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# IWDM Study Library

# COMMUNITY AND FAMILY LIFE

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

QUESTION : What we would like to really do, is take the lead from yourself, turn it into the things that you say just trying to collect from me. In that regard a lot of what we can probably do was try to take this initiative and take it one day at a time. If you could just give us the initiative need to ask some questions so therefore the

IWDM: Right. All right. I looked over the list and this list is very interesting to me and it's a very excellent list of questions, I think.

QUESTION: Yes. If you could begin with the first one regarding building community.

IWDM: Okay, I'm listening.

QUESTION: Okay. If you could just give us how we can present a vision of concern short and long-term for our focus is fulfilled in the community.

IWDM: Yes. Firstly, building a community is an obligation on all Muslims, Muslim believers who live in Muslim lands or in non-Muslim lands. We're obligated, I think, even more, it's a more urgent for us than it is for Muslims living in their Muslim society to have excellent model of Muslim community life, in what is predominantly a non-Muslim environment or society.

So it's an imperative. It's not something that we can say "Yes" or "Maybe" about, or "Yes, but maybe". No, it's "Yes", period. We have to do this if we're to fulfill our obligations as Muslims under the Quran, under the Word of G’d, and under Muhammad's leadership.

The messenger of G’d's leadership, peace be upon Him. I believe that G’d has given us a community to focus on for our efforts, all of our efforts, whether it's private, family, or other, because [clears throat] it's in man's nature to live and achieve in community. It's his nature. G’d has given him a spirit and a nature; an industrious nature, and a spirit to want to work and achieve establishment. The full picture of that establishment is community where responsibilities are shared and benefits are shared and opportunities are shared.

Man was created for that purpose, and I believe for that reason man is described by some great teachers of Islam, and non-Muslims also, as being a complex creature. A creature who is both plural and singular at the same time. He's singular in himself, but he's plural in the possibility that G’d has made for himself. He's plural in the spirit that G’d has created him with.

He can't live to himself alone, in his mind and in his spirit. He has to live with his loved ones, with him, in his mind, with his spirit. In that sense, he is a temple within himself that has not one person's interest in it, but has the interests of many in it.

So he's some kind of a plural, he's a plural person while he's also not in the terms of psychology. That's nuts to be plural. In terms of psychology, you have mental problems. This is plural in terms of your interests. Your interests and your concerns. He's plural. He takes in people, he takes in his family, he takes in his loved ones, he takes in his friends, he takes in his country, all of those interests that are dear to his heart are within his mind and within his spirit. He lives with them as a plural organism. A complex many-formed organism, that he has formed in his interest and in his spirit, in his mind and in his spirit, and he holds them very dear to him.

He's living not the life of one person, but he's living the life-- the interest, pardon me, correction. He's living the life of one person, but he's living the interests of more than one person.

This is what Allah created us with, so when we have an opportunity to have expressions for this in the environment, so then we're really happy. People who are dull and wondering why they're dull-spirited, many times it's because they're not motivated to share the responsibilities for more than themselves, for more persons than themselves.

A Muslim wants to see his brother's life good, he wants to see the family of our brother's life good. We want to see our Muslim children, that's not "our" going to a fine school. All that is necessary for the fulfillment of our own interests in our spirit. Our soul's need won't be fulfilled unless we have that.

Community is to focus on. What I see as the most important thing to start with in building a community-- finally I get to your question -- is a nucleus. The most important thing is a nucleus for our community.

A community built or established to accommodate the lives of people who believe in G’d, who worship G’d. So every community will have a house of worship somewhere, or many. Communities are built to accommodate the needs of family, and the first need is to have a school to educate, that's where we educate our children. Then the community is supposed to have a township. The community is supposed to have some ordinances, some rules and regulations, so that there would be a traffic light on the corner is necessary, and street lights, and somebody to care for that.

After a while you have to have jobs, and somebody regulating the town. But to me, the first step is to have in our plan, a place of worship, the Sallah, where we can worship on Friday; have Friday service, Jumah

The next is to have a school for our children, to educate our children. The next is to have people employed so that these efforts won't be lost. They'll have people employed and earning income to support those things. So it's worship, education, job; worship, education, employment, income. That's the first three.

We already live in a civilized society, so we know that we will have the township services, the city services. We know we have those, but as we develop in those three steps or three areas and begin to feel comfortable, then we should also want to be sharing responsibility for the township. For the condition of our streets, for the condition of the lighting on the street, for the traffic regulation, the regulation of the traffic can it be improved for the benefits to citizens from the government. Is it encumbering the government? Is it too much for government or should we ask for more?

All those should not just be concerns of the non-Muslim living in a township, they should also be concerns of Muslims, that they take up and become a part of the effort to have the best environment possible for the citizens of a town or of an area. They become a part of that effort, sharing that responsibility.

When they are able to free themselves up enough from the obligation to have the masjid and school.

and employment for enough to support their assets or their investments. But sometimes, now that's the best-- that's the plan in order of priorities or interests. But when it comes to actually caring something, working on it, realizing, making that plan materialize, it's not, in my opinion, the best thing to just make it a fixed thing, it's the sole question that we have to have a masjid first. Build the masjid first.

We can have masjid in rented facilities, we can have a masjid in our homes, it depends on how large the community is. So we should look at it. How can we best realize the establishment of this nucleus. A place to worship, education, the situation to change, to have a private school for our children, not that we don't keep them out of public school, no, but we need a private school for our children, and support for our men so they have business and employment and jobs.

Which one is first the best to start off first? In my opinion it's best to start on increasing the income of the community. When it comes to implementing this in the society, the first one you start on is increasing the income of the community, if it's deficient. Let's increase the income of the community.

Second would be providing decent facilities for prayer, for worship, for our daily prayers, and especially for Jumah service. Then third would be a school for our children. In the meantime, we're going to be worshiping on the ground or at home or somewhere in a rented facility and we're going to be educating our children at home or in a rented facility or part-time school.

We don't start these things in order of their priorities, but we're going to establish facilities for them and according to what is more practical and more feasible. I think it's more practical when we are terribly deficient in income, it's more practical to address that need first. How are we going to increase our income?

Civilization started, efforts to have a civilized community started, with men first going out in the field and facing the rough nature out there in the world and catching an animal and bringing back its hide. Then selling it to the next community, if they could. They have something to keep them warm, they go sell some hides to the next community distance away. Fishing, fishing up in the sea.

After a while, the income from their labor, from their industrious labor and spirit would give them the money to have not to sleep in the tree or on the ground or in the hole underground or mountainside. They can build a house and pretty soon they got a riverboat, a horse or something, and all that's in their mind first, but they don't realize it according to the just priorities. They don't realize it that way.

Sometimes it's the last thing you have to do first to accommodate the first thing. I think if income in a group or society effort, a group effort or society effort is terribly deficient financially then they have to address that issue first and try to create situation to bring in income. Once you have income, then you can come back to the first things and begin to cause those first things to materialize.

But a nucleus is what the vision is. The vision is for nucleus where Muslim families will be living close to, next door, around, immediately around, in close proximity with a school, masjid facility, that will also house a school or masjid and house and two different facilities, and schools. That's number one, and business. And business. They must all come together all at the same time.

I think it's the businesses efforts should be first for us, because we are terribly deficient in income. The business effort should be first. They should get the first attention from us. The building of facilities should be next, but the building of facilities should include the building of low income housing at the same time.

We shouldn't say just low income housing, or maybe necessary, if we have a distinguished leader, like myself, you all wouldn’t want to put me in a house that would be seen as the cheapest house you can find. You want to put me in a nice house. So put your leader in a house just like you live in yourself. I want to see you in a nice house. I want to see you all in a nice house. So the plan should have-- to accommodate the leadership, to have decent homes for leadership, and then economy housing for the residents, for the other residents.

QUESTION: The answer to the first question is probably the same as the second question we studied from the Madina model in Newark from prophet Muhammad, but I will ask it anyway especially the study of that model, what should be studied of that model?

IWDM: Yes, we should just study it not as a people who are so excited over who-- the Prophet's own work excites us so much that we can't be in a normal state to observe what he did.

There are muslims who would want to right away response to what we've just said there. And they would say no brother. The first thing the Prophet did when he arrived in Madina was build the mosque. That's because homes was already there the work was already done. People are already industrious . They just invited Him to be their leader.

So that's the answer to the second question.

QUESTION: I recall you preaching recently, on progressive land development.

IWDM: Yes. I believe that my father's-- well, his program, economic program was really a kind of disguise. I would say helped signal to us to in this time now. It couldn't be realized in my father's time, but now it can be realized. I believe that my father had all of these concerns in him and he wanted to see those things happen that are necessary for us in this time and desired by him in that time, and practical also, but not desired in that-- also needed, but also practical for us in this time.

It's practical for us in this time when we are not under the critical eye of the government or the business world of America, business society of America, or the church or anybody, not that everybody pleases us, but at least they don't have a law on their side anymore to single us out for different treatment in this country.

In my opinion, we can invest now and not worry about people poisoning our cattle as they did on the farms in Georgia. Over there Georgia, or Alabama? Alabama. As they did in Alabama. You don't have worry about people poisoning our cattle.

They do have the people that they think that don't belong in America. They don't belong on the land, and they don't think it'll get the public support on their side if it's reported. And that's exactly what they had. Quietly, they had the public supporting them against those people that they thought were not true Americans and didn't belong. They were here to hurt and undermine the American way of life, the American life.

We are in a situation now to look at those ideas and be able to establish the idea, because we're in new times and new circumstances and new attitudes, from an attitude of fear and dislike for people who are foreign and aliens to their society. We have now attitudes that are positive and they're looking at us as people who can make a contribution to the American society. That is a greatly changed time for us. We really are now in a situation to be progressive land developers. Where it was just a hope for Honorable Elijah Muhammad and a great risk if He had invested a lot, and a great risk of Him losing everything.

But now we can invest with hope that our investments are going to grow and grow and grow and be inherited by generations to come. That they will keep this tradition of community responsibility and community establishment, they'll keep that tradition for generations to come as long as America is, I do believe.

Even when America is not, if American people would decide one day to change the constitution or that which is provided for in the constitution to be in United States. If they decide to change the constitution and draw up another constitution, whatever that would be. If we stick to Islam, stick to the excellence of our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Following Him we will be in a situation to live for as long as the earth abides, so long as Allah keeps the earth.

I would say that the plans of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to bring us into financial establishment. His company that he formed Progressive Land Developers is really a message to us today that we shouldn't be satisfied with being less than the creators of environment, don't just be those people who are looking for a place, or looking for opportunities in an environment, but be creators of environment. Progressive Land Developers, that's what that word suggests to me, the expression suggests to me, that we should accept responsibility to create environments, to come up with housing plans, to come up with new community plans, to build small town. Just accept the responsibility of people who feel obligated to be responsible for a community life.

QUESTION: How does the building of a Islamic community relate to our obligations to the broader society?

IWDM: To the broader society?

QUESTION: Yes.

IWDM: We live in a country that's really designed for people like us. This country's plan was designed for the people like us. It had firstly, or in its beginning it had the Christians that were living in Europe and couldn't have religious freedom. They couldn't practice their religion freely in Europe. They were dominated by the Church, by the Church of England, or by the Church that was in power.

Protestant movement headed up by Martin Luther broke that grip of the church on the society of Europe. But it took them time to realize the progress that they have made for the freedom of religion in Europe. So while they were still persecuted in Europe, they saw opportunities to come to this new land that had been discovered, what we call America today. They were Christians.

So the founding fathers of this country, they drew a plan for this society. A governmental plan, a political ideology. They drew it up to accommodate those persons. But when they drew it up, and we have evidence now, we have documents showing it. They were not unaware that other religions would one day come to America. They planned this new society, we call the American life or the American way. They planned it so that it would also attract people of other faith.

Thomas Jefferson, he mentioned Judaism, he mentioned Jew. He mentioned the Quran and Islam, and he mentioned it as a faith that he desired that would come to this country and be practicing this country. They were not only working for the freedom of religion for Christian people, but they were working to accommodate-- to have a situation where if people wanted to have progress for their religion, they could come to this land and have that progress.

Whereas other lands wouldn't have this kind of genuine democracy would feel threatened by such religions, that wanted to realize more of their religious life according to their scriptures or according to their religious knowledge. They would feel threatened. This country would not feel threatened, but would be accommodating that, and would be the strength. That would be the strength upon which this country develops and grows to be a powerful democracy. That would be the strength. The welcoming of people who want to sincerely and honestly worship G’d and have the full religious life that their religion calls for.

So this country was made for us. That I'm saying, that's the point. This country while it was designed firstly for Christian who wanted to live the fullness of the Gospel, it is also a country that was designed for us, who are Muslims who want to live the fullness of Islam or the fullness of the Quran and light of our Prophet, the way of our Prophet.

What the message it has for the broader or outside of this community? They will see us as people who complement this beautiful pluralism that we have in this country. They see us as people who will make a contribution to the beautiful concept of plural society, freedom of religion, and plural culture, pluralistic culture.

What I mean by that is that we are not just going to have Islam in spirit, we're going to have Islam in practice. To have it in practice means that your businesses would reflect Islamic life, your diet will reflect the Islamic life, your products will reflect the interest in Islam. The clothing you wear would reflect your Islamic principles or Islamic modesty.

Eventually, we would have a cultural image in America too. Not to impose from-- imposed on us from without but developing naturally from us, from our own life and our own life experiences in this country, we will have that. So the contributions to the broader society will be great and be very much loved. In my opinion it's going to be great and be very much loved.

QUESTION: And the choice we should be speaking on, the revelations

IWDM: Yes. We're fortunate to have the assistance of Islam. Necessity, survival it's so important to G’d that G’d will excused a person from very serious religious obligations. If the justification is that my survival is threatened, G’d, that's why it's important,G’d that’s why I ate some pork to keep life in me so I wouldn't die, there was nothing else that I could-- my enemy wouldn't let me have any food they would only temp me with the pork, I will only eat some so I wouldn’t die and G’d would excuse me just as I had ate halal ,ate lamb. You see .

We as a people, not individuals, but we as a people our past bad circumstances took away from us the freedom and opportunities to have community life in our hands. We were not responsible for community life for ourselves. We were not in situations to have that responsibility Slavery, segregate south, prejudiced Americans, that was allowing even the law to be different, tried differently to us.

So that time behind us robbed us of the opportunity and the freedom to really work for and succeed at having community establishment. Equal opportunities have come, it's no more legal to single a people out for separate treatment in this country, not legal, that means the laws don't allow that.

For the first time now we are free to work on that need in our life to have responsibility for our community. Islam is a special blessing in our life, because it obligates its followers, its adherer to focus on that particular responsibility and don't be satisfied until you have established community life. You are the best community evolved for the good of all people.

It also says that from out of you, arise out of you, a group that's working to achieve for themselves the image of a model Muslim community. That's in there. That's in Quran, it's in the holy book to the Muslims. This is our number one authority. The supreme authority in our life is telling us that.

So, here fortunately we have a religion come to a people who lost to bad circumstances in history, and the history of this world, who lost their freedom to be responsible for community life.

Now they have their freedom back in America. The same country that pushed-- that kept them out of that have now changed and now welcome them to have that. In this country, we have Islam right at our fingertips, right in our hands, right on the shelves, right there on these books on the table, right on the desk, right where we work it. We have a Quran saying, G’d's obligation is to have community life and to be responsible for it.

QUESTION: What does the concept New Africa fit in?

IWDM: That concept came to mind and I thought it came by slowly. In fact, I've long-- at least two or three years before I before it came into my mind. That's why we don't have the same interests.

The people who came from Europe, from England, they came here and they named the state in that area where they occupied on East Coast, New England , and they still call it New England. I go through some neighborhood and I see New China . So I say, "Why can't we have the same?"

Really, New York, the great York family they influenced the naming of that city, New York, and the state too: New York City and New York State. They influenced it. What they met here is a new hope, we lost it there, but this is a new chance, and that's exactly the same thing I had when I was suggesting or thinking about suggesting it to the communities. But we have a business efforts to establish business classes and business districts.

The municipality won't be called New Africa, or the state won't be called New Africa, our territory won't be called New Africa, but the business effort and the business plan will be called New Africa. Because through business we can contribute to and influence the shaping of cultural life. Without that influence, you can't have much influence over the shaping of culture life.

That's the plan. The plan is to have another opportunity that we lost in Africa. We lost there and we're going back there. I know we are. You all are not going there. But here's a new opportunity in America, which I say is a better situation for us now. The new opportunities in America for us to start over again and accept responsibility for building community life and build it and influence it with our refined spirits and our refined taste and our refined appetite for things of excellence in society. It will be Islamically flavored and it would be African American nature.

QUESTION: What kind of things should the whole society, Muslim and others, focus on ?

IWDM: The first thing they focus on is a support in your life that will stand up to the test of everything man and beast can throw at you and that’s Islam, Christianity, Judaism , etc. that’s first number one, once you have that, then with that help plan for family tackle their responsibility to other establishments and communities.

. I think that's why the Kaaba where I focus when they pray. It represents the home of humanity. It wants to put our mind on home. That's why it’s called Bait , it could have been called Bab. Bab has political connotations, Bait has strong domestic connotations. Home Bait it's called Al-Bait.

I think that's there to tell us that we should want to have the society accommodate people, family, and individuals with the same interest in them that parents would have if they were trying to accommodate the needs of their children, members of their family, and their household.

We're supposed to want the best for people in society, those who will soon inherit it be given responsibility for designing society and managing or leading the effort to establish and maintain society. Those persons should accept to regard the member of the society just like they regard the members of their own family.

We should have that as an encouragement in our life that we are going to build a society and insist upon people who accept that responsibility to that, insist upon them caring about every member that will live in that society, just like they would care about the members in their own family living in their own house, under their own roof.

That's how we should do it. That's how we should approach it. Then we should start providing the needs for the family. Family need works. G’d gave us the Earth, originally, and the Earth already had food on it. He gave us the ability to work and increase the production, to go to fields that there's no food growing and take the seed from other areas and plant them in areas that have no food growing. Because G’d created us to be industrious, to produce wealth. G’d created us to produce wealth.

The next most important thing to serve the needs of families would be plan and form it for families and if you plan and form it for family we will help everybody. One neighborhood with no production takes from other neighborhoods with production. So the neighborhood distance away, they will be appreciative of the neighborhood that is not putting their responsibility on them, but trying to be sustaining, a self-sustained neighborhood as much as possible.

Employment with communities, whether Muslim or Non-Muslim. If they concentrate on having human excellence, feeding their neighbors the same way that they treated the members of their own family, households, and having that under G’d, because we lose our senses when we only focus on our own selves if we don't have a higher authority in our life and G’d is that higher authority and His word is revelation.

After they work to have better income to their community then they should have people with a vision and today we live, like the President said on the television today, he was on Meet The Press. He described this world that we live in now as one world economy, global economy, one world economy. But he also described it as a global society. That was his expression, exact expression, 'global society,' which means that we are becoming linked together and tied together in such serious ways that what we do financially in one part of the world has to respect what's being done in the general world, in the whole world. If we don't, if we're out of line with what's happening in the whole world, then we're going to fail, or we're going to be rejected, or be squeezed out.

We're living in one world economy and we are living in a one world society, because as we said earlier the economics affects cultural life. The culture of the world now is so that cultural air has become one. People are affected by each other's cultures. You won't be able to not experience some interaction with Chinese culture, Far Eastern cultures, living in America. When you go to the store or the supermarket, the same store, you're going to see all these foreign foods and everything up there.

You are exposed to other people's image and their cultural image, their cultural way, their cultural life. You're exposed to them. That's a one world society too. In a one world society it's all the much more important for a people when they're planning their establishment to be respectful of other people's interest.

We can't have a Hitler in the world again. No situation for a Hitler to even develop. When people are going to dominate and take over and dominate everything. Whenever we plan we should have respect for the whole humanity, we should want our neighborhoods as we plan them, we should want be able to plan the future, that's what I mean. We want to be able to plan the future. Plan neighborhoods, plan the future for the neighborhood.

We should have that plan respect the sensitivities of Asian, Far Eastern people. We don't want anything in here that will say to them, we reject them, we are anti-Chinese or any other people, we're the same as any other people. We should have it planned so it doesn't offend any visitor that will come from Far East or Near East or Africa or Europe or anywhere, from Christianity or Judaism or from Buddhism or any other religion. You wouldn't have anything there that would say, "These people are against anti-Jewish and these people anti-Buddhists."

I think America is very important. First of all, have a vision for your neighborhood development and be aware that this is a one world society now. I will say a one society world now. A one society world now where we used to have people living, even moving in our neighborhood that came from Far East or Near East or Africa or any place and we would like to not offend them, but make them feel comfortable and welcome.

People from another religion. We should understand that we can't keep a religion out of our neighborhood. There was a Muslim plan. It's a Muslim developed community development plan. If a non- Muslim wants to live the community we can't keep him out and we shouldn't want to keep him out. We should want them as our neighbors. I think that's what I want to say.

--asked where we are.

Who is critical of Jews?

IWDM: Yes. We think that we have to when we are asked. In our life and our lead to develop this country, but at the same time we should be focusing in one or two or other areas too.

We should be focusing on our need to support this and other Muslims side by side with non-muslims and you should be aware of the need to plan the future of Muslims in America, with all Muslims in America, not just African-American Muslims, but for all Muslims that are there.

IWDM: Our own in a strange way G’d has helped us through the Honorable Elijah Muhammad dreams. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad through a drawing by artist in cartoons shows us ourselves to be responsible for agriculture, industry, factories, and even .

Transportation , trucks , cars and planes flying over us and He's given us the secrets that we can be responsible for all of us. That's what community life is all about].

It won't be a cartoon it will be real.

Question: [inaudible 00:48:23].

IWDM: First of all, to have Islam strong in our family and Islam can't be strong in our families without actually having Islamic Education. For the families we would like to see first different facilities quality facilities with quality environment and quality staff providing quality education for our young ones, our families would be so happy and they will give us so much in return if we could give them that . I would like to see no poor family who is well meaning and not lazy, who wants to work, kept out of our schools because they don’t have the means of middle class.

I would like to see with the help of our business people and firms give these tools to brothers, so that families who can’t afford to be, but they deserve to be accepted. And children can be enrolled in our schools, but we don't have to say, "I'm sorry, we can't handle you, because you don't have the means." I hope that we will get past that one day, I pray we will. What else do you want for our families, is that they learn more about the Islamic life, because no family is safe in America just under the rule of law. I'm talking about civil law, criminal law, government law. We're not safe under the rule of law so it has to be under the rule of G’d to be safe. So they have to learn more about how their religion, hopefully, so that their life becomes more Islamic.

IWDM: I think we should focus on to improve in our I'd say propagation, efforts, and our program, and agenda, and programs for the imams or for the leaders.

We have to include in there the needs of families in this critical time for families in America, and in the world. The needs of families, what they need and what kind of support they need from us and what kind of influences are coming from the outside, coming from the streets, the gangs, from drugs, from illegal houses, from publications of pornographic materials.

The church sees that, they tell about these issues and we have to be aware about what we have to choose. We live in a free enterprise world and the law will not outlaw many things that G’d outlaws. We must have a feel for what is needed in our members what is needed for their awareness and for level of consciousness in order to make us feel comfortable that it's safe to approach or it's safe if something comes in the mail like pornographic material is something that the family will be alert, the parents should be alert to that the mail will never reach the hands of the children. They'll be the first one to get in the mail box and throw the mail out and see whats there. That's is very necessary now.

If there is undesirable business opportunities opened up that they will alert the block, the neighborhood or the block of this, and get support from the neighbors to force that person to seek somewhere else to set up illegal establishment. I'm saying now illegal under G’d, not necessarily illegal under the law.

A lot of places nobody is going to see these hard pornographic, it's real raw pornographic films. They have places for them, abuses of children is everywhere so they force them to keep that stuff out of the residential areas. Sometimes the people that's poor, they don't have that kind of protection. There will be a place on 47th Street and you and your children live on 46th Street, or maybe near the corner and there will be care providers there who say this place is just a bad influence and these businesses are bad for the neighborhood.

Also taverns. We have to be alert for taverns. We have to be aware that our families must live in areas where they don't have to be passing by a drunk every other corner. Somebody is hanging out drunk on the street, because they the people in the have kicked them out or the growth of taverns has put drunks all over the streets. That happened. I lived in these area by myself and there are drunks all over the streets.

There are many concerns, but we ought to take up the whole concerns for families to protect them against influences that would demoralize the family and to protect against influences that will invite the youngsters to criminal life.

If drug pushers come in the area and they're telling the youngsters he can have a luxury car and a wad of money in his hand, that is a great temptation. We should be alert to protect our families and stop that before he gets close enough to youngsters to affect them. We must keep it at a distance, keep it away from them.

If all Americans were alert like this, there would not be much of a place for those people who peddle pornography and drugs in our neighborhood. They would have to go to another country.

QUESTION: What traditions are we missing?

IWDM: Tradition? What tradition? Yes. All right. The one that I see the most that is missing is the tradition in the past that keeps the accomplishments of the family with that family so that the children inherit those accomplishments, and are qualified to continue that tradition..

If the parent was a good baker and had a fine and respectful bakery and everybody just loved that bakery in the neighborhood, the parent would want a son or a daughter to come by to take over the business and keep it in the family. Sometimes a woman becomes the owner and then she wants a son. She wants to get a son so she's marrying. Then it comes back to a male maybe after it skip a generation, it can come back to a male. But usually it's the male that has these businesses.

And not only business, sometimes it's a field and they want to keep those fields in the family. Not that we should insist upon our children being what we are. No. But we should at least want to see some of our children continue our work and continue to make our contributions. Keep our contributions in the society, in the neighborhoods that we live in. So that one to me is the biggest lost that we have is that we don't give longevity to our work. Not only our work will have longevity we have to pass it onto our children. That is the tradition I think that is most important.

Except for that one maybe the other are almost the same and that is the family tradition of wanting to pass on the responsibility to the children of living an honorable and decent life. My mother passed it to us more than anyone else, she passed onto us the responsibility to live decently and honorably in the society.

QUESTION: You ready?

IWDM: Yes.

QUESTION: Okay. imam, how does Al Islam address the questions of desire of single parent home? That is where a woman mostly, or maybe sometimes a man, desires to be the single parent and to have a child with no partner,no marriage? Will that be ok?

IWDM: That is unacceptable in Islam, for a man or a woman, to have a child, but no marriage. It is out of the question.

QUESTION: In what ways did Prophet Muhammad lay emphasis on family life?

IWDM: First of all, he said, "To marry is my tradition." That means he came to put importance on the institution of marriage, and that there is no sex without marriage. Another thing that the Prophet, peace be upon Him, says is that divorce is one thing that G’d permits, but He hates it. It's the one thing that He permits that He hates. G’d dislikes divorce, although he permits it under very serious conditions. There needs to be a divorce then it's something G’d doesn't like. But I think that only speaks for the position regarding divorce. It also says that marriage is a serious institution and that G’d supports the institution of marriage and wants it to preserved and wants the couple married.

That was the key was the saying by the Prophet when He says, "To marry is my tradition." Some religious orders, the leadership feel that they have to not indulge the appetites of the flesh so they try to stay away from the appetite of the flesh, or the pull of the flesh on them by also saying we can marry, sexual marry, and have retreat. Some other religious orders throughout the world.

So when the Prophet said, peace be upon Him, "Marriage is my tradition," that's what he is addressing directly. Some of the Imams of the seragate community have single men not married to a woman, his wife that man cannot be paired into anything and single men lack of wifet.

But we can also reason from that particular logic that marriage is an institution of sacred importance to the social and nature and social development of the society. That's something that we should look forward to and I think in nature—what ever G’d has prescribed for us in religion He has already created us to have those needs and those urges in our nature to support that.

Natural male without being influence by modern society thinking wants to one day have a wife , they want to have a mate, that he's loyal to her and she's loyal to him and he's living for her and she's living for him. He's living to have a future with her through her children and she's doing the same living with him to have a future through his children.

So this is the natural order that G’d made and I think the same as the Prophet addresses that natural need in us to have marriage and not to go along with the modern world and given dignity to the single parent households.

QUESTION: What responsibilities and strengths do we find on man and on the women by building the family lives?

IWDM: Well, first of all, the strength would be having a religious foundation in our lives, that will be the strength. But for natural strength or personal individual strength what we look for in women who will be inclined to marry and want to marry and be responsible wives and mothers.

What we look for is a teaching, an education, a grooming that's they got from their parents. If they didn't get it from their parents, it's not that likely that they're going to have itl. So that's why the institution of marriage is so important, because it serves not only the married couple, but it also positions a married couple to prepare their children to look forward to marriage and to have a mind and a spirit as an appreciation for marriage to make it work.

We find in Southern, most Southern families or small town people that haven't been invaded by the influences or ideas that tend to undermine the tradition of family life or values. Those who haven't had their lives bombarded or invaded by these negative things, these things that tend to go against the grain of what has been the foundation for society over thousands of years. loyalty to my wife, loyalty that I expect from her to commit to me and a life of moral decency, honesty, truthfulness, working together as lawful law partners to increase the strength for the family in every way, even financially.

If they haven't been exposed to these negative things in the modern environment most likely they're going to have the support of their good nature or the support of religion in their life to make them want to value marriage and want to be married and to give them a picture of themselves that they think is acceptable and they'll be avoiding the picture that they think is not acceptable.

The picture of decency, honest work, moral strength, and most importantly a belief we are accountable to G’d and that G’d is the way to everything that you are doing. That's what makes a strong marriage and it makes a strong family. When the parents are conscious like Southern parents who have it cause of nature, not just the church. Churches had been a way for African-American families, but I think it's in the nature of people if they are not spoiled by, I'd say artificial life, because that's what it is.

Because when they promote, the society is promoting or elements in society or institutions in the society promote single family household. They are promoting artificial families, that's not an actual family.

QUESTION: What role should scripture, particularly the Quran, serve in building the family?

IWDM: Scripture is the number one, I would say, source of information and also document, guideline, prescription that should be in the hand of all married couples. If they don't have it in their hands then they should know that they can carry their questions and their concerns to an Islamic teacher, to the imam, who is knowledgeable of what's in the Quran to support a strong families and preserve strong families so that they will get the guidance and the benefits from the scripture.

The scripture is the most important thing in the life of the married couple. When they have difficulties, we gather, we don't try to resolve these matters without , looking at what exactly what G’d has said. Has G’d revealed something that can assist in this situation that we are confronting?

We return to scripture first and we are also to turn to the light of Prophet Muhammad to seek support or guidance from His life for the strength and preservation and progress of our own relationship with our wife and with our husband.

QUESTION: What is Islamic view on artificial insemination, especially practice by women who's biological clock is running down and they want a baby, but not a husband?

IWDM: I see no support in Islam, in the Quran or in the life of Muhammad, the Prophet, to support a person who wants to make that decision, that they want a child, but they don't want marriage so they want to have it by artificial insemination. I don't see any support at all. I think that it would be condemned as perversion, as perversion and a corruption of the relationship.

QUESTION: What about inside marriage?

IWDM: Inside marriage, if the sperm is not the sperm of the husband, then I would say it's still a perversion and a corruption of the relationship.

QUESTION: What is the Islamic view of genetic manipulation, the cloning that's been going on?

IWDM: G’d says in the Quran, "And do not alter the fair nature created by G’d." So genetic manipulation seeks to alter that pattern, it seeks to alter the patterns that G’d has accepted. So based upon what G’d reveals, so G’d says, "Not altering the natural pattern," that would be condemned. Genetic manipulation would be a thing that Muslims would have to be against.

QUESTION: Should science pursue it, say for health reasons rather than-- they say they can take a gene now and maybe take out a disease or make sure you don't--

IWDM: Well, that's not genetic manipulation. If they're seeking cures it's not genetic manipulation. But if they're seeking to alter the way nature has been designed by the creator to perform then that would be condemned. But if they're seeking information to improve nature and not to change nature, that's okay. We would support that.

QUESTION: What are the concerns for parent/child relationships?

IWDM: The examples of the desired relationship for parent and child is something that scripture takes up too. We have Luqman's advice to son, peace be upon Prophet Luqman. We have Prophet Jacob's advice to his son and we have a living record of Prophet Muhammad's love and care for His children and His concerns for His daughters and His advice to His daughters that He gave.

Parents are to remain caring parents even after their children become grown. They are still to remain caring parents. There should be never any generation gap for parents and children. In other words, they should never tell us we are old-fashioned or we are out of touch . They should care. They should respect us more than that, even if they feel that they should never say it. They should always be open. G’d wants them to always be open to receive help from their parents.

QUESTION: What should our efforts as a community and as individuals be concerning the orphans?

IWDM: G’d revealed through Prophet Muhammad, who Himself was an orphan, the concerns for orphans. We find it in the Quran the orphan do not violate His rights. So the orphan though doesn't have parents to protect them, the orphan has all the rights that any other child has.

In other words, what's missing, because of the parent being missing, the society is obligated to step in there and make sure that child is not missing. We can't give a child another father, a genetic father, but we can give that child the support that a good father would give. That's what we're supposed to do. That's what it means.

We have to see that that orphan gets all the opportunities in a society that's open to children with parents. That means we have to see that their home situation is good. As long as they need a parent in the house, we should see that they have guardian in serving as a parent, answering the needs of parents in the life of that orphan. And we should see that that orphan is not denied an opportunity to progress in society just because the child is an orphan.

That means education, everything, we have to see that they have the same access to education, employment, and opportunities to advance in society. When the orphan-- when problems are brought to us we are to fulfill the needs-- answer the needs in that child's life so that that child does not suffer in society because of not having a parent, a father, mother, or both.

We have to give them the respect. That's why it says rights. They were orphans rights. It should be helped that we respect the orphan. It's not charity. It shouldn't be looked upon as charity. It's the rights. You're giving that child what he's rightfully entitled to as a member of the society and the creation of G’d, the human creation of G’d.

Muslims should be seen in society as persons who are conscious of that need, conscious of the problem for orphans and doing everything in their power to provide for orphans. An orphanage is not a altered kind of home. I believe Muslim society should look for parents for minors and also because of the situation, they shouldn't be in a dormitory like they're strays in society, wayward children. They should be given a home situation.

We would be obligated, I think, to support adoption. We reject the idea of having orphan homes for foster children, orphanage. Just putting children together who are not related, putting them all together and grouping them together, many children together, and taking care of them all together like that in a group situation in some kind of facility, it denies them the environment that G’d wanted for them. G’d wants a home environment for them, not a institution.

I'm not saying I'm really critical of orphanage homes. I'm saying we can do better. We can do better than established orphanage homes. We can find homes for those children. In most cases, the child that's an orphan will fare better with parents who have some children already that child's age, than the orphan will fare coming in a house with parents who have no children.

I still feel for those parents who don't have children and they want children, and they're looking to have a child so they go to the orphanage. They adopt a child and take him out of the orphanage, out of the orphan home. I understand their needs. But their needs are not more important than the children's needs, the young child's needs.

A young child needs to have a home where he can experience relationship with other children or where she would experience relationship with other children. It would be desirable to have them of their age, around the same age, or close to the same age. Then they would grow up in that house as members of that family and that would be the good situation for them.

QUESTION: What family insurances are acceptable and what should the community leadership be doing in that area?

IWDM: Family assurances?

QUESTION: Insurances.

IWDM: Insurances.

QUESTION: Insurance. Health insurance, burial insurance.

IWDM: I got, I got it, I got it, I got it. I was thinking about this insurance as a protection, but you really mean insurance.

QUESTION: Yes.

IWDM: We should be trying to provide insurance ourselves. Our goal is community responsibility. Responsibility for the whole needs, that is in community life. That's our goal. Somebody has to be responsible for it and G’d obligates us to be no less responsible for community life than anybody else who's created on this earth. In fact, more. The Muslims are supposed to be in the forefront of everything if we understand the Last Revelation and Muhammad the Prophet, peace be upon Him.

We should be trying to create financial institutions, we should be trying to provide insurance to our community, health insurance. I am not totally against life insurance. I'm against life insurance if the person buying the life insurance is preparing for death. But it the person is looking for financial benefits for his life or her life and also for protection for the children, for the future of the children, I don't see anything wrong with even death insurance.

The language is just horrible for me to accept . Death insurance you know what I mean . I don't like the expression. Life insurance, you know, life insurance, you know .

Most of us, we don't say life insurance, "Oh, I'm buying me some burial insurance." You thinking of death all of the time . So that's what I don't like and that's what's something is telling me, that why we shouldn't think that way or we shouldn't accept that kind of language.

But the health insurance, we don't have any problem at with health insurance. The only problem is that we got to go to other institutions for health insurance. I don't know of any health insurance plans that is not supported-- is not a bourgeoisie executive level staff, worker, a very wealthy executive level worker.

So, all that money is going to them. We can't deny them that right. They have the right to do that. But they are living rich lives, they are becoming wealthy, living rich lives. It's a source of wealth, that's what it is. It's a source of wealth for these people who want to be wealthy.

If we know that, and not have that mind, we don't believe that we should become wealth on the poor then we should try to move in and as much as possible satisfy these needs in our community life.

Insurance, we should be doing something about it, we should be working seriously to provide health insurance to our community. It is a source of wealth, it's a source of income. We can put that back into the schools and back into us. Because no one knows whether they're going to have cancer next year or not ..

It's an uncertain situation, but you don't want to take the risk that you will have to go to the hospital and you won't be able to have insurance. You don't want to take that risk either. So, if we be responsible for health insurance, then we should be looking to see if we know that this institution, this business is going to bring money in.

We should be looking to see where we going to put this money. To me, caring for people's health, educating, caring for their education of their children, caring for their health, and giving them the word of G’d on Friday, the guidance so they will know how to live all equally sacred. All are sacred.

We shouldn't take something that's sacred and put it into something that's not sacred. We should take some money that you get from the insurance business and put it into something else that's sacred if the insurance business doesn't need anymore of it. So, you put it in school, you put it in education, you put it in propagation, you put it in better facilities, you put it in the path of G’d. Then G’d will be with us and we will be very successful.

QUESTION: I have three more questions. I am going to ask the last one first just in case the flag gets called. What should be the relationship with non-Muslim relatives, especially parents; visiting them, prayers for them, and burials attending, and participating?

IWDM: According to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, his example we should keep good company with our non-Muslim relatives in this life. That means we should support them as their children and we should support them as parents that we feel a debt to.

To me, that means that if they want us to pray with them, we should pray with them. But we pray as we know to pray. If we make dua, we make dua as we know to make dua. And we can make it silently while they pray, but we should join them if they want to pray together with us. If they will come to family to get together and pray, never refuse them. Our parents are our relatives.

If they should die, they have a service and the service is not Islamic, the service is Christian or something else, we shouldn't refuse to go to the service. We should go there and we support them in their time of sadness and grief. We will need to be with them, because I am sure we have experienced some sadness and grief. Even though we're Muslims we have the same natural feelings for our relatives that the rest of people have.

QUESTION: What's the Islamic view on abortion?

IWDM: It's condemned. Abortion is not accepted. G’d says to us, "Do not kill your children out of fear of poverty and want, there is no other reason to kill them.

You know the saying men used to have in pre-Islamic times, the men took pride in having sons, because sons were workers and sons were warriors. They grew up to be warriors. The strength of society was seen in its men more than its women. For the strength of the society and for work and labor.

Men prided themselves on having sons so much that they would be ashamed to be seen by their neighbors or by their friends with nothing but daughters or a lot of daughters. The habit was to kill daughters when they come. If you got too many daughters and not enough sons, too many daughters, rather than keep having daughters they'd kill them. They buried them alive. They buried them alive.

It means buried them alive I’m telling you all this is the situation, not necessarily putting them in the write up in the paper, but burying them alive means burying them while they have life in them to grow and develop. They have a future life, so you bury them alive. You don't give it a chance to spread itself up, to be establishing them in the world, you buried them.

So, you actually buried them alive. They were alive, God had them alive. You decided that you didn't want them, so you took that life away from them. It has another application to, but it's an interpretation. That is that to put a person, to plan a person's life so that it be contained in materialism and in production, and industry. You take their life and you put it all there, you lock it up there, you bury it in that. You don't help the life have spiritual expression and have a love for G’d or a relationship with G’d. That's burying the child alive. That's burying the child alive.

Even though there's no physical harm, no physical death, nothing wrong physically, but you're influencing that person's life to keep that person all in material possession and not free to develop spiritually and develop a relationship with G’d, a real relationship with G’d. You're burying a child's alive.