WITH ALLAH'S NAME, THE MERCIFUL BENEFACTOR, THE MERCIFUL REDEEMER

Imams with the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

COMMUNITY PROGRESS REPORT
2018 - 2019

Celebrating Ninety-Years of Community Life and Progress

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِٱلشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾

“So I swear by the afterglow of sunset”

وَٱلَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾

“And by the night as it envelops”

وَٱلْقَمَرِ إِذَا ٱتَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾

“And the moon when it comes full”

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾

“ You shall surely travel from stage to stage.”

(Qur’an 84: 16-19)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Conveners of Imams

Associated with the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Conveners of Imams:

National/Midwest Section:
Imam Dr. Bashir Ali
mecacenter@yahoo.com
309-208-2847

New England Section:
Imam Taalib J. Mahdee
tmahdeeone@gmail.com
617-272-5554

Northeast Section:
Imam Mikal Shabazz
mdmshabazz@yahoo.com
267-586-7328

Mid-Atlantic Section:
Imam Dr. Abdel Nuriddin
nuriddin@triad.rr.com
336-324-9746

Southern Section:
Imam Yahya Islam
yaiplumbing@yahoo.com
706-442-2895

Southwest Section:
Imam Fahmee Sabree
fmsabree@yahoo.com
225-229-9504

Western Section:
Imam Wali Fardan
Wali.fardan@cox.net
619-972-3544

Visit us at:

iwdmcommunity.com

As-Salaamu-Alaikum!

Dear Believers and Community Leaders:

On behalf of the *Conveners of Imams*, it is our pleasure to present the ***"2018-2019 Community Progress Report."*** This report outlines collective activities, accomplishments, challenges, and strategies to develop our community life.

Over the last two years, the Conveners, Imams, educators, and community scholars have worked to create training and education initiatives to prepare a new generation of leaders to carry our community into the future. These efforts have also produced new resource materials to assist local communities.

As our community celebrates its ninth decade of progression, we look forward to the natural transitions of the journey. We pray that you find this report both inspiring and insightful as we work together to realize our collective potential!

Peace and Blessings,

Imam Dr. Bashir Ali

National Convener,

Imams associated with the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

The Section Conveners
(2018-2019)

Introduction

Progressing from Dependence, then Independence, to Interdependence

Background

The ***Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed*** has a history and legacy in America dating back to 1930. Since that time, the community has evolved in three major stages.

The first stage (1930-1975) represents the *"Nation of Islam"* experience. During this time, believers were introduced to the basic concepts and language of Islam in a community structure that was designed to "build a nation" while improving the moral, social, and economic condition of the early believers. As a result, the community of that time was highly centralized with a *top-down governance system* and the community direction and decisions determined by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his national leadership team. This was a time when the believers and local communities were **dependent** on "headquarters" to sanction their local activities.

The second stage of development (1975-2008) represents the leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed. This period represents our development into the fullness and purity of Islamic life. Imam Mohammed transitioned members of the *Nation of Islam* into a new Islamic consciousness based upon the guidance of the Qur'an, life example of Muhammad the Prophet (ppbuh), and the principles of natural thinking (*Deen-ul Fitra*). A result of this new thinking was the transition from a nationalistic community structure to the development of natural community life. Inherent in this transformation was the "freedom" to develop a natural Islamic community life from the bottom-up. As a result, the Imam "freed" local communities and believers to develop **independent and autonomous** governing structures and hold ourselves accountable for the leadership and governance of community life. The Imam also introduced the concepts and models of *"Islamic Democracy"* and *"Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum" (governance by mutual consultation)* to guide our ability to make collective decisions. Understanding that the critical element of community life is **unity of purpose**, Imam Mohammed expressed his vision of ***"Ummatul-Islameeah" (Islamic Community Life)*** as the direction for our community and gave us the Qur'anic metaphor of the ***"four birds" (defined as education, economics, culture, and government)*** to develop the institutions of community life.

The third and present stage of our development (2008-present) represents the natural growth and maturity of Islamic community life. In this natural progression, autonomous and independent leaders and local communities have been blessed with a ninety -year legacy of leadership, guidance, and community evolution. As we continue to progress, the Qur'an, example of the Prophet (ppbuh) and thinking of our Imam should guide this development.

Allah commands that we must move from our individual or local interests to oneness of purpose and interests ***(Qur'an 3:104). "Let there be from you*** (plural), ***community*** (singular)…" In order for Believers and their local leaders to achieve this command from Allah, the individual and local interests must come to the final stage of social maturity, **interdependence**. We must recognize that we have to **work together** to achieve the larger mission of developing community institutions. As we approach this obligation, Allah (through the Qur'an) has given us the principle of *Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum*. Our Imam also encouraged us to evolve this principle into an *Islamic Democracy,* in order to guide the development of our community into the future. Following this guidance, Imams convened in 2009, after the passing of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, to formalize a basic leadership structure for our community, in line with these principles and traditions.

In conjunction with this legacy, the ***Conveners of Imams*** have issued Annual Reports to the Community outlining activities of the seven *Sections* (regions). Our most recent *2012-2017 Community Progress Report* offered a different and broader perspective and attempted to identify major collective accomplishments over the stated period while also identifying the continuing and future challenges for the growth and development of our Muslim community life. This *2018-2019 Community Progress Report* continues that effort and tradition.

The Mission

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

"Let there be from you a community inviting to the goodness/prosperity; commanding universally recognized human excellence; preventing influences that void the human nature. Those, they, will be the successful." (Qur'an 3:104)

Continuing Achievements and Community Challenges

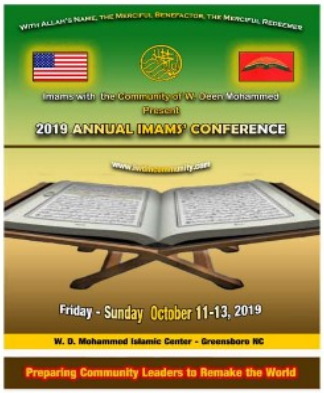
The *2012-2017 Community Progress Report* identified several key achievements that serve as a foundation for continued community development. The achievements include: **1) the establishment of new mechanisms for communication**; **2) developing the skill sets of Imams and Community Leaders** and **3) developing the institutions of *"Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum"* and *Islamic Democracy*.** In the years of 2018-2019 efforts continued in these critical areas.

Connecting the Community and Maintaining Our Mechanisms for Communication

As stated above, over the last few years, new mechanisms have been established to communicate important information to the *Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed* and to the world. These include:

- **Development of the IWDM Community website *(iwdmcommunity.com)*;**
- **National and regional meetings for Imams and Community Leaders**
  - ⇒ Annual Conferences for Imams and Community Leaders
  - ⇒ Sectional and regional conferences and meetings
  - ⇒ Monthly and special conference calls;
- **Reports to the Community on collective achievements and strategic challenges** *(i.e. Community Progress Reports)*;
- **Public Statements on issues of national concern**;
- **Statements to the Muslim community** *(i.e. moonsightings, Ramadan, and the Eids)*;
- **Partnering with established Muslim community news media to communicate on activities, important issues, and answer questions**.

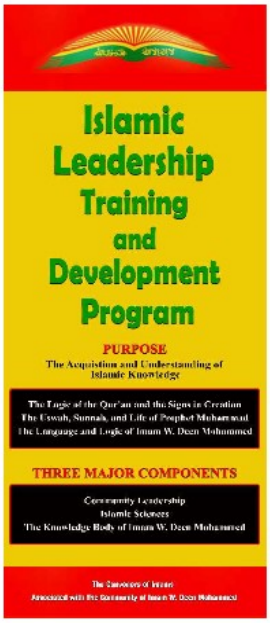
These communication mechanisms have been essential to keep the community informed about important announcements and events, community development challenges, and strategic initiatives. They have also been a vehicle for transparency on issues requiring community input and shuraa. Over the last two years *(2018-2019)*, these efforts have continued, including the annual conferences for Imams and Community Leaders. The *2018-2019 Imams' Conferences* have focused on identifying, exploring, and addressing strategies for community development.



The 2018 conference focused on the strategic challenge of intergenerational cohesion, inclusion, and transition. This included presentations on community demographics, and the retention, outreach, and development of a new generation of believers and leaders. How do we: 1) seek them out; 2) have serious discussions with them; 3) identify their issues; 4) find ways to integrate them into the fabric of our community life; 5) develop leadership succession strategies; and 6) develop enhanced communication strategies utilizing social media to attract them.

The *2019 Imams' Conference* continued the focus on the critical need for developing community leadership succession strategies through education and training. The theme of the conference was: ***"Preparing Community Leaders to Remake the World."*** As our community continues to evolve, a new generation of leaders will be needed to take us into the future. It will also be incumbent on us to pass on the nine decades of accumulated knowledge and best practices that our community has experienced through a structured learning process. Since 2015, conference activities have sought to educate Imams and Community Leaders with selected workshops and presentations. Additional activities included self-assessments on basic areas of knowledge for Islamic community leadership. At the 2019 conference, a team of dedicated Imams and other scholars informed participants about a new program initiative to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of emerging community leaders. Conference presenters also reviewed key program components and sought feedback from those in attendance.

Developing the Skill Sets of Imams and Community Leaders



As a result of the conference workshops and assessment activities that began in 2016, a new training initiative was developed, starting in November of 2018. Based upon the assessment information, a team of Imams, educators, and recognized community scholars *(organized by the Conveners of Imams)* began planning the ***Islamic Leadership Training and Development Program (ILTDP)***.

During the year of 2019, a number of research and program development activities took place. These included:

- Making presentations and **taking shuraa on the ILTDP concept** *(at both the Muslim Journal ATTB Imams' Meeting and 2019 Imams' Conference)*;
- Convening the ***IWDM Knowledge Body Work Group*** and developing ***Critical Concepts*** for the component;
- Developing DRAFT ***"Recommendations for New Imams and Muslim Chaplains"*** *(as a discussion and shuraa template to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities for emerging community leaders in conjunction with the development of ILTDP program);*
- Developing DRAFT **ILTDP component outlines *(Community Leadership, Islamic Sciences, IWDM Knowledge Body)***;
- Developing DRAFT **ILTDP component Learning Objectives**;
- Developing and implementing the ***ILTDP Summary, Brochure, and Participant Survey***

The impetus for the ILTDP program is the need to develop a new generation of Imams and community leaders with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully meet future challenges to grow and develop our community life and institutions. The purpose of the program is to facilitate the acquisition and understanding of Islamic knowledge utilizing the *Islamic Sources (Qur'an, Life of Prophet Muhammad [ppbuh], Creation, and human nature)* based upon the orientation, language, and logic of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

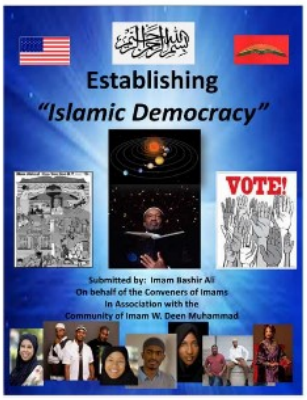
The three major ***Islamic Leadership Training and Development Program (ILTDP)*** components include:

- ***Community Leadership***
- ***The Islamic Sciences***
- ***The Imam W. Deen Mohammed Knowledge Body***

It is anticipated that the program will be up and running sometime in late summer or the fall of 2020. The online program is open to Imams, Assistant Imams, Muslim Chaplains, Teachers, community leaders, and anyone with responsibilities that cast them as representatives of the *Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed,* in their masaajid or elsewhere. It is also open to Islamic workers sincerely interested in qualifying themselves to enhance the community's advancement towards its promised destiny.

Individuals interested in participating in the program can go to the IWDM Community website *(iwdmcommunity.com)* and review the ***ILTDP brochure***. They should also download the ***ILTDP Participant Survey***, complete and return it to the designated ILTDP contact persons *(listed on the brochure)*. The surveys will be used to get input on ILTDP participant learning preferences so the program to can be customized to best meet participant learning styles and needs.

Developing the Institutions of *"Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum"* and *Islamic Democracy*



In February 2015, the *Conveners of Imams* published and distributed the *Community Governance Concept Papers* on ***"Establishing Islamic Democracy"*** and ***"Government: Agreements, Standards, and Accountability by Way of Mutual Consultation."*** The primary purpose of the concept papers was to examine the language and thinking of Imam W. Deen Mohammed relative to collective decision making and community governance and encourage discussion within the Community. The papers identified *ten principles* promoted by the Imam and supported by the Qur'an and life example of the Prophet (ppbuh). These principles include: *Authority, Accountability, Diversity, Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum, Freedom of Speech, Transparency/Openness, Standards, Justice and Conflict Resolution, Responsiveness, and Progression*. The papers also examined the evolution and application of these principles in our Community.

As a follow-up to the publication of the *Community Governance Concept Papers*, a presentation was given at the *2015 Imams' Conference* entitled ***"Developing Community with Shuraa Baynahum: Principles, Practices, and Challenges."*** The presentation was accompanied with a companion document: ***"Selected Tafseer and Comments from Imam W. Deen Mohammed on Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum, 1997-2008, Regarding: Muhammad the Prophet (ppbuh), Community Shuraa, Leadership, and Local Shuraa."***

In conjunction with the aforementioned *ILTDP Imam W. Deen Mohammed Knowledge Body Work Group* research activities in the spring of 2019, a number of ***"Critical Concept Templates"*** were developed. The templates documented: 1) critical concepts from the language and knowledge body of Imam W. Deen Mohammed; 2) references from the IWDM knowledge body *(including quotes, dates, and sources)*; 3) references from the Qur'an *(including the applicable ayat or ayaat and Tafsir)*; 4) references from the life, Sunnah, Uswah of Prophet Muhammad *(ppbuh)*; 5) references from the "Fitrata-llahi" *(evidence and connections to Allah's natural pattern in Creation, including the Human Nature)*; and 6) references from other scholars or sources.

Seven of these *Critical Concept Templates* focused on the important topics of leadership, community life, and Islamic governance. They included:

- **Leadership (in Al-Islam);**
- **Servant Leadership;**
- **Community Life;**
- ***"Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum;"***
- **Government;**
- ***Islamic Democracy*; and**
- ***"Ulel Amre Menkum"***

Over 500 pages of research were submitted on these topics, documenting the thinking of Imam W. Deen Mohammed *(in conjunction with the Qur'an, Life of the Prophet, and Fitrata-llahi)*.

In addition to the research cited above, on-going Shuraa activities took place with community leaders at the local, state, regional, and national levels during the period of 2018-2019. **The best examples of these processes produced strategic goals and objectives for community development. These goals and objectives also are metrics of community progress and leadership accountability.** However, a continuing challenge for local Masaajid/Islamic Centers, states, and Sections is the **consistent application of the processes of Shuraa with the principles and practices of *Islamic Democracy***. Another on-going challenge will be to increase the participation of Believers and Community Leaders in these processes.

Current and Emerging Community Development Challenges

In addition to those *Continuing Achievements and Community Challenges (previously outlined)*, our Community faces additional challenges moving into the future. These include: **1) Cultivating New Life**; **2) Leading and Governing with Integrity and Competence**; and **3) Realizing the Mission and Vision.**

Cultivating New Life

As the Community goes through a natural process of reaching maturity and developing the institutions of community life, a number of challenges must be faced and overcome. One of the most profound challenges facing the Community is the *"demographic timebomb."* Currently, in most masaajid, there are more *"pioneers" (individuals aged 60 and older)* than persons aged 40 and under. This is a prescription for a *dying community.*

The ninety-year history of our Community has produced four-plus generations of Muslim life in America. Each succeeding generation has been blessed with an accumulating legacy of education, talent, and resources. This has resulted in Muslim-American professionals taking a leadership role in all levels of the larger society. This includes leaders in government, military, business, education, and culture. Unfortunately, many of these individuals represent a ***hidden treasure*** **of talents, skills, and resources** for our community. Some of them have grown or walked away from our community for a variety of reasons.

As a result, a major challenge for local communities will be the attraction and inclusion of a new generation of membership and leadership. This will include the challenge of maintaining *intergenerational cohesion and continuity,* encouraging our new leaders to build on a legacy and foundation of learning and experiences of the current pioneers. Another factor associated with this phenomenon is the challenge of identifying and eliminating *toxic or killer community cultures* that inhibit and discourage (either consciously or sub-consciously) successor generation participation and leadership.

In order to meet the challenge of engaging and involving a new generation of Believers and leaders to carry our Community into the future, community leaders at every level must develop meaningful strategies. Our previous *Community Progress Report* identified these issues as a top priority for our attention. In addition, the *2018 Imams' Conference* focused on these critical issues impacting the future of our community. Presentations and discussions identified a number of strategies for us to consider. Some of these include:

- Assessing our **Masjid/community culture** for intergenerational diversity, inclusion, and participation, and eliminating *"killer cultures"*:
  - ⇒ Is our community culture one that is inviting to the diversity of women, youth, young families, and successor generation interests and concerns?
  - ⇒ Are they included in community decision making *(i.e., Shuraa process)*?
  - ⇒ Does our community offer a diverse array of activities and programs that are of perceived value to all members of the community?
  - ⇒ Does our community have mechanisms that promote and develop *intergenerational cohesion* so that each generation can nurture and learn both from its predecessor and successor generation?
- Providing both ***purposeful* and *meaningful accomplishments*** to motivate, inspire, and engage the talent and imagination of younger Believers and successor generations;
- Understanding the ***social transformation* mission of Al-Islam** and developing real-life local models that impact and meet the needs of the larger community;
- Connecting with a new generation of Believers **utilizing *social media strategies***;
- Developing a **"*succession plan*" for local Masjid/community leadership**; and
- Identifying and addressing those **factors that will attract and retain a new generation of Imams and community leaders**.

Leading and Governing with Integrity and Competence

In Al-Islam, *leadership* and *community* are *"mates."* Each impacts and shapes the other. As our community moves into the future, the quality of our leadership will impact and influence its direction. Leadership in Al-Islam is based on two main qualifications: **1) good character and trustworthiness** *(as exemplified by the character and servant leadership of Prophet Muhammad [ppbuh])*; and **2) the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead and develop Muslim Community life**.

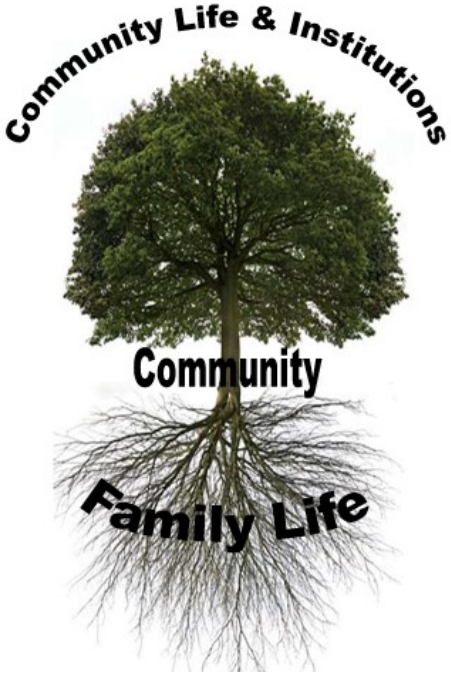
Imam W. Deen Mohammed said: *"Prophet Muhammad has said that the people should choose their leader and gave us the rules. Choose the leader based on his character and on his ability. Not just his character, but, when it comes to sacrificing one or the other, we are to choose the one with good character and turn down the one with the good ability that doesn't have good character…We should choose people on the basis of experience, training and knowledge; how to do the job, and on character.* ***That's the ideal person we want, one who has both good character and know-how.****"*

As local Masaajid/Islamic Centers develop succession strategies for a new generation of community leaders, several questions will be important to consider: 1) Are we aware of the Islamic criteria for leadership and community governance? 2) Do our leaders demonstrate the character, knowledge, skills, and abilities to promote the development of community life? 3) Have we established the necessary processes to successfully make collective decisions and manage local affairs?

Over the last two years (2018-2019), the *Conveners of Imams* have developed additional tools for local communities to use as helpful resources to address the above-mentioned questions. These include:

- DRAFT ***"Recommendations for New Imams and Muslim Chaplains"*** *(outlining the character prerequisites, knowledge, skills, and abilities for new community leaders);*
- The new ***Islamic Leadership Training and Development Program*** *(including training in three critical areas of: 1) Community Leadership, 2) The Islamic Sciences, and 3) The Imam W. Deen Mohammed Knowledge Body);*
- The annual ***Imams' Conferences*** *(providing training, resources, and networking opportunities for community leaders); and*
- ***Community Governance Concept Papers*** *(previously developed in 2015 to provide a framework for the establishment of "Islamic Democracy" and Shuraa-based government, agreements, standards, & accountability, to assist local communities and leaders)*.

Realizing the Mission and Vision



وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

*"Let there be from you a **community** inviting to the goodness/prosperity; commanding universally recognized human excellence; preventing influences that void the human nature. Those will be the successful." (Qur'an 3:104)*

*"…Islam is a religion that **directs us to community**, **to develop community**-under G-d of course. **And to be productive**…"*
(Imam W. Deen Mohammed, 9/11/2008 [Published] "IWDM Last Interview Before Death")

Allah, through the Qur'an and example of the Prophet, has given the Believers a ***mission and purpose to develop Muslim community life*.** As students of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, we also understand that modern dimensions of community life involve: **Education**; **Economics** *(including business development)*; **Government;** and **Culture** *(including Marriage & Family Life)*.

Community Progress Report 2018—2019

We experience community in a variety of dimensions: through our family life; in our local Masjid/Islamic Center; and in larger contexts *(i.e. cities, states, regions, nationally, and internationally)*. It is incumbent on community leadership to develop strategies and mechanisms to progress community life. As our local, state, regional (Sections) and national leadership groups discuss community development strategies, a number of challenges will have to be addressed. Examples include:

Education

- Establishing stable educational institutions to preserve the understanding of IWDM and pass on to succeeding generations;
- Establishing a curriculum for our schools;
- Establishing replicable, accredited, *Sister Clara Muhammad School* or other Islamic School models and curricula *(i.e., SCM full-time elementary and secondary schools; weekend schools; on-line schools, summer academies, etc.);*
- Developing strategies to provide sustainable financial support to our schools;
- Preserving the intellectual contributions of IWDM for future generations.

Economics

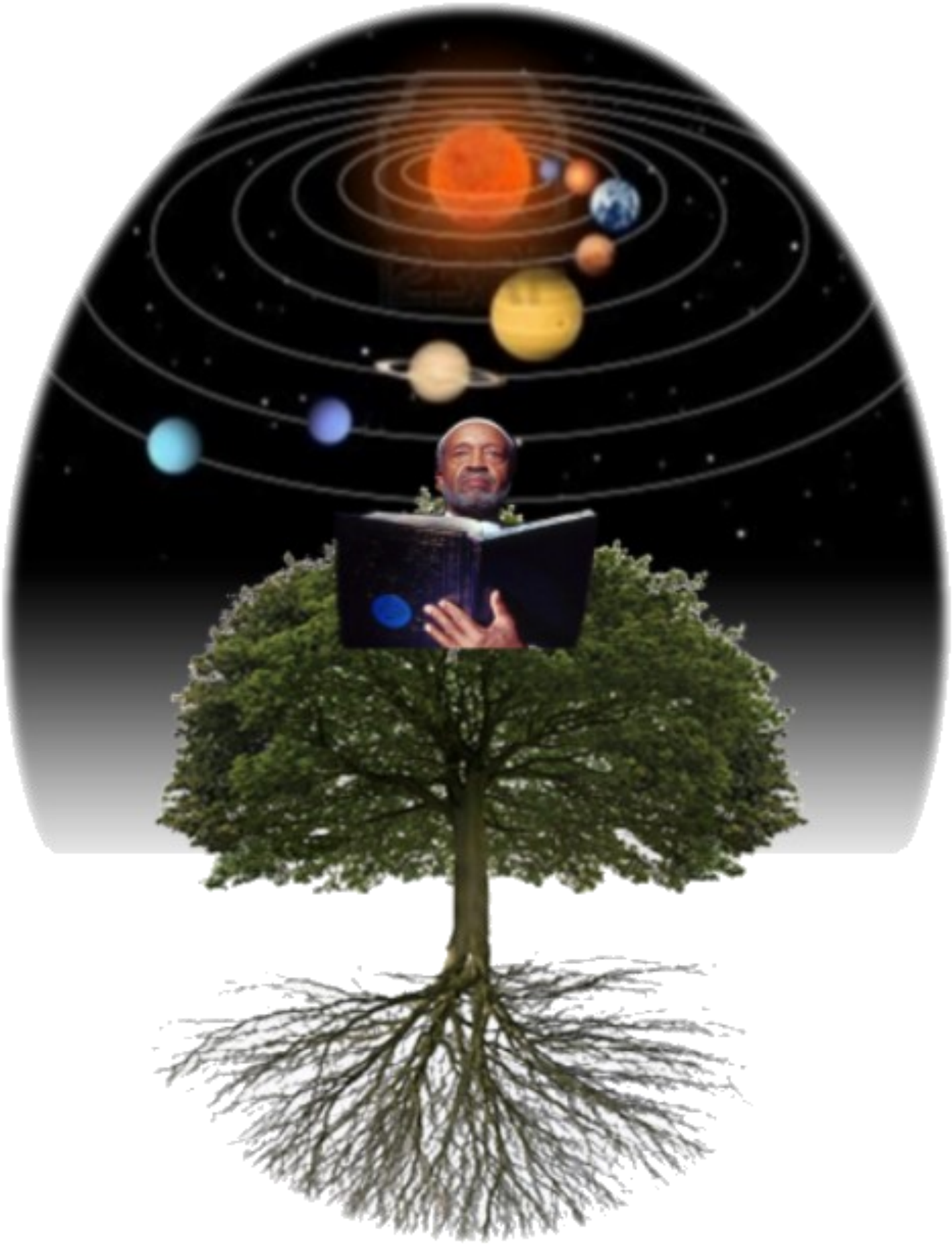
- Identifying economic opportunities and strategies for Islamic/halal collective investment *(including traditional, niche, new, and emerging markets);*
- Creating Islamic economic development templates for local communities;
- Creating programs for personal and family economic empowerment.

Government

- Promoting the concepts of *"Amruhum Shuraa Baynahum"* and *"Islamic Democracy"* with local Muslim communities;
- Educating Muslim communities on successful campaigns for elective office and securing appointments to state and local agencies;
- Educating Muslim communities and leaders to build relationships with local and state government;
- Enhancing the ability of Masaajid/Islamic Centers to effect political change at the local and state levels.

Culture *(including Marriage and Family Life)*

- Engaging Muslims in actively preserving and cultivating our Islamic culture, here in America, while establishing a representation of our own unique cultural voice;
- Developing cultural activities to represent the best of our Muslim and African-American identities;
- Identifying strategies to provide financial support for Muslim artists and cultural activities;
- Promoting marriage and healthy family relationships to strengthen our Muslim and African-American communities.



The Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

WWW.IWDMCOMMUNITY.COM