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# Extended Sense of Belonging More of the Good Life

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Speaker 1: Lecture titled Extended Sense of Belonging: More of the Good Life was recorded Sunday, July the 12th 1998 at the Northwest Activities Center in Detroit, Michigan. The lecturer is Iman W. Deen Mohammed, Muslim American spokesman. Now Imam Mohammed.

Imam Mohamed: As-salaam-alaikum.

Audience: Wa-alaikum-as-salaam.

Iman Mohammed: That is peace be unto you or peace be upon you as we say. We thank the G-d, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the creator of all of us, the creator of man and mankind and all of the resources that we have to have to survive and progress. The Lord, creator of the heavens and the earth, we witness that He is G-d and He cares about all of us, He cares about all of His creation. We witness that Muhammad, to whom the Quran was revealed, is the seal of the prophets and the last of the prophets and a mercy to all of the world, as G-d says. In our book, the scripture called Quran, G-d says of him that he is a mercy to the worlds. Peace be upon Muhammad, the messenger, servant of G-d, the seal of the prophets.

We are expecting Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick. I did have the opportunity to meet her on one occasion before I'm sure. We are expecting her. When she arrives, we want her to greet the audience in her own way, so there will an interruption when she arrives because she has another appointment. When she arrives, we will give way for her to greet the audience.

Let me first explain the language of the topic. More of The Good Life, I believe in the world now but in America, it has been so for I guess for the life of the United States of America. The whole duration of the life of this nation till now, I believe that the idea of the good life was the idea that the founding fathers of this nation, great nation, United States of America had in mind. I do believe that they were inspired by scripture to come up with their idea of what the good life should be for citizens to live and have peace, and security, and prosperity.

In the Quran, our holy book, G-d says-- G-d asked the question really, He says, "Who has forbidden the good things to My servants?" He says, "These good things are for them," the good things are for them. Even more in the hereafter or the expression is exclusively for them in the hereafter. Both revealed books, the Bible and the Quran gives us the words of G-d, warning us to live a good life and to avoid sin and corruption, or sin, so that we will have and keep that life. Both books tell us that G-d rewards obedience to Him with paradise or we say heaven.

We know in paradise or in heaven, there will be no criminals and no sinners. Whatever there is to enjoy, and we do expect the fulfillment of all of our good desires, as G-d says, that that heaven will be the fulfillment of all desires of the righteous. We do believe in that and we know that that won't be shared with sinners or criminals. It will be exclusively for G-d's obedient servants or the ones who feared the wrath of G-d, feared to do wrong and strived always to do right. It'll be for them.

Not that a person with sin-- some sin will be rejected and not admitted into paradise. We know that according to the teachings of Quran and the Bible, if we understand it, our holy book says, "Good deeds remove bad deeds." Not that you're not going to have some sin. If that was the case, then according to the Bible no one would go to paradise, because the bible says, "There is none without sin." Everyone has sinned.

We have to believe then that G-d is a merciful G-d, a loving G-d, a merciful G-d and G-d rewards goodness, G-d rewards sincerity, G-d rewards steadfastness. Those who don't give up the belief and a honorable life. Those who hold on to a belief and an honorable life, though they may stumble and fall, though they may err, though they may do fall into wrongdoings and commit a wrongdoing, but as soon as they're aware of it, they become remorse, they want to seek forgiveness, they want to have it removed from them. These are the people who will inherit the paradise.

We must understand that G-d in the Quran tells us that the good things of this world, that's what G-d says, the good things of this world are for the believers, for those who believe in G-d. G-d has created this whole world, sky and earth, for those who believe in G-d. I'm determined not to turn over my share to bad people.

Audience: Allahu Akbar.

Iman Mohammed: Praise be to Allah. Continuing our address now, Extended Sense Of Belonging. As a young man, I share with most of African American people, a sense of rejection, a sense of being rejected in this country. I didn't come up with a sense of belonging as a citizen of the United States of America. I didn't have that sense of belonging. You didn't have it, not back then. We didn't have that sense of belonging. We were constantly made aware that we weren't fully accepted.

That was a burden on us. It really hurt our, I would say, natural ability. It hurt our natural ability to establish ourselves in society. I believe even now what is hurting our ability to establish ourselves in society is that damaged sense of belonging. I have worked very, I would say, seriously [chuckles] to have those within the reach of my voice in this community to know how to overcome that.

I don't know if you've understood everything that I've said to you, but much of it, I'm going to be repeating today. You can't get the benefit of your own ability if you don't identify in what is happening or what is offered. In America, what's offered to every citizen is a share in this America. A share in this America. Not just a share of your neighborhood but a share in this America. Somebody knows that and somebody has gotten a big share in this America. You know that. I don't have to name any persons or any group, groups of person.

You know that somebody has big shares in this United States of America. They own land, they own property, they own wealth, they own technology, they own great services. They are owners of big, big shares in this country that we all know to be the greatest country on this earth in terms of its wealth and production. Whether you believe it or not, in terms of its freedom, its democracy, it's the greatest country we have on this earth. All citizens are entitled to aspire, to desire and then seek to get a share of this country.

What's wrong with wanting to get more? If you really are sincere and you're a believer, you're a G-d-fearing person, or you believe in decency, what's wrong with wanting to get more? Tell me what is right with putting a limit on how much you can get? Tell me what's right with that. That's like telling me, "Go to college but put a limit on how far you succeed. Go to college but don't go there to achieve the maximum that you can achieve. Put a limit on how much you're going to achieve in college." That would be ridiculous.

It is no less ridiculous to tell somebody that they should put a limit on how much they want the good world or good life that G-d has opened to all of us. G-d has opened this to all of us. We wouldn't have anything if G-d hadn't made it and made us with the abilities to benefit from it or with the knowledge and skills of at least the potential to develope and benefit from it. We wouldn't have anything if G-d hadn't designed this body and this brain the way He has designed it. We wouldn't have it. It's there and we're here. G-d put it there and G-d put us here. G-d designed the world and G-d designed us, so whatever we achieve or accomplish, the credit goes first to G-d who made it to happen. G-d made it to happen.

[chuckles] What's wrong with wanting a big share of it? People are people, and people have appetites that differ. We don't want to change that. We just want to get rid of an abnormal situation. I think we have an abnormal situation as African Americans or as, I would say, deprived people. Not just African Americans but all deprived people. They have, what I call, an abnormal situation. Because they have been deprived of generation after generation, they have come to accept their situation. At least they are not doing anything about changing it. They live with it day after day.

Maybe they dislike it, but they don't have the encouragement to do something about it, to change it, make it go away, except for an isolated few in the society. That very few are not enough to make a difference in the way we feel about ourselves and what we are willing to do about our conditions. It doesn't change. The few are too few. They are not seen, they are not visible, they are not affecting the life of the many, so the many still stay in the same situation.

To get the benefit of something, you have to have a real relationship with it. You can't be cut off from it. If you believe that the home you live in is not available to you, that it's not there to accommodate you, you won't be accommodated in that home. If you believe that this home is mine as it is, my relative, or this person, or that person, this is my home, once you accept that, once believe that and accept that, "This is my home," then now you are free to live in that home. That's what frees you to live in that home. You're accepting that that's your home. "This is my home." That frees you to enjoy the home. To live in that home and enjoy the home. United States is the home of every American citizen. It's our home.

This United States, this is America, this is home. Many of you are still failing, too many of you, still failing to accept that this is your home. The United States is your home. It's yours. You are entitled to it as much as anybody else living in it. You should have the freedom to enjoy it as much as anybody else living in this home we call the United States of America. We can't blame white men, we can't blame the white race for our situation anymore. We're free. We are mentally free, spiritually free, physically free. We are free to make choices of our own. We are free to pursue anything we want to pursue in this country. Presidency of the United States, of a bank, developer of resources, whatever we want to pursue, we can do it. We're citizens, the law will protect our rights.

What's holding us back? The belief that something is wrong with these rights. [laughs] Something is wrong with this freedom. Something is wrong with this belief in democracy. Show me what's wrong, and let's make it right. Until you can find out what's wrong and show it to everybody else so everybody else understands it, let's enjoy the promise Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., may G-d give him paradise, he held the country responsible to fulfill the promise. When he was working to make progress or to get us out of the situation we were in. There was something wrong. Plenty was wrong, but now we live in a changed world.

I don't know if you're aware of how many African Americans remember Dr. King in comparison to whites who remember him favorably. In my travels, I'm meeting more whites that remember Dr. King, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and speak of him reverently and identify with him in what he believed in, his high principles, and express a sense of indebtedness to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Whites are doing this? Should not they do that? He didn't only benefit blacks or African Americans, he benefited all citizens of this country, because racism was a sickness and a poison that was holding all of us back and affecting all of us negatively. He with the help of others before him and during his time, under his leadership, all of that was pushed away. All of that was condemned. Presidents came out boldly on television and addressed the nation, telling the nation what we had done wrong, what this country had done wrong and that it couldn't continue and brought out army, the national reserves, and the army, the police, and everything was brought out to defend the stand that they had taken.

That was serious business. Today, we don't have that situation. There's not a situation like that anymore. There's no two laws in this country, one for blacks and one for whites. There's only one law now. Jim Crow is gone. It's one law for all citizens. Any time we can find that there's a law that discriminates against any of us, we can correct it. We can have it changed. This is the situation we have now.

I repeat, we are citizens with equal entitlement, equal rights to shares in this great country. What holds us back from having progress that we should have as a people, is our own unwillingness or our own condition. I don't think it even comes in the mind or the will. Our own condition won't allow us to think free, to think ownership. Ownership. You have as a citizen of this country, you have ownership in this country.

Who owns this country? The citizens of this country own this country. You have ownership, but how much you own depends upon how much you're willing to want, to have an appetite for, and then act to get it. Elijah Muhammad was in this country when at a time when this country was not accepting us fully, but he still believed that all of us as human beings had right to this earth, so he taught his followers that the earth belongs to them. Now the only thing was wrong with that, he was saying it belonged exclusively to them.

[laughter]

That was the only thing wrong with it. His son now tells you the same thing. The earth belongs to you but not exclusively. It belongs to all other human beings too. G-d made the human beings to be the caretakers on this earth. He didn't make apes to do that. They don't have the ability. The elephants are very huge and wise creatures too, but he didn't give them the ability to be caretakers on this earth. He made human beings with a brain and with the resources necessary to qualify for caretaker. Caretaker. It's time for us to stop worrying about who's going to take care of us and start worrying about whether we are taking care of as much as we should be taking care of or not.

Stop thinking about somebody taking care of you, start thinking about yourself. Am I taking care of enough? Can I take care of more? If I can't, can I qualify to take care of more? I repeat, we differ in terms of our spirit, our appetites, our ability to get out and do things. We differ. Always going to be someone more energetic, someone more ready, but that doesn't mean you don't have a place in the work.

If you can't do nothing but just greet that person every morning with a smile, then make sure that person is working good for us, with a good spirit. My job is going to be to keep this man in a good spirit. Since I can't do what he's doing, what I can do is keep him in a good spirit. Have a smile for him when you see him, cheer him on when you see him working. Yes, there's something for everybody to do. You can do more than that. We know we can do more than that. We can do more than just cheer somebody on, we can do our part. We can find a place for ourselves.

This is what the world is calling for now. The world of the future is calling for more of us to become more productive. The only way you're going to become more productive, you're going to have to get that idea out of your head that this world is a white man's world. This world is a human man world. Let us qualify to be the best human man. The best human man will have the biggest opportunity to benefit from what G-d has created. Yes, because really, the right to have this position of caring and taking charge, taking care of things and taking charge was given according to scripture and we base what we say upon the scripture because we are Muslims and we're Christians, so we base what we say upon scripture.

G-d created, according to G-d's word in scripture, G-d made all of this for the human man that He made when there was no other man on this earth. That human man G-d made became the father, the ancestor of all of us. Maybe crooked courts and things and lawyers can cheat me out of my rights but if I believe in G-d and I go back to the rights that G-d gave me, I haven't lost my rights. G-d gave all of this earth, and the sky, and everything as utility, as resources. According to our scripture, he gave it all to my ancestor, so I have inheritance rights. I have rights to inherit from my ancestor. He's not around anymore but I'm here and I own everything that's coming to him.

G-d says to us in the Quran that he made what you see in the skies to respond to you and give benefit to you for yourself and society. He made everything in the earth. The land and everything that grows out of it and the minerals, the precious minerals that Congresswoman Kilpatrick mentioned that's so plentiful in Africa. G-d made it that way. G-d put all those things there. That petroleum, the oil, and everything, the nutrients that we get in our food that comes from the earth, all of that G-d did. It all was done for that one man.

According to scripture, it all was done for that one man, so that that one man would have everything that he needed to accomplish the life that G-d created him for. Not just for him singly, G-d never really treated him as one man. G-d always treated him as the father of the generations, of a father of the many. That's how G-d treated him. Really, G-d didn't provide that just for the one man in that seens G-d provided that for the many that would come.

When G-d was saying to that one man, "I have created all of this for you. G-d was really saying, what's more important to understand, is that G-d was saying, "I have created all of this for all of us." You, me, G-d did it for all of us. For all the descendants of that man. G-d did it for all of us.

The Quran comes and give us language that helps us to know what G-d wants. In the Quran G-d says, seek with the means that He has made available to you. That means your own abilities and whatever you can use as a tool or whatever the environment offers you to increase your ability or to increase your means for accomplishing something. G-d says, seek with the means that He has made possible for you.

The future or the English west says, the hereafter. The future or the last stage, the last destination, the last goal and that's heaven, that's paradise. "Seek it with the means that I have made available to you, but don't forget your share of this world." That's G-d's language not mine. That's what G-d says to us in the Quran, "But don't forget your share of this world." Now there are many quotes from the Bible that I could bring, that I think satisfy that same meaning, that same concern but I just bring you one. It come to give you life and give you life more abundantly. Yes. Don't be afraid to want more, be afraid not to want more.

A sense of belonging. We don't just belong to our neighborhood, we don't just belong to our family, and certainly we don't just belong to ourselves as individuals. Human being is a very special creation. Because of the intelligence we have, the power of reason, the ability to make free and independent choices, the ability to question things, and change things, and step out of a particular mold of life and choose even a different mold of life, no other creature has been give that kind of freedom and power, but the human being. Only the human being. We have that. We're a very special creation.

Because of this very special creation, we can manage so many things, produce so many things, create so many things, we also can mess up for ourselves and mess up for others. Because of this very special creation, power to reason, power to make choices, power to reject whatever we want to reject, and put our mind to new and different things, we have that freedom. That's a great freedom.

The most significant freedom, the most important freedom, the most productive freedom we have is not the freedom of movement with this physical body, it's the freedom of movement with this powerful, resourceful mind. That's the freedom. That's more important. We have to understand what G-d has given to us and what G-d has connected us with. G-d has connected us up with the world, with each other and with the world. The family is connected up with his self. The members together make one family.

G-d made all people connected. When he created one and made it possible for us to multiply from that one into many, G-d connected all people up together. We have to go our separate ways, the African Africa, the European Europe, the Asian Asia, and the many other places where we have migrated, or gone, or been placed, or developed, and native places, many, but that doesn't at all weaken the truth of the matter that we are all connected. Humanly, we are all connected.

The world has invited us to use it, to use its resources and benefit. We have done that, some less than others but we have done that. Eating at the table of the world, the earth itself and multiplying in numbers, have made the individuals, persons eating at that table so many, over 5 billion. That work so large, mega tons of food and other things. The space have been used up, space has been occupied by people and things produced. The world that was kind of naked separated us. There was nothing to connect us.

Now so many people and so much has been produced that we are connected everywhere. We are connected with each other and we are connected with our production, with our works. Sometimes, in most cases, our production that connects us when we are separated by oceans or by huge bodies of water or land. It's our production that connects us. Someone has something that we'd like to have on our table and they live across the ocean, we learn they have it, some of us find a way to get it to our tables.

We have something on our table that they don't have on their table. Somebody on their side learn about it and they find a way to get it on their table. Here we are brought into an exchange, we're exchanging goods. We have a real connection. The world has made very small now, one big living room. We are all connected. G-d has brought about the situation that is compelling us to acknowledge that the human family is one family. The real race is not the black and the white. The real race is a human race. One race.

This is what the realities are compelling us to accept. That the G-d that made this earth didn't make it for one anymore than He made it for the other. That's why our president, president of the United States, Bill Clinton, go way over across the ocean to the Far East in China and he's speaking to the Chinese people. What he says registers with us that this man is a G-d-fearing man. Not just an American president, this is a G-d-fearing man. This man is carrying on his heart the burden of divine justice, he wants to tell those people that they are entitled to freedom, more freedom, they're entitled to democracy. They're entitled to social justice and economic justice. They're entitled to benefit from this whole world in a natural and normal relationship with other nations, who are their members in the family of man. This is what he's saying. I'm not quoting him exactly, but I'm giving you a gist of what are he's saying.

We're saying the same. We're living in a time when the president of the greatest country on earth, the most powerful material country on this earth, technology, material, et cetera. Most powerful country on this earth its president, goes and speaks to another land. The newspaper, quote him, and describe him as a giver of a sermon. A preacher, a giver of a sermon. That tells us, this is the day of religion. This is the day of G-d's rule. G-d's rule is all the time, but this is the day when the world is going to recognize G-d's rule.

A sense of belonging. I belong to my parents, I belong to my brothers and sisters as a family, immediate family, but I also belong to my neighbors. I'm human. They're human. I and my neighbors, we share one identity. That identity is more important than Black and White. More important than African and European, that identity is human. The human is the whole person. The black is just a color on it. The human is the whole person. Africa is just a name on it.

The human a whole person. The way I have lived, the way I eat, the way I dress, the way I talk, my language. These are all decorations. Small imprints on the whole person, the human person. I can take off the language and still live a whole human life. I can take off the culture and still live a whole human life. I won't be impaired if I'm happy in the culture that I take on. That's what we need to do. We need to identify in the true identity, the real identity, the most important identity is human, means I'm not a dog, I'm not a horse, I'm not a tree. I'm something definite. I'm supposed to be with humans and mate with human, survive with humans, and prosper with humans.

Plan the future and prosper with humans. We can't do it alone. We lose our identity if we try to be alone. We lose our human identity if we try to be alone. Our religion encourages us to appreciate group life. Even gives us an incentive to have more at the table, when we eat tonight. G-d says, the blessing is on the many. If you got two for dinner, G-d won't give you my blessing. You got 20, now the blessings have increased, blessing has increased ten times because G-d says the blessing is on the many.

Any time you add one, the blessing is increased, at the table. How folks used to say from the south, “my folks and all my people have big families. G-d has always blessed us, to have food on the table”. Have you heard that? I have. That's what they say. I think that's a living witness that the blessing is on the many. I didn't say that, for you to go and try to have 20 in your,...eighteen children in your family. I didn't say that for that. What's more important now is for us to connect with each other. Whatever we have as an interest. Let us see if we can connect up with each other, and bring more people into this interest who share this interest so that our interest will be bigger. Our concern will be bigger. Our interest will be bigger. Our work will be bigger and our production will be bigger.

So that more people in the neighborhood will benefit. More people in the town will benefit. That's what we need to do. Don't be afraid to challenge the town. This town can become more productive than it is. This town can hire more people than it's hiring. Don't be afraid to think that way. Somebody has to be free to think that way. This town can produce more. This town can serve its citizens better. Isn't that what we expect in the mayors that we put in the office? When we put them in the office, don't we expect them to have them have something to say that will lift our spirits? We don't want them to come in and singing the same old dull song.

We want them, when we select them we want them to have a new song. We should expect no less of each other, of our own leaders. Let us ask G-d. Let's pray to G-d, to produce for us great leaders. What we mean by great? Human leader, humane leaders, intelligent leader, leaders with foresight, leaders who will challenge the darkness in the road ahead, break through it and put a light there so we can see into the future.

Yes, let us pray to G-d for leaders like that. Men and women, leaders for us, and then let us be on the look, be on the watch like Jews in Synagogue, wanting to see which child will show promise. Which child will show extraordinary ability? Let us be looking at the masses of our people and looking at those people who come forward from them to assume leadership. Let us be looking at them, looking for that one, that shows promise, looking for that one that has extraordinary ability.

The principal of decency and honesty or integrity. Let us then organize people, we'll go out organize people to vote for certain candidates. It's more important to appeal to people and organize people to support good leadership. So that we will have more of the good life, have it better. This is what's necessary, and I go back to a sense of belonging because without a full sense of belonging, you're not going to go very far.

The world now it's open to people who understand the whole family of man, understand the rights of every group in that family and accepts it, and believes that the earth belongs to all of us, and we all should be enjoying it. This what the world is asking for now, and you belong to all of those people as a human person. When you're born, you're not born Chinese. You later become Chinese. You're born looking like a Chinese, but do you think the same child looking like a Chinese and let him be born on my block or down the hospital down the street from me, and let him mix with us, and you know what it's going to turn out to be.

[laughter]

Imam Mohammed: Yes, you go to the nursery and see the newborn there, no baby is speaking Chinese, no baby is speaking English, no baby is speaking Arabic. They're all speaking the same language. They cry alike and sound alike, then they learn from us the language, and then they become speakers of English, speakers of Chinese, and speakers of Arabic, or whatever. Right?

Crowd: Right.

Imam Mohammed: That's evidence that G-d makes them first all alike. As the Prophet Muhammad said, "It's the circumstance that they're put in that makes them different." Yes, a sense of belonging. We have to wake up in the morning and feel rich. Yes, not poor, feel rich. Wake up in the morning and say, "Well, G-d made the land out there that my house is on for me. He made me to share in the whole earth, and I don't have two rooms. I'm entitled to more." Now, don't a pistol and go get it.

[laughter]

Imam Mohammed: That's the way of the criminal, and G-d didn't make it for criminals. He made it for people who believe in justice, honesty, decency, fairness, kindness, charity, et cetera. These are the attributes, the descriptions of a human being that G-d opened this world to, created for that first, that human being, and opened it up to that human being. You want more of it? Become more of that human being that G-d created you to be, become more honest, become more loving. Care about others, not just yourself. We can get rid of most of our sickness if we just stop thinking about ourselves and start thinking about somebody else.

When your head is hurting and your arthritis is killing you, your ulcers bothering you, hold your hand the way you pray like that or like this, or hold around, I don't know how you pray. Hold your hand and pray like you pray and say, "Oh, G-d, there must be a lot of people suffering this that I got, and to think about it, sure hurts my heart. Please help all of us get out of this sickness. Get rid of these aches and pains, arthritis, and whatever." Yes, pray like that. If you start praying with the family in mind instead of just yourself, healing will come to you. Yes, healing will come to you.

That's the same thing for your lack of ability to go out and make a productive life for yourself. If you just think about your own poverty or your own, I would say, being denied, you won't get the help from G-d and His angels, and the good people and the good resources, won't be supporting you. But if you would think not just for yourself but for others. We fast in the month of Ramadan. Some of us, we can eat as much food as we want every day. We got money, we can't eat all the food we can buy. We can buy more food than we can eat, but when it comes to the month of Ramadan, and we're a Muslim, we're supposed to fast. We feel the hunger pains that the poor person feels who can't get the food he wants.

G-d has given us that to make us become aware or become more aware of suffering people. G-d has given us the human nature to want to help somebody. We should extend that help, extend the helping hand, extend it to other people because we all belong to one family, the human family. We should start right at home and start practicing, living as a decent person with each other, caring about each other, loving each other.

We have connected up with the people who are Catholics, this community with me. We have connected up with the people who are Catholics, the Focolare people, their worldwide movement. It start during World War II. Over in Europe, by a young lady, a girl, she first got the idea when she was a girl, same person heads the movement today. I met her, so impressed with her, so impressed with those people. What are they doing?

The Catholic community is a big worldwide community, and here is a small group among them not trying to live or demonstrate, I would say, the whole life that we see of a Christian in the Bible, but they're just taking what they believe to be the most important part of it, the principle of love and charity, love that will make us want to help each other. They're taking that one principle of love that G-d revealed to them through Jesus, peace be upon him, the principle of love. They've taken that principle and they're living it. They're not just preaching it, they're living it.

They show love to each other, they greet each other with love, they express love for each other. Love opens up the heart for kindness, love opens up the heart for charity. All goodness is possible when you have love. Yes, and we know G-d loves us. He says He loves us, and our Prophet, peace be upon Him, He said, "You will not enter paradise until you have faith, and you will not have faith until you practice loving each other." That's what our Prophet said.

These two Books, these two Scriptures, are not in conflict with each other. They agree that love is a human property and a human need, and G-d want us to accept it and express it among each other. If the Prophet made love a condition for faith to be manifest, that should tell us love is very important. He told us we can't enter paradise without faith, and then so that we can have faith, what should I do? If I don't have love, right away I should know I don't have faith. If I'm a Muslim, if I don't have love, according to the words of the Prophet, then I don't have the faith that would get me in the paradise.

I should first look at what is missing in my life in terms of me expressing love, and I should express love as a creation of G-d, a human being, and then I should be working on that. So that I express love for my brother, for my sister, for my neighbor, for my human member in the family of humanity. Express love.

If you want physical fitness you know that you have to do something to get it. Now, we're saying what this religion wants of us? Religion wants us to express love just like this physical fitness. You have to do something to get it. Why can't we look at these things in a sensible way? Look at these concerns in a sensible way and say okay, I know I haven't been expressing enough love. I have to work at it. I may have to work on this.

The most miserable people are those who have that sickness, - self-important. The call to wake up in the day is given in the dawn. The time of dawn before sunrise. The first thing we hear the caller say is, G-d is greater. Let us know you'll know whoever it is. Your husband or your wife or your boss on the job. Are you? You not the greater, G-d is the greater. That's what it's for, to awaken us to know G-d is the greatest.

You're important yes, but you're not the most important. G-d is the most important. That's what it's saying. We wake up in the morning. You don't have a muezzin waking you up at fajr time. Wake yourself up and first thing you say, G-d is the greater. G-d want us to hear that first before anything else. In the morning, when you wake up, you wake and say G-d is the greater. Then what you do? You think of making yourself presentable, don't you? That means get up and go to washroom. After say G-d is greatest say oh, I had to get up make myself presentable. What's wrong when thinking like that? That's great thinking man.

Then remember what the Prophet said. Love for your brother what you love for yourself. He said you're not a believer until you can do that. You're not a believer until you can love for your brother what you love for yourself. Now, I see the logic for that. If I accept the scriptural logic that G-d made one man and all of us are members, descendants from him. That means all of us have equal titles, equal rights of inheritance. Whatever I want for myself, I should want for my brother upon that logic. It's not just sentimental. It's justice. The focolare people, they've touched my heart.

They've caused me to look in the Quran and look in the life of Muhammad, the Prophet. It brought me to see that we have a serious problem. We talking about knowledge and Arabic and all of this. Missing in faith because we're missing in love, sense of belonging. Let us identify with each other. Let's identify with each other in a human way and a healthy humanly way and recognize what G-d say is the reality. That we all members in one body, the collective body of the human family on this earth. That G-d has created everything for all of us to benefit from it and use and benefit from it and to prosper, not just to survive. No, to have a good life.

As the Bible saying to have it more abundantly, they have more of it. As I reported to you from our scripture the Quran. G-d said that who has forbidden these things of the world, these good things of the world? Say no. They are for my devoted servants, and exclusively for them in the hereafter or in the destiny, at the destination. Be exclusively for them because the criminals will be cut out of it. Yes, it will be exclusively for us. G-d made rivers and lakes and filled the rivers and lakes with fish and made land that grow up trees and flowers and all kinds of great products to eat.

As G-d says in the scriptures both books Quran and the Bible, he has done all that. Look out there and see all that abundant life, abundant growth, abundant resources, abundant food. You look out there and see all that. That's love. G-d made more than you can eat. That's love. G-d made the scenery pleasant to your eyes. That's love and that's charity because there's more than enough. There's enough to share with other. Somehow, we allow ourselves to be disconnected and we have to connect up again so we can live a correct healthy sense of belonging.

We have to connect up again. We know slavery separate us from Africa. We have to connect up again. Slavery separated us from other races, from other people, from other nations, we have to connect up again. Slavery did this. Slavery separated us from Africa but not only from Africa. Slavery in its plantation style. Slavery in the South separated us also from other nationalities. We are carrying the effects of that and don't know it, not conscious of it. We feel all uptight when we come in the masjid and see 20 White people. Get all uptight? What's happening?

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: I should have picked another day to come here.

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: What we should be saying is it isn't wonderful? Because it's for everybody. It's for everybody. The G-d is for everybody equally and the religion is for everybody equally. It's a tribute to us, we're honored. When we come to our black house and we find 20 White people came in there to be with us. That's a great honor. That's an honor paid to us. Now, I'm using this color language and uses Black and White for a reason. That's not my language, I'm using for a reason because it's your language. I didn't want to say that but I guess I have to because it's your language. You understand that language.

You come expecting the house to be full of Black people and you find 20 friends of ours from the Focolare, all white. You're kind of uneasy. Wonder what's going to happen today? No, don't be intimidated by a human being. Nothing should intimidate you at all. Except I would say something that's great in quality are great in principle, great in virtues. If you feel yourself I would say inferior, greatly inferior, you might be intimidated a bit by that. Never let a human being presence intimidate you simply because that human being is of another color or another people. We are all human.

We should embrace people with respect for the circumstances that we are all sharing. They come in here to share these circumstances with us of the masjid or the congregation. Then we have to treat them as guests with equal rights before G-d.

Yes. Not before us, before G-d with equal rights before G-d. Equal titlement before G-d. They are human, so they're entitled to be here. The only thing would make them not qualified is that they start behaving in a way that would not show us their human side. Practice Love, be intelligent. Know that you belong to each other firstly, to your family but then, to your friends, or the people you associate with. The people that you share a commitment with. You share a commitment with the Muslims of this association.

That make you partners, your partners in a big interest. Yes you are. You're partners in a big interest. You don't look that person like you look at somebody that you have no relationship with at all. No partnership with at all. Be happy to see that person, know that person is a partner in a big interest with you. You are obligated to greet them in the language that is given to you. The language of Islam. Say to them after them, as salaam alaikum.

Here we have a Christian Congresswoman, comes up and she knows are greetings, so she greets us, as salaam alaikum. I heard no strain, I sensed no strain at all in her voice. It came out so freely, so beautifully, as salaam alaikum.

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: I said to myself I wish brother so and so and sister so and so could greet each other like that.

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: We're going to make it. A friend of mine, Malazuk, in Dallas Texas. He got so many things about him I dislike until have I thought about him, I never speak to him again.

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: But he got some things that I like that's so impressive. I can't think about the things that I dislike.

[laughter]

Iman Mohammed: He tells me when they see me, he says, "Brother Iman, we're going to win this race." What is the race? The race is the race to overcome our setback. The setback of ignorance. The setback of racism, all of these negative things that G-d doesn't want in us or on us, that's the setback. He says, "But Imam, we're going to win this race." The race is the human race, for human excellence, for human peace, for human unity, for human works and cooperation and productivity, that's the race.

G-d says to us in Quran, "And go you all together as in the race, for all that is good." Good. The term "good" is not an abstract term. There are many words for good in the Quran. G-d uses the language that tells us that this is good in the broadest sense, it doesn't only mean for good behavior. Yes, we want that most of all. But it doesn't only mean for good behavior, go as in a race for all that is good, for quality of life. Quality life, good families, healthy families, children that don't have to worry about going to college because there won't be any money around.

We can't solve all those problems, those are the human problem. Yes. Neighborhoods looking bad. Trash all over the streets. Homes in bad repair. That's a burden on the heart. But that isn't nothing that we can't change, we can change all of that.

When G-d says, go as a race to all that is good, G-d is telling us to remember what he said about the town. He said yes, as a parable of the resurrection of the dead it's like a town you go into and the roof's all caved in. The property is in bad repair, then a change is brought about, a renewal comes, a resurrection for that town. We should go as in race for all that is good not only to bring our own immediate environment to life but to bring the neighborhood to life and we have men and women who could accept this challenge and we are accepting it.

We're going to do something about it. We are not going to wait for all African-Americans to get in good shape. We're going to take a few and we're going to change circumstances that will make it easier for the majority of African-Americans to get in good shape and peace, as salaam alaikum.

[applause]

[01:15:00] [END OF AUDIO]