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# IWDM Study Library

# Honoring ExcellenceCultivating Human Potential

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Speaker 1: To our beloved leader, leader of Muslim American Society, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, [Arabic language]

[applause]

Warith Deen Mohammed: Praise be to Allah. We say praise be to God Al-hamdu-lilahi rabbil' alamin. Praise be to God who is the lord keeper and sustainer of all the worlds. We witness that he is one and we witness that Muhammad to whom the Quran was revealed over 14 centuries ago in Arabia is his servant and his messenger and is the last of the prophets the seal of the prophets mentioned as the Quran says in both the Old and New testament but not by those names mentioned in the Torah and in the gospel the Injeel.

Our prophet, the prophet of Islam, is called the mercy to all people, our mercy to all the worlds [Arabic language] mercy to all people. He's also called a liberator who liberates human beings from all forms of slavery. In the Quran we have Muhammad mentioned as one that we can find in the Torah and in the Injeel that is in the old and in the new testament. The description of Muhammad is given. I'm familiar with the Bible. I have read the bible through more than once from Genesis to Revelation more than once and I have studied it also from Genesis to Revelation and for me with the Bible something that I read what Allah says in our Quran in the holy book of Muslims concerning Muhammad is being mentioned in the Bible I've read it and recognized those verses. He's mentioned as one who will take the heavy yokes from the backs of the people and free them from all kinds of bonds of enslavement.

Islam is a religion that stresses or emphasizes the purity of worship and one God in our religion, one God in our religion frees us from all forms of slavery. God address all Muslims or all believers as his servants. He says to us all my servants ya ibadi, all my servants he says speaking to all of us. He says that he created human beings for no other purpose than to be his servants. All human beings, we are to accept that God made all human beings to be his servants not just us but all human beings to be his servants. I have studied the Christ Jesus peace be upon Him. He's the mission in the Bible and He introduced Himself to the world as God's servant. He says I am to be about my father's business. He also referred to himself as a servant, as a servant of God.

In Islam, to be the servant of God means to give your whole life in obedience to God. The word servant in Quranic Arabic means being obedient person, obeying, obedient person, obeying but not just obeying but also adoring the master that you obey, adoring that master that you obey and devoting yourself willingly in service to that master. God says your sacrifices do not reach me, your blood nor the animals, your sacrifices do not reach me, but your obedience reaches me [unintelligible 00:05:01] consciousness. It is the consciousness that we keep so that we always are aware of our obligation to God to obey him. God says that reaches Him.

Then where is our service going? Our service is in community. We serve God through our service to ourselves, our families and lastly and I will say finally because that's the intended direction of our service. That our service begin with our own selves. Make yourself right then your obligations, your parents you're obligated to take care of your children, help your children grow upright. You have friends, advice them rightly, for God's sake.

Sometimes we tell our friends something that will cause that friend to go to hell. We tell that friend that because we want to agree with our friend. We want to agree with our friend. We don't want to disagree with our friend. We don't want to take a chance on losing friendship with our friend even if it means helping our friend go to hell. But if we have God first we put God first and do what we know God wants first, we can avoid being guilty in the judgement of going to hell and sending also our friend to hell.

Islam asks of us obedience to God and a complete obedience to God, an obedience that require that we give our whole life in obedience to God. Everything within our charge in obedience to God. Islam then wants our whole community to be in obedience to God. God has obligated us whether we are citizens of a town or a state or a nation, God has obligated us to have community life and to be ourselves responsible for that community life. We don't eat pork, we don't drink intoxicants, that mean we can't use drugs, illegal drugs only if a doctor prescribes the drug we could take it et cetera.

Now we cant say we were in a society they didn't believe like we did. We ate pork because the country we lived in, they sold pork, the people ate pork. No. God says, well then that obligates you to have your own community, you should have your own slaughtering, you should slaughter your own animals if you have to, provide the foods that you should eat for your own selves and you should be growing your own food and providing your community with the drinks. You're responsible for not just yourself, you're responsible for a community. I told you you are the community the best community raised up for the benefit of all mankind. God says [Arabic language] you are the best of communities evolved or raised up for the good of all people. That's what God says to us. We have an obligation to establish ourselves as a model, a model society or a model community serving mankind in service to God and that's our service to God. That's the way we serve God when we serve ourselves and let our own life and our own life works benefit all people. That's the way we are to serve God.

Now this is nothing new, "This is Islam, this is new." No it's not. God gave the same to Moses. God gave the same to Abraham even before Moses and God gave the same to Jesus Christ. We all have the same idea of community life. The Christians left the old world, Europe, and came here to this new land, so that they could establish their lives. People lost their lives, many saints lost their lives, died horribly, so that they could have freedom in the new land or a freedom in the old land. A lot of them died for freedom there. They didn’t get it, but they died for it. It eventually came, but after the Martin Luther and after the migration from the old world to the new world and the establishment of Christians in this new land we call America. It was only after that that even the west began to enjoy freedom of religion and freedom.[clears throat]

I was told when I was a little boy by my mother and when my father finally came to live with us after being locked up in jails and away from his family for many years. He then came. I was about I think 14, close to 14 years old, 13 or 14 years old. He supported what my mother had been telling me. They told me, “Islam was freedom, justice and equality.” Now I can’t find that Islam. I don’t find that Islam anymore in the world. Freedom, justice and equality. I go to Muslim countries, I don’t find freedom, justice and equality. I go to many of the mosques in America, I don’t find [chuckles] freedom, justice and equality. I find people so preoccupied with the movement, bodily movements and the movement of the tongue; the mouth. Rituals. So busy with rituals, they have forgotten the big picture, that God revealed scripture, Quran, to guide us to the best, the model society upon this earth that will serve human life and also be an invitation or at least a witness for God, the life that He wants for people, for mankind.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad certainly didn’t have the religious language, but he’s definitely had the religious motivation and the religious idea of where we should take our lives. Take our lives to freedom, to justice, to equality, to good conditions, to good homes, to friendship in all walks of life, to money, not poverty. That was the idea the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had. Anyone who will sell us a religion, that puts our mind all on the invisible and not on the visible, those people are selling us into slavery.

W Deen: They are denying us the full life that God intended for us. Hence, Allah says in the Quran, “Who has said to my worshippers that this world’s life, this world’s goods spot me.” This world goods, G-O-O-D-S, “This world goods is not for them?” He said, “It’s for them in this life.” God says in our holy book, ”And in the next, it is exclusively for them.” Meaning in the next life, those wicked sinners and oppressors and slavers of mankind, they’re going to be cut out of it. Those who greed for power, greed for wealth and corrupt society and dominate the human spirit, they will be cut out of it. In the end, cut like cars. Rolls Royces, Jaguars, [unintelligible 00:14:30] be for God’s service. Those sinners are going to be cut out of it. The luxuries and comforts in the next world will only be for us. The enemies of God and mankind will be cut out of it.

Audience: That’s right. Allahu Akbar.

W Deen: Allahu Akbar. God is greater. That’s what they say. God is great, Allahu Akbar. The spirit has never left me. My father gave me a spirit with his teachings. My mother, she was the first to put it in me. A spirit to care about myself and to want myself to be the best I possibly can be, firstly for God’s sake, and then secondly for my own sake and for my mother and father’s sake, for my family’s sake and for the sake of mankind. Yes. I told someone jokingly the other day, I said-- We took a plane from Midway Chicago and we had to change planes in San Francisco where the Golden Gate Bridge is. I said, “I’ve often thought about that bridge.” I said, "I think that would be a really happy way to go out of this world."Go up on that bridge and just jump.

[laughter]

W Deen: I said, “But then I have second thoughts.” I said, “How it's going to affect those who love me. How it’s going to affect my friends and supporters. How it’s going to affect the pioneers who watched me grow up and watched me come into the leadership and followed my father’s lead. How it’s going affect them if they learned that I jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge” I say, “I can’t do it. I can’t jump.” Well, if it was only for me, I would have jumped a long time ago.

[laughter]

W Deen: I advise you all, don’t just live for yourself because in this terrible world you might commit suicide.

[applause]

W Deen: Live for somebody else.

[applause]

W Deen: We’re thankful to be here again in Fresno. We want to congratulate you all on a beautiful evening last night, the banquet. The persons you selected to be awarded, beautiful, most impressive selection of persons. Brother Nada Ali, we’ve known him, businessman and school teacher, principal, a public school principal retired. We’ve known him for a long time. We admire him and respect him and love not only him, but we love his family, his wife, his children. In fact, we are family, because his son, Nada Junior, married my niece and have children. So we are really a family. [clears throat] The strongest family bonds are the spiritual bonds, not the flesh and blood. The strongest family bonds are the spiritual bonds. This is in scripture, Bible, Quran, it’s there.

[clears throat] One prophet, he was wearied and turned to God. He was worried about his son being lost and destruction was coming on the wrongdoers. His son was not with him. So he’s worried about his son being lost to destruction. God told him,He said, “Your children are those who follow you in spirit.” Now we know the blood is a child too. It’s very important. Blood relationships are very important. But when it comes to spiritual bonds, the blood bond or the flesh bond is not as important and as powerful as a spiritual bond. If you really want to have a strong bonded physical family, all of you worship God as you should and you will love each other more and you will be a stronger family.

We are happy to be back in Fresno, California. It is hot here, but my air condition went out and my arthritis got better. I made all the family suffer.

[laughter]

W Deen: I left the air condition out. I told them you can go stay with so and so and so, about four blocks away, the air condition is running over there.

[laughter]

W Deen: I got used to the heat and it feels good. Knock out in Fresno? This [unintelligible 00:19:27] feel good to me. I’m used to it. It feels real good. [clears throat] In our holy book God says, “A parable of human life is the plant.” Or a plant life is a parable of human life. Parable means we’re comparing. They are being compared. They have similarities or likenesses. We know that God invites us to have a life of obedience as I mentioned in the beginning. A life of obedience and it's to discipline us for our own good. God does not want us to obey Him because He needs us to obey Him for His sake. God needs nothing for His sake. He's the one who gives all and needs nothing. But He rewards our obedience and our goodness and it pleases Him, God, that we live a good life. It does not please Him that we live a bad life.

A plant no matter whether that's a big, big or plant that's small. A plant first thing it wants to do is come out of the womb just like a human life. Life growing inside of the mother wants to come out. It's growing to come out and the seed of a plant that's in the Earth is growing in the Earth to come out. That's why it's growing in the earth. It's growing in the earth to come out.

We may say then philosophically speaking, that the first need in life or for life pardon me is freedom. Freedom. To be free. To have your own freedom. The plant wants its own freedom. Eventually, it comes up, out of the soil and presents itself in the light of day. It tries to grow as straight up as it can. God tells us that our way is the way of [Arabic language]. It means uprightness. Straight up as the youngsters say on the street. Uprightness. We are making the comparison that God says. God says in our Holy Book that a parable of our life is plant life. We are making comparisons now. It grows straight up, it wants to go straight up as erect as it possibly can.

We know all plants are not the same. Some plants want to go straight up and establish it and establish themselves in their place like a tree. It wants to grow up and establish itself in its place. Then we have the vines. They grow up but they want to move from the place where they are to other places. If God says to us a parable of our life is plant life, then every plant that we find in life should be understood as having a connection with our life in terms of communicating to us something that is good for us to learn about our own life.

Now, we know some people, they're happy just to grow up where they are. They don't want to go out of town. They don't want to move from the neighborhood. They're satisfied just to grow up and stay right where they are. But everybody wants to find that comfortable balance for their lives where the burden of care in life is not so difficult. If you try to stand up leaning, it's going to weigh you out. The more precise you are in standing straight up, the less burden you're going to have standing up. Standing up on a slant is hard. Standing up straight is easy.

God says in the [Arabic language] also use surely with difficulty comes ease. I watched the youngsters crawling, waiting on him to try to make that first stand, they go and they pull up on something and let go, they be afraid, you can see the fear on their face, they be afraid, they fall. But one time I watched one, and stood up and kept the balance. You should have seen the look of achievement and victory on that low topless face. It was the day of victory. A day of great achievement for that little child, but he had to do that after accepting the difficulty of pulling up and falling down over and over again. [Arabic language] Surely with the difficulty comes the ease.

Now, after you stand up, you forget it. Pretty soon you forget that you even made an effort to stand up. It becomes so easy that you're not even conscious that you are making an effort to stand up. What's holding you up? What's holding me up? What's holding me up now? You say you're holding yourself up. No, I'm not. I'm not making any conscious effort to stand up here. No conscious effort at all and the proof that I'm not holding myself up with an effort is that I can do whatever I like, putting my mind on whatever I want, put my mind completely on drawing if I want to draw some-- Whatever and I stay standing. [unintelligible 00:26:08] a mind it'd be too difficult if we had to keep our mind on standing up. It would be too difficult.

But something is conscious. Something is conscious, not my thinking, I'm not thinking on it. I'm not thinking on it but something is conscious and the proof of that is this that if I get sleepy standing up, first the head drops. [laughter] [unintelligible 00:26:35] stand up on your neck first the head drop and if I get too, the body gone drop. If I get too sleepy the body itself will drop. Something deep in the conscience that is not in my thinking keeps me standing. Keeps my head up. Everything is spiritual. That's the point.

Standing is a spiritual feet and maintaining it is a spiritual feet. A great thing and we'll find signs of it in art and mythology.They will make a painting or drawing and they'll put wings on the feet to say that's where the spiritual, life is. That this balance is spiritual. They put wings on the feet. We know they put wings on the hair too. Some of our hairs do nothing but fly. [unintelligible 00:27:40] have wings on my feet.

[laughter]

Actually, the whole life is spiritual and the whole life can fly. Yes, a plant life. The plant seeks strict discipline. It wants to discipline itself to move go up, whatever and follow it very strictly. The message to us is we should be strict in our own obedience to the pattern of life and the plan for life that God has revealed for us. Strict in obedience and the balance that it seeks is orientated or center orientated. Center orientated from the center it branches out. Branches out to keep the balance.

A tree is perhaps the most beautiful picture of that balance. Whose trees have branches of great weight, great weight, but the way the branches, branch out from the center permits the tree to hold that balance and then carry other weights. Birds come, some animals sleep in trees and the bird's nest in the trees. Some humans even go up in trees and rest in trees. Yes, they do especially early man.

Yes, the tree is a great support not only for its life but also for the life of other life. Life of birds, mainly birds, branching out and man's life has to do the same thing. Branch out but branch out from the center. Branch out from the center. The center for us in our orientation of worship is what we call the ancient house or the first house built for all people. Built for the worship of God but for all people is called the Kaaba, it's called also the Bayt, which means home, it is called also Qiblah, which means center for our orientation. Center for our orientation is called also Qibla. Allah says in our Holy Book of that house, He says it's the first house built for all people, built to the worship of God for all people. [Arabic language] built for all people.

Our Center then is given in a sign, and the sign is that house, our center. What does that center represent? It represents the life that God created for all people. Their life as God created, that's why it's called sacred, that's why it's called holy, that's why it's called sanctuary, it's called by so many different names that says you can't do anything you please there, it is not there for human beings to do what they want to do with, it is there only for God's purpose, the purpose God assigned to it.

It is understood by leaders in Islam, preachers, religious leaders, scientists, in Islam, it's understood by them to be a sign of the unity of mankind, the unity of mankind. Sign of the origin of human life and that God made it to live in a home to be sheltered, and God made it-- When He made it for the first human being, He made it for all human beings. It is the house He made for Adam our father, the first human being, that house that we go to visit on pilgrimage yearly if we can afford to go. It is the house He built for Adam and Adam's wife and all of Adam's children. A house to accommodate the human life that He created and that He designed.

Now, what's the first requirement for that life? The first requirement for that life is that we obey God, that we obey God. But in Islam is mystified in Christianity the same thing I'm giving you now is mystified in Christianity is given to you in Christianity but it's mystified in Christianity. More so than it's mystified in Islam. It's somewhat mystified in Islam too. The meaning there is that God created you and the creation you received from God is good not evil, not sinful, that it is there for all people. Your life that He gave you, is for all people and your life is innocent, not having any evil in it, the evil desire or evil aim, nothing but good aim, good desire and good aim.

The proof of that is easily given. If you go where any child is being born from his mother anywhere; hospital, at home, and you see the baby delivered, what is delivered from the mother is not a criminal. I studied also criminal law in this country, the history not the law itself, not the practice of law, but the history of criminal law in this country. I studied as a young man. I came upon a paragraph that said, at one time it was believed in America that you perhaps could stop criminal or reduce crime by sterilizing criminals so they can't reproduce themselves. But that ruling didn't hold up.

Science finally came into conclusion that there is no way to determine whether a person is going to be a criminal or not by the physical makeup or life of that person. That it had nothing to do with birth at all. Crime had to be learned. Babies are not born criminal. Now they have to come to the ruling that God had already made thousands of years ago. I'm sure he told Abraham that. They had to come to the ruling that God had already made. God did not create criminals. God created innocent human beings. The world is where they learn to be criminals. It's not in the nature that God originally gave them or created them with.

This is our center, understand this, this is very important, this is extremely important what I'm telling you, this is our center. God says-- How wonderful it is. Muslims are right now discussing, in high levels and low levels, they are discussing Muslim unity. The loss and absence of Muslim unity, and they are saying, "We have to come together, we have to unite."

Sometime they are talking to the members of another race or the members of another ethnic group but their own race, their own ethnic group, is not united. Indians are not united, Indian Muslims are not united. Pakistani Muslims are not united, Palestinian Muslims are not united, Egyptian Muslims are not united. You can go all over the world they are not united. They fear each other. Their life is being threatened by each other. They are being denied their freedom and it's their own Muslim brother denying them their freedom. They have no justice and their own Muslim brother is denying them the justice, not to mention equality.

But let's go back to what God said and I said this is what Jews and Christians have in common with us. Although their orientation and the way they explain it may be different, the idea and the purpose is the same. Go back to our center. Our center puts in our focus human life that God designed. Innocent human life. In the Bible says to Nicodemus, say, "You have to be born again," to the rich man couldn't get, couldn't obey, couldn't do the right thing. He says, "Nicodemus you have to be born again," and he says, "How can I be born, go back into my mother, how can I be born again?" The answer wasn't given.

Every time we go to Hajj we call it a renewal. A renewal mean you have a new life, like being born all over again. It's a ritual, but I guarantee you, even though you had the renewal, complete renewal, if you go back with the right frame of mind and for the right intentions, every time you go back, you're going to experience in some measure a renewal of life, a renewal of life. How do we be born again? Return to the original life that God made for you. Return to the innocence of a newborn baby. A newborn baby is not a racist, a newborn baby can put and be given to a mother from any race and will be raised by that mother and not complain.

The African baby as black as black could be doesn't have to raised by a black as black can be mother, that baby could be born and put into the charge onto the hands of a snow-white mother from the North Pole and be as happy as any baby can be, because God made human life, human life not necessarily black flesh, brown flesh, red flesh, yellow flesh, or any other flesh. God made human life human life. In my own family I have relatives as black as coal, black as black can be. In my own family I have relatives that could pass for white if the skin color was enough. If only their skin color was to be taken as a criteria or the qualification or the qualifying thing, then I have relatives in my family who could qualify to be called white folks. We belong to one family. Do you think when we meet we say, "That's white. So and so and so is white, so and so and so is black." When we meet we meet as human beings not as colors. We meet as human beings.

God wants us all to return to transparency, transparency, where we don't see each other as black, as white, as brown, as red, but we see each other as human being. Human being is not something you perceive in concrete. Human being is something you perceive in abstract. There's no camera in this room now or any place on this earth that can photograph Warith Deen Mohammed or Imam W. Deen Mohammed or Warith D. Mohammed whatever I don't know what you call me but-- The man that gave me my name [unintelligible 00:41:31] I guess he's put some-- Caused me to have more than one name. He has several names himself.

[laughter].

Anyway, there's no camera to take my picture, no camera to take your picture. Impossible. You can only take the picture of my body. You cannot take the picture of me. If you have been knowing me all of my life, I don't even want to remember how long it is, but it is sometime now. I've been here for a while. I almost feel ancient when I think of the calendar. If you have been knowing me for all of my calendar years and someone comes up and sees me for the very first time, you don't know anymore about how I look physically than they do if they really take a careful look. What you know of me ain't no more than what the stranger that just saw me one second ago know. You know how I look in the face. That stranger won't know me. You will know me, the stranger won't. Why? Because you have been in touch with the abstract person inside of the concrete body.

Really the real person is abstract, the real person is invisible to the physical eye. The real person. I am the way I reason. I am the way I feel, et cetera and you can't take a picture of that. The camera that is, cannot take a picture of that. I am my emotionality, et cetera. The camera cannot take a picture of that. Maybe the camera can get me when my emotions is influencing the way my face looks, but it will only get just that one expression of my emotions. My emotions will put different expressions on my face, not just one. The camera may get one, capture one expression of my emotions, but I have so many other expressions so it misses me. It can only get me a small part. It can only get my emotions in small part.

If we can return to that center, we can get rid of racism, we can get rid of ugliness in the human family, we can get rid of the ugly treatment that we give each other. When you really understand your life and how connected you are in the common life that another person is just like you. God says, in the resurrection, the resurrection of the people will be as the resurrection of one soul, one soul, that's the human soul. God is telling us that if the human soul, one human soul, can be resurrected that can be the salvation of all other souls because really the resurrection, the true resurrection of the human soul, is the resurrection of every person's soul.

As a tree we branch off from that center we perceive ourselves correctly as life. This is the life God created us to be. Once we perceive that life as God created it, once we perceive it correctly, then we can branch off. We can have the human sciences, branching off from that center so many human sciences that branch off from that center. We can have industry. We can have everything. Branching off from that center. As long as those developments branch off from that center, they will be compatible with that center. Life has become hell or has become a great burden because the center has been lost. The center hasn't been expressed in all the branches. The center hasn't been respected in all the branches. You see what God has given us here? God has given us something big big big big big.

Audience: Allahu Akbar.

W Deen: Allahu Akbar. God says wherever you are, turn your faces toward this center. Wherever you are, turn your faces toward this center, says, for every person, there is a aim that they are seeking. For every person, for every faith, there's a aim that is seeking. I'm perhaps seeking to marry a woman or a girl or the girl or the woman is seeking to marry a boy or a man or seeking their career in college or seeking freedom from a bad condition we are in or seeking a profession, whatever.

All of us have our own uniqueness and our own individuality. We all are encouraged by God, pursue what you want for your own self, but now when you want salvation, turn all of you your faces to this center. Wherever you'll be, I'll bring you together. How are we going to come together as Muslims? God tells us how we're going to come together all as Muslims, but they're ignoring that. Why? They can't even get their mind and spirit in a situation to respect that or to even hear it. They read the Quran, but can't hear what the words are saying. Why? Because they have been so long fixated, fixated hating Western society because it advanced materially and advanced industrially so far ahead of them and they say, "We are the best community. We are the best community.They took it from us. They colonized us. They're denying us our Islam." Blame it on somebody else. When all you have to do is turn back to your own true self, be innocent as a new born baby again and you will hear the voice of God speaking to you in the Quran and speaking to you in the Kaaba and Mecca, and you'll be brought to your center. When you're brought to your center, you will get somewhere.

[applause].

Then and only then, will we be situated to have freedom, justice and equality. Thank you. As-Salaam-Alaikum.

[applause]

[00:49:00] [END OF AUDIO]