

# Brief Accounting on the Establishment of the Nation of Islam in the U.S.

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Did you know that the Nation of Islam led by the late Hon. Elijah Muhammad was actually started by a Muslim from India, the area now known as Pakistan? Did you know he came to the United States and moved in and out of African American neighborhoods as a silk peddler? Did you know that he had “an agenda,” an objective, an aim and design to move African Americans away from what he called the “yoke” of Christianity that was wrapped in the cloak of White Supremacy and bring them into the Religion of Islam?

He went by many names, the most frequent of them being Wallace D. Fard, W.D. Fard, Master Fard, and others. Fard came into the African American communities first in Detroit, Michigan, around the year of 1930 in the midst of the Economic Crash of the Depression of that time. Life was difficult for everyone and especially difficult for those in the low economic bottom of the inner city. African Americans who were sharecroppers in the South were moving North looking for jobs and away from the lynchings and intolerable oppression of the Racist South.

What were Master Fard’s agenda, objective and design? Coming out of India with fresh memory of the brutal rule of the British over India’s people, for one thing it is believed that Mr. Fard had a “score” to settle with Europeans, represented in the White American. Also he observed the devastation of White Supremacy rule over African Americans. He saw how that concept was tied into the Concept of God “in the flesh” of Jesus Christ, who was portrayed in those days in pictures of a blonde haired and blue eyed Caucasian.

So Mr. Fard set out to create a kind of diatribe or satire or mythology that addressed all of these issues and more. He studied others (some Africans and African Americans) who had been working to improve the condition of the oppressed African Americans and the end results of their works, the obstacles they faced, as well as those ideas that appeared to have the most impact.

So Mr. Fard created a reverse psychology to implant within the African American mind, and he taught that while Europeans used White Supremacy as a weapon on Africans to enslave them and to keep them now after slavery in subject humiliation and as second classed citizens under “Jim Crow” laws, that he would use Black Supremacy as an antidote.

As he moved through the African American neighborhoods in Detroit with his silk, he would speak to the ladies and begin to tell them: “Your people are living here as an inferior people, when in fact they don’t know their own past. Your people came from the great tribe of Shabazz, the Asiatic Black people. You live under White Supremacy, when in fact you were the ‘Black gods,’ where Black people were the Supreme who created the White race.”

The ladies whom Mr. Fard talked to like this would go home to their husbands and tell them what this stranger was saying about African Americans. Among them was Sis. Clara Poole, later to be known as Clara Muhammad, the wife of Elijah Poole, later to be known as the Hon. Elijah Muhammad. Sis. Clara told her husband, Elijah, “You should go hear this man, what he says about where we came from.”

Elijah did go hear Mr. Fard and became his student and in time was considered Mr. Fard’s star pupil. Remember the time frame of the 1930s in the midst of the Depression and at a time when the humiliation of African Americans had beaten this people into an inferiority complex. Elijah had moved up to Detroit to try and find a better life for his family, moving from the Southern State of Georgia, among the worst of the worst in metering out abuse, including lynchings, on African Americans.

“Good White Christians also know as the Ku Klux Klan” were the most oppressive in their treatment of African Americans and justified their mistreating them on the Biblical rendition of Noah and his son that laughed at his nakedness and in turn was cursed as Ham, to be the burden bearer of other

people. The description that Mr. Fard gave of the White race was termed as a “race of devils.” This description was then accepted by the African Americans listening to him, as they determined that that was the only way to understand the treatment they had experienced at the hands of Whites.

In 1933, Mr. Fard began to turn over the leadership of the young Nation of Islam to his star pupil, Elijah Poole and named him Elijah Muhammad. His wife, now called Clara Muhammad, was into her seventh pregnancy during this year. Mr. Fard predicted that her child would be a boy (no testing for sex of the child done at that time) and told Elijah and Clara to name this boy child after him. Fard wrote the name in chalk on the wall in the home of Elijah Muhammad: Wallace D. Muhammad. Fard told them that this one, this boy child, would be the one to grow up and help his father in this cause. He told them, this child when he grows up will come to you with something completely different than what he had given them, implying this child would come with “True Islam.”

True enough, a boy was born and he was given the name of Wallace D. (one of the names Fard used) Mohammed. The family of Elijah and Clara and the early followers in the Nation of Islam who knew what Mr. Fard had said about this child treated Wallace D. Mohammed different throughout his upbringing. And the Nation of Islam grew and so did Wallace, the son. Mr. Fard left the Nation of Islam right after his naming of the unborn son and Elijah Muhammad became the builder of the Nation of Islam. Mr. Fard is called its founder.

One thing Mr. Fard left in the midst of this young movement was the Holy Qur’an, although he did not advocate teaching from the Qur’an. He told the African Americans to keep the Qur’an on the highest shelf in their homes and to revere it as the Sacred Book of Muslims. But Nation of Islam members and leaders and Ministers were still reading and teaching from the Bible as their book of reference.

Elijah Muhammad eventually hired an Arabic teacher to teach his children and the other school age children of the Nation of Islam. His final pick for a teacher was Dr. Jamil Diab, who was a Palestinian refugee in the United States. Dr. Diab taught the children Arabic. Knowing the teachings of the Nation of Islam left by Fard were not in line with the Qur’anic teachings, Dr. Diab would use his influence as a teacher to point out certain things the students should go to. He paid special attention to Wallace D. Mohammed, the special son of Elijah.

Dr. Diab encouraged Wallace to go to the Qur’an directly and study, especially now empowered with the language of Arabic. And Wallace did in fact grow up to study the Qur’an and compare its teachings against those teachings left by Mr. Fard. In time, this son of Elijah questioned Fard’s teachings and pointed out their inconsistencies with the Qur’an. As Wallace grew to become a Minister in the Nation of Islam, his teachings from the Temple often reflected Qur’anic teachings and not the satire or theology or mythology left by Fard. Some of the members of the Nation of Islam began to complain to the Hon. Elijah Muhammad about these differences, the most significant being that Wallace would not refer to Mr. Fard as “god in the person of...,” as his station in the Nation of Islam eventually had evolved to. Wallace did not refer to his father as a prophet, another evolved designation as the Nation of Islam grew across time.

In light of these teachings coming from the young Minister Wallace Mohammed, his father Elijah would hold court and excommunicated his son from the Nation of Islam. This happened on three occasions, as Nation of Islam members complained about Wallace’s contrary teachings. Although Elijah Muhammad had been told by his teacher Mr. Fard that this child Wallace would grow up and come with something different from what he (Fard) had left, still the young Wallace was excommunicated. Perhaps it was for his own good and protection, to give him the full ability to think independent of the Nation of Islam and his father’s teachings and to be away from those who envied his independent thinking.

In the meantime, many events are occurring within the Nation of Islam and within the African American neighborhoods of the U.S. and within the U.S. society, itself. Among them, the Hon. Elijah Muhammad gained the able orator to be his National Spokesman, Malcolm X (Little). Malcolm was a “common street hustler” who was sentenced to prison time. While in prison was influenced by a Nation of Islam Muslims to put down the vices and sins and pick up the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, who was working to improve the lot of African Americans. Malcolm came from a family of civil right activists and in his own state of remorse for the lifestyle he had led up to then, he

wholeheartedly latched onto the Hon. Elijah Muhammad and his teachings. But Malcolm's complete focus was on improving the plight of African Americans and not on the teachings of Mr. Fard, parse. One of Malcolm's favorite sayings was, "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock (referring to the creation of the United States), Plymouth Rock landed on us (oppressed African Americans).

More events occur. Cassius Clay joins the Nation of Islam and becomes Muhammad Ali, the Three Time Heavyweight Champion, protesters against the Vietnam War, and was stripped of his boxing title but never wavering in his new found faith or commitment to resist oppression everywhere. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had begun campaigning to improve the conditions of African Americans living under the laws that designated their second class citizen status (The Jim Crow Laws) using the philosophy of Ghandi and non-violent resistance. He was eventually assassinated violently. President John F. Kennedy, who supported the resistance of Dr. King, was assassinated violently. Malcolm X, who had split from the man who was the most important influence in his own transition, was assassinated violently. Presidential Candidate Bobby Kennedy, the brother of President John F. Kennedy, and the hope of the oppressed, was assassinated.

Among other occurrences, Wallace D. Muhammad, who was still in excommunication from the Nation of Islam returned to his father to see if he could assist in the troubled times his father and the nation were going through. His father accepted his return and never questioned his son's teachings again, although some still brought to him tapes of Wallace's talks. At one such meeting, the Hon. Elijah Muhammad jumps up at his dinner table and says, "My son's got it. Clara, isn't this what we have been waiting for?" Wallace was teaching on the dangers of "mythological gods."

Did Elijah Muhammad become a Muslim believing in the Qur'an? Wallace Mohammed, when referring to his father and those who supported his father, quotes from Prophet Muhammed, where the Prophet speaks of those who came out of the age of Jahiliyyah, the Prophet saying: "Those who were sincere in the Days of Jahiliyyah are those who are sincere now." Reportedly, Elijah Muhammad said to his son, "It is not for me to correct these teachings (left by Fard), which I have been teaching for 40 years. That is for you (son) to do." And Elijah left his Nation of Islam in a state where he was assured that the leadership would succeed to his son, the one he had excommunicated three times for differing with him: Wallace D. Mohammed, now know as Warithuddin Mohammed or W. Deen Mohammed.

Imam Mohammed's evolving of the Nation of Islam to true Islam went into full gear immediately after he ascended to the leadership of the organization – the day after his father's death at the number one event of the year, Savior's Day 1975, Feb. 25. After admonishing those who looked for a great disturbance to break out among the leadership, he pronounced at this gathering: "The winds of emotionalism will not shake the curtains on this house."

By mid year, Imam Mohammed opened up the Temples of Islam, which before were exclusive to African Americans – not even Africans of Africa could join, to be joined by all races of Muslims. Many Caucasians joined right away, as they had been watching from the outskirts of the NOI. By the end of the year, he instituted that his members recognize and observe Ramadan in its proper month, with that year fasting in September. In the NOI, the Hon. Elijah Muhammad had observed Ramadan every year in December, one reason being to counteract the effects of Christmas on this once Christian followers. Also during every Ramadan, Imam Mohammed commanded his supporters to read the whole Qur'an from cover to cover; their education in Arabic increased and the Companions of the Prophet, with emphasis on Bilal, were introduced. Wallace Mohammed removed all the chairs from Temples and began to call them Masjid/Mosque as a House of Prayer first and foremost where any race of Muslim must be allowed to pray. And as the ultimate blow for the "hardliners" of the old Nation of Islam regime, he decentralized the NOI and told its members to keep their monetary resources in their local communities and begin to build up their organizations locally. They were no longer to report their every move to Chicago known as the headquarters or to seek its permission just to travel from one city to the next. This appeared to be one of the most unacceptable changes and some of those who were seeing their status, power and influence diminished began to grumble and called on Min. Louis Farrakhan to go back and resurrect the Nation of Islam. (To be continued).