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# Interview with Imam Kamalud-din (Part A)

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

**Voice:** A male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other, not that ye may despise each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of G’d, is he who is the most righteous of you and G’d has full knowledge and is well-acquainted with all things. *The American* *Muslim Mission in Focus,* this program deals with the misunderstandings that exist in this country about the Muslim religion. We hope this program will bring about a better understanding of the religion of Al-Islam. We also hope this program will encourage all people to begin to know each other better, so that we can work together to assure the survival of our country. Now, your host, Imam Ibrahim Kamalud-din.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** As salaamu alaykum dear beloved people. As salaamu alaykum means may the peace and blessings of Almighty G’d be upon you. I am Imam Ibrahim Kamalud-din. For the next 30 minutes I am going to be your host, on *American Muslim Mission in Focus.* This is a program that is designed to bring you very important and much needed information. We would like to welcome you to our program. Also we have a very special treat for you today, and what I mean by special treat, I mean we have a very special guest, a man who is well known in America and around the world.

That is Imam Warith Deen Muhammad. He is the leader of the American Muslim Mission that is the largest Muslim community in the Western hemisphere. Brother Imam we would like to welcome you to the city of Houston.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Thank you.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Thank you for taking time out from your very busy schedule. We know that you are traveling around the country, fulfilling invitations to colleges and universities and leadership conferences and other organizations, and sharing this knowledge and wisdom that we have gotten from the Holy Qur’aan and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. It has benefited our community greatly and we know it is good for others. We want to thank you very much for coming.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Thank you Imam Kamalud-din.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I would like to begin with a question. These 30 minutes can go awful fast. I'd like to begin by asking you to give us a little talk on Al-Islam. What it is, what it represents, because you see many people think because Al-Islam is the Arabic language, and because the religion was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, who was an Arab, they feel that this is an Arab religion or there are those who will lead the people to believe this; that this is solely for the Arab people. I would like for you to clear that misconception up for us please.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Al-Islam is commonly known by the name Islam. The proper name in the Qur’aanic text, in the holy text, in the holy book is Al-Islam. It is one of the three great religions that are popular in the world, Judaism, Christianity and Al-Islam or Islam. The adherents with this faith are found in Arabia where it started about 1,400 years ago or so and in Africa where it immediately went, spread from Saudi Arabia, from what is now Saudi Arabia, used to be the Hejaz. It spread right into Africa and then into Europe. Many people will be surprised to know that this religion was established in Spain and thrived there for seven centuries.

And the sign of Islamic architecture or culture is still there in Spain, in the cities of Spain. Its adherents are in Asia, Far East, Pakistan, and China. There are many Muslims in Russia. We have perhaps been reading in the news, recently where they were bringing attention to the American public. The media was bringing attention to the American public that there are Muslim communities in Russia.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Right. I saw that.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Who represents the problem for the totalitarianism for the regime there. I do not know if they really represent a problem or not, but that is what we were told. I would think that communism would represent a problem for any Muslim.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is right, all over the world.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Right, being Muslim. Right, because we believe in freedom in very much the same sense that the American Christians believe in true freedom. We believe in the sacredness of the inherent rights of individual and the freedom of religion, freedom of the press. We believe in all these things. Free enterprise, we believe in all these things. To tell people what our religion is would be pretty difficult in this short period of time that you have.

What we would just like for them to know that it is a religion that they have heard about, the religion of what they call Moslems. Is called Moslems, but now the Muslim pronunciation is becoming more and more popular, Muslim. These people who we read about in the Crusades, the ugly period in our history that we do not like to recall, but that is how we got to be popular in the West, through the study of the Crusades.

I remember reading an Arab book in that school, in our small school, Muslim school. They had a history book and one part of the history book dealt with the Crusades. I am aware that many youngsters in high school and college they have read about the Crusades. We're talking about the *Ali Baba and the Forty* *Thieves*. That is the wrong image of Muslims. There's no *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* in our religion. The people that the movies and history books have introduced to us as Moslems or Muslims are Arabs. That is really a misnomer, isn't it? They have think that Muslims are Arabs.

Muslims are Arabs, but Muslims are Africans, Muslims are Chinese, Muslims are Americans, Muslims are anybody. To understand our religion and the religious or the population or the makeup of the Muslim community over the world, we have to understand in same sense that we understand Christianity. We do not think that every Christian has to be an American white man or European white person. Christians are all over the world and Muslims are all over the world, and because Christianity started in Jerusalem or in Bethlehem we won’t think that its “Bethlehamic” or whatever you call it religion.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I understand. You are absolutely right.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Why should we think Islam or Al-Islam is an Arab religion?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I know there's another thing they call it. Many have referred to it as “Muhammadism” instead of saying Al-Islam.

**Imam Warith Deen:** To Muslims that is an insult.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes it is.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Right, because Prophet Muhammad more than anything else he warned us against making him a deity, a G’d, or making him the founder of the religion. He is not the founder of the religion. The religion was revealed to him. It is okay for these sec people who have the secular mind to say Jesus founded Christianity, but I think people like to say that G’d did that, right?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes. It makes the religion more legitimate to say that G’d is the founder.

**Imam Warith Deen:** We have to be true to what the representative said. The representative said it is from G’d and G’d established it. G’d say in the Qur’aan that it is not left up to a human being to establish the religion. G’d revealed it, G’d established it. That is what it says in Qur’aan.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is better too.

**Imam Warith Deen:** We cannot make people Muslims. Where the reception is, that is where the religion is going to go. G’d decided that not Muhammad, and not me and not you.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is right. Another thing, you mentioned about Jesus and in Al-Islam there are no images put up as an image of G’d. Like physical images, images of human beings or animals or something like that. I noticed that is strictly forbbiden.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Old Testament forbids it too. Says make no image, engraved image of G’d from anything in the heavens, in the earth below.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** It says that. It says of water beneath the water it covers the whole thing.

**Imam Warith Deen:** That right, exactly. That is right. It covers the whole the thing.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** The thing I'd like to mention here is your new book, *Religion on the line,* and I've read it several times and it is very enlightening.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Well, thank you.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I noticed this one in here it is about an interview on a radio program. I noticed there were representatives there from Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and also Al-Islam which was you. I was reading the different questions and conversation that went on. Actually, when you get through reading this, most people will understand that there is really very little difference in those religions. There's more commonality than difference.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I found from my own experience over the last 10 years or so. I found that when Christians, Jews, Muslims, or others, when they get together, and they all share the strong belief in G’d, and strong concern for the good, free future and well-being of humanity that after a while you just do not see each other in those religious terms or in those religious garments anymore.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is true. That is very true.

**Imam Warith Deen:** You see each other as one people believing in G’d and having human concerns. That is what happens.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** You are right.

**Imam Warith Deen:** That is what we experienced on this program. After a while the priest, the protestant, the minister, the priest, and even the rabbi, after a while, we just saw ourselves as what you call fraternal brothers and after all weren't the prophets fraternal brothers?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes, by all means.

**Imam Warith Deen:** They support each other?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** They did.

**Imam Warith Deen:** They represent one fraternity?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Yes. Well, if we come into that pure spirit then we can enjoy the same even though you might be a Jew and I am a Muslim or you’ll be a Christian, I am a Muslim. We can enjoy the same.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I've experienced that because just propagating the religion Al Islam I have made a lot of friends. Simply because the people hear what I am saying and they say, "Hey that is what we believe in too."

**Imam Warith Deen:** The right spirit is one.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes. That is right. [Laughs] I'd like to show the people the color of this book with us. It is very attractive and it has a very good meaning just looking at it, with the telephone on there. Can I get a go?

**Imam Warith Deen:** It is sort of attractive.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Is that good? If they would like to get a copy of this they can call 649-7789, The Houston masjid of Al-Islam and we'll see that they get a copy.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Very good.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Also, brother Imam I'd like to mention this farm land that we have. I remember you saying that the first time that you went and looked at it, you had heard about it and that it was 4,500 acres, and you didn't realize how much land that was. You knew it was a lot of land, but until you went looked at it and you said--

**Imam Warith Deen:** That is true.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Now, you will mention how fertile this land is and you mentioned the plans that we have, that we're going to use as land for.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I didn't use the word fertile. I said beautiful. It is a very beautiful land, beautiful land, and I believe that it is a very fertile land but my field is not agriculture. I am just in ministry.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** If we carry out the plans--

**Imam Warith Deen:** It looks like a very good land and from what I can hear; they're going to do some soil test pretty soon.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I see.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Yes sir. I believe it is very good land. I know the people in that area they produce a lot of wheat, summer and winter wheat, and a lot of other things. I know there are a lot of pecan trees on the land and they say they are in good shape all they need is some attention. They have been neglected. Do you know what struck me when I went into that land?

**Imam Warith Deen:** What was that?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** The fact that that land was purchased by poor people who represent the poorest people in these big cities.

**Imam Warith Deen:** That is something [cross talk]

**Imam Kamalud-din:** The poor membership of the temple of Islam under the Honorable Elijah Muhammad purchased that land that Georgia found. They purchased it with few dollars collected all over the country, East Coast, West Coast, South, Midwest. That is how the purchase was made. When I went there and saw it and saw the cannery just there, haven't been in production all those years. Just was in production for a little while and saw the land. Nothing is being done on the land. Hunting rights sold out to other people so they can hunt on the land which is good. It is better than doing nothing with the land. What I am saying is I felt so ashamed of myself and so ashamed of this community that we were not out there doing something to make that land productive.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I know what you mean. I got that same feeling when you told us about it.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes. We have to make that land productive and it really can answer many of our needs. It can serve as an opportunity for us to establish our qualifications for sustaining a small community life. And I think the spirit of the freedom fighters among the black folks deserves that opportunity, right?

**Imam Warith Deen:** Yes, indeed. Also, I heard you mention some of the plans that you had for that land, what you have for that land.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** We are just continuing the tradition. It is a tradition among the aggressive, poor, African-Americans. They might call us “black nationalist” or “militants” or whatever, but to me, it is a religious movement more than anything else. It is a human movement more than anything else to establish the dignity of the poor and down and out person. It is tradition for us to pull our little money, to pull our resources and do-- Many churches, many Protestant churches they have ministers who buy nursing homes for their elderly, who buy farmland and they are doing things, they are productive. They realize that they have an obligation to do more than just excite people with the spirit, but they have an obligation to help people with the burden of daily life.

We have come up in that same tradition, and that is an opportunity for us to really satisfy the needs of many poor people. I hope we'll keep it to where we're not living close together. We do not want to create Harlem situation down there.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes, I understand.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Or **a** Watts situation down there. We want to preserve that farm state, a farm condition, a farm atmosphere. So we have an idea to establish a collective farming project where we agree to work the land, be productive, work the land as a collective group and sell as a collective group, and plan for the whole-- Better than 4,000 acres, plan for the needs of the whole group.

**Imam Warith Deen:** That is beautiful.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes, sir.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Because I heard that you mentioned once that a community of people cannot really establish themselves until they have some land. It is like the roots but not rich.

**Imam Warith Deen:** You can establish yourself in a career.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I see what you mean.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I didn't mean you cannot make it. You can make it, but if you want the greatest sense of security then you should either be allied with or you should be an owner of some land.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes, I see what you mean. We said we wanted to-- because there are many people who are curious about what Muslims eat, and believe me there are a lot of misconceptions about our diet.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I am sure it is because we had a lot of confusion…about that.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is right. Now that it is straightened out, and you have been the one who have really helped straightened out many of us by bringing the teachings of the Qur’aan to us.

**Imam Warith Deen:** It is very simple. Qur’aan is very simple and plain. We can all have uniform eating habits if we just follow the Qur’aan.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I found that to be quite true, also the dress code. I know a lot of women have a problem when they see our Muslim women with the long dresses on and dressed modestly. I think many of them misinterpret that. Sometimes I think there are some people out here who do not want to see the majority of the people going in the right direction or forming better habits in their lives. I think they plant a lot of misconceptions about what the decent things stand for.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Yes. What we require of a woman now in terms of dress, I think is not understood by a lot of people. This is because since the passing of the late leader, my father, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Since his passing, we have done away with the regimentation of Muslims. We do not regiment the life of Muslims anymore. Our religion says in Qur’aan La ikraaha fee ad deeni let there be no compelling people in this religion. We cannot compel them to do anything. We can only tell them what is proper for a Muslim, what the Qur’aan says, what Prophet Muhammad has established the peace be upon him, we can only tell them those things, we cannot police them, right?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is right.

**Imam Warith Deen:** What we want to preserve is this; What is the proper model for a Muslim woman in terms of her dress? Not just loose clothes that doesn't reveal her mature parts, but the tradition is, prophet Muhammad established that the woman should be covered from here the neck down to her ankles. The only thing that should be exposed is the feet, hands, and face. The women do not have to wear veils that not Sunnah, that is not Hadith. Hadith says the face can be exposed, hands, and the feet. If women wear a veil that is their business, but I think it invites curiosity. They think it protects women. Well, when I see a woman in a veil I get curious.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** It attracts attention.

**Imam Warith Deen:** What is behind this veil?

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I see what you mean. It is really dangerous to wear a veil.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Over here it is, in America it is dangerous to wear a veil.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Brother Imam, we want to thank you for straightening this up.

**Imam Warith Deen:** We want to present that the proper dress for a woman is to cover herself and be modest not tight, not form fitting clothes. Cover herself, be decent, and modest, and cover herself, down sleeves, long sleeves. Like me, that is not proper for a woman not in public. In the privacy within the private quarters of her life she can do what she want to do, as long as it is in good taste in the home environment. She doesn't have to cover all this, her hair up here and everything can be exposed whatever.

She is in the privacy of her own home with her husband that is different. But when she comes out in public she supposed to be covered in a full dress, long sleeves. Pants are okay. If the pants are not form-fitting, if they're not indecent she can wear pants, but she should be covered. The man has almost the same. In fact you find most of men abiding by almost the same rule. Most of the men will cover from all the way down and even their arms will be covered in Islamic society.

You've been there so you know even the arms will be covered, but according to the Hadith---that is the tradition of the prophet---peace be upon him, the man can be exposed from here up, and from below the knee down. I believe that allowance was to accommodate workers who work in the ditch, who work in the dirt.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Freedom of movement.

**Imam Warith Deen:** The leg gets buried all the way up, if you see peasants working. The peasant have soil, he cannot get his clothes, his pants all down there in the muck and mire. I believe those allowances were made for such people, for the worker. Situations for workers and this gives freedom.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is right. That makes a lot sense.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Hot climate, very hot climate. I believe these considerations were made for certain work situations, but I believe as men in the city we should cover too just like the women. I do not like to see a man with shorts on out in the public.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I do not like it either.

**Imam Warith Deen:** If you are playing tennis that is different, but why walk all around like that? In the restaurants they say, “oh do not come in here unless you got shoes on and socks”.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Another thing the Christian religion, they have a code of dress, they are supposed to be laid back and it is a decent code.

**Imam Warith Deen:** They have their standard and their standards I believe satisfy us.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** It does. It does. [crosstalk]

**Imam Warith Deen:** The real Christian standards satisfy us; the standard of decency satisfies us. I believe that, except maybe for the covering of the head they do not require women to cover their hair out in the public. Maybe they won't be fussy about-- A lot of women I know. Old folks used to say, “That is not nice you shouldn't be at that occasion unless you have long sleeves on”. My mother used to tell my sisters that get long sleeves short sleeves were not proper for certain occasions.

I do believe that people are inclined, that is people without an appreciation for discipline in their lives. They are inclined to take the lowest of the standards that the society allow, rather than copy the best. Allah tells us in the Qur’aan to “copy the best”.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I can remember when I was quite young---I am not that old really---I can remember I grew up in a very good Christian family, and they believed in good morals and they taught me that.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I know.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That actually has saved me and guided me all through my adult life up to where I am now and that is what made me accept Al-Islam.

**Imam Warith Deen:** I appreciate what they did for you.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Thank you, I appreciate it too. The last thing that I want to get to is I want to show them your book again. I most certainly want them to get this. *Religion on the Line,* it is a brand new book that is published by the WD American Muslim Mission.

**Imam Warith Deen:** American Muslim Mission WD publication, **[unintelligible 00:24:36]** publication.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** All right, I'd like for them to get another look at it here. If you'd like to get one of these you can call 649-7789 and that is the Houston masjid of Al-Islam, and we will see that you get one. Last question I believe brother Imam is again concerning the Islamic diet. The reason I want to bring this up again is because we do not eat pork. A lot of people misunderstand---well, the reason and until I heard you explain that there's two dimensions to that, I only saw one and that was just a physical dimension, that it was bad physically. It had worms in it. Trichina worms in my diet, but you showed us another aspect, a psychological aspect. Would you please?

**Imam Warith Deen:** Yes I will, but first let me deal with the obvious reason that most people have accepted. That is, that the animal in itself as food is not good for consumption, and some writers from academia and also from the ministry, I read where they have explain---the Muslim writers and also non-Muslim writers, theologians---they have tried to explain the reason why they do not eat pork.

They said in those days there was no refrigeration, and that pork deteriorates fast if you do not have it preserved some kind of way, but I know that is not the reason why G’d said do not eat it. It probably has something to do with it, but I am sure that is not the main reason. The main reason I think G’d said-- I am just speaking on my own right now, but I think I have basis for what I am saying in the sources, in the authentic Islamic sources--- the reason why G’d forbids it because he doesn't want the pig in our personality. He doesn't want the pig in our mentality.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** I certainly can see that.

**Imam Warith Deen:** He doesn't want the pig in our appetites. Really it is a human pig that is forbidden more than other pigs, but we have to obey G’d. If G’d say do not eat that animal we do not eat that animal. I never eat it. I’ve never been aware of eating pork. It might have come in some food or something. I am not saying I have never eaten it. It is possible that I have eaten dinner with somebody and maybe there was some of that, but I wasn’t aware of it. It was in there as essence, as lard or fat or something like that. I was deceived. I've never been aware of eating pork and I'll never eat pork.

I believe in obeying G’d. If G’d said to Muslim, I am Muslim. Christian is different. Christian religion say something different he follows his religion says. I have to follow what my religion says. My religion says do not eat pork I do not eat pork.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** That is what Muslim mean. One who submits to the will of G’d and obeys G’d.

**Imam Warith Deen:** He follows what G’d established for him, he follows that. Our religion is very simple, very rational. It doesn't restrict life that much.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** It actually gives you more freedom.

**Imam Warith Deen:** Certainly, we have plenty freedom in our religion-

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Yes, we do.

**Imam Warith Deen:** -if we want to be right.

**Imam Kamalud-din:** Okay**,** Brother Imam as always our time runs out when we get in these conversations. I'd like to say to you viewers that we thank you very much for being with us, and most of all sticking with us through the whole program, and we hope you've benefited from it. We are going to be bringing you many more, series like this, and try to bring you vital information that we feel will help us to better balance our lives and improve on our condition.

We want to thank you very much for watching *American Muslim Mission in Focus.* I would like to leave you with the greetings of as salaamu alaykum which means may the peace and blessings of Almighty G’d be upon you and we'll see you on our next program. Thank you.

**Voice:** *The American Muslim mission in focus*, this program has dealt with the misunderstandings that exist in this country about the Muslim religion. We hope this program will bring about a better understanding of the religion of Al-Islam. We also hope this program will encourage all people to begin to know each other better so that we can work together to ensure the survival of our country.