### 10/03/2004

### IWDM Study Library

# RESEARCHING OUR RELIGION, ESTABLISHING BUSINESS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

# PT. 1

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

00:00 Speaker 1: Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

00:05 Speaker 2: Takbir. Allāhu Akbar. Takbir. Allāhu Akbar. Takbir. Allāhu Akbar. Takbir. Allāhu Akbar.

00:21 IWDM: Imam has just arrived and he will be with us very shortly, and we want those who are present in the east coast and all over to relax and make yourself comfortable. And we ask G-d today that He bless Imam with this noble effort, and we ask G-d that He blesses us to receive the message of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

00:57 S2: Takbir. Allāhu Akbar. Takbir. Allāhu Akbar. Takbir. Allāhu Akbar.

01:03 IWDM: Thank you, thank you. We praise G-d. In the language of Islam, we say Assalamu Alaikum, peace be on you. And we say alḥamdulillāh, that means Praise be to G-d. Rabbil 'alamin, Lord of all the worlds. We witness that He's one, and we give the traditional salute to the last prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad. Sallā allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam, that is the prayers and the peace be upon him. We thank Him for our presence, G-d for our presence that is, we thank G-d for our presence here today as we do always. And we pray to him and we trust that he will guide us, so that we do not err. It is a beautiful day here, just turned cool, but it is a beautiful day. Beautiful day in the Chicago area. I was somewhere in the south just yesterday, and it was so cold, I said, " Boy, oh boy. This is winter, what am I to expect when I go back home?"

[laughter]

02:18 IWDM: And I got back home, it was a little better than it was south of us. So the weather is not predictable anymore, like it used to be. The weather pattern that is. The weather pattern has changed, is changing. Basically the same, but you can experience a summer day sometimes in December here in Chicago. In Chicago area, in December, 60 degrees or more, we've experienced that, in fact some individual on TV were swimming [chuckle] in December, one year here in this area. And I don't know, that a lot of mysteries in life, and we'll never know all of them, and we'll never be able to understand it all. But to me, the more I study, I'm a student of the natural environment more than I am a student of anything else. And the more I study the natural environment, the more I'm convinced that the natural environment seems to always reflect what's happening in the people, or with the lives of the people on earth.

03:37 IWDM: And we always seem to reflect what's happening in the natural environment. Yes, so you see how unpredictable the patterns are for weather now. And the people are the same. Very unpredictable. What was expected years ago cannot be expected today. The things that we could study in the behavior of people, or the happenings that we could study in the behavior of people could enable us to predict what was gonna happen tomorrow, next week, down the road. Maybe for months, maybe even for years, but no more. The people are just as unpredictable in their patterns, behavioral patterns, as the weather is. And the weather seems to be reflecting us and we seem to be reflecting the weather. The natural world reflecting us and we are seen to be reflecting the natural world. Our theme has been, and continues to be researching our religion and establishing business for our neighborhoods.

05:00 IWDM: Contributing and supporting the business life of our neighborhoods. If you study every other people in these United States, you will find none of them as weak, financially, as we are in the establishment of our neighborhoods. They would have more property in their neighborhoods accredited to them, their name. Whether they be Irish, Polish, Spanish or Mexicans, or whatever. They'll have more to their credit, to their name, to the credit of their name in their neighborhood than we have. When we travel through our neighborhoods, we can't see ourselves in the material establishment of our neighborhoods. We don't see ourselves, our name is not on it. Others, the name of others, is on it. That should bother us, that did bother us. That bothered African American leaders in the past, before... Even before the honorable Elijah Mohammed. But when he came on the scene, he made that a number one issue.

06:19 IWDM: That we have to stop depending on other people to do for us what we were created to do for ourselves. And we still have that burden. And this is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and those African American leaders, Christians, who came before him, were determined. And some even were Muslim, Moorish Americans, same thing. The Moorish Americans preceded the Nation of Islam by a few years. They also called the Moorish Science Temple. And Mr. Fard came after them, and gave my father the name Holy Temple of Islam. Very similar. Language very similar to that of the Moorish American People. And there are many other similarities for the Moorish American Movement or organization, of those people and us, the Nation of Islam.

07:19 IWDM: Anyway, getting back to the main idea, the main thought here. None of them were satisfied with our poor showing in our own life as a people. As a people, not talking about as individuals. We know we have Oprah Winfrey. We know she got plenty of money, giving away expensive cars. She's charitable and everything. We appreciate that. We know about other millionaires, and perhaps even a few billionaires among us, African American people. Like Oprah Winfrey, you know. We know of them. But they carry more burden on their hearts and minds and souls than the poor people in these neighborhoods that go along just like birds, bees, butterflies, doing nothing but being happy to have just a little bit of life, and a quick season, and they're gone. Like the butterflies that come when the weather is nice. For awhile, and they're gone, yes? They don't seem to carry much burden on their hearts and minds and souls. They are flighty, they're carried by the winds. They're happy. They're up and down like birds. Getting up with the sun and going in at night. They are happy. They don't have any big issues. No big problems.

09:06 IWDM: But those who have been blessed to have experiences and opportunity to meet with people who know the nature and way of life that we call the life of America, and the life of the neighborhood. And they carry a great burden on them because they know that G-d didn't intend for black people to be only butterflies and birds, flighty things in the air. Up and down with the sun, and darkness. G-d didn't intend that for people. G-d intended that people have a plan for their lives. That they have a life plan that supports and protects their life presently and in the future. A plan for themselves now, and for the generations to come. Well, if we are with the spiritual enlightened people, all of us don't have to have that awareness, or the ability to manage life for ourselves. It's enough for every people, for the Polish, that they have Polish intelligent leadership in the church, in politics, in business, in culture, etcetera. Who have the interests of their collective life, and will not just work for themselves as individuals, but will work for the bigger cause even more than they work for themselves individually. Work for the bigger cause of managing and securing the management of the life of themselves as a whole, the collective whole.

11:27 IWDM: We once had that. This ain't nothing strange to us. When we sought to change our situation from that of a people in bondage, or enslaved on the plantations of the south, to that of a free people along with all other American citizens, Frederick Douglass and those who were working before him that perhaps we don't know by name. Frederick Douglass of course is playing the establishment history. And the Quakers, the abolitionists that he worked with or who accepted him to be an able spokesman for the abolitionist movement. And those who came after him, all the way down to Malcolm X and Doctor Martin Luther King or the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam and the Civil Rights Movement. Yes, all the way down there, we had leadership. Benjamin Mays is gone now, but Benjamin Mays was a man that I got to know. I used to read his column in the newspaper and I got to know him personally before he passed. A Christian man, Christian educated man, an educator him too, himself. A wonderful man that never forgot that his people need help and need leadership, need guidance, need someone to keep the important issues before them.

13:29 IWDM: He didn't forget that and there were many others in politics and religion, in politics and some even in business and especially in education beginning with Carter G. Woodson, who felt that freeing people or taking this... Permitting the slaves to leave the plantation and to leave their former masters or owners was not enough, that we would still be slaves if someone didn't take the chains off our minds. The chains of slavery, ideas that we accepted that was imposed upon us by white supremacy about a world that favored whites getting up and blacks staying down. The chains of ideas that put us down as people of value. As a human being having equal human worth with other human beings.

14:37 IWDM: Originally, if not in the circumstances we were in, believing in what the founding fathers believed in for all human beings belonging to the citizenry of the United States, believing that every human being begins with the same qualifications for life and progress when they come from their mother's womb. Mohammed the Prophet said, "Every child is born submitting his will to the will of G-d until the circumstances the children are put in change that." So if a child is put in circumstances where he looks at his mother and he gets to know his mother as a slave, as property owned by another human being with a different face, a different nationality, a different race, pardon me. The circumstances for that child are greatly inferior in terms of this power to lift the child up to where G-d wants it to be, to the circumstances for the child who's born in a favorite situation or the favored situation of being a child of the one who owned the master, pardon me, the African American woman and her child.

16:11 IWDM: So these are realities that we can't forget, that we didn't start off equally. We were born equally, but we didn't start off equally. We lost our record, our history, our life line in Africa. And we had to start a life line in the circumstances that the world put us in, the white world put us in; the circumstances of slavery, the circumstances of blacks being called sub-human, not equal to whites, etcetera. Those are the circumstances and we have to remember those circumstances and look at what's happening now to us as a people and tie what's happening now to what happened back then. If you started off in good circumstances, you would be in good circumstances now, but if your beginning was in bad circumstances and you haven't fully recovered from those bad circumstances, then you could be in a bad situation now when we look at the situation for people who didn't suffer those bad circumstances that we suffered as a people. Is this making sense to you?

17:28 IWDM: It makes perfect sense to me. And what bothers me, what troubles my heart is that we don't have enough of our leaders on this case. We got to get on the case. They have to be here where we are right now, in this conversation or in this speech that I'm making to you. We have to be right here. There's a reason why we can't establish our neighborhoods. There's a reason why we don't have the spirit to change our neighborhood so that it be a credit to us and not a shame on us. It's a shame on us now that we live in our living quarters. Understand this, your neighborhood is your living quarters. We live in our living quarters and we don't have our own stores. We don't have our own real estate offices. We don't have our own insurance offices. We don't have our own management of our neighborhood. We don't decide the climate, speaking morally, speaking financially. We don't decide the climate of our own neighborhoods. It's others who look at our neighborhood and say, "Well, here is nothing but space for business." They don't occupy any space in their neighborhood. So ain't nothing but open spaces here for others who want to do business in the black neighborhoods. So let us go to the black quarters and let us set up our business. And when they have their needs, they come out of their homes and they come to us.

19:33 IWDM: That's a disgrace on any people that they can't have enough awakeness of mind or enough conscience of mind to realize that as long as their living quarters is provided for and dictated by other than themselves, they will never be any more than a baby people. They're baby people. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad says we are baby nation. That's how his teacher told him to look at us, baby nation. Why baby? Because you haven't got what little boys got in other people's quarters. That has to change and we're about changing that. But equally important to us now... In fact, if we miss the second importance that I'm getting ready to explain to you right now, we will never be able to take care of the first. And the second is this, that no people, separate to themselves or considered alone, are of more importance than the human family.

21:04 IWDM: The human family includes all races. The human family includes all ethnic groups, all colors; black, white, red, brown, whatever you want to call it, yellow, Asians, all. That's the human family. And when G-d gives us human beings, he doesn't give us human beings that's members of the black race, or members of the white race, or the yellow race, or the red race, or whatever color we want to give the races. He doesn't give members of those races. They become members of our race after we raise them and teach them what was put into us.

21:49 IWDM: If you take a baby as soon as it's born from a African American family and you put it in a Chinese family, that baby will come up a Chinese. Likewise, if you put the Chinese baby as soon as it's born from its mother into an African American family house, that baby will come up an African American. "Oh no, it will still be a Japanese. Everybody will see it's a Japanese." You're talking about physical picture. That's not the real life. The real life is how that child thinks. The real life is how that child feels. All right? That child will be raised thinking and feeling like an African American if it's taken from the Chinese mother and put in the African American house. And only way it will be able to connect with the thinking of a Chinese or Japanese people, it would have to get up and be educated. Educated.

22:50 IWDM: Don't laugh. This is more important than what you discovered or what you noticed. Don't laugh. Be serious. If you laugh, that tell me you're stupid. That tells me you're silly-minded. And you can't get this, what I'm offering you, if you're silly-minded. Don't look for faults in people. Look for beauty, and guidance, and excellence, and light, and intelligence, then you'll get it. Okay. We're gonna get on that too later, what dispositions us to be that way. Yeah. All right. Excuse me. I love my people, and If I see a problem, I want to try to help them right on the spot. I love all people. My people are human beings, but my closest relatives are black. [laughter] And that's what got me all tied up. [laughter]

23:52 IWDM: Praise be to Allah. Now, so the first identity is human. First identity is human. Allah didn't make us Japanese, Spanish, whatever, Allah made us human. G-d made all of us human, and we belong to the family that He made, firstly and lastly. The family that He made is the human family. But because of our circumstances on this Earth, we're separated from each other, we develop our own languages, certain regions of the Earth gave us our color, I'm talking about skin pigmentation now. But no matter what physical picture you come into, it does not necessarily have to decide the way you think, the way you feel. So what are you more important, a piece of flesh or mind and a soul? Where is your real identity, in your piece of flesh that you have, that flesh body? Or is your real identity in the way you think, the way you feel? Your mind and your soul. Is in your mind and your soul, that's where your real identity is.

25:17 IWDM: Firstly in your soul. The soul that G-d has created, human soul that He creates. In our religion, it is same for Christianity and Judaism, and I believe other religions too. I've studied religion, a lot of religion, I've done a lot of study in religion, that I believe I know Judaism, like Jews scholar know Judaism. I believe I know Christianity, like Christian scholar knows Christianity. Yes, so anyway, G-d says that He gave us our pictures when we were in the body of our mothers. When our mothers were carrying us, before we were born after nine months or whatever, come earlier maybe some of us. So before we were born, G-d says He gave us our pictures in the body of our mothers, when we were been formed in the bodies of our mothers. And G-d says of those pictures, He said that He made them beautiful. Beautiful. He made them beautiful.

26:25 IWDM: Then G-d says, that He gave us our single picture. One picture, not different pictures. So He gave us our many pictures, that means G-d is the one who made this Earth to balance in our different colors and features. But the same G-d made us one picture, one human type, one picture. That's our human identity. And G-d says that that one, He made it the best, fa-ahsana-suwarakum. And He made the best picture for you, your single picture, your picture as a human being. Therefore, whoever loses his human life, and his interest in himself as a human person, loses his best picture.

27:42 IWDM: An African American, that lost his human interest in himself as a human person, he lost a great value. And whatever he puts upon himself will eventually fail him. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he mentioned the term "dress", D-R-E-S-S, dress. And yet, I've heard him tell us, that is tell the congregation, the body, and I've heard him tell also educated persons who were questioning him, this; he said, "Well, my job is mainly to dress our people up." He said, "I have to put them in a new dress," that's what he said.

28:50 IWDM: One of the people, educated people, young man, who was doing his thesis, a dissertation for his Ph degree, he was from Africa, named Yasin Udom. He wrote a book on the followers Honorable Elijah Muhammad, very important book I thought. He said that he understood the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's main work to be guiding his people to a cultural life. Cultural life. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad would put it in this sense, he would say, "dress them up, I'm trying to dress them up."

29:41 IWDM: Actually men of great insight, especially, I should say men and women, of great insight, especially in religious knowledge, they understand even our flesh on our bones to be a dress, to be a clothing. That's not the real self. The real self is what's under the clothing. Our feelings, our thinking that the clothing encased. Yes, our mind and our feelings that the flesh encases. So they see the flesh itself as a clothing. That's the understanding they get when they study G-d's words to His prophets and messengers on how he formed or how G-d formed human life. That the real life is the inner body not the flesh body that houses the inner body, the spiritual. Not spiritual in the sense of Negro spirituals or black spirituals. Spiritual in the sense that it is the life, that is intelligent, that is moral, and that is aspiring. Always wanting to be better, an aspiring life, aspiring for greater situation, for a better situation, for bigger and better opportunities, etcetera. So it's the life in that's the more valuable life. And that's the life that's truer to the identity of the life form, that we call human life, that we call human life. This is very important, especially for people who are lost, or are missing a continuous lifeline, that came from people of identity with land.

32:13 IWDM: Africans with African land, Igbo with Igbo land, Hausa with Hausa land. African people, African families, African tribes, who identify with their land, and have a history that they can read, and reconnect if they go to Mexico or to New York, as a child and lose that knowledge. They can their books on their people, and get that knowledge right back, and get back in step with their lifeline. But we can't get back in step with our lifeline because it's been so completely severed and lost, there's no possible way to get it back.