

Enlightening Interfaith Journey to Sacred City of Jerusalem



By Imam

Mustafa EL-Amin

"Glorified be He Who took His servant by night from the sacred Masjid to Masjid Al-Aqsa, the surroundings We have blessed, to show him our signs, for surely He is the All hearing and the All seeing." (Qur'an 17:1)

Makkah, Madinah and Jerusalem are the three most sacred sites for us as Muslims in Islam.

Having performed Hajj in 1992 and traveling to Madinah as well, it was a deeply heartfelt honor and blessing to have the opportunity to travel to Jerusalem along with a diverse interfaith

clergy group that consisted of two Muslims, myself and Mohammad Ali Chaudry, Pakistani of Basking Ridge New Jersey, four Rabbis and fourteen Christian Pastors of various denominations and to attend Jumah and pray at Masjid Al-Aqsa and to spend time inside the Dome of the Rock.

The Muslims there refer to the area as Al-Haram Al-Sharif and the Jews refer to it as Temple Mount because they associate it with Solomon's Temple as well as other reasons. Nevertheless, it is considered a very special and sacred area by both.

Prior to that, we had visited the Holocaust Memori-

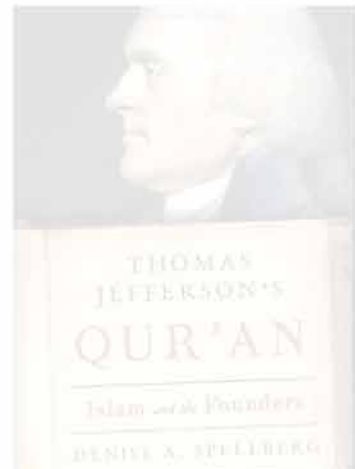


al. Actually we left there and caught a cab to the Masjid for Jumah. The cab driver was Palestinian, who shared good information with us.

The journey was well organized by Keith Krivitzky and Dan Rozett of The Jewish Federation in The Heart of Please turn to page 13

An African American MUSLIM History Salute

Islam in Early America Before Independence



By Baba Kenya

Islam was in America, long before it became the United States.

In 1730, 20-something Ayyub ibn Sulaiman Diallo, the son of a Fulani Imam from Bundu, near Futa Toro (Senegal), was captured and sold into the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade while attempting to find a trader for paper.

He was sold on Kent Island, Maryland. In 1734, he obtained his freedom, and enroute to his home country, while in England, he wrote

two complete Qur'an's from memory. This was 46 years before America became a free nation.

Ayyub ibn Sulaiman Diallo



In 1752, YERO M a h - m o u n d , who was 16 years old, and his sister A m i n a , b o t h

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New Jersey. It is important to note that I was invited by a Rabbi whom I greatly respect and have developed an honest, open and brotherly relationship with over the last couple of years.

Rabbi Marc Kline of Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls New Jersey and I were both speakers at an interfaith program celebrating Muhammad the Prophet (saw), at Rutgers University, sponsored by Muslims 4 Peace organization.

During Rabbi Kline's presentation, he spent a considerable amount of time talking about the transition of the African American Muslim community from the teachings of the Nation of Islam to the universal teachings of Islam under the leadership of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed.

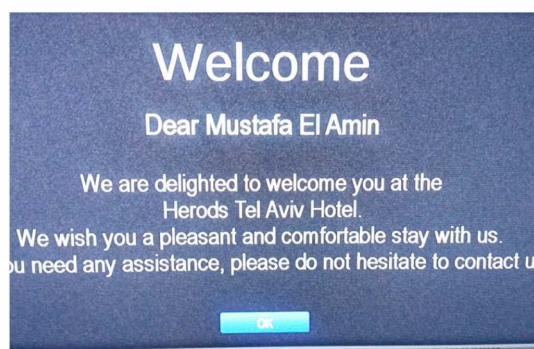
He indicated that he had actually met Imam Mohammed and expressed his admiration, love and respect for Imam Mohammed as a per-



son and his great works. The overwhelming majority of the audience was non African American.

I mention that, because I believe Rabbi Kline would have said the same thing – rather I was there or any of us from Masjid Ibrahim or any other African American Muslim was present. I have participated in an interfaith event at the Synagogue that he presides over.

Since we returned from Israel, I asked Rabbi Kline



where did he meet Imam Mohammed. He replied, "I was with Imam Muhammad in Columbia, South Carolina in the late 90s. He and I shared a program with an Episcopal Elder who was a dean of one of the colleges.

"We were speaking about the similarities of our faith traditions. I will share with you that not only did I appreciate spending the time with the Imam, but the room's aura changed when he walked in. He was a dynamic man, and I wished that I had had more time and opportunity

to spend with him."

I was thankful to receive an invitation to travel with him and other leaders in the Faith community on a "Clergy Interfaith Mission to Israel" – not just for myself only but for our community.

I immediately reflected on the fact that Imam Mohammed had gone to Israel. Prior to going I remember him being in Newark at Masjid Muhammad, as it was known then, and asking the community what did we think about him going to Israel.

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SOCIAL POLITICAL EDUCATION BEING A FREE MAN IN THE CITY

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in the community and outside of the community. Find those that have similar concerns, pursue the idea with the mindset of a contributor, a "Free Man in the City."

Carter G. Woodson in his book, "The Miseducation of the Negro," said, "The Negro is a new figure in politics, one who will not concern himself so much with what others can do for him as with what he can do for himself ... he (the Negro) will appeal to his own

and to such friends of other races in his locality as believe in social justice, if he does something for himself others will do more for him."

(The Miseducation of the Negro, Carter G. Woodson, page 116.) Being a Free Man in the City comes with great responsibility, individual responsibility and community responsibility which requires, "Faith, Worship and Work."

As an independent commu-

nity but also as a community that is engaged with other communities, we should see ourselves as leaders.

It is not necessary to belong to any particular political party but there is the need to ensure that social and political concerns are in agreement with our way of life.

As Free Man and Women in the City, our desire should be to participate with right minded people who share our concerns.

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As I continue to process and reflect on what I experienced and learned while in Israel and a few of the Palestinian territories, as well as the historic sites that we visited that are sacred to Muslims Christians and Jews, I have to be thankful for the depth of the itinerary that we followed almost to the letter for the seven days that we were there.

It was extensive and a grind. From the first day to the last, we were constantly being educated by early morning presentations by both Jewish and Palestinian speakers concerning the reality of the complicated situation that exist between the two and the possibilities for hope and peace – as well as presentations by Christian speakers.

The daily routine was to visit a number of historic sites locations, like Shilo, Nazareth to visit the Church of Annunciation where many Christians believe is the area where Mary the Mother of Jesus lived and where the Angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a child.

It included the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, as well as other churches and the Western/Wailing Wall, the Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Jaffa/Joppa, which is the oldest part of Tel Aviv and is historically associated with Jonah and Solomon.

Personally, it was important to take a photo there with the Mediterranean sea in the background because

during my tenure as an educator teaching World History, there was a focus on ancient kingdoms of the Mediterranean.

Before going to Jaffa, we drove through Levinsky Park for a glimpse at the realities of Israel's African refugee population and had a discussion of some of the challenges. We walked along Rothschild Boulevard, where Tel Aviv began, exploring the old and the new.

The first day there, we went straight to Jerusalem where we witnessed worshippers at the Western/wailing wall and heard the Church bells and the Adhan being called from Masjid Al-Aqsa.

It was an amazing site to see believers of the three Abrahamic Faiths basically in the same area and in spite of the deep-seated controversies, from what I could see, peacefully worshipping G-d in their own way.

In addition to those sites, we went to the Golan Heights which borders Syria and Lebanon. From our location, we could see both countries and to Rawabi, a new Palestinian city near Ramallah to meet and have dialogue with Bashar el Masri, the developer of the city, a Palestinian American entrepreneur.

Another very important place that we visited was the Etzion Settlement Block,, Palestinian Nonviolence Center, and met the Israeli and Palestinians of Shorashim-Judhur, a grassroots project which brings together Palestinians and Jewish settlers in

a realistic and unique coexistence project.

We heard presentations that were very informative and hopeful, with both the Israeli and the Palestinian expressing their hurt and pain at the loss of family members at the hands of each group. They both explained that they are tired of the conflict and are doing what they can to work for real peace and understanding.

In summarizing this enlightening journey, I thank Allah first and foremost, then the organizers from The Jewish Federation for their interfaith efforts to bring about greater understanding between members of the faith communities.

In the words of Keith Krivitzky, CEO of The Jewish Federation, "We were not here to convince anyone of anything, rather to expose the members of this group to real life in Israel, for the good or the bad...."

"Together, as Jews, Christians and Muslims, we created dialogue, shared experiences, enjoyed meals together and most of all formed a bond through mutual respect and understanding for one another that will continue back in New Jersey.

"We have laid the foundation to enable us to work together for a better community and maybe even a better world. I could not have asked for a better outcome!"

It was truly an educational and thought provoking experience that I will never for-

Calendar of Events

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May 15 – June 14, 2018 (Contingent on Moon Sighting)

INTERNATIONAL – Ramadan, the month long fast from dawn to dusk, is projected to be May 15 thru June 14, 2018. Please plan unrelated events to clear your calendar in time for Ramadan Fasting. Stay in touch with your local Masjid/Islamic Center for Sighting of the Moon to commence the Fast and to End the Fast, for prayer locations and religious activities.

June 15, 2018 (Contingent on Moon Sighting)

INTERNATIONAL – Eidul Fitr is projected to be June 15, 2018, the prayer and festival celebrating the completion of the month long Ramadan Fast. Contact your local Masjid/Islamic Center for details.

August 19 – 24, 2018 (Contingent on Moon Sighting)

INTERNATIONAL – The Hajj, Pilgrimage to Mecca and Holy Places, is projected to begin Aug. 19 thru Aug. 24. Contact the Hajj travel advisors in your area for preparations, deadlines to travel rapidly approaching.

August 21, 2018 (contingent on Moon Sighting)

INTERNATIONAL – Eidul Adha, the celebration – prayer and festival – upon the completion of the Hajj is projected to be Aug. 21, 2018. Please stay in touch with your local Masjid/Islamic Center for specifics, locations and activities.

CELL HEALTH IS BASED ON POSITIVE THOUGHT AND ENERGY

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think sickly thoughts your cells will conform to the impression in those thoughts and because your thoughts are creative sickness will be created in your body.

Or to the contrary, if you think thoughts of health and beauty the consciousness will conform itself to health and beauty in your body.

Our choices in most cases are predicated upon our predominant mental attitude. Poor choices relevant to food, relationships or beliefs generally are dictated by our environmental factors if we are not directed by self-suggestion.

Most people think they tell themselves what to think. However, this is not true. Most people think based upon what the outer world tells them to think.

The outer world consists of all stimuli from books to electronic media to teachers and professors etc.

Most people are not directed from the internal world, or what Scripture calls, "The Kingdom of Heaven".

Most people have not found that center in themselves. The Bible says: "First seek ye the kingdom" which suggest you must first find it before, "the other things can be added unto you" which we believe to be health, wealth and happiness, etc.

It is unfortunate that the masses have not found this special place within themselves despite Revelation.

And it is also unfortunate that many people have become so damaged as a thinking entity that they may never find it, leaving the life to one of chronic sickness, weakness and unhappiness.

Protect your cell health by thinking positive thoughts that will supply energy for health. We all could use a coach and mentor.

get. The conflicts and complexities of the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians in such a sacred place, rich in history and

religion, as Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, in my opinion can only be resolved by themselves by Allah's Permission.