

WHAT'S IN A NAME? - THE PROBLEM WITH THE "NATION OF ISLAM" (PART 2 OF 2)

Rating: 4.2

Description: Some statements of prominent people who left the Nation.

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Fellow Muslims with eyes the bluest of blue and skin the whitest of white...

Former NOI members who recognized anti-white racism as folly and converted to proper Islam include Malcolm X and the world champion heavyweight boxer, Muhammad Ali. Both spoke out on the subject:

"[The Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca] was an exhilarating experience to see people belonging to different colors, races and nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equality in Islam." (Muhammed Ali)

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) -- while praying to the same God -- with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana."

"We were truly all the same -- because their belief in the one God had removed the 'white' from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude."

"This religion recognizes all men as brothers. It accepts all human beings as equals before God, and as equal members in the Human Family of Mankind. I totally reject Elijah Muhammad's racist philosophy, which he has labeled 'Islam' only to fool and misuse gullible people as he fooled and misused me. But I blame only myself, and no one else for the fool that I was, and the harm that my

evangelical foolishness on his behalf has done to others.” (Malcolm X)

Whither the “Nation of Islam”?

Laudable as the lifestyle espoused by the NOI may be, one cannot escape the fact that despite some of the trappings of Islam, the theology and ideology they currently espouse are not only non-Islamic but actually anathema to Islam. There are, however, some signs that things may be changing for the better.

On the death of Elijah Mohammed in 1976 his son Wallace D. Muhammad (now known as Imam Warrithuddin Mohammed) assumed NOI leadership, renamed the organization the Muslim American Society and tried to steer it toward Islamic orthodoxy. After three years a disgruntled Louis Farrakhan broke away and re-founded the NOI in line with the teachings of Elijah Mohammed. But in February this year, Farrakhan, recovering from a serious battle with prostate cancer which may have given him cause to reflect, shared a platform with Wallace and made an important move toward mainstream Islam by declaring:

“Allah sent Mohammed with the final revelation to the world. ... There is no prophet after the Prophet Mohammed, and no book after the Koran.”

Let us hope that similarly orthodox statements on the nature of God and on race will also soon be forthcoming. Let us look forward to the day when Louis Farrakhan and his NOI follow the example of their former colleague, Malcolm X, who eventually found his way from the so-called “Nation of Islam” to genuine Islam and stated:

“I declare emphatically that I am no longer in Elijah Muhammad’s ‘strait jacket’, and I don’t intend to replace his with one woven by someone else. I am a Muslim in the most orthodox sense; my religion is Islam as it is believed in and practiced by the Muslims in the Holy City of Mecca.” Alhamdulillah.

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