

# Islam In The Community

## The way of Prophet Muhammad (saw): A moderate movement by design

By MIKA'IL STEWART SAADIQ

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mika'il Stewart Saadiq is the Imam of Masjid Al Aqabah in Detroit, Michigan.

For years now I have heard the word "extreme" become extremely popular. In the mid to late 90's, the word extreme was used as a prefix to excite young risk takers and to promote everything from candy to sporting events. Post 9/11, the suffix "ist" - someone who is proficient or a skilled practitioner at a particular task - was peppered all throughout the media and became the new catch phrase to describe terrorist activity. Now-a-days, the

word extremist almost always follows the title of Islam. The word is slowly transforming to mean any Muslim who professes to live in accordance with the Qur'an and the way of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). ("saw" means Sallaa Allahu alaihi Wasalam, or honorable salute of peace be on him.) Consequently, this "extreme" reaction of xenophobia is making many Muslims run to an extreme of their own - self-denial of religious expression.

As a perfectly understandable defense mechanism, many Muslims in the west (being the minority) feel it necessary to promote the so-called "Moderate Islam." Most Muslims in

our country are immigrants who have come to this country to lead productive lives as opportunity-seekers and contributors.

The last thing they would want is for their neighbors to fear them and/or persecute them (something that many of them witnessed first-hand in their countries of origin). And as for the percentage of Muslim converts, many born and raised in the U.S., they have chosen Islam as a way of life as an aid to be better people and even to assist in solving societal problems.

In order for us to have a fairly sober, or moderate, perspective on this issue we must look at it from a wide view.

Life is literally a continuum. On a continuum there are extremes at both ends. According to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) extremism is not healthy. He said, "Beware of extremism." He also encouraged his followers to be moderate and balanced in their practice of Islam giving every person, place, or thing its due rights.

To recreate a brand new Islam called "moderate" is insinuating that the way of Prophet Muhammad (saw) was at one extreme in The Continuum of Life. And this could not be further from the truth.

"And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you..." 2:143

To better understand moderation in religious vs. worldly life, Muslims and God-con-

scious non-Muslims alike need to examine the life of Prophet Muhammad (saw).

My reasoning for saying God-conscious is because that's what Islam is - a movement in the God-consciousness of mankind. The goal of the Qur'an is to further guide those God-seekers to a straight way of life and to spark contemplation in those who might be unconscious or unaware.

A lot of the time you see views and opinions of people with very little knowledge or understanding of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) being broadcasted (Muslims and non-Muslims) because of their over-the-top comments and ability to entertain the masses.

The product of such individuals usually results in the misrepresenting or defaming of Islam. Two prime examples of each extreme would be the mythi-

cal "super-jihad" terrorist Osama Bin Laden and Miss "Muslim" America, Rima Fihki. Neither one of them are Islamic scholars, judges, or Imams but have been tapped for their "wealth" of Islamic jurisprudence?

Neither one of their exploits are examples of the way of Muhammad (saw).

The propagation of political views and cultural traditions, in conjunction with the excuses of those infatuated with everything of White-American Normalcy, have upstaged the call to Allah while xenophobia and straight bigotry are trying to extinguish His Magnificent Light.

All throughout history we have seen the pure teachings of every prophet, philosopher, or guru become misinterpreted. Those at both extremes use the profundity of their predecessors to justify their own lack of adherence and hypocrisy of their absolutism and fanaticism.

The terms secular and orthodox have been introduced as prefixes to ease the conscious of those who fail to adhere to their self-proclaimed religious tenets. Also, these terms have allowed two cancers to develop that have plagued God-conscious communities since ancient times - sectarianism and elitism.

"So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. The fitrah (natural way) of Allah upon which He has created people.

No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know. [Adhere to it], turning in repentance to Him, and fear Him and establish prayer and do not be of those who associate others with Allah. Of those who split up their religion, and became sects, each sect rejoicing in that which is with it." 30:30-32

In an effort to be normal, people will follow the

crowd, or keep the option open for them to follow, by adopting a group/religious brand that is known for recognizing but not promoting adherence to God-consciousness.

This is how we find Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and even Muslims openly practicing some of the exact same immoral habits that their founders or prophets (as) came to purge the world of.

We must stop trying to use the flaws of human habit as interpretation of religious doctrine. Hence, this brings us back to Islam.

If anyone were to objectively study Islam they would see a perfected design that transcends time, continent, and ethnicity.

And when I say, "objectively study Islam," I mean to study and analyze the glorious Qur'an and the way the Prophet Muhammad (saw) lived as model human before his receiving revelation and then being the vessel of the Qur'an afterward.

Study how he conducted himself as a man of three eras. He lived one-third of his life as a well-respected citizen and contributor among his people. Second, as a revolutionary thinker and conscientious objector to immorality and inequality.

And last, as a statesman and the proven, undeniable Messenger of God (saw).

At each stage of his life there are well-preserved accounts on how he applied rationale and adherence to the command of Allah to bring about god-consciousness in his society.

Of course, I could go on and on giving you specific examples, but I would rather challenge the readers of this article to visit a bookstore or get with a Muslim you know and read. (In the name of your Lord) May Allah guide us all. Peace.

## A Look At My World

### Closer than my cell phone

DR. JAMES L. SNYDER

Traveling, especially by air, is not my favorite pastime. I know some people who just delight in flying from one point to another point. If you would count all of those people who do, I would be nowhere on that list.

Recently I had to travel involving changing planes, which involved spending a night at the Orlando airport. I could have come home, which is about two hours away, or I could spend the night and catch the plane the next day. It would cost me about the same to stay overnight at the airport as it would to travel back home and then return to the airport the next day. So, after all of my meticulous calculations, I decided to spend the night at the airport.

I determined while there to get the most of my night's stay at the airport. The hotel at the airport was one of those big international hotels. It had more stories than a politician on the campaign trail. As is usually the case, my room was on one of the top stories of the hotel.

Checking in at the front desk, I then went to my room and settled down for the evening. I was not going to waste my time huddled in my hotel room, rather, I was going to look around and experience the "nightlife" at this international Airport.

Have you ever made a decision, then looking back on it you thought to yourself, "Self, we are never going to do that again." Such was my case.

I decided to get some supper around 8 o'clock

in the evening. This, I found out, was the time high society folk eat. Why they eat so late, I will never know. But, since I was with high society, I decided to act and eat like high society.

The restaurant in this international hotel was one of those highfalutin restaurants where you really do not know what is on the menu. The menu was in every language except English. Fortunately, they had some pictures and fortunately, my index finger was still in good working order. I ordered my supper, set back and observed the high society all around me.

One thought that stumbled through my brain at the time was, "I wonder if these people in this restaurant know that I am not part of high society?"

About this time the wine steward, I guess that is what he is called, came by to take my wine order. The only wine I know is spelled with an H. When I declined the wine, people began to suspicion I was not part of high society. I guess you cannot be part of high society unless you wine a little.

I finished my supper and decided to wander around in the huge lounge area on this floor. Everybody there was talking and so I got an order of coffee, went to a couch, sat down and just observed what was going on around me. One thing I noticed was that most people seemed to be on their cell phone. What would happen in our society if cell phones suddenly stopped working for three minutes? There would be such a panic across our country that nobody

would actually survive.

I decided I should call someone on my cell phone. After all, I am trying to fit in with this high society. My dilemma came when I tried to figure out who in the world I should call at 10 o'clock in the evening.

Then it dawned on me. I will call the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I do not know why I did not think of this before. So, I pressed the speed dial and the phone started ringing.

As soon as the phone started ringing, a thought danced in my mind. What in the world am I calling her for? What in the world would I talk about?

Before finishing all of the questions floating around my cranium my wife answered the phone.

The first words out of her mouth were, "What did you forget now?"

It seems that whenever I go on a trip, before I get too far down the road I remember something I forgot. When I assured her that I had not forgotten anything, I sensed a slight pause on the other end and then she said, "Did you miss your plane?"

Within the next few minutes I was bombarded with question after question, all I did was call, and at this point, I could not remember why I had called her. It just seemed like the thing to do at the time.

After she settled down a little bit and her panic seizure ceased, I told her I just called to call.

"Oh," she said, not knowing how to answer that.

I was shocked. It had never happened before. I am going to cherish this memory for as long as I live. I actually caught her when she had nothing to say. Needless to say, I relished that moment because it will probably never happen again.

After I hung up, I sat sipping some more coffee when one of my favorite verses came to mind. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).

My comfort rests in the fact that God is closer to me than my cell phone.

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### Mass in Swahili at St. Adalbert Church

A catholic Mass in Swahili will be celebrated at St. Adalbert/OLBS Church, 2347 E. 83rd Street, on Saturday, September 27 at 4:00 p.m. with Father Faustine Furahai.

Father Faustine is a priest from the Catholic Diocese of Moshi in Tanzania, East Africa. He is currently a student at John Carroll University.

Swahili is spoken in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi.

President Barack Obama visited Tanzania in 2013, and Tanzania is an important U.S. ally.

The Mass will highlight the culture and the beauty of Swahili and the people who speak the language.

The Mass will bring together people in the United States and those from Africa who are fighting for economic and environmental justice.

Many African countries are fighting to save their homelands which are their greatest natural resource.

Recently a court in Tanzania blocked a plan to build a paved commercial highway across Serengeti National Park, where massive herds of wildebeests and other mammals migrate.

According to the World Wildlife Foundation, it was a victory of the people of Tanzania, conservationists and wildlife biologists who have been fighting the project since 2010. A southern route around the Serengeti has always been considered the best way to provide transport and development for western Tanzania.

Fifteen percent of the country's income comes from tourism. Tourists visit Zanzibar.

### NAACP wins major early voting victory in Ohio

A federal judge ruled on Thursday September 4 a law that cuts early voting in Ohio is unconstitutional and cannot be enforced for the November 2014 election. The ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by the NAACP Ohio State Conference, the American Civil Liberties Union, several black churches and other coalition partners.

The law would have cut back the early voting period from 35 days before the election to 28 days, eliminated evening voting and voting on the Sunday before election day.

"Early voting is not a social luxury, it's a civic essential—particularly for citizens working long hours on the job or in the home. This ruling will restore access to the ballot box for thousands of Ohioans during the midterm election. If these cuts had been allowed to remain in place, many voters would have lost a critical opportunity to participate in our democratic process. Voting is the foundation of our democracy and its imperative that citizens of every race, color and creed have unfettered access to the ballot box," said Cornell Williams, president and CEO of the NAACP.

Jotaka Eaddy, Senior



**Furahai**

bar or a "northern circuit" of Serengeti National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater, and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Similarly, in the United States, citizens and environmentalists are trying to block the Keystone XL pipeline that would cross through the western United States and potentially endanger the Sand Hills of Nebraska.

Several priests from Tanzania have studied at John Carroll University and have played an active role in the local parishes.

According to Matt Fodor, who is the music director at Our Lady of Peace Church, Father Faustine is an invaluable aid in the Cleveland diocese which has a clergy shortage.

Father Faustine arrived in August for a two year stay while he completes his studies.

"He is a great help assisting Father Gary (Chmura) assisting with the mass schedules at the two parishes, Our Lady of Peace and St. Adalbert; and visiting the sick and shut-ins," Fodor said.

Bwana asifiwe! Join the mass in Swahili!

Advisor to President and CEO and senior director of voting rights at the NAACP explained the ruling as:

"Expanding opportunities to vote, builds a stronger democracy. To deny thousands of Ohio residents, who have demanding work schedules, childcare obligations and other responsibilities an opportunity to vote would be a tragedy. Cuts like these disproportionately harm low-income Americans and communities of color."

Sybil Edwards-McNabb, who is the president of the NAACP Ohio State Conference viewed the ruling in the following light:

"This important ruling and historic victory on the part of the NAACP enables Ohio residents to once again register to vote and cast a ballot on the same day. It also restores evening early voting, as well as voting on several Sundays. The Ohio State Conference is proud of this victory and our work with the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio to reverse these early voting cuts. This triumph will surely encourage Ohioans across the state to take full advantage of the voting process and significantly increase voter turnout."

In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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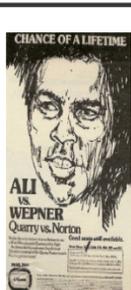
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