

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Conveners of Imams



Associated with the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

America: Beauty and the Beast, the Next Chapter

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ۝ ۱ وَأَنْتَ حَلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ۝ ۲

"I call to witness this land. And you are a citizen of this land..."
(Qur'an 90: 1-2)

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ۝ ۱۲ فَكُرْقَبَةٌ ۝ ۱۳

"...And what will explain the path that is steep? It is freeing a neck..."
(Qur'an 90: 12-13)

The **Conveners of Imams** associated with the **Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed** would like to add our voices to the public discourse on the current historic events playing out in the cities of America and around the world, relative to the ongoing struggle for social justice, freedom, and equality.

Our American experience has been a story of **TWO** realities. The **FIRST**, is the beautiful guiding aspirations of our founders reflecting the universal principles of the human spirit. Accompanying these aspirations were succeeding generations of good people, many of whom gave their lives to achieve the American ideals. These include:

- *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." (The Declaration of Independence)*
- *"We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and*

our Posterity, do establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”
(Preamble to the U.S. Constitution)

- *“E Pluribus Unum” (“Out of many, One”) [Motto on the Official Seal of the United States];* and
- The painful and tireless efforts of countless American change-agents that have been inspired and guided by the above-cited ideals to continuously transform our collective life to conform, more closely, with the founding aspirations.

The SECOND, is the harsh realities of American history driven by domination, genocide, slavery, oppression, and an artificial system of racial superiority. These include:

- Dehumanization and genocide of Native peoples and the thief of their home lands;
- A four-hundred-year history of enslavement, torture, oppression, and dehumanization of African peoples, based on a *“system of white supremacy”* enveloping every institution of American life, including:
 - The establishment of the 245-year institution of American *“chattel slavery” (i.e. crimes against humanity, cultural genocide, forced captivity, forced family separations, wonton rapes, tortures, and the execution of captive slaves);*
 - One hundred (100) years of *“post-slavery”* racial apartheid (*i.e. neo-slavery disguised as “share-cropping;” with mob lynching of innocent men and women assisted by “law enforcement,” establishment of American terrorist organizations, unpunished murders of “uppity Negroes,” assassination of community leaders, race massacres, “segregation-based” public policies*);
 - Fifty-five (55) years (plus) of *systemic racism* rooted in public policies and practices, such as:
 - An unequal and unfair system of *“justice;”*
 - Excessive policing and police brutality;
 - Voter suppression;
 - Housing, employment, and health care discrimination;
 - Unfair financial lending practices (*impacting home and business ownership, and economic development*);
 - The psychological impact of *“white supremacy”* on the unconscious thinking and behavior of the descendants of slavery; and
- Expanding the umbrella of *“white supremacy”* to include latter European immigrants and restricting or excluding other non-European immigrants from the benefits of American *“white privilege.”*

America and the rest of the world have been “dancing” with these two realities for centuries. It is with this historical backdrop of America’s *“Beauty and the Beast”* story, that we view the current reaction and social movement that has grown out of a critical mass of unjust deaths of African American men and women at the hands of police or self-appointed vigilantes. The most recent public examples include *Trayvon Martin, John Crawford III, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald, Freddie Gray, Brianna Taylor, Amaud Arbery, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks...* The fact that these deaths continue to occur all over the country, with alarming frequency, points to the systemic nature of the “beast.”

As Muslims and people of faith, we believe the human family is one. We believe the human origin is one. We believe G-d is One who is, bigger than, originated, and guides Creation. We also reject the personification of G-d in the human form. We believe that no group of people has special or divine rights over other peoples. We believe that “racism” is an artificial human mythology that has infected the entire world and has devastating human psychological and social consequences. We believe in the freedom, justice, and equality of mankind. The *Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed* also believes in the universal principles of the *Declaration of Independence*. We continue to honor and respect the countless freedom fighters from each generation of the American experience who have sacrificed themselves to reconcile our American realities to our American ideals.

As Muslims, the Qur’an gives us guidance on the “*social compact*” between a society and its citizens (*Surah Balad, Chapter 90*). It becomes the duty of both the individual citizens and the collective society to continue to transform our respective selves to these *high ideals, “the path that is steep.”* Allah gives the first example of this high road as “*freeing the neck*” (*a metaphor for removing the forces that enslave and oppress human life and aspirations*).

As a result, we are encouraged to see the beautiful diversity of those individuals across the demographic spectrum, in our country and throughout the world, that have raised their voices in protest to a centuries-old system and legacy of injustice and racism. We are also encouraged to see a new generation of “*freedom fighters*” challenging the paradigms and traditions of “*white supremacy*,” and advocating for a more just society for all, toward a “*more perfect Union*.” We expect these renewed efforts will be needed for decades and we pray that they blossom into a new era of enlightened social consciousness, progress, and appreciation of our shared humanity. We continue to pray, in the words of our Imam, that “*GOODNESS IS ON THE RISE*”!!!