, one room, when we are talking one world that's what I'm talking about. One world where people have to live together and they have to deal with the problems of this one family, the human family, but with that is another development. That development is that every member of the family is the group's more responsibility is being because of that is being placed on every group, every unit of society. Every group and every individual person, more responsibilities is going to come on us.

I think the one who is in an ideology whether it’s religious or not, one whose life is given to the structure of an ideology whether it’s religion or not is better off than people who are just living in the winds of influences. That's the best condition. You mentioned religion. People are serious about their religion, and first of all, are honorable people. If you're not honest and honorable, you can be in religion; you'll be a worse enemy to society than the person not in religion. The next thing I want to say is that private life is precious, private life is precious. Private life begins with the most private thing, that's man and wife. Then, the next circle of privacy is your family. That privacy extend to your neighbors, next door neighbor, your race.

I think we should have a bit of respect for privacy. I hope I didn't say too much.

Host: Would you like to address that Mr. Battle?

Mr. Battle: I think he's right on point absolutely, particularly from the standpoint of the family. That's one of the things that we as a race, that's where our problems start with a breakdown of the families. How can a kid, how can you expect him to respect authority figures when he's cussing his mama out. It starts at home. We need to have a greater respect for the family, for mom, and dad, and being honorable. When we came along, we said, "Yes, sir. No, ma'am", and we're very respectful to any elder, not just your parents, to any elder. It seems to me that we can learn a lot from that, getting back to the basics of respecting each other as individuals. As men and women of faith.

I would like to see that in our lifetime. I think if we can get back to those kinds of bases so many of the other problems that we have will become a minuscule if we can overcome those kinds of problems.

Male Participant 1: If I understand correctly, the collective wisdom of the panel is that we should start reprogramming to respect family life?

Mr. Battle: Absolutely

Imam Mohammed: And privacy.

Male Participant 1: Privacy. Thank you very much.

Miss Gray: I want to add one thing. It's an African proverb that says it takes a whole village to raise a child. When you consider that, then your family life becomes an example and everything you do works toward the raising of young people.

Male Participant 1: Thank you very much.

Host: Thank you very much.

Imam Mohammed: If I may,

Host: Yes.

Imam Mohammed: I don't think the seriousness of my concern for privacy is reaching you.

Host: Okay, elaborate it then.

Imam Mohammed: I'll give an example. I don't think it's racist to prefer that I raised my children up around members of my own race, or in a neighborhood that's predominantly made up of the members of my own race. I don't think that's racist. I don't think it's racist to prefer that my young child goes into a classroom that's predominantly of my own race. Again, I don't think its racist the hold my daughter back when she's invited to speak to a white stranger and tell her a little caution daughter. I don't think that's racist. Thank you very much.

Host: I guess I have to question that for just a moment, would you think it's racist if a white held his daughter back from speaking to a black?

Imam Mohammed: I would tend to think so because that's the way he's been behaving.

Host: Well, when we behave in the same way, are we not then racist?

Imam Mohammed: No, no, no. We have to be established for that kind of thinking first.

Host: I have to come to a better understanding of that one. You have a question?

Darlene Walley: Yes. My name is Darlene Walley, and I'm from gist house which is a treatment recovery rehabilitation behavior modification program. My question is, what is being done in the communities to give back children's self-esteem to them from the peer pressure that they're experiencing, from all the drug dealers, and drug pushers. Because young teenagers they want what they see another half. That makes their low self-esteem there because of the dysfunctional homes. What is being done in the communities? That's my question.

Miss Gray: Okay. I think that there are several things being done, a lot of it is being done through churches. A lot of it is being done through different business concerns as far as programs that businesses have out in the community to help young people, and try to focus young people in a direction that gives them more focus on maybe what their quality of life can be.

I think also, there are a lot of people who are doing things in other groups outside of businesses and churches. I know Mrs. Magee who was up here earlier. I know that she has programs. I know Southwestern Bell, AP & L, a lot of the major companies have programs in town. I know that most churches have youth groups. I think that that is one of the one of the places that it begins.

Female Participant 2: Thank you.

Host: Thank you very much. When we take a look at all of the things that are going wrong, and why we have not achieved, I think we have to look at what we're going to do to achieve. Yes, we need to look within ourselves, but how do we actually get to that point? It's hard to think everybody has to find the answer within themselves, but how does one get to that point?

Imam Mohammed: My son, recently, well, I guess a month ago, we hadn't been able to communicate with this son Sadi favorite son for years, since he was about maybe 12 years old. He's 19 now. I decided to spend more time with him. I'm spending time with him, and taking abuses, and not calling the police. One day, he came to me and he confronted me, and he started in on me, and I've had the patience of way listening. He said, "Daddy, wait a minute", he said, "Don't answer that I'm only rebelling. Now, I don't know if that's the answer for everybody, but sometimes we just have to be willing to make great sacrifices. We beat these children up; we beat them up by not giving them the right guidance. We've beaten them up by not coming they're coming to their rescue when they needed us. We've been beating them up. Sometimes if we have patience and show that you love him, and let them beat you up. Let us get beat up let them gone, get some frustration out on us, and just suffer with them, and love them. Let them know you're there, but be strong. Be strong morally.

Be strong but stay there, be willing to take some abuse and maybe many of these children do the same thing Sadi did will see their own troubles. It's not always about telling somebody you need to question your own thinking. Sometimes we just need to give them a situation; they need a situation for change.

Host: You have a question?

Male Participant 2: As salam-Alaikum.

Imam Mohammed: Wa Alaikum Asalam.

Brother Kareem: To Imam Mohammed, to the board. I'd like to address the question to Imam Mohammed. My name is brother Kareem. I have been experiencing a lot of activity with the community with dignity, and this penitentiary as a man down to rice per unit. I have seen a lot of times when we approach a lot of people that have been a lack of faith. I remember a time when you had said mentioned once that a problem with a lot of families, and in the community, and the system was the lack of faith. Do you think that that problem has been a major addition to our development of lack of understanding as parents, and the lack of understanding as adults?

Imam Mohammed: Yes, sir. Yes, definitely. You can still be conscious of yourself as a person of faith, but that doesn't mean that you're really a person of faith. We can be conscious of ourselves as Muslim or whatever, that doesn’t mean necessarily that we are really a person of faith? To be a person of faith, you have to really believe in G-d. You have to really believe in something. I think there has been just bold, outright attacks upon every sacred thing that people believe in made by this culture that we see as a straying and error making culture, some of the American culture. The cultural life of the American people has allowed this that every sacred thing be disrespected publicly before our little children and everybody. That has damaged, I think, faith in us. It's a big problem. We're not going to solve these problems with one solution or by approaching them from one direction. We have to have many directions and many solutions. This is not that simple.

Brother Kareem: Thank you very much.

Host: Thank you. When we talk about culture, how much of what we as African-Americans do is our culture? How much of it is European? What difference does that make? What is the effect of having and doing things from a Eurocentric point of view than doing them from an African point of view?

Imam Mohammed: Yes. I'm not one to look to race and the past life of race for cultural life and cultural disciplines. I don't belong to that group; let me make that clear right now. I don't want to go back to the fetus and be the fetus. I like being out of the womb and free. I don't want to back up in the road of the evolution. I think many who go back to primitive African culture, backing up in the road of evolution. The best place for cultural foundation is your home. Nature puts in the mother, the good treatment, the good spirit, the good attitude, for bringing about the home culture.

If we concentrate on that home culture, I think we'll have naturally forming an African-American culture in time.

Host: Okay. Want to come on up with your question. If going back to primitive Africa is now where it is, does it matter if we're called black or African-American?

Imam Mohammed: Yes, I think so. I don't like the color-charged words like black and white. I don't like that language. I prefer African-American. I believe that on the whole, you can find more people of the European family in America without the problem of color consciousness, then you can find among us. I'll tell you why I believe that. Because really when they see each other and identify each other. It is only when they see us that they are right. They are Irish, or they Italian or they are something else. They are Jews but only when they see us they are white.

Host: You have a question?

Female Participant 3: I just want to say that I'm honored to be in you guys’ presence, and I try to be a symbol of what was expected from long ago. I was there doing the marches one of the babies at that time. I've come a long ways and my mother has passed which she passed long ago. I've made my life, I've tried to be strong and to be what you guys wanted all these years. Right now, I've been working a long time, but that recently going into the work field. I feel that the work field takes me as a threat. I'm a threat. Education is still necessary, and I'm just keep saying what you're saying because there's somebody listening.

I'm not the only one, I was one of the babies that were there doing all the segregation and the marches. I've listened to you dad different states and here in Arkansas too. Just keep on saying what you're saying because somebody else is listening to. I need a degree.

Host: Thank you.

Imam Mohammed: Appreciate the encouragement

Host: Thank you, thank you.

Host: You have a question?

Dolores Bryant: Hi. I'm Dolores Bryant. I think as I've listened to each of you, I think the consensus of the panel has been that what we need to go from here is to somehow, someway, bring our young people back to respect for the family, respect for work, respect for our race, and et cetera. My question now is to NAACP and to Urban League, what do you think your role and responsibility is to help us bring our young adults, young children, what have you into that respect? What can you do? Then, the last question is, do you think that the government has a role to the African-American people in that respect?

Miss Gray: Yes. When you say you, do you mean as an organization?

Dolores: Yes.

Miss Gray Okay. Let me answer the last question first. I do think that the government has a role. The government had a role in 1897 when it established segregation as the law of the land in education. The government has a role now in making sure that all Americans have equal access to grants, to loan programs, to specific types of education, to housing. I think the government has a role to make sure that all ethnic groups have equal access to everything that America offers. I think the government continues to have a role. What can the organizations do? Number one, I will say on behalf of the NAACP, I think the organizations as do many of the community organizations.

We need more people in those organizations, dues-paying members so that we can support the programs that the organizations carry on. When people ask NAACP to come out and help them because they feel that they've been mistreated on the job, mistreated in buying a house, mistreated in the school. That is one of the ways that the NAACP can rise to the occasion and help by showing young people and their parents that we're there for them. Also, we need the support of those very people asking.

Mr. Battle: I agree with that. In addition to that, some of the things that we've done any number of our board levels go out to schools and talk to classes. I know that during the school year that's a regular part of my agenda. I leave my law practice and I go and I talk to young people. Give them a hope, and give them a vision of what their lives can be in this day and this time in spite of the obstacles. Because they still need to hear that it's possible to rise above one's circumstances, and they still can be all that G-d intended that they be. They need to hear that message that it never grows old. That was one of the things that I was told even there's a very young child from my grandmother. We chopped cotton and pick cotton, but I was always told that I could be whatever I wanted to be.

I was told that enough until it sunk in, and I believe that. I believe that in spite of my circumstances, I can be whatever I want to be. We go to the schools with that message. More than that, we're still concerned about the education initiatives. We're going to be looking at the suspension rate I alluded to earlier in the Little Rock School District in particularly. One of the things that really concerns me is that we need to know let our children know that we care about them. We need to take the time as Imam has stated. We need to take time with them to let them know that they are important, that we care about what they're going through, and be there for them.

That's one of the reasons that this I deal in pinkie when they will not disrupt that school that I became so heated and so fervent about that because that was our children. Anybody can put up a basketball and tell our children go play ball, but we need to be concerned more about what's on the inside as opposed to those outward skills. We need to be concerned about their development emotionally, and psychically. We need to be concerned about the whole of our children. I think that's really the message that we carry.

We do that by more than just going to schools and giving our message. We do it by example as well, letting them know that we support those things that are dear to us. Letting them know that we're supportive of those things that are good. I'll say this and I'll close a lot of the things that I do particularly when I go to Philander Smith. Something about our black colleges and universities are suffering financially. Just think of all of the black graduates that have gone through there and they've gotten jobs, too many of us don't put anything back. We got to learn to put something back in our communities. It's a poor farmer that will eat up all of his seeds, and not put something back.

Dolores: Thanks.

Host: When we talk about the government, how much help and what should the government do? Some say now that the government has done so much, it has allowed us to stay on welfare. Some say that the government hasn't done enough; we need to be paid reparations. What is the role of the government? What should the government do to help us achieve what we set out to in the beginning?

Miss Gray: I think, first of all, self-help is preeminent. I think that there are a lot of things that we must do for ourself. The government does not come in and tell us to let our kids watch 40 hours of TV a week. There's some things and it all goes back to, I hate to keep repeating, but it all goes back to what Mr. Mohammed said and that is making sure that that family life is in place, and making sure that kids are being taught outside of just watching TV. There are other things that I think it's very important that the government do.

I think those areas are when it comes to making sure that minorities do get equal access, African-Americans, all people that are considered to be minorities in the United States by their terms, or have equal access to contracts, have equal access to loans, equal access to housing. I think it goes back to ensuring that we are given what everyone else has.

Host: Imam Mohammed, is there a certain role of the government?

Imam Mohammed: The governments definitely should have a role, but the problem that I see, and I think when I say I see, I'm just looking. I'm seeing myself as many others have seen the same thing. It's that we have gotten into the groove of just turning to the government for all answers. She just said you have to have be self-supporting too. The problem is turning to government for everything. Thinking that government has to solve all of our problems, it can't solve all our problems. Government is limited. We have this democracy limits what government can do for us. President John Kennedy remember he said don't ask for the-- and he got in big, didn't he?

He said don't ask what the government can do for you, but ask what you can do for your government. I use term government. I think the government should have a big role in our lives that's just there the be field is waiting to be filled. When you have the City of Chicago sanitation department spending a great amount of money that they spent to take garbage out of the poor neighborhood, if we can't how the government all come in and make a law that your garbage better reflect your income.

Host: We wouldn't have any garbage, would we? Not much. Your question?

Kelvin: My name is Kelvin. I have an open question for the panel. I'd like for the panel to address the indigenous of our social order which is the Afro-American people which is directly the hindrance to our autonomy which would solve a lot of the problem. I understand the capability of the words using here about what is equal, what is equal. What we have to do is it address our own indigenous which will lead to these other things? The second part of the question is, are we failing to realize that our indigenous depends directly on Afro-American staying in our community to address this problem?

Host: Who would like to start with that question?

Miss Gray: Let me address the part that I'm pretty sure, that I understood and that was about African-Americans staying with the community to address some of their problems. We may need him to repeat that. I'm not sure about you all. At any rate, I do think one of the ways that we stay with our community is that we do business with our community, whether it's our photographer, or caterers, or whatever we do. When we can do business in our community, I think it's important that we do. I'm sorry, sir, I did not really get the first part of your question.

Mr. Battle: I think part of I think part of the thrust of the question to have to deal with living in the community. I understood Imam to make the comment, but he doesn't think that it's racist to want to live in an all-black community, and neither do I. I think that that's good at the same time. I think that your community is really where your heart is. There's some people who live in our community, but they're not making any contributions to it. In fact, they're out selling drugs, they're littering, and they're destroying our communities.

They'd be better off out of the community. Your communities where your heart is. I guess I take that position because I have to live in it predominantly white neighborhood, but my heart is still here and that's why I have a commitment and I spend the time to put something back as I alluded to earlier. I think that's so important. Doesn't matter where you live, what matters where your heart is, where your concern is. If you're willing to put something back into the community that you come from.

Kareen: Hi. My name is Kareen from the gist house, the behavior modification program. Okay, we already know that African-American society is G-d conscious in general, and once we start taking that step to give it back to the younger kids to show them the love, but they're not getting it from home because their parents are lost. What steps will you all take to help that child?

Mr. Battle: That's an excellent question. That's why I get back to going back to the schools. So many of our churches, we could teach the love of G-d and teach our children that they are created equal in the image of G-d. We could teach them that if they came to our churches, but so many of these children are not in our churches because many of their parents are not in our churches. What we have to do is go where they are, and carry that message. That's why I think it's important. They're in schools because the law requires that they be here, and that's why it's important that we take that message to the school where we can find them.

There are other organizations like one of my board members has Teen talk, when he gets young people to come in and talk about their problems. There are other organizations and efforts of that kind, and we have to do that because we're about to lose an entire generation. We have to reach back and bring them out of the oblivion there's so many of them face, but we got to have make that special effort.

Imam Mohammed: I think the government too should the government need to search its own thinking too. How has it been handling problems? Is there a better way to handle problems? I didn't always have a father in my house. I had a strong mother in my house. There was always a male member that I could turn to like a turn to a father, uncle, a grandfather, or somebody. The government since it pays the woman, the single household, a housekeeper, whether it’s a man or a woman, but even a man can get somebody now if he has a children.

Why not help the woman by looking in the family first to see if there's a male in the family without a job, but he's a healthy male will be good be in that household to help the mother lookout for children, a uncle, or a grandfather, a brother, then the government to pay him, pay that person to be in the house with the children, to be the role of the father, the father image in that house with the children. I think habits of the establishment coming from the slave days and plantation days are still disguised in government attitude toward family life in their way of solving our problems.

When they give checks to my wife and I can't find a job, that's a real problem. They should look for a male in the family to give the check to, and if he's not decent why not spend some money on him. They're going to spend some money on him anyway when he goes in prison. I'm for major changes in this government, this society. Major changes and they should start right with us the little people on the ground.

Host: How can we make sure those changes are made though? A little people on the ground making sure that government changes.

Imam Mohammed: All you have to do is just get the interest started, and the government will soon come in when they see it getting big, they'll come in and do the job because they don't want the little people to get credit for it.

Host: You have a question?

Male Speaker 4: Yes, I have. You have been talking about the government, and we talked about the United States, and it's supposed to be a government of the people for the people, and by the people. I look at the political process, what can we do as a people to get more out of the government if it's going to be for us? We know that we do not have any representation within the government, and especially judiciary system.

We go to the courts only thing you can find in the courts are a Caucasian there on all the panels and we can't get any justice out of judiciary system, the political process. We can't get any justice out of that as far as job is concerned for as allocation of money to different communities and so forth. A lot of people's now they don't even participate in the process as far as voting in the voting process. It's to get on the juror where you got to be a registered voter, and we don't even have our Afro-Americans registered to vote, and they don't participate.

A lot of our churches tell us that only thing we have to do is pray, and wait on G-d; He'll come and change things for us. They talk about pie in the sky when we die, and they don't think about we got to have some ham on the ground while we're around now. We got to have something to eat while we're here. We need to do something ourselves while we're here now, and especially, for our young opinion, we cannot continue to hand them from year and from generation to generation welfare checks, food stamps, and things like that. There are promise that they might get something they keep on living. We need to try to give them something, and especially, the drug problem we have in our community.

The drug problem is a problem that I think has been put into our community. We don't have any means of transporting drugs to this country. We don't have no land to grow drugs on, but all the individual, all our young people's in down in jail because of drug-related crimes. I know Caucasian or European-Americans they bring these drug in out to community, give it to our kids, they do this in a day and come back at night and arrest them for dealing in drug. They're the one that the police department and things like that the undercover narcotics agent and things like that.

They're the one I think it's a form of genocide that they're using to destroy our families. You have not got mens within your family, then you're not going to have a family. You keep locking all the means up killing them all, then you're not going to have this the reproduction process stopped there. What can we do to get some equal justice in the court, get some equal justice in the political process there, that we might be able to help our own people?

Host: It's a loaded question.

Miss Gray: First of all, I think we can vote, and for those of us who aren't registered we can get registered to vote. I think voting is one of the first steps, it is certainly not the only step because once you vote, and once you elect people, then you have to ensure, or certainly attempt to ensure that they keep the promises that they made when they were running. To do that oftentimes it takes the extra step of writing letters calling, or blocking in other ways, but voting and electing black legislators, and black governors, black everything that you can. I think that's first step.

Mr. Battle: I agree with what the brother said. It's almost as though he took a page on my last campaign because that was what I said that if I was is to truly be a representative democracy, then our democracy must represent all of our people. We are represented in the legislators of this country. We're represented in the executive branch by virtue of some of the department heads and employees and what have you. But when you go to our judicial system the brothers right. You got white judges there, sentencing people; you have them committing these brothers to the penitentiary. How do you get to the penitentiary?

A circuit judge has to sign a commitment order and you hear me a little earlier to the fact that over half the prison population down here are black. I guarantee you there weren't black judges that committed them to those institutions. That is not to say that they don't need to be there, but how do we know we need to be represented at every level of our government, and we need some black judges to make sure that the judiciary is honest, and make sure that it's fair. I agree, we talk about preaching the gospel and praying, there's something else that the Bible says that faith without works is dead.

You can pray all you want to, but you don't have to put some feet to those prayers. G-d is not going to come down here and pull no level for you in the voting booth. G-d is not going to come down here put a black on the judge on the bench. We're going to have to put some select work in some hard work in addition to our prayers because faith prayers without faith without works is dead.

Imam Mohammed: That's right. That's our religion too.

Speaker 4: Okay, my question is to these two representatives of the organizations. With me being in the public school system and being a strong young African-American woman and sure of where I'm going to go and not seeing any young African-American males in my classrooms makes me wonder what is the public doing or your specific organizations doing to enhance and nourish the young males, because they need a lot of nourishment from a lot of places. It's not going to just have to come from the homes. It's going to have to come from a lot of other places.

Like the young man said, the reproductive system stops there when I young men are going to jail and doing all these kinds of things, what I specifically doing with the young African-American males I know that you said you're going to the schools and all the females that I'm friends with they are very sure of themselves. They know where they're going to go, but the majority of our young men and they look to lunch, that's how they do, they don't pay attention in class and all those kinds of things. What specifically are you doing?

Host: I think this is the third question. Third time this question has come up on what the organizations are doing, and we have both said we're looking into programs, we're looking into suspension rates, we're looking into education, but I think people are wanting to know what exactly are you doing. It is what you're doing working and if it's not why aren't you doing something else?

Mr. Battle: I think part of the problem is what Pat alluded to earlier. Many of these organizations are struggling for their very survival because so many of our black brothers and sisters don't become a part of these organizations and support. It's a cycle goal thing you have to support the organization to ensure its survival if it's going to help to address some of those concerns. I can speak from that very pointedly because three years ago the Urban League was virtually bankrupt, the doors lock and like to vanished from this community, but we got to support our own. That was the message that I've been saying all along.

Too many of these organizations are faltering by the wayside in spite of all of that they've done to help meet the needs to address some of these concerns, but we don't support them. I remember being in a setting very much like this and the question was asked, how many members of the NAACP are there? Over half the organization, over half the people there were not members, how many members of the Urban League are there in this city, and there were even less. We're going to have to support these organizations if we want them to be around to really contribute to the problems that we face as community. We have got to put something back.

Imam Mohammed: I'm aware that the Urban league and your organization done a lot, and you're doing a lot. But no one organization, no combination of organizations of nature of your two organizations can solve these problems that we address in here by yourselves. It's take effort-- all of us have to accept more responsibility, all of us. It has to start right in our homes. The gentleman mentioned the drugs problem and I sympathize with him if I was going to run for office I might take a lot from his speech made too at that mic. We can't just move on emotions as true.

We don't have any planes and no the poppy farms to bring drugs to raise the drugs, and to harvest the drugs, and bring the drugs into this country. We don't have that, but we don't have the means either to supply the supermarkets with the food we eat every day. Somebody's doing that too, you see? It's business. We ought to get strong in business. We get strong in business, then maybe we can have the power to decide what kind of business is going to be in our neighborhoods.

Miss Gray: I could name at least two things right now that come to my mind that the NAACP and Little Rock has been doing, one took place in the first quarter of this year that I think was very good and that was held at Philander Smith College. It was a youth extravaganza, It was a talent show was an opportunity for African-American youth in the community to express themselves in various ways through poetry, through song, through dance.

These are the types of things that build self-esteem because when the schools were not integrated many times the schools always had opportunities for young black people to recite poetry by African-American writers to know their history and to demonstrate that to others. Because self-esteem a lot of times is something that grows by doing something over and over, and you gain confidence in that way.

Another thing that I know firsthand that our president is working very hard on and then the whole group and that is we have an Education Committee that is now working to assist black teachers who feel discriminated against in keeping their quality of life within their school system. In other words, not just having to go to work and feel battered, by the Caucasian PTA groups who want to find every little nitpicky thing wrong such as well she doesn't dress the way I want her to dress.

There are things that we're doing. A lot of things don't get a lot of publicity, but I can assure you that the NAACP is working on behalf of this community, but as I said, again we could always use more help.

Mr. Battle: That's true and too it's something that we did along those lines recently. The Urban League sponsored a group from the Delta brought them to Little Rock and took them on an excursion of the Arkansas River and the zoo, because we were rewarding them for academic excellence. So many of the times our young people are not rewarded for performing well in schools, and they have rewards some of the young people are hardest students to teach others the better students are hardest students to teach the ones that are not doing quite as well.

We want to give them some tangible rewards for their academic pursuits, and we were very fortunate and very pleased to have sponsored them and to try and helping to encourage them, those are the kinds of things that we're doing, but again it takes funds to do that.

Deborah Robinson: There were two references to genocide and drugs being in the African-American community. Do you all feel that if there is such a thing called genocide that it is a conscience effort of a certain group of people to do away with another group of people, is that a conscious thing that's going on or is it just by chance that the African-American community has the drugs and that were dude that we're killing each other?

Imam Mohammed: I wouldn't suspect that the effect of drugs, the impact of drugs on our community is the result of some conscious act or conspiracy. I would say no, but I believe that there are conscious efforts to destroy us by certain people. Even maybe by certain groups, but they're not big enough to have that kind of effect, no. The problem is that we are not to get ourselves inwardly and even as a people.

Miss Gray: I agree. I think that if you want to talk about consciously trying to get rid of us you have groups like the Klan, the Ku Klux Klan, the arm, and a sword, and a shield or whatever it's called. Those are the groups, but I believe that those groups cannot have the impact on us that the drugs have on us.

Mr. Battle: Well, when I look at what I've heard the conspiracy theory, I don't buy it either. It may sound callous, but Imam made a reference earlier to the fact that drugs this big business in this country. It's big business, but in order for business to survive, in order for business to thrive, it has to have consumers. Safeway, Harvest food, will go out of business if folks stop going in there buying. Companies have to have consumers to survive. If there's a conspiracy who says that we have got to take part or buy the product of a conspiracy.

Nobody's forcing us to go out and take drugs, and put dope in our veins. Nobody's holding a gun to make us do that. I don't buy the conspiracy theory. If we stop buying drugs on the year, the drug pushers would dry they pack up and go someplace else, because they can't sell it here.

Imam Mohammed: That's happening, but the efforts and the people involved in it the small numbers, but they're Christians and Muslims fighting drugs in the neighborhood we’re fighting together, in Dallas, Washington DC, I can name in several cities where the members of our religion, and Christians have gone out and risk being killed. They're doing it now to let the drugs people know that they're not going to dominate the neighborhood; they're not going to decide the future of those youngsters. That's happening right now, need more of that and the government support that.

Deborah: That’s going on in Little Rock too. We only have a couple of minutes left, but what I want to leave with is, has our mission changed, and what should we be about now, what are we to set out from this day on to achieve and how are we to do it? Mr. Battle.

Mr. Battle: I think that it starts with something very basic respect for one's self, respect for one's family, respect for one's neighbor, respect for one's community. If we can start from the basics that's the foundation of civilization. We can do great things, if we give the attention, and have the proper attitude toward those basic values.

Deborah: Mrs. Gray?

Mrs. Gray: I think that we need to make sure that our young people have a global focus, meaning that they understand and that we ourselves understand that we're not self-contained. When we talk about civil rights here, we also have to think about human rights in South America. We have to think about human rights all over the world. I think that bringing ourselves to the realization that we always have to work with others everywhere.

Deborah: Imam Mohammed in one minute.

Imam Mohammed: Yes. I could have said it just leaves it like it is because I'm very satisfied with has been said. We have to let our children know too that everything though free lives within a context. There has to be a context for life, in other words, we are free but we have to have a set of disciplines in our life in order to contain that life, and allow us to make progress as an organism, as a human being, as a person.

Deborah: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank Pat Gray from the NAACP, Hayward Battle from the Urban League, and our honored guest Imam Warith Deen Mohammed. Thank you very much for joining us. Thank you. I'm Deborah Robinson.