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# IWDM Study Library

# Radio Interview

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Interviewer 1: We're talking to W. D. Mohammed.

Karen: That's Imam, W. D. Mohammed.

Interviewer 1: I'm just reading from the paper, okay.

Karen: Don't just read from the paper.

Interviewer 1: The Imam is the son of The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the founder and the original founder of the Nation of Islam. Joining us now is the Imam Mohammed.

Karen: Good morning.

Interviewer 1: Imam, are you with us?

IWDM: Good morning.

Karen: Good morning. Welcome to the show.

IWDM: Thank you.

Karen: You were in town last week talking about economic self-sufficiency in the African American community. In fact, you have stepped down as leader of the American Society of Muslims to head up this organization, the Collective Purchasing Conference, correct?

IWDM: Yes.

Karen: Okay. When you took over from your father, and you lead the Nation of Islam into a more Orthodox observance of Islam, at that point, you sold off a lot of businesses that your father had created, a lot of the land that was purchased. Why did you do that?

IWDM: Well, it was forced upon us. In fact, my father told us before he passed, he told us. When I say us, I mean the staff and National leaders, that we would have to lose all of our property, all of the assets that we had because that was what they call commingling of charities with business money, money from businesses. The charities are used to show up business, was used to make things look good. It looked like it was working but it wasn't working the way IRS would accept that it works.

Karen: Government issue?

IWDM: Yes, ma'am. There were big problems, there were big financial problems even started about like 8 or 10 years before the passing of my father.

Karen: Because it was perceived that you had moved away from his movement to empower folks economically. It's 8:09 in the morning, so I'm glad that that was cleared up.

IWDM: I actually did but I didn't leave it as a plan I have a future plan. I left it because I thought it wouldn't be good for people, the following to continue to look to business. I thought that they needed to get back to spiritual life first. I feel now that we have gotten back to our spiritual life and we're ready to go into business again.

Interviewer 1: Well, are you doing anything in that area to generate either businesses or like, I think one of the ideas of Farmland.

IWDM: No, the Farmland not yet. I don't think we're looking at Farmland right now. I mentioned slavery. What's been motivating me all along is what my parents put into me. That was a desire to see the conditions of life in our neighborhood improve and see us, African Americans or blacks, having a bigger role in determining the future of our neighborhood. That's business, we have to have some business interest and we have to ourselves be represented in our own neighborhood as business people.

That's what was motivating me more than anything else. To me, that's the moral obligation, it's not just business, it's a moral obligation on us as a people. And I believe that the majority of black African Americans in these neighborhoods, they are depressed and they are lost spiritually because we do not have enough of our leaders working on the material interest for our neighborhoods, for our home life and our neighborhood.

Interviewer 1: Imam W. D. Mohammed is our guest this morning. It is 8:12 in the morning and before we talk about the Collective Purchasing Conference, talking from that side of actually purchasing, let's talk about the flip side and instead talk about business and giving them economic empowerment. Well, it would seem to me that even before you talk about buying new things, we need to talk about acquiring money in order to be able to buy those things. What are we doing or what is being done by you and your organization to help black people get jobs and set up businesses?

IWDM: The collective conference is an investment company and you can make small investments as much as $100 up to $2,000. The investors are owners or it's a partnership, all the investors invest their money. Invest with money collected from our members, our supporters. We are able to buy land, we're able to operate facilities. We have a meat processing company in the Markham, Illinois where I live here in southwest of suburbs of Chicago.

We have land for building affordable homes and we are looking at some property now, where we will build for professional people. We do have professional people we're not saying that our race hasn't made progress, we've made great progress since the civil rights time in the '60s. Since the '60s we've made a lot of progress and we made progress even before the '60s but after the '60s, we made a lot of progress. We just haven't organized our leadership-

Karen: That's where I was going to go.

IWDM: -to address these problems.

Karen: 2128680975 is the number, I know we have a lot of listeners who are or were former members of the Nation of Islam, which you are part of because your father started that organization. I want to talk to you about leadership and collective working together. We see in other community that people who don't even like each other, may not share the same views when it comes down to business, they come together. We see that folks from even opposing sides who share a common religion come together when it comes down to business. Are you working with Louis Farrakhan or Jesse Jackson or are you working with any of the other so-called black leaders to make this work?

IWDM: Somewhat but nothing has really materialized for us. We have an interest in working with members or business persons of the Nation of Islam under Minister Louis Farrakhan. We would like to have some kind of economic ties with them, business ties. I don't know about business ties I would say economic ties. We'd like to sit with them and discuss the planning of a better material future for us in our neighborhood. I have expressed that over the last several years and I did get an indication from Minister Farrakhan and one of his top aides that there is an interest but we have not sat down to actually do anything.

Karen: What's your relationship with him?

IWDM: Well, I'll put it this way. I believe in the future of their following. I believe that they will have to do more to represent themselves as Muslims. The religion is not correct yet, they don't have the religion correct. At least it’s not in their newspaper. Their newspaper still carries the old language of the of their Nationalist Movement that was not so much religion, it was a nationalist movement.

Karen: But that was your father's vision, wasn't it? Wasn't it your father's vision in many ways?

IWDM: Yes, it was my father but my father was constantly changing. My father was a man of change. He kept the same rhetoric because he didn't want to lose his followers. But quietly, he was guarding the leaders to accept changes in America and accept that opportunities were better for us and that we should embrace the new realities that we were seeing here and look at white people differently. So, the honorable Elijah Muhammed was softening his rhetoric quite a bit.

At the last couple of years of his life, he told us, if the white man can accept us then we should look at ourselves again and look at the situation again and treat them with respect and take advantage of new opportunities. That was the teaching of the honorable Elijah Muhammad. When Minister Farrakhan took the leadership, he reacted to me, he reacted to my leadership. What he did was go back I think he felt he had to go back to the old language. When he went back, to me, he was really stepping back from the honorable Elijah Muhammad's new position. And going back to the honorable Elijah Muhammad abandon stand that he took.

Karen: I see a couple things going on, and I'm not so sure if acceptance of white America is important to the success of black people. It might even be a detriment. Perhaps in many ways Minister Louis Farrakhan understood that and I'm not so certain if at the end of the day, even if they accept us if they're going to give us a place at the table. I'm not sure if they're willing to give up any power to make things equal. 2128680975, we do have a caller, Matt in Manhattan wants to talk to you. Good morning, Matt.

Matt: Good morning, professor. Good morning Rabbi. I just wanted to clarify something. I heard both Karen and Rabbi refer to The Honorable Elijah Muhammad as the originator of the Nation of Islam. It was my understanding that it was a man named Fard in Detroit in the '30s, a bi-racial half white man who gave birth to this religion and then conveniently disappeared and was replaced by The Honorable Elijah Muhammad. I may be mistaken or ignorant but could you please correct me on that point.

Karen: Okay.

Interviewer 1: Okay. Thank you. Imam?

Karen: Imam?

IWDM: Yes.

Interviewer 1: What do you say?

IWDM: That's correct. He's correct. He wasn't a half white man, he was of Asian blood. He was from the area that was before 1947 there was no Pakistan. He was from the area that became Pakistan. At Lahore, Pakistan. He was an Asian. He looked like a white man but he was an Asian. To us all white skin people are white people. Some of them feel the same way now. They feel they're white and not black if it's white or black, he was white man, yes. If he's saying white or black, he was a white man.

Karen: Okay. What happened to him?

IWDM: But he had a sincere interest in doing something to change the way think in the black neighborhood in our black communities. He was successful in doing that. He brought about change. You mention the doubt that the white people will accept us at the table, that's the position of many African-Americans. Majority. But I'm different. I see enough that has happened already to convince me, that we are accepted at the table just like anybody else.

This is a society that believes in competition it's sometimes it's much like the competition in the jungle survival of the fittest and I’m prepared to accept what all Americans have to accept that we have to compete and nobody's going to just keep taking care of us. That's what Elijah Muhammad taught us.

Karen: We're going to hold you over because I know what's next in the collective purchasing conference, where are you going, is there some place that people can call and contact you? Hold on one second, we--

Interviewer 1: Success stories in that area.

Karen: We have a couple of callers and I’m going to put the question the question out. Is Imam W. D. Mohammed correct? Is it a fair playing ground, is it survival of the fittest? Have we moved to that point where white America is accepting blacking America to the table? You're listening to the hottest morning show in the world and go ahead.

IWDM: Yes, I'm here.

Interviewer 1: Okay. Mel are you there?

IWDM: Yes. Muhammad here.

Interviewer 1: We're trying to get to Mel.

Karen: No, it's Mike.

Interviewer 1: Mike I'm sorry.

Mike: Hi.

Karen: Hey Mike. Who's Mel?

Mike: I don't know who Mel is. He must have left.

Interviewer 1: Okay Mike.

Mike: Real quick. I want to ask the gentleman I remember when the nation of Islam was coming around real heavy in the '60s and all they were saying that Jesus was the white man's G-d, but what amazes me is that, when I see Farrakhan on TV and all, he always quotes Jesus and he always quote's the bible. That's always amazed me and that Jesus is in the Quran, so I don't know why they make it like Jesus is the white man's G-d? Hello?

IWDM: Yes.

Mike: Could I get a response on that please?

IWDM: Yes, that was a big problem for me too. I was seeing the picture of the man we called our savior Fard who gave my father his idea and we were saying that we rejected Jesus and he was a white man indicating that G-d was white, so as a child I had a lot of problems with that. When I learned from my holy book, the book of all Muslims called the Quran that Jesus Christ was very much like the Bible presents him.

We don't believe that he's G-d but we believe that he's a spirit and a word from G-d and a sign, a great sign as his mother was. Peace be upon both of them. The Muslims all over the world accept Jesus Christ and we do believe in I will use the Christian language, immaculate conception that he was created by G-d spiritually and he was a great sign, a great sign. A prophet and messenger of G-d and a great sign.

Interviewer 1: Okay. Thanks.

Karen: Thanks for clearing that up for Mike.

IWDM: We do believe in Jesus Christ.

Interviewer 1: Okay. Let's go to Ed in New Jersey. Good morning Ed?

Ed: Hi, how are you?

Karen: Hey Ed. 8:28. Good morning.

Ed: I just have a question. I believe that the downfall of the Nation of Islam was when Malcolm X was assassinated because I really believed that during that period Malcolm X-- a lot of stuff that Malcolm was trying to do and had he lived, the situation would've been better today. I'm going to let him respond to that and then I'll have one last question and then I'll hang up.

Karen: Okay.

Interviewer 1: Imam?

IWDM: Can I respond now?

Karen: Yes. Go ahead.

IWDM: I have to put it this way because I know the time is short. Malcolm and I, we were friends just as Farrakhan all the three of us. Malcolm, Farrakhan, and myself we were close and close associations most of the time maybe we were friends more than just workers, co-workers we were friends. I had conversations with Malcolm just before he passed. He went international which that was his business but when he wanted to involve the United Nations and others in our problem, I thought that that was going away from what we were actually established to do and I wasn't comfortable with that. We had political differences.

I believe that except for those political differences Malcolm would've been a big success if he had not been assassinated.

Karen: Do you believe that Farrakhan had something to do with it?

IWDM: I can't say Farrakhan. The Nation of Islam leaders, have to do with it.

Karen: Definitely. Let's go. Ed, I'm sorry but we're going to have to move on to Anthony because I know the Imam has to leave so I want everyone to get their questions. Anthony in The Bronx. Good morning.

Anthony: Yes hello.

Karen: Quickly.

Anthony: Yes, hello?

Karen: Yes, you're on.

Anthony: I miss Malcolm so much but I would like to ask you the Imam is you like his father? Because his father was the one that spread the rhetoric. His father was a pedophile, his father conspired to kill Malcolm X. Is he like that? Does he believe in that?

Karen: Have you been listening to the show Anthony? You don't have to respond-- all right. Thank you, Anthony. Imam, you do not have to respond to that and I know that you have to leave. Let's talk about the collective purchasing conference when is the next event is there an event and where can you be reached?

IWDM: We schedule conferences all around the country and every year it's looking brighter and brighter. We don't have big cash reserves to make big investments but the financial future is excellent for us. We are getting some persons that are not Muslims from Christians who are interested too and we welcome them. The meeting we had in Harlem at the church was expressive and I think we should go back to New York very soon and that's what they're telling me.

Karen: Okay, let us know when you will be back and you got to come in live in to the studio because we have a very hot show.

IWDM: I would love to do that Karen.

Interviewer 1: Thank you very much for dropping in this morning.

Karen: Okay. Wait. Is there a website or a telephone number?

IWDM: Well, you have my telephone number.

Karen: Ok. Well for the people if they want to donate or be involve. Is there someplace where they can call or reach out to you?

IWDM: Well, the number is to reach me would be 708-798-6750.

Karen: Excellent. Much success to you Imam Mohammed and thank you for coming on this morning. When you come back to New York you must drop in.

IWDM: I look forward to being with you in the studio. And thank you for having us on WWR.