

On the Hon. Elijah Muhammad 'He pointed us toward Allah,' Emam says

By Kalla Akbar

OAKLAND, Calif. — A festive mood prevailed in this East Bay City recently as Muslims from various regions of the U.S. and abroad, along with Christians and other dignitaries joined together at the regular monthly dinner sponsored by Masjid Muhammad No. 77.

A standing room only turnout of nearly 1,500 listened attentively as the guest speaker of the evening, the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad, reflected on the contributions of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the spread of Islam in America.

"The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us many very, very dear and helpful things," began Emam Muhammad, the son of the late leader of the then-Nation of Islam. "He taught us not to abuse ourselves. He taught us to dignify ourselves. He taught us not to sell ourselves for a small price, not to be Uncle Toms and boot lickers."

Speaking in the Honorable Elijah Muhammad Cultural Center, Emam

something about our condition and to win respect for ourselves in the world."

As guests and dignitaries from as far as the Fiji Islands and Pakistan followed the Emam through history, he reminded all that the greatest contributions of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad were that "he pointed us toward the Holy Quran, he pointed us toward Allah, he pointed us toward the Holy City of Mecca, and he taught us to identify with Muslims all over the world.

"He said that we are brothers and sisters belonging to a great body of people numbering into the hundreds of millions. So, he, himself, started us out on the road toward Allah, Prophet Muhammad, the Quran, and the Muslim life."

In the two and one-half years since assuming the leadership of the WCIW, though he has spent considerable time clarifying the symbolic teachings of his father, Emam Muhammad has mentioned on several occasions the successes achieved by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.



Emam Wallace D. Muhammad



The Hon. Elijah Muhammad

converted to Orthodox Islam, but rather to an allegorical, symbolic message.

"And the Honorable Elijah Muhammad never said that he was establishing religion. He said that 'I am trying to clean you up and put you on the road to progress.' And the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said that we would be taught the religion later.

"He said, 'I'm not teaching you so much religion now. I'm trying to clean you up and save you from the fire.' And I think he did a divine job of cleaning us up and saving us from the fire. Because of his teachings, I never ate pork, I never drank alcoholic beverages, I never stole, never committed crimes against the people, against society, never toured bars.

"I always had a God-fearing mind. And it's a blessing, a great blessing, and I'm just one of many thousands of people who would give testimony if they were here and had the opportunity to do so tonight."

Emam Muhammad noted the importance of understanding that the message designed by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was designed to instill confidence and self-respect into a people who had been robbed of all confidence and self-respect, "who had been separated from their history and knew nothing of their past except the hazy pictures that were given to us by the Caucasian people."

The fact that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was able to take a people who had mocked and laughed at their black skin, nappy hair, broad nose and thick lips and make those same people proud to call themselves "Black" was a remarkable achievement in itself, Emam Muhammad declared.

"The Honorable Elijah Muhammad knew these problems and he forced the secrets to come out of us, our secrets and our shame. He made us see our shame. He said, 'You don't like yourself. You hate yourself. You despise your own people.'

"He said that you have to love yourself, you have to respect yourself, you have to appreciate yourself... He shocked our minds into that awareness. If it weren't for him we wouldn't have started to think right and now we are blessed to come into a sensible idea of what rights are all about and who we are.

"So we should understand that, and we should appreciate the great work of social reform. He was a great psychologist, a great psychiatrist and he knew how to reverse the psychology that was destroying us and use it to bring us into strength and self-confidence and put us on the way to try to do something for self."

"He pointed us toward the Holy Qu'ran, he pointed us toward Allah, he pointed us toward the Holy City of Mecca, and he taught us to identify with Muslims all over the world.

"He said that we are brothers and sisters belonging to a great body of people numbering into the hundreds of millions. So, he, himself, started us out on the road toward Allah, Prophet Muhammad, the Qu'ran, and the Muslim life."

Muhammad said his father observed that the majority of problems encountered by Bilalians in the U.S. centered around the fact that "we didn't know who we were, where we came from, or where we should be going.

"But he gave us a solution. He said we came from a great ancestry. He said that we should be our own men and our own women and that we should separate ourselves from the Caucasian people. Now today, people look at the World Community of Islam in the West (W.C.I.W.) and say, 'Who are these people now and where are they going?'

"We're the same people. We've just grown up more and we have a better idea of where we should go," he said. "The leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad brought us together and gave us enough interest in ourselves, enough concern to sacrifice enough to do

"The Honorable Elijah Muhammad came and made us forget about worrying about equality with these Caucasian people or equal rights here in America. He fired up a desire in us to win respect with our own hands, with our own minds and with our own efforts.

"And that fire that he built up in us kept us together, kept us struggling and sacrificing, opening businesses, opening temples and mosques and converting thousands of people through the voice of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to respect and believe in Allah and the Holy Quran. So we have to remember these things."

Emam Muhammad said he had been asked by some American-born Orthodox Muslims to denounce the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Master Fard Muhammad — teacher of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and founder of the Nation of Islam.

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