

Thinks U.S. Muslims Should Aid Islam at Home Before Pilgrimage to Mecca

By Abdul Basit Naeem
(Continued from
Last Week)

Naturally, as far as the "Nation of Islam" in America is concerned, only its rightful leader — Honorable Elijah Muhammad—can best advise the movement's members whether or not they should take adequate interest in the "Hadj" (pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina) ritual at this time. The venerable Messenger alone, again, should have the privilege of scrutinizing and passing judgment on qualifications of the intending pilgrims, if any.

AS FOR THIS humble columnist's opinion on the matter, I believe that the "Nation of Islam" members should—at the very least — take plenty of time before deciding to undertake the important Eastward journey.

As a matter of fact, it is my earnest conviction that, at least for now, my brethren in Islam in this country should prefer invest-

ing every cent of their hard-earned money, every second of their valuable time and every ounce of their precious physical energies in endeavors aimed at advancing the cause of Islam (freedom, justice and equality) in America.

I venture to suggest this on the strength of an ancient Islamic edict, which points out that Muslims residing in countries where they constitute a numerical minority... or where they are surrounded by openly hostile elements" must consider themselves as living in a perpetual state of "jihad" (meaning "supreme effort" — though often erroneously presumed to mean "holy war"). And those who sincerely and ceaselessly exert "supreme effort" (in behalf of ALLAH, His religion, ISLAM, or in the direction of self improvement and self-defense) are exempt from the "Hadj" requirement.

NOW — CAN WE classify the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's followers as "mujahids," i.e., "those who exert supreme effort"? Aware of the nature of their daily life and routine activities, as I am (and have been for over a decade), I certainly

think so.

After all, what can be loftier and more noble as well as arduous than the Muslims' present undertakings and ultimate objective — of "raising" and rehabilitating the 22 million mentally dead (deaf, dumb and blind) so-called Negroes of America?

Moreover, since the Messenger's followers already possess high moral standards, puritan ideals and precisian motives, I do not see how the "Hadj" ceremonies can be of very great help in improving their spiritual well-being or personal conduct and discipline.

I DO NOT, of course, wish to minimize the "blessings" attendant upon those who do participate in the sacred annual event, though I'm convinced that a "mujahid" is no less deserving of "Allah's Pleasure and Bountiful Rewards" than a "Hajji" (or pilgrim).

Nor can I understate the uniqueness and matchless "atmosphere" of the occasion: Certainly it is an extraordinary experience to stand before and walk around the Holy Ka'bah, on the same hallowed grounds where the noble Patriarch Abraham —

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and a succession of Allah's divine prophets after him—once stood.

No less exhilarating is the experience of seeing with your own eyes and bestowing kisses of devotion upon the ageless Black Stone — the only remaining relic from the first and original "House of Allah's Worship" (Mosque) built by Abraham. The unity and variety and humility and piety displayed by the multitude of Muslims present in the Holy Cities (Mecca and Medina) is a stirring spectacle in itself.

WHAT I'M afraid of is that the "New World" Muslims, while in Arabia or visiting other, adjacent lands of the Islamic "East," would also come across certain "peculiarities" of the "old" (i.e., "orthodox") World of Islam which may well puzzle or perplex them.

(To be concluded)



Naeem