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# IWDM Study Library

# The Life Blood of All Communities of Faith and Al-Islam is Peace Pt1

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

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This is the National Public Broadcast with Imam W.D Mohammed, American Society of Muslims leader. The following lecture, titled the Life Blood of Our Communities of Faith and Al-Islam is Peace, was recorded March the 31st the year 2003 at the Irvine Auditorium of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The lecturer is Imam W.D Mohammed.

Thank you. Praise be to Allah. Thank you. Thank you. Praise be to Allah, we thank you. Our greeting is peace, As-salāmu Alaykum.

Speakers: wa Alaykum As-salaam.

We thank G-d, we say Alhumdulillah rabbil Alameen. We praise G-d, who is the Lord, cherisher, sustainer of the worlds. We witness that He's one. We witness that Muhammad, to whom the Quran was revealed, is the last of the prophets and the seal of the Prophets mentioned both in the books of the Jews and in the book of the Christians. As we are told in our book, the Quran. He is mentioned as a liberator, liberating with guidance from G-d. He is mentioned as one who comes to purify the people, to lead them to purity, and to teach them the book and the wisdom. Teach them the book and the wisdom. The revealed book, revelation from G-d.

We salute him with that traditional salute salla lahu alaiha was salaam, prayer and the peace be upon him, that is. We are happy to be here in the city of Philadelphia again. The city that I think of as home. Of course, I was a young man just got married and my father sent me here to be a resident minister. I lived in the home of Sister Annie Pearl and her husband and they treated me so nicely. I enjoyed all the love that they have for my father. They didn't have him, so they gave it to me. I enjoyed it like home, we became family with them. I'm happy to be back in Philadelphia, a city that I regard as my home.

Also, it's an honor that we are invited to address you here on the campus of University of Penn here in Philadelphia. We are grateful to all of those who have supported this event, to our brother Abdul Rahim, to the Muslim Student Association, to the students' body, the administration, to all of you, we are grateful to you, and we thank you for this opportunity.

The Life Blood of Communities of Faith and Al-Islam is Peace. Peace, when we think of peace, we think of the soul, and that's where peace should start, right there in the soul. We want peace in our souls. G-d created our father that we recognize in these three religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Al-Islam, as Adam, our father Adam. And Adam was at peace. G-d created his soul for peace. But he had to deal with challenges from the environment, and he had to deal with challenges also from the enemy of mankind or the enemy of the human soul. That's the devil, the Shaytan. Satan in Christianity, Shaytan in Islamic language in Quranic Arabic.

We think of peacekeepers. I remember when I was young, we thought of police officers as peacekeepers, we used to use that language, peacekeepers. I don't know where language went, but it was peacekeepers. Our officer was expected to be a peacekeeper. Peace requires strength, that's where I'm getting at, peace requires strength. The peace that G-d wants for us, that G-d revealed and wants for us in our souls, and the peace that we want to establish for our environment and support our best leaders who are working to have peace in the whole world so that the whole family of mankind can enjoy peace, it's not a weak peace. It's not the piece that we see and think of when we think of all pious man who have devoted themselves to prayer, and rituals, and worship of G-d and the more peaceful they got, the weaker they got.

And when they talk to you at old age, they can hardly talk, "Alaykum Salaam Alhumdulillah to brother." That peace is okay for him, he wants to go to sleep. But G-d wants for us a peace that is strong. In our religion, we are taught to be as soft as milk with the good people, but be firm strong like iron against those who oppose the good life. So, we have to be strong in our peace. We can't be weak. This is Judaism, this is Christianity, this is Al-Islam. We are thankful for this invitation, I repeat. I continue Christianity, Judaism, and Al-Islam are sister communities. You'd be surprised how much alike we are and what G-d asked of us as communities on this earth. Very much alike, although we have some very, very sharp differences.

The three sacred books, reveal books, we share: the Torah, Gospel, and the Quran, we believe the author of the three books is the Creator of everything in the sky, human beings and all living things, the earth, all. We share this in common. Although these books are separated by their differences, the three books have the same prophets except for maybe one or two exceptions. We have the same prophets, same human history, morally focused, the content material bears a striking resemblance. When you read the story of the prophets in the Bible, you read the story of the prophets in the Quran, you're getting the same name, same prophets, all coming from one G-d.

These religions represent progression or a continuation, and that's exactly what Muhammad the Prophet, forever peace be upon him, wanted us to know. That he did not bring anything new. He said, "I bring nothing new. G-d told him to say this is no newly put together. The Revelation, it is a continuation and an explanation”. This is the nature of the Bible too. I'm a student of the Bible as well. This is the nature of the Bible too. If you read Genesis and you read from Genesis on up through the Bible all the way to Revelation, you're reading of things that occurred in the history of human evolution.

The evolution of the spirit and the intellect, the evolution of the spiritual life and the intellect. You are reading what occurred in the evolution, the history of the evolution of the spirit and the mind, the intellect. You're being influenced to choose righteousness over wickedness, right over wrong, moral life over an immoral life. These books are the same in that respect.

Al-Islam distinct picture is seen in its emphasis; the emphasis on universals. Emphasis is italicized here. Universals in the Muslim book, Quran, are the same. As you find in the list of universals appearing in earlier sacred scriptures, for Jews, the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians, the emphasis is there on those books also. But in the Quran these emphases are more sharply focused to get your attention to those universals. We shouldn't think of our religion as religion in competition; some bitter competition or envious jealous competition with Jews and Christians, or with Judaism and Christianity. That's not the way to look at it. You're missing if you do that.

You're to see this as a growth, a natural growth. As man goes on the earth as a human family that is, when I say man I mean the human family, as a human family grows on Earth and experience difficulties, have to learn and experience difficulties and make progress, the more progress we make and the more we are connected around the world, the more we venture out from our small quarters and connect with one another, the more we bring about a world that has to look at universals.

When people are separated, like we were before the discovery of this part of the world, not knowing these two big continents over here, North and South America, we were not connected completely with our own selves. The family of man hadn't discovered his own self. Man had to discover himself in these various quarters of the world. Now that we've discovered ourselves in the various part of the world, we now connect and we have to be connected.

We have to know one another better so we can understand one another better, and so we can work and support the good of the other fella as well as our own good because we are one family and we're living in this one world. What I'm saying is this that natural phenomena, the natural growth of life and the natural growth of transportation, media, and everything that brings us to be one in communication, connected by one communication system, this has made it possible for us now to look at mankind as a family for the first time.

Look how long it was ago, hundreds of years ago, thousands of years ago, a few thousand years ago. Who knows? Maybe many thousand years ago, that G-d revealed to man that man is one family. He had not yet known all of his brothers and sisters around the globe. He had not known that they even existed, but G-d told him man is one family.

Now that this world is populated by all of us and we are connected and the media has brought us into one living room, so to speak, where we see what's happening all around the world, even in the back alleys in the back-wood areas, we can see what's happening everywhere to mankind. We have to accept that we are one family and want the same for our brother that we want for ourselves.

We got more brothers now than we ever thought we ever had, but we have to want for all of our brothers as Muhammad taught us and as Christianity preaches too, we have to want for our brothers what we want for ourselves. Muhammad the Prophet spoke of the neighbor. He said “G-d pressed him so much regarding concern for his neighbor that he thought his neighbor was going to inherit him”. That's the saying of our Prophet Muhammad, the last prophet, peace be upon him, and believe me I heard that years ago, but more I look at what's happening in the world today, the more I see that having real great relevance.

This has more relevance to me now than it ever did before when I heard it years ago. When I see that our neighbor is our country near and country far, wherever human beings are populated, those are our human neighbors. We have to care about them like we care for ourselves. We can't live apart anymore and think that we can work for our selfish interests, or our particular interest and not work also for the interests of the whole. These religions are bigger than we think they are. G-d says, "No just estimates have they made of G-d's greatness." No, we haven't made any just estimates of the greatness of G-d. G-d concern is for all, for the whole universe.

On that distinction for Muslim, once I was visiting Saudi Arabia, the king of Saudi Arabia, I was in Mecca, and I was the guest of the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Rabita it is called, “Rabita al ala Al Islami” is given in English in short, the Muslim World League. I was about to leave. I was leaving. I was giving him bye-bye or Salaam- Alaikum, I was greeting him and he hesitated to take me, he continued to walk me through the door. He stopped and he said, "You know, Imam Mohammed?"

He said, "Islam is a religion of universals." I told him "Yes, I agree." I want to say that's what I'm all about man.

That's what brought me to be alive at my mind and spirit, and that's where I am. I remember my father preaching, a lot of you, I'm looking at your faces, I know you knew my father. I'm happy to see you here. If he was here, he'd be happy to see you too. You know that. My father passed in February of 1975. He used to say I'm a little boy, I guess I can recall sitting on seats looking at my father preach when I was-- I must have been no more than about 12, maybe 13 years old and go all the way back there, the early years.

I didn't even know my father in my house until I was about 13 years old. 13, yes, about 13. I had to have been about 13 years old, maybe. I could have been 12, 13 years old.

I'd be sitting there on the seat. I'm listening to him preach. I love him and I respect him, I don't think he'd be telling anybody anything bad for him. I'm listening to him with faith. Those things I couldn't understand I didn't deal with them. I heard him and the people applaud, I applaud too.

I did it because I trusted him, not because I understood what he was saying. The thing I did understand even as a child he said, "Islam is freedom, justice, and equality." He used to have a drawing when you would walk into the temple, the first thing you saw was that drawing on that board. It said, "Islam, freedom, justice, equality."

I understood that because I understood the African-American people and our needs, I understood that we were discriminated against. I understood that we were not given full citizenship at that time. We weren't accorded full citizenship rights at that time, I knew that. When he said Islam is freedom, justice, and equality, he spoke not so much as a scripture to me, he spoke common sense to me.

Let me tell you, if you got religion and no common sense, you don't have anything. We don't have anything at all. That's what we have to have to have peace. You have to have a heart open for all good people. And you have to have a desire to see the neighbor's son have a good life like you want your son to have. When you're like that, you start to have piece in your soul. We have in Al-Islam a saying that the greatest Jihad is the Jihad that begins as a struggle in the soul. A struggle in the soul for peace. That struggle in the soul for peace, it has to fight those things that are in the way of the soul having peace: lies, deceit, hatred, prejudices against someone just because they are a different color, or they speak a different language or whatever, you have to overcome those things.

The soul that hasn't overcome those things is not at peace. A lot of the ugly behavior we see in the world today, ugly behavior towards self and ugly behavior toward others. Even the violence we're experiencing now in war, a lot of that we are seeing it because the soul is not at peace. The soul has been denied peace for so long, and have been denied peace in such great measure, and in such great depth, that the soul now has become a foreign life.

It has made the soul a foreign life to the human need, it's foreign to the human need. It takes on a life of an alien, not even a creature of the human family. We have a lot of tormented souls and we shouldn't condemn them say, "Oh, demons, Beast." No. What made them like that? The ignorance of our leaders, the ignorance of our societies, selfishly going at what they want or what we want and not caring about the other fella, and not caring about the other country. What we are suffering in this world today, as in human behavior, is brought on by our insensitivities, by our lack of concern for the other person.

We have to look at victims and not condemn them without looking for causes. Try to understand what caused that human being to become the disfigured person in his soul and mind that he is, find the causes. I'm a student of Science as well and I learned as a boy studying science that you can take your animal and you can deprive that animal of its natural habitat, its natural environment, and you can deny it the nourishment it needs from association with its kin and also the nourishment it needs from food, and you can turn that animal into a demon. The same happens to human beings.

Muslims are supposed to be lovers of peace, we are supposed to be peacekeepers. Muhammad the Prophet established a new world. Great civilization was established under him, under the preaching of the Quran and the preaching of our prophet, and under his model behavior, great civilizations sprung up. Within a few years, the intellect dawned in his following and they established excellent institutions of higher learning and became the leaders of the world in that field.

Al-Islam is the religion of peace, but that peace is not the peace of somebody fantasizing, dreaming, dealing with make-believe, or tripping out, no, into space somewhere, no. The peace that G-d wants for us is first, the peace that comes when you want to be a good person more than you want to be just a person. You want to be a good person, I repeat, more than you want to be just a person. Then that peace starts in your soul.

G-d tells us over and over in the Quran, “G-d loves the doers of good”. And Muhammad taught us that G-d is good and He accepts only good. Allah tells us in the Quran, that don't put into your charity that that you would be ashamed of if it was told where you got it from. G-d doesn't even want you to give bad thing into charity. If you have a billion dollars to offer, a good leader would turn it down even though he was poor and needed it, it could do a miracle for him and his following, but he would turn down your billion dollars if he knew your billion dollars came from drugs, drug deals, selling drugs or from something else that's punishing humanity.

This is Al-Islam, and this is how you have peace. Peace is a small word but it incorporates so much, it involves so much. We're given a picture of the universe, G-d says He made this world and He says the world was made and matter was in confusion. It was not at peace, He said when He made the world, matter was in confusion. It was violent things, exploding matter. This is in Quran. He gives us a picture of matter not at peace.

G-d calls the heavens, the world that was in a state of turmoil, He calls that world to conform to law and come to a state of peace. From lawlessness to law, and then to a state of peace. This is a picture of the human family in our struggle of ignorance and barbarism, and our struggle to become humans civilized in a good picture, in a good shape. This is a picture of us. G-d is telling us how the world outside was made to speak to our need, to do that with our own life here on this earth.

Come from violence, come from confusion, come from waring with one another and start it right with your soul because the greatest Jihad-- I started to say earlier, the greatest Jihad is Jihad in your own soul; the struggle in your own soul, in your own self, to bring your soul peace, of fighting those things that deny you peace inside your own soul. I have lived to see and I've shared this with you because I'm just thankful to G-d and I'm happy. Ain't no big deal with me, I'll share with you. You might not believe it, but still I'm going to tell you anyway. I don't have to die to go to heaven, I'm in heaven right now.

G-d knows I'm in heaven right now. G-d has blessed me to have heaven, I struggled for it and G-d blessed me with it. I have heaven and when I die, I'm going to die in my heaven. and I will be there until G-d do whatever He wants to do with me. Yes. Muhammad the Prophet did not establish an army after the war was ended. He didn't establish a police force, no police force. He had all those following, he's the leader now of nations, not one, but more than just Arabia, he's voice went outside of Arabia and he did not establish a police force. How did they manage?

Their hearts were right, they had been purified. Their faith was strong, their love was strong for one another. Their love was strong for the new idea, and they didn't need the police force. One reported that one man was behaving in a very ugly way, and Muhammad the Prophet said, "You all witness that, what did you do about it?" He told him that each one that witnessed that and did nothing, they shared in the crime of that person because they saw it and did nothing.

Once he was speaking, Muhammad the Prophet, and he said, "Help your brother, whether he's in the right or in the wrong." They said, "How do we help our brother when he's in wrong?" He said, "Help him by holding him back from the wrong." If we would live really the true love for one another, we wouldn't need police in our neighborhood. We wouldn't, but because we beat up on each other in the house, on the streets and everywhere else, we got to have police around.

If we had the love, the love for the ideal life that G-d wants us to have on this planet, if we had that love, the police would start moving out. They'll say, "We don't need to be here." They'll start moving out. What I'm saying is what Muhammad achieved, it's not something that's impossible for us today. It's as real and as possible for us today as it was in his time. We want peace. But we want peace for intelligent human beings and for intelligent human society. We don't want a sissy's peace. We want a soldier's piece, and all of us are supposed to be soldiers for G-d when we have to.

Isn't that what G-d asked us to be? Soldiers for Him when we have to. This is not a maniacal Jihad, this is a rational Jihad. Jihad is supposed to be rational, not insane, its rational. Jihad is for good ends, never for a bad end. Always for good end. Even in war, the Muslim is required to keep his humanity. He's required to keep his intelligence, he's required to keep his human sensitivity, even in war.

If we just would study the history of war in the time of our prophet. He forbid mutilation of a body, he forbid that anybody kill in excess or mutilate another body. He required that the soldier fight with sharper swords so that they don't mutilate or bang-up people. The cut is swift and as painless as possible. This is Muhammad the Prophet, a man that even required of his army that they fight as a human being, not as a savage or a beast or wild animal. We have to come back to the real Al-Islam. The world of Islam has lost the real Islam. Thank you very much, peace be unto you.

Imam Robert0 Rashid: As-salāmu Alaykum. Imam Muhammad will now take questions. We have two microphones in the aisle. He has said that he will take questions for as long as the talk, which say we have about 45 minutes. We would ask you to be orderly, line up behind the microphones, have your questions ready. We will close out in a dua. Anybody has questions? I know you've got some questions.

Hashim Sharif: As-salāmu Alaykum.

IWDM: wa Alaykum as-salaam.

Hashim Sharif: Concerning collective purchasing conference, the business aspect of your leadership, in Philadelphia we are looking to bring some productivity here to Philadelphia. What would be your suggesting-- should I come up closer?

IWDM: Yes, I'm not hearing you too clearly. Maybe if you speak more. Put your mouth a little closer.

Hashim Sharif: Yes, sir. What would be your advice to us here in Philadelphia as to how to bring an investment group together for collective purchasing for the CPC/ComTrust?

IWDM: Well, you have to look to our religion and see what our religion says about that. Muhammad the Prophet taught us that whenever we have a task, or something to be carried out to do or be carried out, it requires more than one person to do it, make one person an Amir or put one person in charge. You're talking about all of our centers and all of our members of our Muslim Community here in Philadelphia area?

Hashim Sharif: Yes, sir.

IWDM: You need to find a person that can be your chairman or something, that all of you are support.

Hashim Sharif: Thank you.

IWDM: You're welcome.

Speaker 4: As-salāmu Alaykum brother Imam.

IWDM: wa Alaykum as-salaam.

Speaker 4: I think I have a pretty good understanding of Islam because of your leadership, however, why do you think Islam is so chaotic? It's a very peaceful religion. Why is it so chaotic now: the war, the fighting over in Iraq, Iraq and Iran, now with United States and Iraq? It really hurts. Can you give me an answer on what you think?

IWDM: Well, when you look at the news, you hear all the bad things. Understand that there's a lot of good going on at the same time. At the same time, there's a lot of good going on, not just bad; there's a lot of good going on. I'm in the circle of leaders from America and from around the world, Muslims-- many of them are not Muslim, and I'm seeing the good that's happening as well as hearing the bad that's happening, there's much good happening all around the world. This is not a bad time for Islam, this is a good time for Islam. A lot of good is happening, but you won't find it on the news. It's not going to be on the six o'clock news.

You only see the bad. You get the trouble on there. Yes, now, we still have to ask ourselves that question because there is a lot of confusion, disunity, Muslim not caring about each other. We love one another, we still have love. Most Muslims, I don't care what color or where are they're from, most Muslims they have love for Muhammad, they have love for G-d, first of all, they have love for Allah, they have love for Quran, they have love for Muhammad the Prophet, and they have love for human being.

But when it comes to having the society right, we are missing big. Our societies are not right, but our hearts are ready. We just don't have the leadership. I think the fault; the blame is on our leadership. Our leaders are not just qualified to deal with the realities of this present time and pull people together so that we join in the fight for humanity, not just in the fight for ourselves, as a people or as a race or as a religion. We have to join in the fight for humanity.

The big cause is now on the drawing board, the big cause. When the big cause is not on the drawing board, then we could deal with these small causes. Now, the big cause is right there and facing all of us. We have to look at it. Humanity is what we have to look at now. State of humanity, state of human life, all over the world, that's what we have to look at.

Our leaders should be sensitizing their following with the Quran if we are Muslims, with the Quran and the life of Muhammad so that we see the human picture is number one. After the human picture, then comes my national picture, or then comes my racial image. The human picture is number one. G-d says that He is the one who gave you your pictures when you were in the wombs of your mothers, when you were in the stomach of your mother, that’s what G-d says.

He says He made your picture most beautiful. He didn’t say pictures. No. He made your picture most beautiful. What G-d is saying is this, that yes, He made you different colors and different races and He made you different nations. Yes, He made you all of that. You should take that to heart and cherish that. That's your life. But He made you firstly human. No one is born from the mother, an African, or a Chinese, or Asian, or European, you're born human and the environment connects you with history, your family, Africa and all that.

That's child can be taken straight from mama, and put anywhere else, and become Japanese, French, Spanish depending on the language which it learns and then whoever cares for it. That tells us we are human first, and I see it as clothing. G-d made me human first, that's my naked self. The naked self is human. And then I clothe my human life with my African-American life. I clothe it with my American life. That means the national life, America, the national life. I clothe it with all these clothing, but if the clothing becomes more important than what I'm clothing, the human life, all of it becomes trash.

IWDM: This is what G-d wants us to know. Thank you, brother. Thank you.

Participant 1: As-salam Alaykum.

IWDM: Alaykum as-salam.

Participant 1: Brother Imam, could you tell the audience the true meaning and understanding of this whole Homeland Security? I don't think they have the right conception of it. The old saying goes, "If you love what Hitler did, you're going to be crazy of what Bush's going to do." Can you give the headlight of that of what you know of?

IWDM: If you love?

Participant 1: In other words, Homeland Security and Germany-- You know what it's all about.

IWDM: If you love what? I didn't get that.

IWDM: I said, can you tell the audience the true meaning of the Homeland Security that's coming about in America?

IWDM: Homeland Security?

Participant 1: Yes.

IWDM: I don't know. If I know more than you know about that.

Participant 1: I can tell you what I know.

IWDM: I'd say-- Let me respond. Let me respond, but I just want you to know that I might not be knowing exactly what you know. I know that if Muhammad, the prophet, was living today on Earth, I don't think he'd beat up on anybody before he'd beat up on some Muslims. He would first get his own house in order. And it is not in order. He would bring the Muslims back. He'd call the Muslims back to the Muslim life and back to the model human that G-d wants us to be on this planet, Earth. That's what he'd be doing.

Believe me, he'd have armies going into Muslim lands. This is not to justify or to say I'm pleased with what President Bush has asked for. I prayed hard and I pleaded that this wouldn't happen. Now that we're at war, I'm recalling not so much what Bush is doing, as I'm recalling what Saddam does. He put innocent citizens up as human shields. Put them in the way of the military and the military equipment that he knows are being target for destruction.

He put innocent human lives there, to be killed, so Bush would be blamed for killing them. Who put them there? I'd rather take defeat than to put innocent family members of somebody's family member in the way of fire, or people I don't like. Maybe, some Kurds or something. Put them in the way of fire. I wouldn't do that.

The man has lost his humanity. He has lost his good human nature, and he should be removed. I want to make that clear to all of you. I wish that it could be done as swift as possible with the minimum cost of life to our soldiers and all sorts of the Iraqi people. We love them like we love ourselves. I'm not for accepting that dictators dictate life with no respect for the Quran and no respect for the model human Muhammad.

And have a different idea, but Ba'ath Party idea. That's not Islamic, but that's what's in Iraq. The Ba'ath Party. Then, he wants us to accept him as he is going to be our deliverer. He's a deliverer for Muslims, and he hasn't even respected the Quran. They have the Quran as his highest idea, but where is he getting his guidance for his own behavior? He's not getting it from the Quran. He's not getting it from the life of Muhammad. Peace be upon him. I just want to make that clear.

Imam Sulaimaan Hamed: As-salaam Alaykum.

IWDM: Alaykum as-salam.

Imam Sulaimaan Hamed: This is more an update than a question by the Imam. Just to let you know, that the students from Syria have arrived home safely.

IWDM: Thank you very much.

Imam Sulaimaan Hamed: We come with greetings and love from Sheikh Quftaro and he also sent you a letter.

IWDM: Thank you very much.

Participant 2: As-salam Alaykum.

IWDM: Thank you very much. I hope to meet with you all soon. Inshallah. All right. I thank Allah for your return.

Leon Shamsiddeen: As-salaam Alaykum, brother Imam.

IWDM: Alaykum as-salam.

Leon: My name is Leon Shamsiddeen. I've been blessed to be a follower of your leadership since you took over the leadership from your father. I'm glad that I got a chance to get up because your answers are so clear. By the time I got up, you might have answered my question already. I’m going to mention it anyway because maybe some of the believers in the Philadelphia area we might have the same thought, idea or question and it's about the multiple number of Muslims in the City of Philadelphia, and what we might be able to do to bring about some unity rather than being splintered all over the Delaware Valley and surrounding areas and build up some grassroots following. If you look at the spectrum of it on the macro and micro level, no other communities of Muslims in the city other than the ones who follow your leadership have a national outreach. Maybe, some that follow the Imam Jamil Al-Amin

Otherwise, everyone else is just splintered. I was around fortunate enough to see it develop. I just wanted ask, what kind of a comment? Or can you address some of the leaders that you mentioned that you asked that question already. Share that with the believers of how we should continue to move on, trust Allah and grow in unity as one community and one body.

IWDM: In the Quran, we are told that Muslims conduct their affairs by mutual consultation. Shura baynahum. By mutual consultation. My advice is, and I'm saying this because I have knowledge and experience in this community. In America, as an African American Muslim or as a Muslim African American. I have knowledge and experience. I know problems we've had in our society, our circle of believers. I know problems outside of our circle in other organizations, even for immigrant Muslims.

We are to conduct our affairs by mutual consultation. We are to try to select the best in character and the best in ability, or the best in mind, or knowledge and resources. We are to select those persons, males and females for our community achievement. To achieve something for the community. We have to include female too. Select our best people and then discuss it. Select one to be the convener or the chairman. That'll be the Amir. Give someone to have a charge. Give someone charge.

That person who has charge, that person should realize he is there to facilitate the others. Whatever they have to offer, he is to help bring to the forefront, the best. The best offers. The best offers of help. The best mind. The best ideas. The best plans. He is to just facilitate that. He's not there to dictate. He shouldn't be there to dictate.

If you want to kill the chance of you having a consultative group that will respect one another, Shura baynahum, consulting with one another. Respect. If you want to be sure that, you won't have that. Put that dictator in charge. You're not going to have that. You have to be careful of who you select. That's what you have to do. That's the only way G-d is going to bless us. When we respect one another. Respect our resources. Respect our intelligence. Respect our education. Respect our professional skills. Knowledge and skills, et cetera. Respect the resources in each other and bring the best forward.

Make sure that the one you give authority to, is not one that's going to abuse that authority. He's not there to have authority, he's there to serve. He's not there for you to look at him, he's there to serve. That's what you want. If you don't have it, pray for it and G-d will give it to you.

Yusuf Kareem: As-Salam-Alaikum brother Imam?

IWDM: Thank you. Alaikum-Salaam.

Yusuf Kareem: My name is Yusuf Karim from Philadelphia. I thank Allah for giving me the opportunity to come into Islam, it helps me out a lot. I had an opportunity to spend five years in Atlanta Georgia. In Atlanta Georgia, the community is growing and it makes you feel as though-- make you feel as though you're real human being. Putting your clothes on like you say it earlier.

Here in Philadelphia, when I come back here, I get to see little. I mean I came through a whole lot of brothers and sisters here. I love Philadelphia and I hope to be here for the rest of my life, Inshallah. I don't understand is that we have a school, I had three children that graduated from our school here in Philadelphia, and because we have attitudes that we don't like each other, we letting our school die.

That school was named after a Great person, Sister Clara Muhammad. What can we do to stop our school here in Philadelphia, the Sister Clara Muhammad school from dying?

IWDM: You have the answer, you just have to do what you have to do.

Yusuf Kareem: I accept that one.

IWDM: I know. I know you have the answer, you have to do it.

Yusuf: Okay, Alhumdulillah. As-Salaam-Alaikum?

IWDM: Alaikum- Salaam.

Participant: As-Salaam-Alaykum brother Iman?

IWDM: Alaikum-Salaam.

Participant: I have a question. I would like your advice or thoughts on Muslims who serve in the military. Given a war in Iraq, what are your thoughts and also advice regarding Muslims that are serving in the military?

IWDM: People fight for what they value and we value the life that we have here in America, the freedom we have here in America. We value the opportunity we have to have our own schools and to work out our own future here, A Muslim future. That's very important, that's very valuable. If we have that on this land with these good American people, then we should be willing to not to have them go and die for it alone, but we also must be willing to die for it.

I believe in respecting the sacredness of land, our first father, G-d gives us as Adam, He gave him responsibility to G-d but for the environment that G-d put him in. We as descendants of that first father, all of us whether we are enlightened to have that knowledge or not, all of us have inherited the responsibilities that G-d assigns to a human being in his good right mind for not only his personal life but also for the environment where he lives.

The land is sacred and I tell my children, "Now so when you would walk out there, don't just see the city of Chicago, see your share of it." Every citizen has a share, every citizen in Chicago has a share to the city of Chicago or in the city of Chicago. I say, "When you see this big world, don't just see the big world, see also your share of it because the creator that made all of it made it for you, as well as he made it for all the others.

We have to have an attachment, a real serious sacred attachment to the land, to the world that Allah made or G-d made, to the world that G-d made and realize that this land has been developed by our people as well by whites and others to the extent that it's developed now and a lot of lives have been lost. Blood has been spilled, suffering, a lot of suffering for us to have this what we got now. I will die for it, and I think Muslims should be in the military. Muslim of America have to be in the military.

But if you don't have the mind for it, you should at least respect it enough not to join. When you join the military make sure, be sure you have the mind for it. Your spirit is with it, you have the mind for it. If not, don't join, so far is still a volunteer army. They’re talking about drafting, but that hasn't come yet. You don't have to be in the military if you don't want to. Your spirit is not with it, your mind is not with it, so you've helped all of us by not joining the military.

If you have your spirit with it, you feel as I do, that this is a sacred duty and that we have a life of great value here that we shouldn't ask others to go and defend and we not be willing to defend it, then please join the military and be a great soldier for the United States of America and for all good Americans.

Participant: Thank you.

Participant: As-Salaam Alaikum brother Imam?

IWDM: Alaikum-Salaam.

Participant: Once again we appreciate the clarity of speech in all, on behalf of you as our leader. And also, the good work based off my recognition of Iman Abdul Malik's work in our area. In terms of the clarity of the word that you have given on the words jihad. I think it's imperative that we look at the best meaning and the highest meanings and a more moral meeting that you give forth.

I recognize that there's many other words that's relative to the Quran, and by being African American, being excited over learning a new language.

I find that in our association that we tend to be, use this language casually whereas this language and terminology based off Quranic ideas would appear to come off as being politically incorrect. Or would raise bad sensitivities and people who may not be aware of that.

What is some of your suggestion as regards to the believers who are learning the Quran in Arabic language and they begin to communicate to each other casually in that way, what are some suggestions that you think that we should keep in mind in this particular time of trouble?

IWDM: This is the time of religion. Religion is freer today than it ever had been since the history of mankind on earth. Religion is freer today, and Muhammad the Prophet was really a liberator. Firstly, liberating people of faith so that they would be free to practice the religion of their choice, for Muslims, yes. Number one, but not only for Muslim for others too. He wanted them to be free to practice a religion of their choice.

We should understand that our leaders have to be like Muhammad the prophet. All of our leaders. We're living in a time of religion, we live in the time also of humanity. We have to help those that show the good human nature and the good human image. They have to be in the classroom teaching our children, they have to be the Imams giving a lecture on Friday and leading us in prayer on Friday.

They have to be those that we give charge over our businesses. They have to be our business people. They have to be people that love G-d and love mankind, and are human and have the best human sensitivities. We have to select people like that, and we are to be aware that people are hurting, they are hurting in our community. All of us haven't got over the hurt of slavery and hurt of the Ku Klux Klan put on us.

Some of us still harbor those hurts, those ideas, and those things that happen. They still harbor that hurt and the bitterness. Don't think everybody is healthy. As I said earlier, don't condemn, look for causes. How come they're like still? But don't pick them to be your leaders. In this time we just have to be very selective, very selective, and we have to insist that the better educated with better morals lead the others.

Participant: Thank you, brother Imam.

IWDM: Thank you.

Participant: As-Salaam Alaikum brother Imam? The Muslim Journal, I noticed that G-d or it is written or abbreviated G-D and also the translation of Bismillah Rahman Rahim, instead of the Yusuf Ali that we've been used to reading all these years, "In the name of G-d, most gracious, most compassionate." We're using now “With the Allah name, The merciful, the benefactor, the merciful redeemer."

IWDM: Yes. It's still the same. Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim has not changed. It's still the same, but we chose the beneficent, the mercy, the merciful. In Ar-Rahman is mercy. Ar-Rahman is from the word mercy. Ar Rahim is out of from the word mercy, so we have mercy twice. Understand that the Quran addresses revelation that came before the Quran. In the scriptures that came before, G-d promised two mercies. Not one, he promised two mercies.

I identified those two mercies in the two attributes of G-d, Ar-Rahman, Ar Rahim. The merciful benefactor, the merciful redeemer. Now, beneficent, G-d is the benefactor and He is. His mercy is beneficent, He is beneficent, the beneficent and He is the compassionate. His mercy. He cares for all, and His mercy all, have kindness. Get kindness, get attention, love, et cetera from G-d. I see those two attributes, both of them are saying mercy.

Ar Rahman is saying mercy, the mercy of G-d. Ar Rahim is saying the mercy of G-d, but merciful and giving abundance-- There's a chapter by the name Ar Rahman, read that chapter and see what G-d is telling us in that chapter. You'll see that He is giving abundantly to man.

Wealth and riches, and beautiful things in the seas and on land, and then the best of all of His gifts is revelation, communications on Himself, the Quran. It begins, Ar Rahman. Alamal Quran. Khalaqal insan. “The beneficent G-d”, as it's translated, “taught the Quran, to man and created the man”. Now, you ask me, "No, oh, please, wait a minute." You didn't only ask me that, you asked me about the spelling. Well, I'll tell you. I have never felt comfortable, I was a little boy and I understood what my father said. My father used to say, I know where he's coming from, I'm not coming from where he's coming from, but I still see the intelligence and I see the logic that he gave us.

He said, "Allah, is the better word than G-d." We know Allah is G-d. Allah is Arabic for G-d, but what he meant a better term or language, a better spelling he said, "The word G-d, you can spell it backwards and it reads dog." My father taught me that. You want to know why I changed that, that's why. I could never get over what my father told me. That if you read the word G-d, backwards it says dog. I take the O out and I put a dash, or hyphen, or an apostrophe, or anything, I just leave the O out because I don't like to see D-O-G when I see G-O-D. All right?

Well, I said as long as I was talking, I'm willing to spend the same amount of time asking questions. I don't know, you have to keep-- You're the timekeeper, not me.

Imam Roberto Rashid: We have about 15 more minutes, so within that time period, I'm not going to be the bad guy, but I got to be. I know brother Imam's been traveling all over the country, we want to have the respect for his time, so we have 15 more minutes. Thank you.

Participant: Brother Imam, salaam alaikum? I have a question. There's a lot of parents and grandparents, I'm a grandparent myself as well and I always like to walk away with maybe some tool that will help me out with our young brothers and young sisters that are out there. Because we have a lot of our young brothers and young sisters that when you put in a perspective today about the personal jihad, that's really what it comes down to with them.

Can you just maybe share something that we can walk away from here today, all of us, that we can share with some young people? They are Muslim and I came from a lot of things myself and a lot of them are doing somethings and I refuse to frown on them, period.

I know how Islam saved me. For me, when I look at any of our young brothers and young sisters, whenever the behavior is, in my heart I'm always wishing and inshallah that they'll definitely going to come around, but it always helps that to continue to get information when it's available.

IWDM: Let me answer so that we need some time from the 15 minutes for the next person. Let me say this, knowing our community and knowing our people, people period. We're too quick to judge ourselves and most of the time, my experience tells me, that most of the time the person does not give themselves the mercy and the consideration that G-d gives when they judge themselves. We're too hard on our own selves. We say, "Oh, I committed a sin, I ain't no more good." That's not G-d. G-d, doesn’t say you are no more good because you committed a sin. Don't try to judge yourself, you're not G-d. As long as you have the desire to be better, G-d loves you. Don't judge yourself.

That's the first thing I want to tell you. I also want to tell you this, don't think you're being a good friend, when you're keeping your friend happy by agreeing with everything your friend is doing. A good friend is the friend that will risk losing a friend, that tells a friend what is best for the friend. That's all I have for the night.

Participant: As salaam Alaikum, brother Imam.

IWDM: Alaykum salaam.

Participant: I have three questions, I would like some clarifications on, please. The first one, many of us come from parents-- Our parents were not Muslims, they were Christians. All right, one question.

IWDM: My hearing is not the best anymore and my sight is not the best anymore, but don't I know you?

Participant: You have a good memory, perhaps you just remember my features.

IWDM: Yes, I think so.

Participant: That's it.

IWDM: Good to see you again.

Participant: Alhamdulillah. About our relatives, I was told one time by some Muslims that if your parents were not Muslims you cannot pray for them and you cannot ask Allah to forgive them. I would like some clarification on that. If you can pray for them or when you visit their graves, exactly what can you say for your relatives if they were not believers?

IWDM: In the time of our prophet, the idol worshippers, they had plenty of time to see the beauty and the humanity in Al-Islam and come from their savage religion. They were defiant and they were just bad people. They were the enemies of Al-Islam. You were not to pray for them, but your Christians are people of faith. You should pray for your Christian relatives living and after they die.

Participant: Salaam Alaykum wa raḥmatullāh

IWDM: Alaykum salaam.

Participant: I wanted to ask for you to possibly remind brothers and sisters because I noticed that sometimes brothers and sisters, we sometimes might hang pictures. I notice that it's very popular especially in the Philadelphia community, that sometimes brothers and sisters they might wear a picture of Malcolm X on their shirt, or maybe Elijah Muhammad. You know how Aisha, radi Allahu anhu, into the house once and there were pictures of cows or some types of animals on it. And Rasulilah(saws) he didn't like it so you ripped it off. I was wondering if possibly you could give them a form Nasiha for our brothers and sisters.

It's not wise for us Muslims because we don't carry sometimes pictures let alone have a picture of Malcolm X because we wouldn't even dare have a picture of Prophet Muhammad Salah Ali Wasallam because we don't have a picture and we never did.

IWDM: I understand, yes. I understand the sensitivity is there. Personally, I tell them I don't like my picture to be worn by anybody. I don't wear pictures on me. I don't wear pictures and I don't want anybody to wear my picture on them. But let us understand that we have to check ourselves too while we're checking our brother. I'm not talking now directly to you but I remember Abdel Nasser of Egypt his pictures were everywhere.

I remember Khomeini, a great man but his picture was just everywhere. Huge pictures of Khomeini everywhere. I don't think anybody was going around telling, "Why you got that big picture of Khomeini?" Let us be considerate of our brothers. They love Elijah Muhammad for what he did, for the good he did and they love Malcolm for the good he did. I'm not one who is so quick to go and say, "You shouldn't wear that picture." I just let them know I don't want them to wear my picture.

Participant: Salaam Alaikum.

IWDM: Alaikum Salaam.

Participant: Really as you said in your speech that you want it or you call it the Hadith of the Prophet Salah Ali Wasallam. Where if you see your brother being mistaken you need to correct him. First of all, I know that I won't get a chance to talk to you in person, but I know your men will stop me so there was a need that I should correct you in some issues or some things you said. This is the son of the Prophet Salah Ali Wasallam. Allah subhana wa ta’ala says in the Quran. Neither the Jews nor the Christians will be satisfied with you and he's talking to the Prophet until you follow their own way. This is something you did not talk about.

IWDM: I am aware that.

Participant: I know you're aware of it.

IWDM: Yes, I'm aware of that and I agree with that.

Participant: Exactly so I think there was-- Can I finish?

Imam: No. You finish first.

Participant: Okay. When you mentioned about being in peace with the Jews and the Christians, I think there was a necessity to differentiate what kind of peace. Is it peace of faith or peace of just living next to each other. I think I agree with living with them in peaceful. I have friends and they are very close friend to me Christians and Jews. However, we cannot agree with the faith because it's completely contradictory to Islam. Second of all, you recall the Hadith where the greatest jihad is the jihad of the soul. This is according with the consensus of the scholars of Hadith.

This hadith is fabricated where the companions came and they said, "We have come from the small Jihad meaning the combative aspect to the great Jihad. The Jihad within us." Then what about the other Hadith of the Prophet Salah Ali Wasallam and the ayah in the Quran where give a high status of the combative aspect. I'm not talking about doing Jihad. I don't think we are qualified to do Jihad as Muslim, the combative aspect but there was a need as agreed upon the scholars to mention if the hadith is being fabricated or not.

The third one, what would you say to the scholars of Islam who have said or who have agreed that fighting the Muslims is haram? What about the ayah of the Quran that says, "The Muslims do not take the kuffar, allies or awliya against Muslims? How can you tell the Muslims to join the military and it's fine because it serves this country? Why you didn't tell them to do what Muhammad Ali did when he refused to go to Vietnam? Muhammad Ali was Muslim, he refused to fight the non-Muslim. Why you didn't I think that would have been better if you told your people. The fourth one you said and this was while I'm standing. You asked about-

IWDM: No, no. Please be patient and be civil. Hey, don't start this, please.

Participant: I'm only saying what Allah has said and what his messenger says. The fourth one Allah says-

IWDM: I'm listening.

Participant: The Prophet Salah Ali Wasallam was forbidden to make Istighfar or ask forgiveness for his own mother. I didn't know how you give the fatwa and you said it's all right to make Istighfar and ask for forgiveness for the Christians and the Jew.

IWDM: You say he was not permitted to ask forgiveness for who?

Participant: For the Christian. The Prophet Salah Ali Wasallam the authentic hadith has said that "Whoever hears about me from Muslim or Christian or a Jew and does not believe in me then he is in hellfire." Why should we deny that? Why should we compromise our religion? Fifth of all, Prophet was asked, or he asked his companions, "Who is the stingiest person? They said the one who does not give out his money. He said no, the stingiest is the one that when I'm mentioned in front of him, he will say Salah Ali Wasallam. He will praise me."

IWDM: I have no problem with anything that you've said so far because you were not talking about Christian. If we understood one another we wouldn't have a problem.

Participant: Okay, that's my advice.

IWDM Yes. My advice is the same advice.

My advice is the same advice he gave saying, "We have to accept what G-d says." Yes. You do not trust your interest to Christians and Jews for them to protect your interest, and establish your interest. Right now, I will say the same thing to many of you African-Americans who are Muslims. You do not trust your responsibilities for your community to Christians, Jews, Buddhists nobody else. That's your responsibility. It doesn't say, friend. They mistranslated.

Didn't say don't take Jews and Christians for friends but it’s just speaking to the ignorant in the following of Muhammad that was trusting others with their interest and they should put themselves there first to be obligated to protect their own interests.

Muslims are obligated first to protect their own interests. You are not supposed to trust that interest to Christians, Jew or anybody else. I could go over each thing he said and show you that I'm seeing it and I agree with the language but he is perceiving it differently. I'm not perceiving it as he is perceiving it. We thank our brother. I believe he's well-meaning and we thank him for his words. Thank you very much. Peace to you all. May G-d grant us all peace. As- Salaamu Alaikum.