

Applying the Teachings of Imam W. Deen Mohammed Book

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Applying the Teachings

of

Imam W. Deen Mohammed

BOOK 5

by

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Preface

I am happy to present Book 5 of the series, "Applying the Teachings of Imam W. Deen Mohammed." The teachings of Imam Mohammed is comprised of two major components; his language and his logic.

By his language, we mean his definitions and explanations of various religious and social terms and concepts. By his logic, we mean his reasoning, inferences, deductions, extrapolations and conclusions about religious and social ideas and practices that he derived.

The essays in this book utilize both his language and his logic to help explain some of the teachings of Imam Mohammed and to help elucidate some of the lessons, applications and implications.

The essays of the Applying the Teachings series are not mere regurgitations of the words of Imam Mohammed, but rather are expounders, clarifiers, evidences, arguments and proofs for the veracity of the Qur'anic insights of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

It is my earnest hope that you find as much benefit in this book as many readers have found in the previous books of this series.

Dr. Mubaashir Uqdah

Autonomy & Unity

Strengthen The Individual and the Community **To Each is a Direction Towards Which We Turn You**

Sura 2:148 says, "To each is a face (wij'hatun) towards which he turns (muwalliyhaa). Then each of you become foremost (is'tabiqū from sabiquun) (as in a race) in all that is the best (khayru) (in what you are turning towards). Wheresoever ye are, Allah will bring (ya'ti) you together (jamiyan). For Allah Hath power over all things."

When this verse is read, we can see the declaration of the principle of autonomy. "To each is a face" is translated as direction or goal in most translations. Why? Because the face is typically pointing towards the thing it is interested in.

If we are interested in something, our attention goes towards it and since our attention involves our five senses, particularly our eyes, we point those senses at the object of interest. Hence, the word face is symbolic of the direction or goal that is the object of our focus.

Furthermore, the face is also the primary means of identifying a person. We know you primarily by knowing what you look like. The face is the chief identifier, because it has the most distinguishable and unique characteristics we possess.

The connection is that we can see the direction you are heading in by looking at the characteristics you are manifesting with your actions and attitudes. Similarly, by carefully observing the directions we see you travel and the objects of your focus, we can forecast the characteristics your identity will begin to manifest.

So, Allah says that each of us has a goal or direction towards which we turn. The word Allah uses to describe how we 'turn' is muwalliyhaa. The root of this word is Waliy, which many of you know also means to protect.

By this word, we can see the clue that our turning towards a direction is not just any kind of turning. It tells us that we are protective of the thing or direction or goal towards which we are turned. The idea is that we have an interest and concern for the direction or goal that we are turned towards and we want to protect that interest or concern. Towards All That is Best...For The Situation

The next idea is for each of us to become the leader or foremost (is'tabiquu) in the best aspects (khayraati from khayrun) of the direction or goal. Khayrun means good, but not just good in a moral sense. It is not just a "race to all that is good" in a moral sense. Khayrun means the best of "that thing."

For example, if you play the piano, strive to be the foremost at playing that piano with excellence and skill and beauty. Imam Mohammed said, "Khayr means better in a real practical sense."

The word used is is'tabiquu which is the eight form of the word sabaqa, which means to advance, surpass, overcome, outstrip, etc. The sabiqun is the one who is in the lead or the foremost out front.

The eight form of this word is reflexive, which means that it indicates an internal action. Thus, you are to push yourself, motivate yourself, be determined in your attitude and desire to be the best at what you are focused upon, to do the best that you can in your direction or goal.

So, all of us have our own goals and directions and interests which are important to us and my goal is not necessarily your goal and your goal is not necessarily my goal. You may be going in one direction and I may be going in another. Not only that, you should be racing towards the good in your thing and I should be racing towards the good in my thing. The Benefits of Autonomy

The principle or truth of this verse lends itself to the powerful idea of autonomy circulated and promoted in our community. We have come to understand that the Imam instituted autonomy in order to protect us from the kind of exploitation made possible if we were under the authority of a single leader or council of leaders. But, this is only one benefit of autonomy.

Another benefit is that it encourages individual initiative and responsibility. As this verse tells us, each one of us is to develop our particular talent and interest and do it the best, or be the best at it that we can. We are to strive as in a race to be at the forefront of our individual fields of interest or expertise.

This idea can make us some of the most productive people on the planet and some of the most useful people to our society and families, if we believe and practice it.

If the inheritors of the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed will accept the responsibility to advance ourselves, our skills, and our productivity in the community, then as each person becomes stronger the synergy will cause the entire community to be stronger.

It is like a football team. As each person gets better through practice, experience, and hard work, the whole team is made better.

Other positive benefits of autonomy are freedom and creativity. When we are psychologically free, our soul and intellect are free to soar to unlimited heights. We feel like opportunities are all around us and nothing is stopping us from pursuing them.

This allows the human being to become curious and courageous enough to be creative and try new things that might prove to be the solution to a serious problem.

The benefits of autonomy are not only true for individuals, these benefits also apply to our local masjids. Local communities are different from each other in many ways. They are similar in many ways, but they are also unique. Some are large, some are small. Some have many professionals and some don't. Some have money and others don't.

These differences can impact the goals and interests of the local communities and give them different priorities from each other.

Autonomy allows these communities to build and evolve according to the goals and directions towards which they have turned. It allows them to focus on their own unique strengths and weaknesses and put together a plan that suits their circumstances and needs.

They also have to take responsibility for themselves. This forces each local masjid to get stronger as an individual community and if all of our local areas get stronger individually, we will be much stronger as a collective body.

So autonomy is a force in our lives that can serve to strengthen both the individual and the community. By making the people stronger, the local masjids are stronger, and therefore, the entire national community is stronger.

These are some of the benefits of autonomy in addition to the concern of our Imam, which was protecting the community of the many from being exploited or smeared by the actions of a few.

Given the past history of the CIA, the FBI and other wealthy people with special religious and financial interests as well as the present actions of the Homeland Security, the National Security Agency (NSA), the New York Police Department (NYPD) and other spy networks, this decentralized model can help protect us. Does Autonomy Forbid Unity?

Now some people think that because the Imam decentralized the community and informed us that the local masjids are autonomous entities that it is somehow wrong or inappropriate for us to meet and work together and make agreements and hold each other accountable to anything at a level beyond the local level.

The idea of unity is no longer in their vocabulary. It is as if the concept of unity is taboo.

Do we really think that the Imam's support for an autonomous decentralized model of masjid structure was intended to discourage and reduce cooperation and unity amongst us? Do we think he intended for autonomy to desensitize us to the difficulties and problems of our brothers and sisters in a different part of the country? Do we think that by trying to keep us away from our enemies he intended to keep us away from each other? Wherever You Are, Allah Will Bring You Together

Consider the last two ideas of the verse. Allah says, "Wheresoever ye are, Allah will bring (ya'ti) you together (jamiyan). For Allah Hath power over all things."

The verse says that wherever we are in our autonomous pursuits, wherever we are in our individual strivings for the best success, Allah is going to bring us together (jami'a, from which we get jumu'ah).

Coming together is the concept of unity. No matter where we are, Allah is going to bring us together in unity. How else could our national community benefit from the improved strength and achievement of its individual parts, if those parts are not brought together?

If things are diverse and autonomous and Allah brings them together, that means that Allah is going to connect those parts into a collection, into a whole, or into a system of some sort. *

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