

Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, Sufi Abdul Hameed and Sheikh Daoud: Our Forgotten American Muslim Heroes

Several years ago (November 12, 1994), I gave a speech at Chicago's Wilbur Wright College on the importance of having American Muslim heroes for our youth to look up to as examples. I chose three individuals to focus upon in the speech: Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, Sufi Abdul Hameed, and Sheikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal. The first was a European-American convert to Islam and author of the polemic guide *Islam in America*. Sufi Abdul Hameed was the organizer of Chicago's and Harlem's "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" jobs protest program. Finally, but not least, Sheikh Daoud was the individual most responsible for establishing so-called Orthodox Islam in America in the 40's and 50's. There is a link in this article to one of Sheikh Daoud's letters.

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Sheikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal – Delegate at Large Representing American Muslims at the United Nations:

A contemporary of Sufi Abdul Hamid was a Caribbean native who also propagated Orthodox Islam — Sheikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal. Sheikh Daoud was born in 1891 to a devout Muslim family of Caribbean and Moroccan background. He came to the United States as a young man. In 1920 he married his wife Khadijah. She became a dutiful aid to his Islamic work which ranged from his founding of the Islamic Propagation Center of America in 1928 at 143 State Street in Brooklyn to his establishment of the Muslim Village Madinah al-Salaam near Fishkill, New York in 1934 (it lasted to 1942). He was always a Muslim pioneer in all his endeavors.

This venerable Muslim leader was active in propagating Islam and trying to explain away misconceptions about Islam and present Islam in a form palatable to the American people till his death in Feb., 1980. He left a great legacy to our Muslim Youth. His monumental 280 pp. work *Islam: the True Faith, the True Religion of Humanity* (Islamic Propagation Center, Brooklyn, 1965) has yet to be edited and published in a needed scholarly edition. The work he carried out as the United States Muslim Representative to the United Nations has no equal. No one else called for equality and justice for all minorities in quite as loud and articulate voice as he had.

This writer has finished work on the first attempt at sifting out Sheikh Daoud's writings from his book. Almost two thirds of this massive work is filled by other writers' works. These other works vary from the Saudi Government Hajj Manual, to a Prayer Manual by Hosny Gaber, and a few articles from *Minbar ul-Islam*. I have not included any of these and since Sheikh Daoud tended to be very repetitive in his writings, I repeated most things he wrote only once. I have also rearranged the order of some of the passages so that similar topics are under the same chapters. Also, he repeats the verse "Truth shall last and falsehood shall perish." (Holy Qur'an 17:81) numerous times in his work. I have given the *aya*' number at only the first occurrence for this verse. There was an earlier edition of this work dating from the 1950's that was only 195 pp. long. This earlier edition is better edited than the second edition and gives us more of an insight to the propaganda that Sheikh Daoud undertook. There the reader can see a letter to the United Nations from 1949 showing Sheikh Daoud feeling on Islam, World Peace, and the delegates of the United Nations responsibility. Like his later work, this contains work from other writers. Whole chapters of the Bible and the Qur'an are quoted and a thirty odd page long excerpt from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali are included. This excerpt does not give credence to the Ahmadiyyah's version of Islam. Ghulam Ahmad is not even mentioned in it. Furthermore, Sheikh Daoud frequently gave *khutbahs* against the teachings of the Ahmadiyyah and the Nation of Islam. Both of these works are being edited for future publication by this writer.

Sheikh Daoud told us little of himself in his work as he was more interested in propagating Islam. Any assistance at writing a biography of this great man would be a great aid to the preservation of American Islamic literature

and history. There is a passage on p. 73 of his 1965 work *Islam, the True Religion of Humanity* that tells us something of his family background. It reads, "It is very encouraging indeed to know that at last illiteracy will be a thing of the past in a very few years for Morocco and the people of Morocco, which was denied our people for the past seventy-two or more years during the French rule. Personally I have every reason to be proud and joyful. Because my grand father, one of Africa's great Chiefs, and one of the wealthiest was a Moor, and so was my father whose mother was an east Indian, born in Mauritania. We are of the Bambara tribe. Known as the Rift night riders, who fought the French from 1865 until 1890 with Samory Toure who was eventually betrayed by his own officer, Murryba Kita and was captured while at prayer in the early hours of the morning and was taken to the Kongo, where he died in 1898. Leaving besides many wives and children in Africa. There were two who were taken to France where they lived for many years."

There was one detractor named Nadim Makdisi who claimed Sheik Daoud's Moroccan origins were pure fantasy. He writes, "Another Negro organization is the Islamic Mission headed by Sheikh Daoud Faisal, a controversial character who claims to be a Moroccan but, judging from his features, language and mannerisms is an American Negro. At his home in downtown Brooklyn, which is used also as a club and house of prayer, Sheikh Daoud, an affable and charming person, impressed the writer as a sincere but unversed propagator of the Islamic faith. Sheikh Daoud founded the Islamic Mission Society in 1934, and ten years later was incorporated for 'the propagation of al-Islam, the religion of mankind' (in the words of the application). Sheikh Daoud, who boasts of having converted 30,000 Negroes to Islam, even advances the fantastic theory that most American Negroes were originally Moslems." I have problems with Nadim's account. Others such as Noble Drew Ali made similar claims of ancestry for themselves and their followers, besides Sheikh Daoud said his ancestors were Moroccan not that he was.

A Letter by Sheikh Daoud to Delegates at the United Nations August 12, 1963

In the name of "God", the "Beneficent", the "Merciful"

I respectfully call your honorable attention to the fact that Allah, our Lord, the Almighty God, your Lord and my Lord, the Lord of the worlds, Creator and Sustainer of the universe is (one) Universal Eternal God, and not three in one, and all creatures, things and beings are God's, and are equally servants of God. The peace we human beings crave and which you are trying to achieve in the United Nations. Peace is Righteousness, an attribute of God, which can only be achieved by the Righteous, through Submission in obedience to the Will, the Commandments and the Laws of Allah, our Lord, the Almighty God in Islam. The revelation of our Lord containing His Sacred Laws an holy Commandments for the righteous government and guidance of all humanity. Since all things, creatures and beings are God's, and Peace is righteousness, an attribute of God, and it cannot be achieved without the leave of God, the Giver and Taker of Life, Peace and death. Therefore it is quite obvious peace cannot be achieved without righteousness, which is submission to the Will, the Command and Laws of Allah, the Owner, Giver and Taker of Peace. However, this Peace for which we crave and which you strive to achieve in the United Nations can be achieved, and must be achieved, if humanity is to survive. But in order to accomplish this great feat, you honorable delegates and representatives of the United Nations in the United Nations, and the people and the nations of the world must willingly, and without reservation surrender your will in complete submission to the Will, the Command and the Laws of Almighty God, Lord of the Worlds in obedience to "ISLAM", His revelation, containing His holy Command and Sacred Laws, perfected and revealed unto His chosen Prophet Mohammed (peace and mercy of Allah be upon him) as the Religion in which to worship Him, and the Laws to be taken therefrom for the government and guidance of all humanity. Bear in mind, that all things, creatures and beings are God's, and are equally Servants and Messengers of God, including the very breath that you and I breathe is the Life and Spirit of the Life of God in us, which is also His Servant and Messenger. Now how can peace and economic security for which you strive for humanity be achieved without God?

All knowledge is God and came from God. Knowledge which humanity have achieved or acquired thus far came to us in the form of Commandments and Laws, revealed and taught to the various Prophets of our Lord, who in turn taught humanity. No man is independent and self-taught. All must be taught. God taught the Angels, Angels

taught the Prophets, and the Prophets taught humanity, and humanity teaches each other. This is the way knowledge was acquired. No one is self-taught. God is Knowledge and Giver of all knowledge. Praise to God the Lord of the worlds. We human beings were created by Allah, our Lord, the Lord of the worlds, free and equal without sin, and with a free will and a mind our own, and a conscience, the Criterion of right and wrong, good and evil, and a soul to cherish and to nourish and then placed us upon this planet earth, as His Servant-representatives, with earthly provisions and all other necessities for the nourishment and sustenance of life, to live in peace with each other, and for the love and peace of each other, and the goodwill of each other, to love, to praise and to glorify the holy name of our Lord.

Our main objective on earth as human beings, and as Servants and Messengers of God, our Lord, is to praise and to glorify the holy name of our Lord, to enjoy the companionship, the love, the peace and the goodwill, the social, economic, industrial and commercial co-existence of each other, and to enjoy a full and complete social life with our families, friends and neighbors; and not for hate and the making of destructive implements of war for the destruction of each other. But to live for the love, the peace and the goodwill of each other for the good of our own souls and the glory of God.

For the sake of peaceful co-existence man must learn to love and to respect the human rights of each other, the freedom of each other, the dignity of each other, the property rights of each other and the rights of self-determination of each other, which is the fundamental law of common decency and self-respect, and the respect of others. Upon these high basic principles which Islam teaches rest the peace of our world and the solution of all the problems confronting humanity. Man cannot live without God for all things are God's, including man himself. For the very breath that we breathe is God in us; and the Life and the Spirit of God.

All ye faithful believers, know the truth, that the Koran which contains Islam, the last and complete revelation of Allah, our Lord, confirming all previous teachings of the Prophets of our Lord, and all of His revealed Books is available to you. Please read it. It was revealed especially for you. Its contents are all true revealed words, Laws and Commandments of our Lord, the Almighty God. Please avail yourselves of the opportunity of reading it. Remember this, that there is not any forgiveness for those who make partners unto God; and there is no forgiveness after death.

I am appealing to you honorable delegates of the United Nations on behalf of humanity to be ever mindful when making decisions in which the rights, the freedom, the dignity, the property rights and the rights to self-determination are involved. Because Allah, our Lord and His Heavenly Angels are ever present, hearing, seeing and knowing all that you do and say. While the Heavenly Angels are making a just record of everything you say, do, or write, and your reward whether it is good or bad is instantaneous. Remember this also that your secret and personal ambition and desire may have to give way, so that truth and justice in relationship to the decision that you may be called upon to make for the benefit of peace and economic security you are striving to achieve in the United Nations may be realized.

It is a foregone conclusion that all creatures, things and beings are God's and are equally Servants and Messengers of God. Then how can the United Nations ever hope to achieve peace and economic security for humanity without the leave of God, Who is the Owner, Giver and Distributor of peace and economic security! The United Nations can never achieve, nor accomplish anything successful, good and lasting without the leave, the guidance and the blessings of Allah, the Almighty God, Lord of the worlds. All things, creatures and beings are God's. Therefore, you must go to God, the Owner and Distributor of Peace and economic security through submission in obedience to His Commandments and His Laws in Islam, which he hath especially revealed for our righteous government and guidance.

To falsify in the name of God by saying and doing what He hath not revealed and which was not taught by His Prophets is the gravest of all transgressions. Therefore, be careful of what you say, write and teach relative to the Nature of our Lord and His relationship to humanity. Remember that Allah, our Lord, the Almighty God, Lord of the worlds, Creator and Substainer of the Heavens and the earth and all that lies between, Life, Creator and

Substainer of Life; the Giver and Taker of Life, Peace and Death has neither image nor likeness of anything, creatures or beings, that are but His Servants and Messengers, including Jesus, the Messiah, son of Mary, the Apostle of God, and there is nothing comparable nor like unto God. To make unto God the father of a human son and to say God is three persons in one God, is false, blasphemous, mischief making and misleading, for which there is no forgiveness from God. No Prophet said nor taught any such misleading thing. So long as saying amongst you, you could never receive the guidance and blessing of God. The only truth in existence is Islam, and the only solution that can and will solve all problems of humanity. For Islam is the Commandments and the Laws of God, to which man must bow in obedience.

TRUTH SHALL LAST AND FALSEHOOD SHALL PERISH, SAID ALLAH, THE LORD OUR GOD. (KORAN).

Therefore, whatsoever man may establish on falsehood, and false and many gods, and false worship, will perish. Your Lord and my Lord, the Lord of the worlds is (one) God and not three persons in the one God. False god worshipers and the worshiping of false God is false; such as those who worship Jesus, the Messiah, son of Mary, the Apostle of our Lord as God and as son of God. For them said Allah, our Lord, the Lord of the worlds: Paradise will be denied them and they will perish in the hell fire. (KORAN): False gods worshipers and the worshiping of false and many gods, the hypocrite and unbeliever will perish. Unless they repent, beg forgiveness of Allah, their Lord and establish true worship in the Glory of His holy name, and to glorify His holy name.

The so-called Christian believing humanity who have established and advocate what is now known as White Supremacy above their other human brethren have and are spreading this poisonous philosophical doctrine everywhere and by every means possible, which has created and is creating dissension, confusion, hate, unGodliness throughout the wide world. They and their evil doctrine will soon perish from the face of the earth. Because Truth shall last and Falsehood shall perish, and will be replaced with Godliness, Truth, Peace, Human Equality, Justice and the Brotherhood of Man under one God on earth. For God is Truth, Love, Peace, and Justice;; and Islam teaches Truth, Love, Peace, Justice, Human Equality and the Brotherhood of Man. But unbelieving humanity will not accept nor surrender their selfish lofty selves in humble obedience to God and His Will, Laws and Command. Who created them and unto Whom is their return.

If and when the revealed Laws of Allah, our Lord, the Almighty God in Islam are accepted and implemented in the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, it will solve all problems confronting humanity, establish, maintain and preserve peace, love, goodwill and the brotherhood of humanity on earth forever. Praise be the name of Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Thank you. May Allah grant you peace, good health and long life.