

# Tells Why Aiding Nation of Islam Should be Chief Task of U.S. Muslims

By Abdul Basit Naeem  
(Continued from last week)

In describing the "old (i.e., 'orthodox') Muslim world" peculiarities, which possibly may puzzle and perplex American Muslims (followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad) visiting Arabia and other adjacent lands, I would like to state at the very outset that the views expressed below are entirely my own and in no way reflect a judgment or opinions of others.

**FURTHER, THE** remarks offered here are not based on hearsay. They are, in fact, my personal impressions formed during a journey of "Umrah" (or "lesser Hadj") to the Holy Land of Islam a few years ago.



Naeem

While my visit to the Great Mosque in Mecca, which contains the HOLY KA'BAH, and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina had provided me with much inner contentment and joy, I recall feeling deeply aggrieved upon discovering that practically everything sold in general merchandise stores in the Holy Cities — inclusive of popular souvenir items — were not of Muslim-Arab origin:

The colorful prayer rugs and tapestries, in-

cluding those depicting Mecca and Medina scenes or bearing geometrical arabesque motifs, were products of (predominantly Catholic) Italian and (Shintoist) Japanese craftsmen. The glass, hardwood and plastic "misbah" (prayer beads) had come from (Protestant) Germany and Belgium.

A variety of fabrics, gold and silver jewelry and leather goods (largely Hindu) were manufactures of India, while multi-colored greeting cards and souvenir photo albums had been imported from Denmark and West Germany respectively!

**I REMEMBER** visiting store after store in the two cities, inquiring of "products of Muslim-Arab origin," though in vain. Similarly, I was able to locate but ONE solitary (Swiss-made) watch bearing numerals in Arabic.

"It isn't fashionable or in demand here," the dealers invariably told me. The printed dial card of a number of "grandfather" clocks in the historic Mecca and Medina mosques actually bore Old Roman numerals, such as XII for 12!

Knowing, as I do today (thanks to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's very great kindness in enlightening me on this subject), that Islam, translated into practical terms, naturally provides Allah's believers with every means of continual progress, ceaseless productivity and, hence, unbounded prosperity, it was pitiful to see the Muslim Holy Land mercantile outlets substantially devoid of the "signs" of Islamic economic abundance and cultural genius.

("OF COURSE, you can obtain a sample of our national product at the nearest gas station," a good-natured Saudi trader reminded me.)

Recalling another incident in the city of Medina, I was rather annoyed to come across, in the front display window of a general dry goods store squarely opposite one of the main Prophet's Mosque gates, a life-size

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Alone of all the Negro leaders Elijah Muhammad has a vivid awareness of the vital need of a new birth.

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(headless but nonetheless distinctly noticeable) clay mannequin sporting typically Western (imported) female undergarments.

The store owner emphatically denied that the display reflected bad taste, much less an affront to established Islamic traditions. In another area, I experienced considerable frustration in trying to locate an authoritative Islamic calendar and other Islamic-Arabic educational materials.

**IN MECCA**, I was pleased to see that the special religious police were quite efficient in effecting silence as well as momentary closure of shops in observance of the daily prayer intervals (both a shopkeeper and his customers violating this law are liable for punishment — by lashing in public.)

The same policemen, on the other hand, made no effort whatsoever to reprimand a steady stream

of mosque-bound motorists speeding and unnecessarily honking their car horns, right through the muezzin's call to prayer as well as the actual worship service inside the Great Mosque. The reason? The occupants of the automobiles were relatives of the ruling royal family and, in some cases, members of the "affluent, powerful merchant clans . . ."

To witness the socio-economic paradox — with a few rich so highly privileged and so many too poor to afford a decent shirt for their backs or a pair of wooden sandals for their feet — in the very birthplace of true social justice wasn't a comforting encounter, either!

**REPORTS FROM Saudi Arabia** on the "Hadj" season just past appearing in the world press indicate that the guardians of the Holy Land of Islam somehow did not deem fit to respect the traditional peace and sanctity of the Pilgrimage period (comprising the first 10 days

of the Islamic month of **Zul-Hijja**) this year.

When a group of 19 Yemeni Arab-Muslims were allegedly "found to have entered (Saudi Arabia) for subversion and sabotage purposes," after a summary trial (in Riyadh, the capital) all but two were promptly put to death (presumably by beheading) — on the eve of "Eid - ul - Adha," which marks the end of the week-long "Hadj" ceremonies.

Such being the circumstances, I doubt if the "New World" (U.S.A.) Muslims will find a journey to the "East," at least for now, vastly stimulating or spiritually highly rewarding.

**THAT IS WHY** I suggest that they continue to spend what they can of their physical and financial resources in aiding and strengthening their own (Nation of Islam) "Central Point" in the wilderness of North America.