

Chief Imam appoints Sudanese as resident Imam . . .

Community welcomes new Imam

By Samuel Ayyub Bilal

The newly appointed Resident Imam of Masjid Elijah Muhammad, Chicago, Muhammad Nur, is already displaying the kind of brotherly concern which believers love to see in a Muslim.

After a recent Community Night meeting at Masjid Elijah Muhammad, Imam Nur stood in the yard around the masjid greeting various brothers who came up to meet him and firmly shook each one's hand.

Invariably, he'd inquire how the brother was feeling, make comments about the meaning of the brother's name and show other forms of appreciation for the brother's presence. (Holy Quran 49:10—"The believers are but a single brotherhood.")

A few days later, Imam Nur was teaching a Saturday afternoon Arabic class for beginners. He wrote on a blackboard some Arabic letters, sentences and their English transliterations. Then he patiently drilled each student in their recitation while simultaneously inserting some notes on Islamic history and the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

BY THE TIME the Arabic session was finished, the students had been thoroughly grounded in reading, writing and reciting the very brief chapter 108, Al-Kauthar (The Abundance) of the Holy Quran.

On the following Sunday, the 32-

their friendship and sympathy are like bricks in a building; each one holds the other."

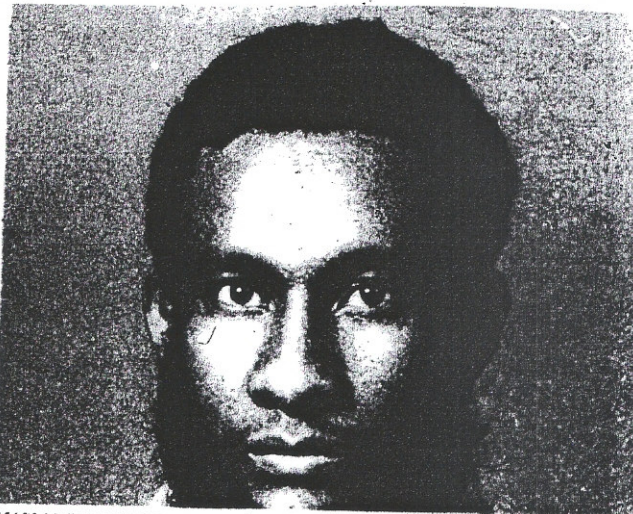
Imam Nur is a Muslim from the African country of Sudan. During the Bilalian News interview, Imam Nur displayed a keen knowledge not only of the religion of Al-Islam, but also of the tremendous mission of that religion and of the growing importance of the WCIW in that mission.

He also displayed profound knowledge of Al-Islam in the Sudan, the close religious, cultural and historical kinship between the Sudanese and the Bilalian people, and the need for Al-Islam in the Western world.

"I am very thankful to Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad for putting me into this heavy, trustworthy job," he told Bilalian News, "and I am also thankful to all the WCIW community. They have welcomed me with great welcome and trust me, and this makes me feel great responsibility to them."

HE ALSO EXPRESSED appreciation for the special help given to him by Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad's brother, Jaabir Muhammad, his aide, Salahuddin Abdullah Muhammad and all brothers and sisters of the WCIW who have assisted him.

During the interview, much of his heart and mind poured forth. One could sense his great love and respect for Al-Islam, his great esteem for Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad and the WCIW, and his concern for all



IMAM MUHAMMAD Nur, new resident Imam at Masjid Elijah Muhammad in Chicago.

had observed the developing work of the WCIW, and his lectures simply heightened the young student Nur's growing thoughts of what he would eventually like to do.

"Before I came here to America, I prayed to Allah that He would help me to come here when I finished my Islamic student days and help the Islamic movement here."

Meanwhile, the young Nur continued his Islamic studies which had begun earlier than his first formal schooling. "There was a relative of ours who had memorized the Holy Quran," Imam Nur said.

Imam Nur began his Islamic studies at a very early age. In fact, he began learning almost from birth about the Principles of Al-Islam, about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the universal-Islamic culture.

He was born into an Islamic family in Sudan 31 years ago. He took Islamic studies and Arabic courses when he attended elementary and high school in Port Sudan, the Red-Sea town of his birth.

UPON GRADUATION, he went to Medina, Saudi Arabia where he earned a bachelor's degree in Shariah and spent two years studying for a master's degree in Hadith (traditions) in Mecca.

"What made me search for knowledge was a Hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (Sa-la-la-hu A-la-hi Wa-la-lim) said, 'He who would tread the path in search of knowledge, Allah would pave his way to Paradise'" (Muslim).

While growing up, he was absorbing Islamic knowledge and ideas from the predominantly Islamic culture surrounding him.

"Sudan is a very important country for Muslims as well as for Africans," Imam Nur said. "Because of where it's situated geographically, one can go in

any direction from the Sudan. That is because Sudan is surrounded by eight African countries."

He said important sources of Islamic studies in Sudan are the University of Omdurman and the Islamic African Center. Students from all over Africa come to study at the center where, in addition to Islamic studies, such popular African languages as Hausa and Swahili are taught.

"AND ISLAM IS TAUGHT in the elementary and secondary schools. We also have the University of Omdurman where they teach Islamic studies, Arabic studies. . . . Students come there from all over Africa. Sudan is a very mixed country—African and Arabian blood. It is a bridge from Arabia to Africa. I think it is the key of Africa.

"Now we have an Islamic African Center which was built and is supported by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. The purpose of the Islamic African Center is to teach Africans so they can go back home to Africa and teach others Al-Islam and the Arabic language."

Imam Nur noted that "there is an Islamic movement in the Sudan in which students, women and others are doing all they can to advance the Islamic movement." He noted that because of Al-Islam, the people in the Sudan enjoy the best relationship among themselves.

"THE PEOPLE LOVE one another very much. They visit one another in their homes, go to the hospital to see one another. It is an Islamic habit to visit each other. During Ramadan the people bring out their carpets before the houses and everyone sits and eats in front of the houses in groups and that brings the people very near to one another.

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"I think the Western world is a very good land for Islam. Why? Because the Western civilization didn't give the people peace. It gave them the material life, but no peace. Allah says in the Holy Quran, 'But whosoever turns away from My message, verily for him is a life narrowed': Surah 10, Verse 124. And now there is hunger in the West for Iman (faith). Islam is able to feed the scholars, the philosophers, the scientists and all because Islam speaks to the heart as well as the mind."

year-old Imam Nur gave a brief lecture at Masjid Elijah Muhammad which a member of the congregation later described as "very, very good; brief but to the point—to the religious point. Pure Al-Islam and shows that Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad made an excellent choice."

Indeed Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad has made an excellent choice by appointing Imam Muhammad Nur as Resident Imam of Masjid Elijah Muhammad.

By the appointment of Imam Nur as Imam of Chicago, Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad is opening the World Community of Al-Islam in the West (WCIW) to the best possible Islamic leadership and teachings. He is also showing that the WCIW is a community which is firmly dedicated to the principles and practices of Universal Al-Islam.

IMAM NUR RELATED a Hadith which states: "You find believers who through their love for each other and

humanity.

It is humanity which the youthful and knowledgeable Imam Nur hopes to help Mujeddid Wallace Deen Muhammad reach with a renewed Al-Islam and make true a suggestion he once heard a great Islamic scholar make during a lecture in the Sudan.

After the scholar, Dr. Hassan Alturabi, had visited America, he returned to the Sudan and began giving lectures on his observations of the Islamic movement in America. He said something which sounded strange to us at the time, Imam Nur related.

He said, "One day, maybe Islam will come to us from the West."

This is not strange in Al-Islam. There is a Hadith in which our Prophet Muhammad (Sa-la-la-hu A-la-hi Wa-la-lim) said that "Al-Islam initiated as something strange and it would revert to its (old position) of being strange, so let there be tidings for the strangers" (Muslim).

IT WAS CLEAR that Dr. Alturabi