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# IWDM Study Library

# Sacred Life Connections Morehouse College Atlanta GA

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. As salaam alaykum, peace be unto you. We begin with Allah's name the gracious, the merciful and we seek His blessing and His favor on this day and this occasion. And we trust that what we offer today as understanding on our religion will be acceptable first of all to Him. We pray peace and blessings of G’d whose name with Muslims is Allah, on the last and universal messenger Muhammad, on his descendants, his family, and his companions and on all the righteous be peace, Amen.

There are three concerns that I would like to bring to your attention with this address: first of all it concerns for our preserving a correct image of Muslims, for ourselves and for our neighbors--- our fellow Americans. Secondly, I would like to point out the similarities, the important similarities for our religions. That is, what is commonly called Islam, Al Islam properly and Christianity. And lastly, I want to, in the interest of the first two concerns, acknowledge that there are differences.

As Muslims, we believe first of all in the unity of matter, and we believe that that unity of matter- when we say matter it means the whole cosmic order, everything in existence that we call creation, that religious people call creation. We believe in the unity of matter and we believe that that unity is a reflection of the unity of G’d. We call it in our religious language, Tawhid. Tawhid begins with the belief that there is but one G’d and everything else is in existence because of that one G’d, whose existence has no beginning, no end, He is eternal Without beginning, without end. Also He is without change as He was, He is and He will always be there. In our religion we are taught that nothing can even approach Him, can begin to approach Him, to change Him. He cannot be changed. Nothing resembles Him; there is no image for Him. Nothing resembles Him; there is no image for Him laysa mithlahu shay.

This is a verse from Quran, from our holy sacred book, which says, "There is nothing at all “mithlahu”. Mithlahu is also a common expression in the common language of the Arabic speaking people it simply means “like Him” mithlahu, like him. There is nothing at all existing like Him. “La shareeka Allah”, again, the words of our Holy Book; “He has no partners in the office of G’d”, no partners are with him in his office, la shareeka Allahu. This is Tawhid, the wonders of G’d. There is more to be said for it but I will conclude the brief mentioning of the oneness of G’d, the unity of G’d with the verse from Quran: Bismillahir rahmaanir raheem; With Allah's name, the gracious, the merciful, qul huwa Allahu ahad, say G’d he is one alone, Allahus-samad, Allah is eternal, Lam yalid, He never fathered anyone, walam yooladu and He was never fathered by anyone, that He was never a child born of anyone; walam yakun lahu kufuwan ahadun and that there never existed for Him a comparison.

From this idea of Tawhid comes the perception that is very essential for the well-being of civilized enlighten society. Though we are aware that the concept of G’d is not the same for Christians, we believe that Christians too are believers in one G’d. We believe that they share with Muslims---and there are other great religions---this belief in the unity of matter, the unity of creation, the unity of knowledge. Being that we all share that belief, we are blessed people. The historical development of science, the focus for the historical development of science that has accounted for the progress and establishment of the great civilizations, of renaissance sciences--- renaissance sciences that followed the death of prophet Muhammad, his teachings and the works--- his great works, religious works and scientific works of his followers, his early followers.

That enlightenment and the enlightenment that came on the hills of that enlightenment, enlightenment for the Christian world that took place in Europe and came from Europe to America called also Renaissance, also the enlightenment of early civilizations, the Jewish people, these are all very similar. They all came about in very much the same way because first of all men had hearts to receive the light of G’d.

And G’d blessed those men, the prophet's peace be upon them with his message and they were able to convey it successfully to other men and to their society. And behind that came a process of enlightenment, a process of enlightenment that gave them a focus on the world outside of themselves, a focus on the unity of matter, a designer for it and behind it and a belief that man has a special role in it. That his special role is to serve the aim of G’d, the purpose of G’d in that unity, in the scheme of matter, the universe. Those men, the prophets left with us a sense of great importance for human beings that accepts that kind of focus that kind of viewing the external reality and their own reality---man's reality.

A very special role for man that left us with a sense of great importance that man in this vast universe, if he devotes himself to the service of G’d to satisfying what G’d requires of him, working for G’d's aim and G’d's purpose in the material world and in the human world, that his freedom is unlimited; and also the tools, the resources, by which he will advance himself his society and the world of man are also unlimited.

G’d says that He made useful---to be of utility---whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. The sun, the moon, the elements, the climate, the natural forces, everything that G’d has created; He has made it to yield service to human society. Because of that belief, men of the enlightenment expanded their vision, expanded their intellects and worked hard to improve the state of human society and to utilize sciences, the natural sciences, the human sciences for their purpose. This is what accounts for the greatness of the early community of Muhammad the prophet peace be upon him, his scientific advancements, his human advancement, his great excellence.

This is what accounts for the excellence of the Western society; and also as I mentioned, the Jewish enlightenment that came before these two. It is very important then for us to preserve that focus on the historical development of knowledge. Industry did not begin with this enlightenment; industry was even before this enlightenment. In fact, industry began before there was civilization. Primitive man noticed how certain things happened in his physical environment and he understood what was happening and he was able to cook his food with fire.

He was able to make iron and weapons and tools out of iron. He was able to make vessels to sail the seas and do many things and practice medicine. So this enlightenment, major enlightenment for man that is accounted for the greatness of man and the greatness of the world of man is not the beginning of science. It is the beginning of a certain, definite, specific way of looking at matter, the role of matter the role of man in matter and most of all the theme of matter, the aim in matter and believing that there is a G’d behind it. That is what accounted for the great civilizations we call Islamic civilization, Judaic civilization, Islamic civilization, Christian civilization and there were others.

There is much more to be said on the concept, or the way that we perceive reality and the concept of G’d, the concept of man, but this address is intended to be a very brief address. So I will go on to the next concern. And that is the concern for the similarities, the real similarities that exist for too faiths, two religions. In our Holy Book, our Lord says, G’d Allah says, "You'll find the people to be nearest to you are those who call themselves Nassara." and that is Christians, that is the early name for the Christians the people of Nazareth, that religious community that was given the name Nassara, of Nazareth.

Why are the Christians the closest to the Muslims closer than even Jews? When we look at how we believe regarding the monotheistic purity in religion, we would think that Muslims should be closer to Jews not closer to Christians. However, G’d have said to us in our Holy Book that the nearest people to us are the Christians. They are nearest, why? It is because what is most important in religion is sincerity. Our prophet the peace and the blessing be upon him, he said “religion is sincerity”, not religion is many things that is one of his descriptions to it, “religion is sincerity”. We are closer to each other because of the sincerity that we share for belief in G’d belief in obeying Him, belief in serving Him in the best way possible.

That sincerity we share with Christians. Not that we are closer to them in our expression of monotheistic purity; and we are not closer to them perhaps in our insistence upon the role of logic or reasoning, the role of human reasoning, et cetera, in the life of the religious society. We are not close to them when it comes to our belief that the natural sciences, the creation of G’d and G’d intends for men to construct his world upon natural sciences and G’d intended that way and there is no other science. We do not believe that there are some sciences other than that. Spiritual sciences are all a part of the unity of the sciences.

Muslims, though we cannot explain some things that are scientific in spiritual matters and in human matters does not mean that that they are not of the pure science. We believe that all of the sciences are pure sciences. They are not pseudo-sciences, they are not half sciences. They are full sciences; they are pure sciences, whether it is human, spiritual or material. We believe that there is only knowledge and one truth and everything else is just a form of it, a shape of it and expression of it, reflection of it and G’d is Creator of it all. We do not have a division or a split on one side spiritual sciences and other side, material sciences in conflict. There is no conflict for the sciences with Muslims.

The sciences all share a unity. Now, there are many other similarities which time will not permit me to point to today with this address. However, I will sum it up by saying this, that the Trinitarian belief of Christians. Their belief in Father, Son and Holy Ghost does not---in my opinion and I believe I stand upon solid grounds as a representative of the religion I represented, representative of this religion, with the Imams the leaders of the religion, the leaders of the religious community and scholars in academia, I think they will all accept what I am saying---that we do not take this Trinitarian idea to mean that Christians do not believe in one G’d. On the contrary, we believe that is their way of expressing their belief in one G’d. Their G’d is one, our G’d is one. What I will simply say that the great differences for us are not in essence, but in the way we view the essence. In the way we communicate the essence of our knowledge. Christian knowledge is viewed by Christians differently. The way the essence of the religion, the essence and essentials of the religion are communicated by Christians is different---greatly different from the way we view our essence and essentials, and from the way we communicate that to ourselves and to others---greatly different.

In spite of these great differences, these great differences; and also the differences in the way we live a community life our diet, our community emphasis, our religious emphasis in spite of all these great differences, we can live not only in peace together, but we can live in a workable situation together. Where we share the burden of society together and work for the common aim of excellence for man, together. Thank you, as salaam alaykum.