

MUHAMMAD SPEAKS

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Muhammad's Teachings Make 'Natural Islamic Preachers' of His Followers

By Abdul Basit Naeem



Naeem

With the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's kind permission, I would like to devote the present column to continuing the discussion of my last week's subject — World Heavyweight Champion Muhammad Ali's career. Presently I shall explain why.

THE WHITE U.S. press has openly attacked and questioned Brother Muhammad Ali's "true motives . . . and qualifications to serve as a preacher (of Islam)." Pending an official statement on this matter—which only the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, as head of the "Nation of Islam" in North America, can issue (and which may or may not be forthcoming) — I would like to offer the champ's unkind critics a few of my own observations pertaining to same.

As far as I am concerned, Brother Muhammad Ali is an excellent exponent of Is-

lam. This is true of him not only when he addresses the Muslims or other all-black gatherings, and I've been amongst his listeners more than once, but also when he is interviewed by newsmen and writers of his own "kind" or (Islamic) faith. For purposes of accuracy, I shall quote from some of his recorded utterances.

PLEASE READ what the champ told Mr. Haleem Ahmed, a reporter for the *Illustrated Weekly of Pakistan* of Karachi, Pakistan, (as printed in the magazine's June 5, 1966 issue):

"It was only when I ran into the teachings of (the Honorable) Elijah Muhammad and through him became a Muslim that I realized why the white people aren't so anxious to integrate. Now I'm not always busting into places, feeling bad because they don't want me. Now I can just walk by a restaurant—like that! Now I no longer want to take a chance on dying to get through that door, like some of our people have. If I'm allowed, I'll go. . . ."

"It is said that I hate the white man. I don't have time to hate anybody. I am

the object of hate because of my beliefs. I hate what the white man has done to our people. I hate lynchings. I hate dogs being put on us. I hate our people being the last hired and the first fired. If we did hate white people individually we would be justified, but we do not . . ."

HERE ARE a few excerpts from an interview Brother Muhammad Ali recently gave the London correspondent of another Pakistani publication, the *Daily Pakistan Times* of Lahore:

"Islam has taught me to live clean, has made my morals high, has given me more inner strength and contentment, both inside and outside the ring. It has taught me what to eat and what not to eat. Now I can think more clearly and fast.

"Before . . . I used to boast and brag that I was the 'greatest,' but Islam taught me that only Almighty Allah is the greatest. It taught me to be humble and meek and modest. Before I became a Muslim I used my arrogance and boastfulness as a gimmick to draw the crowds to my fights. But then I was not

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the champ and not a Muslim . . .

"I have no sixth sense to guess the outcome of fights but what I do before making a prediction, I very carefully and scientifically study all points of my opponent including his past record of fights. I size up my opponent and that's how I predict. This gives me an idea how long the fight will last.

"BUT ABOVE all, Allah has been with me all through. I must thank Almighty Allah and my reli-

gion of Islam and, of course, my leader (Honorable) Elijah Muhammad, for what I have done in the past and what I might do in the future . . ."

In my opinion, anyone who can speak like that should be considered well-qualified to speak of Islam to others.

After all, what is Islam? According to the extraordinary and most meaningful teachings of the U.S. Muslim leader (Honorable Elijah Muhammad), it is basically "being your natural (righteous) self." If you can do that, in fact, you need not

even undergo the rigors of specialized professional training to become a preacher; you automatically begin to tell it "like it is" of the truth of God, of Christianity and heaven and hell, of the history of mankind and, last but not least, of the real nature of "Devils."

THIS BEING the case, I might add, soon there should be legions of the likes of Brother Muhammad Ali — not the unexcelled prizefighter, of course, but the natural, eminently effective exponent of Islam.