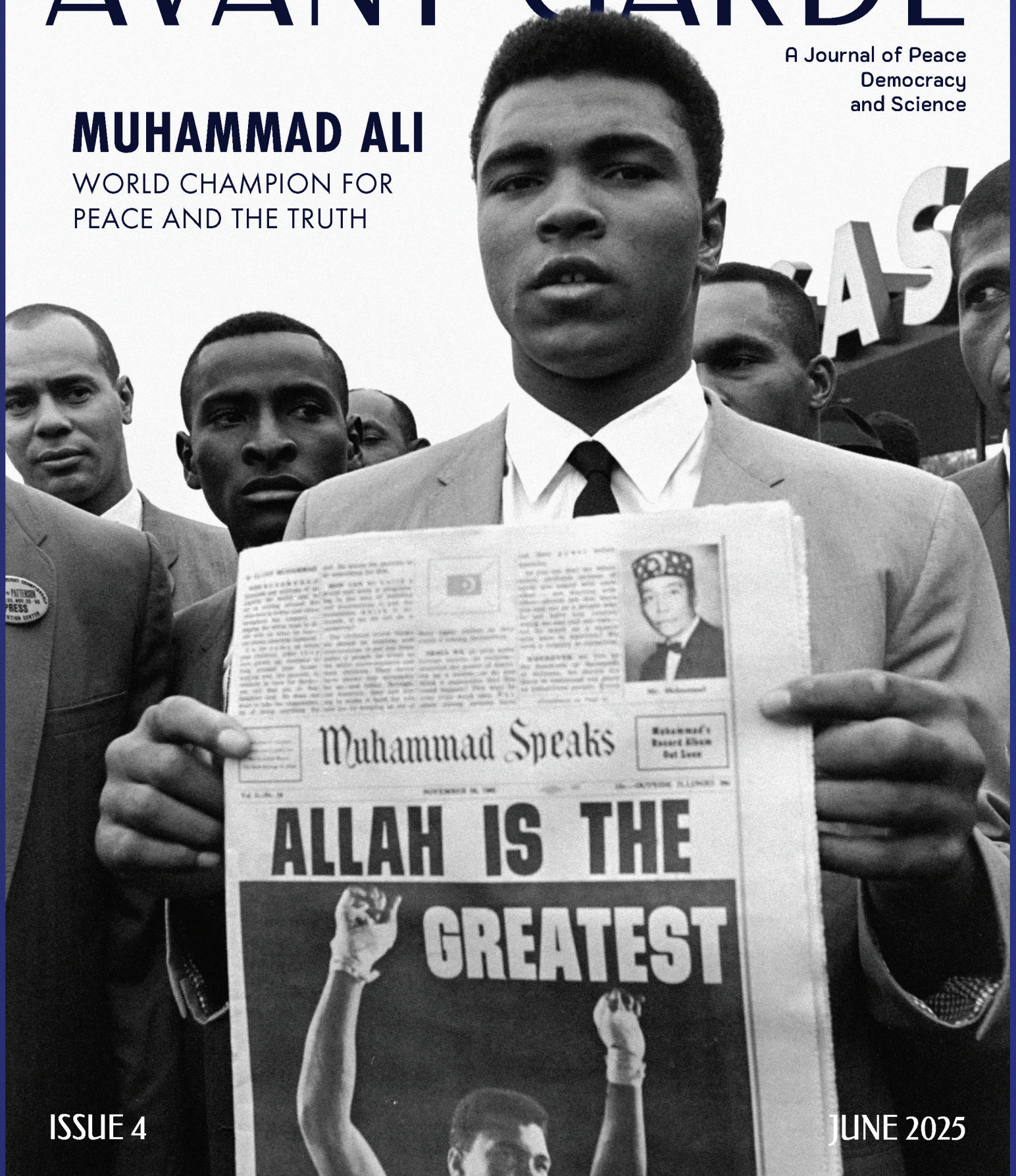


# AVANT-GARDE

A Journal of Peace  
Democracy  
and Science

## MUHAMMAD ALI

WORLD CHAMPION FOR  
PEACE AND THE TRUTH



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*"Freedom Can't Wait—The Awaited Dark Humanity"*

Serafina Harris

# AVANT-GARDE

## Muhammad Ali: World Champion for Peace and the Truth

In a time in which standing for the truth is devalued and not considered worth minor inconvenience, we need the example of Muhammad Ali. When Black men are told to shut up and dribble, we need Ali. When the very idea of truth is under attack, we need that simple proletarian love, that most profound recognition of the truth, that made millions of the world's oppressed anoint him the People's Champion. In the face of Jim Crow, the genocidal war in Vietnam, and the might of the U.S. government, the oppressed said, "It is humanity that chooses our champions, not white supremacist governments." And they chose Ali.

Those who strive to be revolutionaries, know that our struggles will not be fair contests. We face the normal challenges of American life but we also fight against mountains of tyranny, just as Ali fought not just murderous punchers in the ring but the whole white supremacist social system. Like Muhammad Ali, we may work our hardest but still lose our prime career years, our livelihoods, be mocked and scorned, yet the man from Louisville's life shows us that with moral courage, we can win the greatest prize—the eternal love of the people.

Ali turned a barbaric sport into an elegant ballet. He came onto the scene at a time when Black fighters dominated boxing, with the stipulation they never speak their minds. Ali's refusal to accept the constraints of the fight game showed he was more than a fighter in himself—he was a fighter for a Black people in revolutionary becoming: the wretched of North America, tearing down the walls of Jim Crow, poverty, and a civilization of war.

### A Child of the Freedom Struggle

As Harry Belafonte said, Ali grew up into the era of the freedom struggle, what we call the Third American Revolution. As a child he was profoundly affected by the murder of Emmett Till. He bore the wounds of his parents' unfulfilled dreams—his father an artist forced to work as a sign painter, and his mother working as a domestic. As a rising amateur, a rich, white "manager" forced him to work as a domestic; an experience Ali said felt like being a slave at a plantation. His boxing prowess took him to the 1960 Olympics in Rome, where he defeated a Polish and Soviet boxer to win gold. He came to regret defending the treatment of Black people in America to a Soviet reporter. Returning to Louisville a hero, he was enraged by the fact that he was refused service in a downtown restaurant because of the color line. He threw his hard-won medal into the Ohio River in protest.

His early professional career began amid the heavy years of the Southern civil rights struggles and the first steps of Africa's newly independent nations. He established himself as a charismatic and entertaining young fighter who soon earned a shot at the title. However, few experts believed that the brash young Cassius Clay could defeat the fearsome champion Sonny Liston. What they did not know is that he fought not just for himself alone but for a greater cause, taught to him by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. He shocked the world by defeating Liston for the heavyweight crown, but even more so by publicly announcing his joining the NOI the following day. No longer the brash, entertaining Cassius Clay, he arose as a world champion: embracing a liberation theology that refused to bend to the standards of white America. After winning the title, Elijah Muhammad's student Ali did not tour European capitals; he toured West Asia and the African continent where he sought the company of the global anti-colonial struggle, leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser and Kwame Nkrumah. He said that while the State Department funded trips for Black people defending the U.S. government, he was rare in receiving invitations by heads of state because of his membership in the NOI. These leaders saw in the NOI and the broad Black movement, a sister force in the Bandung Spirit. In Ghana, he denounced the bombing of Black churches in the U.S. South and praised Kwame Nkrumah's commitment to freedom. Gamal Abdel Nasser gifted Ali a miniature golden mosque, which Ali presented to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad upon his return to the U.S.

The War in Vietnam, was his tryst with destiny. He saw photographs of dead Vietnamese children and read about the genocidal war in Muhammad Speaks, the newspaper of the NOI, which served as a key platform for the global anti-colonial struggle. After his stance against the draft, the government took away his passport like they did with Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Du Bois before him. Ali said this was



because the government knew that the masses of the world gave him strength. His travails made him beloved by the darker peoples of the world—the villagers of Bangladesh and Zaire and the Philippines.

Opposing the Draft

The U.S. state sought to target Ali for his religious beliefs by singling the heavyweight champion out for the draft. In 1967 he said the famous words, “I ain’t got no quarrel with the Vietcong.” He refused induction into the army, unlike his predecessors in boxing like Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson. In reality this meant refusing a cushy, public relations role avoiding any exposure to combat. He followed this with a longer statement after accompanying Martin Luther King at a housing rally in Louisville. He was sentenced to five years in prison, stripped of his passport. He was subsequently stripped of his title and the ability to obtain a boxing license, making him unable to earn a living. State governments throughout the country passed resolutions against allowing him to work. He made the choice to resist following the example of the Nation of Islam, whose Messenger along with many male members were jailed for draft resistance during World War II as well the Korean and Vietnam Wars. He was fully backed by the Nation of Islam, who gave him financial and spiritual support. The stripped heavyweight champ—who admitted he had only graduated high school because of his sporting prowess—earned his living through speaking at colleges, explaining his opposition to Black participation in the war and his religious beliefs. He stood firm in the national media, saying that only sacrifice could bring freedom to Black people and that the title was meaningless if he could not stand with them. A three and a half year court battle ensued.

Ali’s example inspired young Black men to resist the draft and spurred on the peace movement. The solidarity of the Black proletariat, including the Nation of Islam and activists from the Civil Rights Movement, pressured the Supreme Court to allow him to return to the ring. He sacrificed his prime years for his principles. He came back a physically diminished fighter, and it would be a bumpy four year journey to challenge the most feared fighter alive, George Foreman, in the 1974 Rumble in the Jungle in Zaire. With a restored passport, Ali regained strength through the hero’s welcome he received among world humanity. With the championship fight set in the heart of Africa, the reception Ali received from people of Zaire gave him the ability to accomplish the greatest comeback in boxing history by knocking out Foreman.

Ali: The Black Worker Meets World Humanity

The Black Freedom Movement produced a champion. At a time when boxing was the most popular sport in the world, Ali as heavyweight champion became the most famous man on the planet; a level of fame we cannot fathom. Nearly half the world watched his fights. Revolutionaries from South Africa to Vietnam to the U.S. cheered for him as a symbol of the fight against imperialism and white supremacy. The biggest celebrity in the world was a symbol of peace. Coretta Scott King called him a champion of peace and human rights; Ralph Abernathy called him “the March on Washington with a left hook.” Huey P. Newton wrote an open letter telling Ali he was a Black man who fought against the whole system of imperialism.

If there is one thing that made Ali beloved, it was his willingness to sacrifice for the oppressed. Solidarity, a subset of love, is something scarce today. We cling to material things and see our lives and worth as tied to them. In a time in which superpowers genocide children, at most we utter cautious words of sympathy. Yet, Ali shows us that to live one’s principles means to be willing to sacrifice everything—wealth, titles, even exposing one’s life to racist attacks. A higher belief, what King identified as the third dimension of life, what Ali called Allah, a concept of God that motivates moral courage and sacrifice, is inherent in the Black Freedom Struggle, and something that Ali exemplified. As we look at more than 600 days of the genocide of the children of Palestine, we see the courage of Ali in the Axis of Resistance—the peoples of Yemen, Lebanon, and Iran—who tie their fate to the Palestinians; and after them we see it in the courageous student encampments who sacrificed elite credentials in solidarity with the oppressed. Humanity will prevail when we see ourselves as tied to each other, and are willing to sacrifice accordingly.

Ali’s international visits showcased his internationalism. In 1975, Prime Minister Michael Manley of Jamaica welcomed Ali as part of a NOI delegation including Minister Farrakhan. At a public rally Manley said of Ali, “Your fists may have put you into everybody’s favor but it was your conscience that has written you into immortality in the history of human affairs.” In later days, he deliberately prolonged his career so that the heavyweight championship could be a platform for unity and world peace, to the detriment of his physical health. His work for peace would take him on a friendship tour of the USSR and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would invite him as an official guest of the Indian government for Republic Day. In a 1977 visit to villages in Bangladesh, Ali said, “Look at these beautiful people, I am

working for peace and unity, it would be a crime to do something else with my fame.” The love between him and the darker people of the world was mutual and profound. He fought bravely for the victims of racism and imperialism.

Ali represents the Black Worker striving for a new modernity. He is a representative of a civilization of peace. When the U.S. state silenced Paul Robeson, another artist who became an icon of the struggle against white supremacy, Ali appeared on the world stage. It is fitting that he would play the role of a Reconstruction senator, originally meant for Robeson, in the long delayed film adaptation of the novel Freedom Road by once blacklisted writer Howard Fast. Ali is one of Black America’s greatest gifts to humanity. The footage that remains of him, viewed billions of times over the decades, shows world humanity’s love for Black America. What would he have been without the moral choice? Cassius Clay, another prizefighter. Yet the impact of the people, their zeitgeist, and a liberation theology turned him into Muhammad Ali, a champion for world peace, truth, and humanity; a man for the future; a sign of the world to come.

Today

Western civilization has brought our modern world to the brink of annihilation in its attempt to control the fate of dark humanity. The future of civilization, the hope for our children, rests upon the shoulders of the earth’s disinherited—upon the shoulders of Black men like Muhammad Ali.

Then as now, American elites smeared the Nation of Islam as a hate group. In the years since Ali’s great period, they have tried to separate the man from the movement and the people who produced him. Yet this is very far from the truth. The elites fear the ideological clarity and unity of the oppressed. They seek to control history and ideas; we must separate from this way of thinking just as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught Ali to separate from it. The Nation of Islam has left a permanent imprint on America. There is no way of imagining a future of freedom, justice, and equality without reckoning with the teachings and work of the NOI, who to this day stretch out the hand of unity to all of the oppressed. The Honorable Elijah Muhhamad taught that our unity is greater than an atom bomb, and this power will be necessary to fulfill King’s vision of a freedom explosion across this suffering world.

Ali is an embodiment of the new movement of world thought begun by W.E.B. Du Bois in the aftermath of the defeat of Reconstruction. He was the son of the Black Proletariat who joined a great religious movement for freedom in the NOI; who stood with darker humanity against the warmongering of the U.S. elite; he pursued one of the few avenues available to Black men—boxing—as a demonstration of excellence as well as a platform for the message of freedom, justice, and equality. He brought the message of the Black proletariat to the world stage in the age of television, refusing to be limited by the racist attitudes of corporate media. Though the counter-revolution waged by the U.S. ruling class has tried to whitewash and diminish his significance, we who strive for the truth remember Muhammad Ali as an extraordinary talent who dedicated himself to even more extraordinary things—the struggle for world peace, truth, and justice for the oppressed.

The American people and world humanity have been changed through their love for Muhammad Ali. He is an icon of truth and world peace who lives in them. They see him as an example of what they can become with moral courage and strength. He was a man of the Third American Revolution, who embodied the freedom movement’s challenge to rethink notions of art, beauty, science, and democracy. He was a fierce, but gentle, Black embodiment of the truth, in his clinical pugilism, his poetry, his approach to the poor, children, and the oppressed. The spirit of Ali, which is an embodiment of the Black Freedom Struggle, lives in the hearts of the people. It can be ignited when they revolt against warmongers and oppressors. When they strive to be people who cannot fit into a system of warmongering and oppression. When they see that the uphill battles of their day to day lives are for an eternal cause greater than themselves. When they see that art and beauty are not defined by the elites but something for everyone. When they begin to think about the world in their own terms and not those of elite intellectuals; it is this that still holds the potential to free humanity.



W.E.B. Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois alongside leadership of the Communist Party of China including Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and Mao Zedong, 1962. Credit: UMass Amherst



# W.E.B. Du Bois, A Black Swan for This Historic Moment

ANTHONY MONTEIRO

“The deeper reason for the triumph of European civilization lie quite outside and beyond Europe,—back in the universal struggles of all mankind. Why then, is Europe great? Because of the foundations which the mighty past have furnished her to build upon: the iron trade of ancient black Africa, the religion and empire-building of yellow Asia, the art and science of the ‘dago’ Mediterranean shore east, south and west, as well as north. And where she has builded securely upon this great past and learned from it she has gone forward to greater and more splendid human triumph; but where she has ignored this past and forgotten and sneered at it, she has shown the cloven hoof of poor, crucified humanity,—she has played like other empires gone, the world fool.”

*Darkwater: Voices From Within The Veil*

W.E.B. Du Bois

“Out of black India, the world was born. Into the black womb of India the world shall creep to die. All that the world has done, India did, and that more marvelously, more magnificently.”

*The Dark Princess: A Romance*

W.E.B. Du Bois

W.E.B. Du Bois is a Black Swan. Black Swans are metaphorically and scientifically unexpected events which have huge and unusual consequences. Du Bois is that event in the intellectual and scientific history of modernity.

At the dawn of the 20th century, he began to see the world differently from almost all established philosophers and social scientists. In 1900 he declared the problem of the 20th century was the problem of the color line. He was insisting, in essence, that

the problem of modernity was racial oppression and colonialism. He was also saying the crisis for modernity, democracy and social progress was the color line. He devoted his scientific and activist career to proving this and to scientifically showing the implications of this problem for the future and how to resolve it.

## A NEW WORLD MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT

His thinking in its most expansive sense constituted an epistemic and ideological break with the intellectual and scientific consensus concerning race and society. Looking at things from the vantage point of the 21st century Du Bois’s vision was the beginning of a new world movement of thought, which went beyond the West’s scientific, ideological and philosophical worldviews.

The history of modernity shifted, in the Du Boisian view, to the formerly enslaved and colonized peoples. Hence, the history of humanity going forward would be determined by the darker races. He saw the crisis of modernity increasingly in civilizational terms. The first 500 years of modernity concluded in a comprehensive crisis of Western Civilization and the beginning of the civilizational reconfiguration of the world in Afro-Asiatic terms. The Du Boisian regrounding of thought established a new way of seeing the 20th and now the 21st centuries.

The unprecedented crisis of Western Civilization is of such depth and magnitude that it makes Du Bois more relevant now than at the start of the 20th century. In essence, Du Bois is a prequel to the future.

## EUROPEAN MODERNITY: A STAGE OF HISTORY

The rise of European modernity was a great occasion for humanity. Capitalism, a part of modernity, though historically necessary, was not. It came into the world dripping with the blood of the slave trade and the mud of exploitation. It did, however, emerge alongside modern science, philosophy and the liberal state.

Modern European philosophy, especially the German 18th and 19th centuries, and particularly Immanuel Kant, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel and Karl Marx, they are historically significant because they investigated the capacities of human beings to know the world and to remake it. They linked philosophy to science. Economic theories seeking to explain capitalism arose as well. Lastly, theories of revolutionary change discovered the European working class as the principal agent of revolutionary transformation. Socialism was declared the logical aim of the class struggle.

In significant ways Du Bois rethinks these

European centered views of history and the locus of revolutionary change. He rethinks the history of modernity and the future. To do this he deployed a new science, sociology. It was sociology in his new scientific construal. Du Bois saw European modernity and capitalism as a necessary stage in the realization of human freedom, and ultimately an Afro-Asiatic reconfiguration of world human relationships.

## SOCIOLOGY AND A NEW WORLD MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT

Du Bois as he began his academic career said that he intended to make sociology a science as a way to answer the most pressing questions of the modern epoch. The historical and epistemological center of his sociology was dark humanity, which he also saw as the future of humanity. As he said, the darker races would remake the world, moving it from the Age of Europe to the Age of Humanity. He insisted the world was thinking wrong about race. To get it right required a new scientific sociology. Sociology would be foundational to a critical reworking of established histories of the modern world. He argued that he would look at the world as an African, and as he said, from “within the Veil,” as a part of the world’s racially and colonially oppressed.

While historically necessary European philosophy and science were incomplete. They explain part of the world; but are limited by Eurocentrism. Du Bois, to explain the present epoch and to plot a path to the future, sought to complete the uncompleted.

For many this is an over-the-top proposition. How could Du Bois—who was a Black man, who never taught in a great American or European university, who was silenced for a good part of his life by his own government and by the racialization of knowledge—how could he explain Karl Marx, Kant and Hegel? And how dare I compare Du Bois to the greatest thinkers of European philosophy? How is that possible? While I hope to explain this going forward, it must be recognized that most great scientific achievements begin as an imaginative leap. So it was with Du Bois.

## SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY AND THE COLOR LINE

To explain the world Du Bois had to undo the racialization of epistemology and science. This was a necessary part of creating new knowledge and new science. Sociology and his sociological and historical investigations of knowledge were at the foundation of his work. However, he connected these investigations with empirical studies of Black folk and increasingly the colonial oppressed. While doing this, he invents a modern science of society, more complete than the European efforts that preceded him. He argued that



the most pressing demand of modern science was to know Man. Science and philosophy in order to know Man must know Black Men. And to know Men meant scientifically knowing them in their totalities and in all their complexity. Forged out his philosophical, sociological and historical investigations a new phenomenology of the Black lived world emerged.

Du Bois says that to know modern societies, social science must explain both law and chance. Law, he writes in *Dusk of Dawn*, is the enduring patterns of social stability, the predictable rhythms and movement of society. This is but part of explaining society and human behavior. Chance, probability, variability, uncertainty and unpredictability are as important as law. Chance assumes in this moment of social instability a larger part in explaining societies and human behavior. You cannot explain this or these phenomena by rational laws of social development alone. Moreover, much of social behavior is unpredictable and nondeterministic at times like these.

He discovered that, for sociology and social science, we must know both law and chance. Law and probability, law and variability, the non-determined and hence what he called “uncaused causes.” In terms of social thought this constituted a paradigm shift and an epistemological rupture. It was new. Understanding Chance was and remains an enormous challenge for science and sociology.

DU BOIS AND LEONARDO DA VINCI

I began to understand the quest of Du Bois better when I was preparing for a lecture at the Central Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. I’d written essays on the art and science of Du Bois. I’d written and lectured on him as a philosopher and as an epistemologist. In preparing that lecture I realized I didn’t know as much as I thought I knew. As I’m researching for this lecture on “Du Bois’s Artistic Approach to the Social Sciences,” I suddenly ran across an essay that Du Bois wrote in 1890 as an undergraduate at Harvard, its title is “Leonardo Da Vinci As a Scientist.” I had thought about Du Bois most of the time in relation to 19th century European philosophy and science. Suddenly, I discovered this essay and I’m thrown back to the Renaissance. Not the modernity of Kant, Hegel, Marx or Freud. Not the modernity of Bach, Mozart or Beethoven, but the painter Leonardo da Vinci.

Of course, Leonardo only completed maybe 10 paintings. Most of the paintings and sculptures Leonardo began, he never completed. What he left us are, however, 7,000 remaining pages of close to 15,000, of reflections, descriptions, diaries and scientific observations. Du Bois used these observations as evidence that Leonardo, the artist, was also the founder of experimental science.

The question is, why does Du Bois view the Renaissance painter that created iconic paintings such as the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper (that humanized European man and woman) as the founder of experimental science? Why not Francis Bacon, who is normally considered the founder of experimental science?

For my study, this essay says as much about Du Bois as Leonardo. Du Bois going forward in the practical work of creating and discovering knowledge saw an indispensable link of science to art. Indeed, his work acknowledges Kant’s search for rational and universal laws and Hegel’s search for the historical processes that produce reality and knowledge; but he insists that art and the imaginary are decisive in knowing.

DU BOIS, A SCIENTIST AND ARTIST

I feel strongly that I have discovered something that defines what Du Bois was seeking to achieve. I have read carefully as much of Du Bois as I could. I’ve tried to read as much of Kant, Hegel, Marx and even the European existentialists, as I could. I saw something, I did not at first understand. So, I went back in order to rethink and relook at his oeuvre. Starting with his doctoral thesis *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870*, especially the seventh chapter on the Haitian Revolution. Du Bois makes an imaginative leap (an artistic leap, if you will), insisting that the Haitian Revolution as much as, or more than the English abolitionist movement, was the decisive part of legally ending the transatlantic slave trade. So already, we have in his work the centrality of the African human being in the fight for their liberation; meaning they were fully human. Such an assertion was an imaginative leap, something like an artistic leap. I look then at *The Philadelphia Negro*, the first work of modern sociology. I’m struck by its elevated prose and his hand-drawn maps, tables and charts. It effortlessly comes close to a scientific work that is artistic. Very much like Leonardo’s writing. With Leonardo’s diaries and observations are included drawings of the details of the human anatomy, biology, the heavens, botany and natural landscapes.

I moved then to *The Souls of Black Folk*. I began to see it both as a landmark work of sociology and phenomenology, and as a work of art; a more complete work of art than found in *The Philadelphia Negro*. In each chapter there is a poem by a European poet, and then there are bars from one of what he would call the Sorrow Songs, a Negro spiritual. Already you have poetry and music, but then you have Du Bois’s elevated prose and his uses of irony and metaphor. There is triumph and tragedy, pathos and sadness. There is beauty and death. There is a short story. But then there is his imagination, and his ability to foresee

a future through struggle. Through it all he discovers Black folk, as a striving and special people. He locates their relationships to the world’s peoples and struggles for democracy. He finds something world historic in their historically constituted being. They are, as he will later insist, a civilization in potentiality.

Finally, his *magnum opus*, *Black Reconstruction in America*, where he brings it all together and puts it before the world. This work is a zenith, although not an end, to a project that began in 1890. We see a new epistemology, a phenomenology of an enslaved proletariat; he makes a new philosophy of knowledge concrete in an unprecedented social scientific research project. Again, his prose is poetic. The work is composed like a symphonic work of music. Read carefully it sounds like one of Duke Ellington’s works, like *Black, Brown and Beige* or *Three Black Kings*. In it there is the class struggle, now articulated through the strivings of Black folk. There is the enslaved Black proletariat, whom he says is “everything African.” Africa and African civilizations are a unifying thread of the work. We hear echoes of his “The Damnation of Women” where speaks of the “African Mother Idea,” as the originary civilizational ideal of motherhood.

Du Bois’s bold assertions concerning the general strike of the slaves, that forced the slave system into an economic crisis, the democratic dictatorship of the Black proletariat, and the centrality of the Black struggle for freedom and democracy to freeing the U.S. people, evidence a rich imaginary that is artistic in its breadth. This was a full acknowledgment not only of the humanity of the African, but their revolutionary humanity and potentiality. Going forward the future of this nation would rest upon their shoulders. All of this continues to unsettle liberal and radical theorizing about the world and U.S. history.

But without his recognition of the unity of art and science and hence a new way of knowing the world, he could never have arrived at these conclusions. Du Bois represented, therefore, a great leap forward in knowledge, a new and different way to achieve knowledge, a great leap forward in our ability to imagine a revolutionary future for this country and the world.

Even in the darkest of times, great leaps forward in knowledge are possible; knowledge that is revolutionary and can lead the people to struggle for positive peace and people’s democracy and against U.S. empire. If the U.S. empire is brought down, the world that comes after European modernity must rethink its position vis-à-vis humanity itself. For the first time European modernity with all its great achievements and with all its great crimes, with all its narcissism and egotism and self-celebration will be forced to reconsider its relationship to humanity and to Du Bois’s new movement of thought. As Baldwin says, white people must rethink whiteness if they are to become human in the ways that the rest

of humanity is. The question no longer is, “Are Black people human?” but “Can white people be human and be white at the same time?”

DU BOIS, EINSTEIN AND KANT: PHILOSOPHIES OF SCIENCE

Du Bois, Albert Einstein and Immanuel Kant were in profound, though in differing ways, philosophers of science. Each sought to establish modern philosophy’s relation to science. For Kant and Einstein the question was philosophy’s relationship to the natural sciences, especially physics. For Du Bois it was philosophy’s relationship to the sciences of human beings. For Kant and Einstein their path was guided by hundreds of years of scientific and philosophical investigation. Du Bois forged a new way.

Kant’s synthetic philosophy was a synthesis of schools of philosophy and differing epistemologies concerning the possibilities of knowledge. His philosophy engaged questions of the existence of God and the doctrines of the Church; he asked, did a scientific epistemology demand a rejection of the ontological viewpoints and metaphysics of the Church; how much of reality could we know and how was reason connected to our experiences of the world. Kant proceeds through categories that mediate and structure experiences and the results of scientific experiments. His central categories are time, space and causality. Kant attempted to show that reason aligned with experience could discover general laws of nature, artistic judgement and moral choices. He asserts that knowledge has limits, however. He did, though, establish that human beings were the central agents of knowledge. There was, he concluded, a rational structure of knowledge. Knowledge and thus science, however, had limitations. We were limited to our experience and our capacity to reason. He boldly insists knowledge and science are human enterprises and humans are the exclusive agents of knowledge.

Einstein’s theory of relativity (a theory that forever changed theoretical physics) mathematically establishes the complex relationships between time, space and velocity. Kant and Einstein creatively deploy the categories of time and space. Einstein introduces velocity, which manifested as the speed of light. Time is reconceptualized to be dynamic, rather than static and structural. Einstein’s equation  $E=MC^2$  demonstrates the conditions under which mass is transformed into energy. Einstein, unlike Kant, presents an epistemology of transformation. However, like Kant, Einstein was seeking out universal laws of nature. Also, like Kant he believed in the capacity of humans to know the world and that reason was the central factor in achieving knowledge. Neither went far beyond scientific knowledge of nature and the laws of nature. Du Bois shifted the emphasis to Man and society.



Du Bois faced a more daunting task than either Kant or Einstein; to invent science from existing metaphysics and epistemologies, constrained by white supremacy. He faced the racialization not just of the world he lived in, but of knowledge. Hence, Du Bois faced creating social science out of anti-scientific and racist domains of knowledge. The central social science for Du Bois was sociology, what he considered a science of human beings, their societies and behaviors. Du Bois's work influenced and in many ways reshaped the disciplines of history, anthropology, political science and economics.

He insisted that the urgent task of science was to know Man. This placed social science at the center of the scientific enterprise itself and put sociology at the center of the achievement of knowledge. For Du Bois, to know Man is to make it possible to free Man. And to free human beings was to free knowledge from racist dogma and speculation. Knowledge was the antithesis of unfreedom, racism and colonialism. More than Kant and Einstein, Du Bois ultimately shifts the civilizational assumptions of science and philosophy, suggesting a nonwhite and democratic epistemology. To deracialize philosophy, science and epistemologies, meant reclaiming their Afro-Asiatic histories and foundations. In subtle, but yet not fully realized ways, Du Bois was humanizing knowledge and science and thus making them enterprises by and for people; hence democratic.

The philosophical achievements of Kant, Hegel and Marx, of logical positivism, dialectical materialism and existentialism and other philosophical achievements of the modern epoch; alongside the scientific achievements of Newton, Einstein, relativity theory and quantum mechanics, exist within a world movement of thought that began with the European Renaissance, and as Du Bois claimed, Leonardo Da Vinci. Du Bois, finally, at the beginning of the 20th century starts a new movement in world thought to understand Man and as such to understand the revolutionary possibilities of the world. On this basis a new way to understand human and revolutionary potentiality.

#### A DU BOISIAN FUTURE: COMMUNISM GROUNDED IN AFRO-ASIATIC CIVILIZATIONAL VALUES

In 1950 W.E.B. Du Bois completes a manuscript, *Russia and America*, which seventy years later remains unpublished. It is a revolutionary book. It is a defense of socialism in the Soviet Union, a theorization of the possibilities of socialism becoming a world system, replacing world capitalism, and socialist globalization coming through Asia and how the probable path to communism would witness an Asian leap through the centuries. However, the transitions from socio-economic backwardness to

socialism and finally communism would require social scientific knowledge and sophisticated planning. All of this would bring forth a new epoch, a new world socio-economic system and new human civilizations.

The prerequisites for communism were, he thought, more readily grounded in the values of ancient Asian civilizations, especially ones that had had socialist revolutions and established the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat. Du Bois thought creatively about questions such as forms of state power, including the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state of the entire people, which evolves from it, and what is today called the civilization state. He thought in new, unprecedented ways, about a new type of communism ("a different kind of communism"), based on a new way of thinking, and forms of state power and people's democracy rooted in Asian civilizational values. He creatively synthesized several modalities of social scientific, philosophical and historical investigation: comparing civilizations and their possibilities to achieve communism. These interrogations have meaning in the 21st century; a century where Asia will overtake the West and the U.S. is confronted with domestic political instability and a rising crisis of government and bourgeois class rule. The manuscript is framed by Du Bois's characteristic optimism, despite the Cold War and domestic police state repression; and even as he was being indicted as an agent of a foreign nation.

In 1961 before leaving for Ghana to restart work on his *Encyclopedia of Africa* and to live his final days, he joined the Communist Party of the United States, declaring, "I believe in communism." The father of Pan Africanism, the towering theorist of race, a vanguard in the anticolonial struggle, was, as importantly, one of the great theorists of communism. For the final forty years of his life, he theorized and rethought possible paths to socialism and communism and the freedom of Africa and African Americans. After a month in the Soviet Union in 1926 he wrote, "If what I've seen is Bolshevism, I am a Bolshevik." After being arrested for his peace activism he rebuked the U.S. government declaring, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called communists. Is that praise for the communists or condemnation for the peacemakers?" In substantial ways the manuscript is a theoretical outline of his rearticulation of socialism and communism, civilization, the state and the global liberation struggles. This manuscript and most of his last work was dedicated to tracking a path to the future.

The towering accomplishment of the manuscript is Du Bois's theorizing of the relationships between civilization, socialism and communism and the multiple questions surrounding these issues. The Russian Revolution became for Du Bois a concrete area of research in history and sociology. It was part of his search for the truth that might make the



"Panel II: Interchange"  
in *The Art of the Negro* mural series,  
Hale Woodruff, 1952.  
Credit: Clark Atlanta University

future predictable. He studied the dictatorship of the proletariat as a form of people's democracy and people's defense of their revolutionary triumphs. He studied its main leaders as an examination of what revolutionary leadership looked like. He examined the careers and moral character of Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky. Lenin, he said, was "one of the great men of this century" and a social scientist. "Lenin was not the sort of modern Sociologist, who boasted of his science, and did nothing to discover its laws." Du Bois concludes, "following Karl Marx, he saw the rhythm of history and determined to plan human life in accord with known knowledge." And therefore, "He studied not only the written word of history and economics, but the actual current deeds of living men." Stalin was from the East, Du Bois tells us. He was, "inconspicuous, cautious and taciturn." He became a socialist while organizing among oil workers. "He followed the plans of Lenin." "He sought methods of action to implement revolution." Trotsky was a dreamer, a brilliant orator and inspirer, but in the end, as Du Bois insists, betrayed Russia and the revolution.

He saw the Chinese Revolution, like the Soviet Union, as the nation where the same questions could be studied as a way to think of the future and the possibilities of Afro-Asiatic revolutions. He

considered the capacity to forge what he called the unity of Pan Africa and Pan Asia.

Ruined by civil war, feudal relationships of production and foreign control, China, for him, remained indispensable to understanding the possibilities of communism. "Any attempt to explain the world, without giving China a place of extraordinary prominence is futile." Speaking of a new socialist economic system in China after the Chinese Revolution, Du Bois says, "It would take a new way of thinking on Asiatic lines to work this out, but there would be a chance that out of India, out of Buddhism and Shintoism, out of age old virtues of Japan and China itself, to provide for this *different kind of communism* (my emphasis), a thing which so far all attempts at a socialistic state in Europe have failed to produce; that is a communism with its Asiatic stress on character, on goodness, on spirit, through family loyalty and affection might ward off Thermidor (counterrevolution—A.M.); might stop the tendency of the Western socialistic state to freeze into bureaucracy." He concludes, "It might through the philosophy of Gandhi and Tagore, of Japan and China really create a vast democracy into which the ruling dictatorship of the proletariat would fuse, deliquesce and thus instead of socialism ever



becoming a stark negation of freedom of thought and a tyranny of action and propaganda of science and art, it would expand to a great democracy of the spirit.”

Critical to all of this is breaking the over-determination of capitalist laws of development over human social relations; they would be replaced with the laws of socialist development leading to communism and freedom. This, in Du Bois’s thinking, is the movement from Necessity to Freedom, from over-determination by the laws of capitalist development to full human actualization and the new human being. The great tragedy, however, for an emerging Pan Asian civilizational convergence, was that Japan “learned Western ways too soon and too well and turned from Asia to Europe.”

*Russia and America* is part of Du Bois’s most significant, innovative and creative period; it’s part of his magisterial research agenda, at his most mature, and a creative synthesis of multiple areas of knowledge. In the last 40 years of his life, he produced works that are a foundation for revolutionary thinking and practice in the 21st century; arguably some of the most important work in modern intellectual history. They evidence a revolutionary historiography, epistemological and philosophical ruptures from within modern European thought. He creatively relocates the center of revolutionary strivings to Asia and ultimately Africa.

He called Karl Marx the most important modern philosopher. He made no bones that much of his research considered Marx’s scientific discoveries. He’s always looking for empirical facts to support his assumptions; his experimental methodological apparatuses are his way of getting at difficult to discover truths, and he deploys historical logic in unusual ways, seeking laws, probabilities and variations of social development and what he calls “uncaused causes.” He bends and revises Kantian, Hegelian and Marxian assumptions geared exclusively to Europe; and explains how race, class and civilizational questions must be addressed in new Afro-Asiatic and democratic ways if we are to understand the forward trajectory of history to socialism and communism.

W.E.B. Du Bois, the Black Swan for a new epoch of modernity, is the originary figure in a new world movement of thought. His life’s work is an integral part of the 21st century, establishing him as a 21st century thinker. He ends his life triumphally proclaiming Man can be known and therefore must be studied scientifically. While human beings and societies are complex it is upon us to create methods of studying them. Human beings must be studied and known in all their complexity and studied holistically. Science is necessary to understand the many possibilities of establishing new socio-economic systems and new world civilizations. And finally new men and women.

## Man is Divine: A Conversation with Minister Ishmael Muhammad

MEGHNA CHANDRA, JAHAN CHOUDHRY,  
NEHA CHIVUKULA, ANTHONY MONTEIRO



*Dr. Monteiro, Min. Ishmael, Jahan Choudhry, Meghna Chandra in Min. Ishmael’s office. Chicago, June 2025. Photographs by Michelle Lyu*

The Saturday Free School studies the lifeworld of the Black Proletariat in order to develop a revolutionary science for our times. We believe this is essential to the liberation of all people in American society. We are in an era where White Gods are failing—white churches, white universities, white politics, white science, and white civilization itself. Our hope lies in understanding the Black Proletariat’s search for Black Gods, something identified by Arthur Fausset in his seminal 1940 study *Black Gods of the Metropolis*. In the long sojourn in the wilderness of North America, the Black Worker has never lost his search for the Black God, a search for meaning and truth that can make freedom real. We see in the nearly century-long work of the Nation of Islam an exceptional case of this search. The Nation of Islam remains the strongest institution of Black Liberation Theology, and exemplifies what W.E.B. Du Bois calls “our spiritual strivings.”

Where many institutions and preachers have shut the door on the work of the Saturday Free School, often due to their devotion to the Democratic Party machine, we have always found the Nation of Islam and Mosque Maryam to be generous and principled partners in our work for the ideological education of the masses. Furthermore, the Nation of Islam reflects the ideal of beauty in a wilderness so bereft of love and truth.

The subject of the interview is Ishmael Muhammad, Student National Assistant Minister of the Nation of Islam. It is the story of a child of the Nation of Islam, a worker for the freedom of Black people and oppressed humanity, and a student and propagator of liberation theology. This dialogue is a beginning of a project of ideological renewal that must take place if the people are to break out of the dark and tragic landscape of contemporary America. This is a process of developing new definitions of

knowledge, science, faith, revolution and even God, to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The interview took place over the course of two days on June 9th and June 10th, 2025 in the office of Minister Ishmael. We were greeted and treated with great generosity and warmth by Minister Ishmael, his daughter, and his staff. Though each session was scheduled for only two hours, we went over three hours on each day, with Minister Ishmael’s assurance that he was committed to answering our questions. He is a humble man who takes his job seriously but sees himself as merely a student of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and “helper” of the people. He preferred not to speak a great deal about his own life at first. As Dr. Monteiro said, Minister Ishmael’s life journey is reflected in his beliefs.

We have organized the interview thematically, including Black Gods, Knowledge as Science and Faith, the Third Resurrection, Prophecies of War, Peace, and Revolution, the Infinite Capacity of Humanity, the significance of the transition in leadership, and Minister Ishmael: Son of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad. The full transcript and video as well as an expanded version including his views on the Second Resurrection and the sociology and politics of Black America is available online at [avantjournal.com](http://avantjournal.com).

At the end of the interview, Minister Ishmael said he had never been interviewed in this way, and he felt destiny had brought us together. We hope that in the coming years we will witness a Third Resurrection in which the worldview of the Black Proletariat, encapsulated in the teachings of the Nation of Islam, will be embraced and developed further by world humanity to establish, as their faithful believe, a universal government of peace.



# Black Gods

**Dr. Monteiro:** Minister Ishmael may I ask you one question on that very important point? I don't know whether you're familiar with the book by Arthur Fausset published in 1940 entitled *Black Gods of the Metropolis*. His argument is, just as you have said, that as Black people move from the South, they were seeking new gods, in fact Black gods. It seems that he is arguing that, whether they knew it or articulated it or not, Black folk have been striving to discover gods for them, literally "Black Gods." Would that make sense to you? So the Nation of Islam, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and probably Noble Drew Ali and others were reflecting a deep aspiration of Black people to find gods other than the white gods that were trying to be imposed. Is that fair?

**Min. Ishmael:** I think that is more than fair to say. (Laughter) What the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said and taught is that the Black man is God. In our Supreme Wisdom lessons that every registered member of the Nation of Islam received upon becoming registered is, "Who is the original man?" The answer is "The original man is the Black man, the maker, the owner, the cream of the planet Earth, God of the universe." It was the Honorable Elijah Muhammad that taught us our origin, our history in the world and how the Caucasian people came on our planet. It is impossible—genetically, biologically—for two white persons to produce a Black person. So all of the races, the Bible says, "from one blood came all the nations and they were given their own boundaries and appointed time." So what one blood is that? The Genesis... and now we're going into theology! (Laughter) [Minister Ishmael explains the Nation of Islam's theology for the origin of white people going back to the book of Genesis and Biblical evidence.]

**Dr. Monteiro:** Let me ask you this then. This idea of "Black Gods" which it seems [for] the Nation of Islam, is so central to your theology. But then there are white gods. And we have read in the *New York Times* and other newspapers that all of the mainline and mainstream white denominations are in decline, but the Nation of Islam is not in decline. Daddy Grace's United House of Prayer for All People is not in decline. Prophet Cherry's church is still active in Philadelphia and probably other places. So Black Gods seem to be alive and white gods seem to be in decline. Is this part of the prophecy or prediction of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and is this part of your ministry, the ministry of the Honorable Louis Farrakhan in the Second Resurrection?

**Min. Ishmael:** There is only one Ministry. I don't have a ministry and Minister Farrakhan does not have a ministry that is separate and independent of the ministry, the teachings, the ideology and philosophy of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. We cannot characterize what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad has taught as his prophecy. What the Honorable Elijah Muhammad did was he introduced us to what is written of prophecy that's in the Bible and Holy Quran because his teacher Master Fard Muhammad taught him of the Torah, of the Gospel, of the wisdom of the book, the Kitab, the Holy Quran. He taught him the meaning of what is contained in the scriptures. And biblical scholars agree with the Honorable Elijah Muhammad: what we read about in the Bible, 75% of it is prophecy, 25% is actual recorded history. But what the new ruler or Satan did was he took the 25% that is actual recorded history in the Bible, he made that prophecy, and he took the 75% that is prophecy and made that to appear as though it actually happened. For instance in the Book of Genesis God is talking to Abraham. He is telling Abraham, "Your seed is going to be a stranger in a land not up their own; they're going to be slaves to another for four hundred years, but after that time I will come, I will judge that nation which they shall serve and afterwards they shall come out with great substance and go to their fathers in peace." [Minister Ishmael explains the Nation of Islam's interpretation of the Bible with Black people as the true children of Israel who are yet to fulfill their destiny, and the lack of historical evidence for the Jewish exodus thesis. He also identifies the Beast from Revelations as the Western white man, and the decline in Western fertility rates.] ...

So we are looking at a culture that is gradually being extinguished naturally because the time for their rule, their existence, according to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, is *up*. This is why we see so much chaos in the world and you hear so much talk about *saving, preserving*: Western civilization. They feel that they're under attack and you see the rise of the indigenous people all over the world. Europe and America and the Caucasian people's time of rule and Western hegemony is *up*. But they are so powerful, they cannot be defeated by any *foreign* power. So I think it was the historian William Durant who said before a great civilization is destroyed; they're not destroyed from *without*, they are destroyed from *within*.

So now look at the institutions. Look at Harvard, look at all their great institutions of learning under attack. Look at the Panic now: democracy, this is the end of democracy. It's the end of their *world*, because it was never built on the principles of truth,

justice. The whole system has been built, according to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, a system built on lies, tricks, deceit, falsehood, corruption. So that's a long answer but see, that's prophecy being fulfilled in all of the prophecies of the Bible, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad which makes him the most important and significant theologian. Black, white, red, brown, yellow, it doesn't matter. There are many theologians and biblical scholars and preachers who do lift these prophecies to point out what we are witnessing today is fulfillment of Prophecy. We've come to the end of the world. And when a world comes to an end, *systems* go out, *nations* go out, *people* go out. History shows the rise and fall of civilization. This is the time of the *end* of European or Western civilization. It's up. It's served its time. It served its purpose, according to the will of God. So the Minister said, whatever *God wills*: sun, moon, stars; the forces of nature; aid; what God permits or what he wills. When that purpose has been fulfilled, the same forces that once *worked for it* now *work against it* because its time is up. So we are witnessing the expiration of a people and a civilization. That explains extreme weather.

See, even they're at a loss of how violent the weather is. They want to blame it on the gases, on the ozone layer. *No, no, no.*

Those of us who study God, and what is written... all of these calamities, all of these natural disasters is what God brings upon a nation and a people who have rebelled. So the Quran speaks about many things that God will send upon the wicked as well as the Bible. And Jesus of course spoke of the end times. He talks about *nation* rising up against *nation, kingdom* against *kingdom*. *See?* Peter talks about perilous times shall come when men will be boasters and defamers. And see, this is all prophecy written hundreds of years ago. Now we're witnessing it.

So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad did not bring us prophecy. He made us aware that we are *fulfilling* prophecy... and he taught, when you read his writings, he talks about the Judgment of God and he talks about how God would bring upon the wicked four great judgments: rain, hail, snow, earthquakes. We have always been in the time of God. But as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, he said we are all gods. Every human being is a possessor of power and force. But you have an evil God and you have a righteous God, and the God who is the Supreme Being over all gods determined that there would be a season and a time for Satan, who's a god—he's a God.

Satan would be given a time of 6,000 years to exercise his rule, a contrary life and a world and a

lifestyle opposite the God of Creation, the God of Nature, the God of Righteousness and Justice. But we're now at the end of Satan's rule. And most people don't realize, and going to the Bible, Satan deceived the whole world. And the Minister asked the question, are we not in the world? So could it be that we too have been deceived by Satan?

So Satan has had his day, but his time is up.

I just gave a lecture yesterday and the title of the lecture was "We Are All Gods," children of the most high God. So the gods, the original gods, as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, were put to sleep to allow for the new God to exercise his power. But now, the Black God and Gods are awakening, and now are going to take back the rule and the power from the enemy. That is what we are living in right now.

# Knowledge as Science and Faith

**Meghna:** [How does the Nation of Islam relate to modernity?] By that, I mean the idea [of] human beings coming into their maturity. What does it mean to say, "God is Man, God is a Black man" [when the white world is saying "God is dead"]? In a way [NOI theology] could be seen as contradictory because this is an era of science and reason; "aren't we beyond religion?"

**Minister Ishmael:** Real religion, as taught to us by the Honorable Elijah Muhummad, is rooted in science. And if you can't prove from your theology that which exists in nature, then that's not religion.

The greatest truth that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad revealed to the world is that God is not a mystery. God is not a spook. God is not invisible, and both the Bible and the Holy Quran refer to God in human terms, human qualities, human characteristics. So he is God, he talks but he doesn't have a mouth. He speaks to His prophets but he has no vocal cords. He sees but he doesn't have eyes. He hears but he doesn't have ears. Then you have in the Bible where God actually makes an appearance. Abraham sees three men approaching him, and the scriptures say, "and one of them was the Lord." What? Enoch walked with God.

So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, "Show me your God." I know you can't do that. There's no such thing as a God being immaterial, intangible, invisible. "What interest," the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, "would he have in the material world and why were we giving eyes to see physical reality?" What would an invisible God be? If he





The dome of Mosque Maryam's sanctuary featuring Islamic calligraphy. The sanctuary is sometimes likened to a womb that gives birth to Gods.

was a spirit and invisible and the law in nature is everything reproduces after itself, and man is made in the image and likeness of God, then if he is invisible, why am I not invisible if I'm in his image? Why would he create a material universe and he be the opposite, or he be immaterial, and everything else is material. Doesn't make any sense at all.

So God, throughout all the scriptures, it's not a spook that's talking. Then you come to this human being called Jesus that's declared the son of God. And he's called God incarnate—well how can *he* be God In the Flesh, and his father, who is God, not be a material being?

Doesn't make any sense, does it? So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, "God is a man and you cannot make him anything other than a man, a human being, if he's not human then say 'it.'" Refer to God as an inanimate object then, but all of the expressions of God and his talking, you can't even rationalize and reason with that intelligently, that here is God speaking human language, he's got hands. Adam and Eve see him, hear him. They said the footsteps of the Lord are in the garden and they

hid themselves from the presence of God.

You don't hide yourself from a spook, you hide yourself from something that got eyes that can see you. Then they put the fig leaf on... hey guys what are you doing? What are you doing?

So this is the greatest revelation and truth that's at the core of the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Could I ask a question?

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes sir, of course.

**Dr. Monteiro:** You know, confronted for instance in the Christian Bible or the Jewish Bible if you will, is the paradoxes, unsolved questions. And so Christians would say there are unsolved questions and therefore it requires of Believers that they have faith, that they not rely upon what they can see or taste or hear, but the realm of faith is important or maybe critical to any form of religious belief. Does the Honorable Elijah Muhammad advocate for faith or for science? If I'm making myself clear. Because science does not refer or default to faith.

**Min. Ishmael:** Correct.

**Dr. Monteiro:** But religion, or at least most religion, defaults to faith.

**Min. Ishmael:** Well, faith by definition is trust, confidence, in a person or a thing. Both the person and the thing are material. Every thought, every concept that comes up in the mind of the human being comes out of the physical reality. It's unseen, right?

An inventor, he's got an idea. The idea comes from vision, right? He's looking at a universe, he's looking at things, and an idea sparks. Go back to the Wright brothers. Birds have wings, maybe man can fly. Think about it. That moon. For so many, many millennia, human beings been looking up there. Give credit to white folks. Hmm. I think we can build something to get to the moon. It's unseen. Now I'm going to exercise faith in my idea to bring it into what reality. That's how everything we see has come into existence. It's an unseen concept, unseen meaning, it hasn't become materialized, it hasn't come into reality—that's faith. Faith in terms of religion takes you into a realm of Spookism.

Now this was purposely done by religious leaders who developed a doctrine knowing that they could not prove and defend scientifically what they were introducing to the public. So the doctrine is "have

faith," or "you can't question God," or "the Lord works in mysterious ways." Stop.

Science doesn't buy none of that. You can't prove to a people of science or even to the Common Man, for instance, Jesus the Immaculate Conception. Here is a human, a human born from a human, without the agency of man and sperm. Come on, man.

Science says that's impossible. Every human being must have sperm from a male and the ovum of the female inside of the womb of the female, that's the only way you're gonna get a human being. But church doctrine: "No, no, no, no... the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost moved upon Mary and she became pregnant." Nobody can buy that.

God works in reality. So church doctrine is to keep people ignorant and from questioning what they have presented to the people, so the Lord works in mysterious ways, you can't question God. Stop. Stop. So that faith is religion, that's called organized religion for the purpose of controlling the masses of the people.

Real religion is the *nature* of man and the *nature* of things. And the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said if you cannot prove your religion and your God in the nature of things then you don't have religion. So that, I think, Dr. Monteiro is the distinction and the difference. Yes, as a believer in God, I have faith in him. But faith in him based upon his word...

## Third Resurrection

**Dr. Monteiro:** The Nation of Islam was reborn, and I'm going to use my term, from the ashes.

**Min. Ishmael:** You could say that, but "ashes" is the complete disintegration of...

**Dr. Monteiro:** I wouldn't use "ashes" then. But what I wanted to ask, because. You have emphasized strongly the fulfillment of prophecy. And I'm just, if we could imagine together, maybe not next year, maybe not 20 years, a Third Resurrection. Could the Nation of Islam become, with this knowledge—which is, I think you would acknowledge for all human beings—would the Nation of Islam *not be* what we call the Nation of Islam, but a third Resurrection based upon a broad embrace by humanity of this prophecy?

**Min. Ishmael:** That's a very interesting question. First of all, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad saw, he foretold that the nation that he had built and sacrificed for would fall.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Yes.

**Min. Ishmael:** And, but he said it would rise again and it will never fall again. So our rise, if you put it in the terms "Second Resurrection" and the rebirth is one that will never again fall. The Nation of Islam where it is presently today in 2025 will only grow, evolve, expand. And the ideology, the philosophy, and the teachings will spread as they already have globally. So the seeds of the new is already planted all around the world, so you will see the Nation of Islam pop up as it already has in Africa. You will see the seed come to life in Asia, Mexico, it's already there, Central America, it's already there, South America, it's already there.

So there will never be a second destruction of the Nation of Islam. What the minister has done in 47 years has ensured that the Nation of Islam will never fall again and that is because of what Elijah Muhammad said. And he was sitting with the Minister, and he told him that the Nation would fall, and he saw the countenance of the Minister fall, and he said, *don't worry brother, it will be rebuilt, and it will never fall again.*

The Minister didn't know at that time that it would be rebuilt on his shoulders. So I don't see a Third Resurrection. The greater resurrection that both the Bible and the Quran talks about is in process or progress as we speak.

People are now awakening into a new consciousness that's on our planet. There is the revival and restoration of the human being taking place right now. The force is awakening and people all over the planet, the whole universe is now aligning itself, and there is a new energy and a new portal that's been opened up that's unleashing energy and a new thought that's going into the minds of human beings all over the planet, and it's happening globally.

So there won't be a Third Resurrection. There's only one resurrection. And what happened with the Nation of Islam, the terminology that Elijah Muhammad used is a correct one. "Fall."

**Dr. Monteiro:** I just want to thank you for your response to my question about a Third Resurrection. And I think it leaves us with a lot to think about for tomorrow.

**Min. Ishmael:** But I think, if I may interrupt you.

**Dr. Monteiro:** No, no, please.

**Min. Ishmael:** Your Third Resurrection. You're looking at the world.



**Dr. Monteiro:** Yes.

**Min. Ishmael:** You’re looking at humanity.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Absolutely.

**Min. Ishmael:** You’re looking at the human family that needs to be resurrected.

**Dr. Monteiro:** And let me tell you why. Because I’m looking at the Free School and how we are composed of the world.

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes.

**Dr. Monteiro:** You know I’m reminded of one of our members who on Saturday at our meeting, she’s a member and she’s Chinese. And she says Black America can see China, but China does not see Black America. And that’s why I’m connecting it to this new, I’m saying, Resurrection...

**Jahan:** Great Resurrection.

**Min. Ishmael:** Mhmm, mhmm.

**Dr. Monteiro:** But a renaissance that will literally make undeniable to Asia and Africa who we are, and our message to the world. And I know in the Free School; and this is with my colleagues today, we believe, and I think you confirm it, that there is something special going on here. And yeah, that’s all I wanted to say. I called it as a Third Resurrection, or that might not be the right word.

**Min. Ishmael:** Well...

**Dr. Monteiro:** But a new stage is being arrived at, almost.

**Min. Ishmael:** Well the whole human family has been put to sleep by Satan. Asians, Africans, Europeans, Latino, Red Man, Yellow Man, Brown Man, Black Man. All have to be resurrected. So on the inside back page of the Final Call newspaper, we have what originally appeared on the back page of *Muhammad Speaks*. What, well it’s the Muslim program. What the Muslims want and what the Muslims believe. And one of our beliefs is the resurrection.

So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, I’m not quoting it perfectly, we believe in the resurrection. Not in physical resurrection, but in mental resurrection. And we believe that the resurrection will take place first with Black people. Then he says, and the resurrection of the righteous. It stops with the member of the human family who has, now this

term properly applies, been destroyed completely.

When you take a people from their native land and their native people... Unlike other slave empires that took human beings and made them slaves and used their physical strength for the purpose of manual labor, but with Black people, the slave trader, the slave master, stripped us, Doctor.

They didn’t bring us over here to America to lay their roads, to build for them, to be on the fields picking cotton and produce, destroy. They took from us a name, our culture, our religion, our concept of God. That is destruction.

Because you stripped the mind. So we were stripped of our own identity. And you and I know Black folk were denied the right to know for 300 years. It was forbidden for Black people to acquire knowledge, to learn how to read and write. And when they decided it was okay, they taught us what they wanted us to know about ourselves, our origin and history in the world, and then they taught us about themselves.

Then what did they do? They gave us their names, their culture, their religion. Take it to modern technology. You’ve deleted the files. You have corrupted the hard drive, the original operating system of the human mind from a people.

Now you’re downloading your software and you’re installing white operating system; and we wonder why we can’t open up Windows. (Laughter)

**Min. Ishmael:** But their system is incompatible. So the best that we have done is to try and function, live, operate, under their system. But it does not work because it’s incompatible with your nature. So the Chinese, they’re way up here. They don’t see us. We see them.

What have “us” done to be seen and recognized by the Chinese people or the Japanese people, or white people? They look at Black America and they see, coming out of Black America, musicians, entertainers, athletes, a scholar here and there—from the “learned,” of course. (Laughter) Oh, a Black president.

But the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us: “No man can rise higher than his people.” So they see an individual. But China is not known by its president. They were not known by their Emperors. They made their mark on the planet by their culture, by their science and what they introduced to the rest of the world. That the world would look at what China has to offer, that is of benefit and value. What do we offer of benefit and value? Where is

our science, our technology, our innovation? It’s all subdued by white folks. And though we’re in the backroom helping with the inventions, it’s the white man who gets the credit. Not the Black man and Black people. What product do we export to the world that says “Made in Black America”? I don’t see it. And when we go, we don’t represent our people. We go to represent America. And we go to conferences and we go over here and we, of course, speak as “intelligent, educated” from Harvard and Yale and Princeton.

What is the state of affairs and the lifestyle of your people? Ghetto, fighting, violence, criminality. Those of us who are blessed to get an education, we separate ourselves from that. And we can no longer relate, though some of us may have come right up out the hood. But once we get a certain level of education, you can only relate to people of your kind. You don’t want to be bothered with the ignorant masses, so you’re going to be in the circle of intelligent, educated men and women. Nothing wrong with that. *But there is*, because W.E.B. Du Bois talked about the Talented Tenth. What we’ve never done is come together as scholars, as educated, learned men and women to see what we can do with the knowledge that we have gained to lift the people. That’s not being done. The masses are over here, and those that came from the masses have become a part of the classes and have forgotten the masses.

Our people are suffering. You’ve got billionaire Blacks, but the masses are lagging so far behind. It doesn’t matter where you go. You’re in France, you’re in China, you’re in Tokyo, you’re in Dubai—as a learned, rich, Black person, individual from America. But our people? Fifty million of us? Look at our Mexican brothers and sisters. They come here, they’re still Mexicans. They got their restaurants, they got their products. In fact, the Little Village here is second only to the Magnificent Mile in economy, because they all spend among themselves. How popular is Mexican food? The Indians, how popular? Who wants chitlins? (Laughter) There’s a few people who have to come for Harold’s fried chicken. But where is our own unique—collard greens? Sweet potato pie? Fried chicken? Come on. You go to an Indian restaurant, “Oh wow, look at all this.” You go to the Mexican restaurant, “Oh, look at this, look at this spread here.” The French, the Italian, see?

We don’t have our own culture. The Chinese, they don’t see us. They see us—Gauff just won the French open. Serena before her. LeBron. Jordan. Yes, they see athletes, they see entertainers, they see rappers. They join with everybody else: “Man, them niggas is really talented.” And so the image is: that’s what *their* gift is and we enjoy it—

**Dr. Monteiro:** But isn’t that the conspiracy against Black people? The young woman that I was mentioning to you, she was saying that it is a deficit that the Chinese do not see us. Because the Chinese need to see us, because as Du Bois said, we have a gift for the world.

**Meghna:** I also just wanted to mention that passage from *Dark Princess*, a novel by Du Bois that’s very important to us. There’s a scene where this young Black man explains to the leaders of the darker nations that what Black America has given the world is this idea of humanity, art, and science emerging from the masses of people. And that art is the greatest art in the world because it arises from this experience of, like you said, destruction and devastation. But it proves humanity, and I think the rest of the world is still struggling to learn this lesson.

**Min. Ishmael:** But the deficit that you mention. It’s *our* deficit. Because if we hadn’t made ourselves an asset—but he goes to what we were saying. We have to make—as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said—we have to build ourselves up. We have to have what the Chinese have. What the Frenchmen have. What the Mexicans have. Pride in themselves.

**Dr. Monteiro:** What my friend says—who was from China, who in her household only speaks Chinese, although she was raised here, her family immigrated from China. She says yes, all the great achievements of China and you can’t deny this. But yet, there is something missing in the souls of China. The soul of the Chinese people. And they’ll say it from India. They’re from India. It’s almost the same thing. They will say, “But you all have something—and maybe you all don’t even realize it—that we value.”

**Min. Ishamel:** Once they become introduced to the soul of Black people and the soul that manifests intelligence. But a soul that is so connected and tied into nature itself that the Indian and the Chinese and the Caucasian see, they can only get it from *this* soul because *this* soul is what’s giving all souls. That goes back to what we were saying, when we are the mothers and fathers of civilization. If you look at it in that sense, that the children are missing something. They’re missing the parenting. They’re here but they’re not fully connected. The human being is always searching for connection. I can be who I say I am, but I’m not fully connected, I’m not fully grounded, I’m not fully bonded as I should be because the soul has to find, it has to be wedded and tied to the essence of nature itself to have fulfillment and to feel fulfilled: your and my existence. So there’s something missing. So the Chinese can only go so far. Every other race—the Indian is different. Why?



Do you want to know why?

**Jahan:** (Chuckles) Why? Does it have to do with food? Just kidding, we have food, we don't have much else.

**Min. Ishmael:** The reason why it's different is because the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that your people are members of the original people. You are not part of the yellow or the brown.

You are members of the Black Nation. The Indian people have mixtures, we've all been mixed. But the people of India, like it is in all of the different nations, you go all the way, I forget what you call it—the Daka. They have a name—

**Jahan:** Dravidians, yeah. She's (Meghna) more from that part, the Southern part.

**Min. Ishmael:** But that—your roots, your people are, what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad would say, original people. You are native people to the planet. You're not a race. You're not a part of the yellow man, white man, or the brown man. You are original members of the planet itself. But a different philosophy and ideology is what Indians have taken on. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that your people migrated over into the Western Hemisphere. That's why the root of all that's called Indians—here in America going all the way down into Argentina—they all have their roots back to India. And the root is Indian. That's why they're called Indians. They were exiled from India 16,000 years ago, but they are members of the original people of our planet.

## Prophecies of War, Peace, and Revolution

**Dr. Monteiro:** Our journal is entitled “Avant-Garde: A Journal of Peace, Democracy, and Science.” We see peace as central to the work that we do. And you believe that a great war—is it a war for Armageddon, would you say that?

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes, sir.

**Dr. Monteiro:** ...is inevitable. And if you recall when you made that statement, I said, “I hope not.” And you said, “Well, there's a small window of hope.” But could you just elaborate on this question of war and peace? Will you speak on that?

**Min. Ishmael:** The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, and history bears witness to what he said,

that in these last 6,000 years we have seen the rise and the fall of civilizations. We have seen bloodshed, violence, conflict, and wars as never before happened. The Bible talks about war, and it is prophecy that at the end of this 6,000-year period, it will culminate in a great war. And that the efforts of peace will fail. And God in the Bible is telling us that the wicked will seek peace but will not find it. Why? Because the wicked want peace on their own terms, but not on the terms of God.

Jesus said that there would be wars and rumors of war. There will be pestilence, famine, earthquakes in diverse places. And Jesus said these are just the beginning of sorrows. Wow. Nation is going to rise up against nation, kingdom against kingdom. And the only way to avert that is what Jesus offered in his olive branch of peace, and that is that the wicked have to repent. So Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” The kingdom of God that all human beings desire is peace.

But are the people willing to repent for their evils? Because that's the only thing that Jesus held out. In the Bible, Jesus said a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. No sign will be given to it, but the sign of Jonah. Jonah is the only prophet in the scriptures that took a message of atonement and repentance to the wicked people of Nineveh. And what Nineveh did, it's the only miracle in the Bible. Because of all of the other nations or cities and people to whom God sent a prophet, Nineveh was the only city that listened to the prophet. And they, from the king all the way down to the little man, the king went out in sackcloth and ashes. And this spared Nineveh the wrath of God.

So Jesus holds that out to a wicked and adulterous generation; that if you want to escape the consequences of your evil, and if you want to avert the wrath of God you have to humble yourself. In Second Chronicles—which was the scripture at the base of the Million Man March, soon to be 30 years ago—if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven: forgive their sins, heal the land.

From the Scriptures, Armageddon is mentioned one time—and it's in the last book, in the Revelations. It's a day where the nations are gathered together for a final war. Since World War II, the nations have been building up their arms. Weapons. And nobody wants a war. But when we look at Israel, we're looking at America, we're looking at what is happening in the Ukraine and Russia. The governments are not really coming to the table to sit down and make peace. They are strong-arming each



*Min. Ishmael Muhammad speaks to Dr. Anthony Monteiro in the Student National Assistant Minister's Office in Mosque Maryam.*

other. The worst of the conflicts that are taking place on our planet right now is what Israel is doing to the Palestinians.

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan was shown by God what Prime Minister Netanyahu had in his mind all along, which is what has happened over there. They intend to move the Palestinians—which they have—out from Gaza. There's nothing but rubble, ruin, and destruction. It's inhabitable. Unlivable conditions. Because in Netanyahu's mind, he has for a greater Israel and to annex that land into Israel. But the suffering of the Palestinian people, tens of thousands men, women, children. But that is the place in the scriptures. That is the focus of the war of Armageddon. And the prophecy goes: when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that the end is near.

So everything that we are looking at right now in the world is pointing towards, it's moving towards war. And the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said it will be a war that will end all wars. After that, peace will come. But the peace is not going to come from America, Russia, China. They are going to destroy each other. This is a very sad prophecy. So that small little window that we spoke about is: will the rulers humble themselves? Will they call their people for atonement and repentance? And if they do not turn to God—which they do not appear as though they're going to do that, because they're too arrogant. There's too much pride. They're proud, boastful leaders.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Can I ask you a question? How many years would you predict this war will go on? And what will humanity build after it?

**Min. Ishmael:** The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said it will be a very short war. It will start with conventional weapons, but it will go nuclear. It's a big part in all of this. We talked about it yesterday, and what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us of these real life objects over our head. And these objects that they now call Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. If you notice, the military has captured many images and film. And these wheel-like objects have been seen and are seen over their nuclear installations. They already know that the power from these wheels can disrupt any activity. This should help us to see that God is involved, because God is not going to let the enemy destroy life on our planet.

So when the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said that it will go nuclear, it does not mean that all of the nuclear weapons that these nations have in their arsenal will be released and will annihilate and destroy life on our planet. There's another power that is present to keep it from escalating or going to that point of annihilation or extinction. So, after the war—now, when we were talking about Third Resurrection—the people will be ready. And there will be a new government established. But all of this old system and old government will go away. And there would be a unified family and a unified people on our planet. No more will we be divided according



to these boundaries. No more will there be this flag, that flag, this—no, no, no, no, no.

Just as it is in the hearts of the people—whether we live in Asia or Africa or Central South America—the common man and person wants what? Unity. But it is our governments that set up all of these lines of division.

**Dr. Monteiro:** So it will be a war to destroy governments?

**Min. Ishmael:** It will be a war that they will be destroying their own selves. And there won't be a government in place as we know it. There'll be anarchy, but not to the point where there is no order at all. But it will end all of the systems under which the people of our planet have lived under: which is a system of oppression and injustice. We want peace. The common man wants peace. But the rulers do not want peace.

So in the Book of Joel, there is a prophecy. And it's God calling them. And God is saying, "Come all ye men for war," because this is what is in their hearts and minds. They don't want peace. So there's a prophecy where God is saying, "I will give you your own blood to drink like sweet wine." The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said that the blood will be up to the horse's bridle. That's a lot of death. And you say, well how can a good God allow—no, no. They have refused to accept the way of God. God's way is peace. But Satan is the opposite of God. So this is why, when we were talking yesterday, Satan's world is a world of division. It's a world where there is conflict, violence. But all of that has to reach this point in a great war.

**Dr. Monteiro:** I just want to ask one more thing before I turn it over to my colleagues. The Nation of Islam is built upon the Black man in America. Is that fair to say?

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes, sir.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Where will Black people end up, in the war of Armageddon but [also] after the war? How will we fare in this situation?

**Min. Ishmael:** We will be fine. We will be fine. There are a lot of lives that are going to be lost according to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. But Black people are going to be fine. And many other people. But in terms of the future—if I understand the answer that you are seeking to your question, how will we fare—we are going to be fine. Black people and all people of goodwill. They will be on the other side of this, and there will be hallelujahs and singing of joy after

this terrible, dark period is over. But we have to go through the darkest hour of the night to come to the dawn of a brand new day.

**Jahan:** From what I'm understanding, you're discussing a transition through this war, the transition to a truly peaceful world or kingdom of peace, as we saw on a plaque on the way here as well. I think most people, as you said, in the world would like to see this better vision of a world free of oppression, and with a government that is truly righteous, and there are no boundaries between people. But at the same time, and I think you would also agree with this, the preference for most people would be a peaceful transition avoiding bloodshed and avoiding nuclear war. You also said there's a window in which there is a possibility of repentance, and I think most of us are skeptical of the possibility of governments, especially the Western governments, of repenting. I'm very struck by the Nation of Islam's emphasis on atonement and moral commitment. As you said yesterday, the Million Man March was not even demanding much of the government; it was more a demand upon the people to atone and repent and gain a new moral commitment. In the context of the possibility of world war or nuclear war, is there a role for the ordinary people of the world to atone, to take moral responsibility in order to avoid bloodshed?

**Min. Ishmael:** Well, the offer of repentance from God is for all the people, because as the scriptures tell us, all have fallen short of the glory of God. All have sinned, all have rebelled. So repentance is for all the people and for all the inhabitants of our planet. In what you are saying, I can see a picture; that if the masses of the people, which would be in reverse of what happened when Jonah went to Nineveh, because it was the king, the ruler, all the way down. But if that's reversed and the masses of the people come out in atonement and repentance, would that in some way force the government and rulers to follow the lead, now, of the masses. Very interesting scenario.

**Jahan:** If I may: or even be able to replace the rulers, if the existing rulers are not willing to follow the lead of the masses?

**Min. Ishmael:** Well, now you're talking revolution.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Don't the two go together in history? War and revolution. And economic chaos.

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes, they do.

**Dr. Monteiro:** So to prevent a war of Armageddon, one alternative would be for a worldwide toppling

of governments that wish to bring about war. But is that a part, is that provided for in prophecy?

**Min. Ishmael:** No.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Okay.

**Min. Ishmael:** No, it isn't. And we have seen in history the toppling of a government and replacing it with another form of government. What change has there really been? So you get rid of one tyrant, one oppressor. Then those that topple or bring down that particular form of government, but yet you still have the disease of corruption that comes right back. So we really cannot have an entirely new government or a new system until the human being is made better.

**Meghna:** But given the Nation of Islam's emphasis on atonement, is that not a philosophy of the revolution of the human being? Which is that when you change the human being, like you say, you change the world. So are you also talking about revolution through the theology that you are preaching and preparing people for?

**Min. Ishmael:** Well, if we want to take that term, the Earth that we live on revolves around the Sun. It's making a revolution. That revolution is made possible on our planet by the power of the Sun. It's like that it is striking the Earth, causing the Earth to spin or make a motion on its axis. So when you talk about real revolution—real revolution is not with arms. With arms or weapons. It's the turning of the mind. And the only way the mind can be turned in a proper direction, it has to be exposed or introduced to light. And light here is synonymous with knowledge. There has to be the introduction of knowledge that allows for the human mind to evolve.

So the scripture that we mentioned earlier, if God is talking, "Turn from your wicked ways." The real revolution is not with the gun. The real revolution is with light. Greater truth. Greater knowledge that allows for human beings to reverse their direction. And then when you have that kind of revolution, you have change. Real change. And the result of that change, when the human being turns back to God, back to the Creator, back to the order and the laws of nature itself—now we're in harmony with our own nature. We're in harmony with creation and harmony with nature itself; therefore, there's peace. The reason why there is no peace is because we are not in harmony and in accord with Divine Law and nature. We have been rebelling against the divine order, and as a result there is no peace.

So in this name or term "Islam," it means peace.

That's the primary idea in Islam, is the making of peace. And Islam means submission, obedience to the will of God. When we are in obedience and submission to the Creator's law there's peace. There's no chaos in the universe. That's why when we look up into the heavens, there's motion going on. But why does it give the mind so much peace? Look at the night. It's peace because the planets, the stars, the sun, everything that we look at in nature is in harmony with the will of the Creator. The only creature that is out of order is the human being. Does that make sense?

**Jahan:** Right. As we've said, one of our major interests is the building of a real peace movement, and I think from this conversation it sounds like you're suggesting that if we define this true concept of revolution—a moral, spiritual revolution rather than simply the changing of a ruler, that *that* may be a direction for a serious peace movement to achieve true peace on Earth.

**Min. Ishmael:** Absolutely. Absolutely. But the challenge that every individual or groups that advocate peace are confronted with are the dark—if you will—forces. Satanic forces. And all the peace movements seem to be of no avail, because as we said, you could do it from the bottom up. And that is in scripture too. There's a scripture in Daniel. The prophet Daniel had a dream, a vision. And he sees a stone hewn out of the mountain without hands. And this stone strikes an image of gold and silver, but it strikes it at its feet and the feet of this enormous statue was mixed with iron and clay. So that means that the statue was top heavy because it was gold. But when the stone struck that image, it brought down the statue. And the symbolism is, see, the feet or what's at the base of all of these governments are the people. That's why they always fear the masses, because when the masses start moving and going to Jesus's prophecy. He talks about the tossing and the roaring of the seas, that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said represent the people.

See, when people start moving, it starts shaking what is at the top. So when the people are awakened—Third Resurrection—the people then begin to shake what is at the top. But they exercise so much power that no matter what effort is being made on this level, they have their plan and agenda here. And they, of course, exercise their power through the military. And then we, the common people, we are the soldiers. So you gotta look at it and go, how can I affect? Because one thing is the masses and all of the soldiers are common men and women as well. But they've been trained. They're loyal to their governments. So it's not the masses that start wars; it's the classes. Then we have to suffer. We suffered



the consequences. We paid the price of the decisions and the policies made by our governments. So how do you stand a chance? Very difficult. Very difficult. So with all of the protests and the people coming out in great masses, whether it's in Beijing or whether in London or in New York. All the capitals.

How many times have we gone out, but to no avail, calling on our leadership to cease? Look at the call to end the genocide of the Palestinians. But the masses, all they have is a voice. But they don't have the power to stop. So we plead with them, and that's God pleading. That's God pleading with the rulers, but they turned a deaf ear. It means nothing to them. Netanyahu doesn't have the support of the Israeli people but he's in power. So this is why God, at the end of the day, He's in charge. He has the power to deal with that power. That the people are powerless to affect those with power. Power respects power. These are topics that talk on what is happening in our world, and it doesn't give a lot of hope to people of goodwill who want peace and are doing everything we can. And we should not be discouraged.

But we should put it like this: we should not put so much hope in the establishment. Put it in layman terms; they're done. But where we waste our energy is concentrating our effort on a system that turns a deaf ear. If we redirect that energy to what we were saying earlier, what is it that we want to replace what is? Then our energy and our effort becomes more productive and optimistic because now we're focusing on what kind of government or system will be a system that would be just, equitable, and fair for all people.

**Meghna:** I'm wondering [about] the enormous contribution figures like the Honorable Elijah Muhammad made and Muhammad Ali in saying, "I will not go to Vietnam. I will not fight that war." And would you say that is what you're saying, that is gesturing towards what will replace the order that will come? Or how do you understand the contributions of the Nation of Islam in fighting for peace in the world?

**Min. Ishmael:** By making the people conscientious objectors?

**Meghna:** Yeah, the moral leadership shown to the world and the direction they gave to people of conscience. That I will not take this stand, these people are my brothers. I will never, ever, ever kill them.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Like your dad and Muhammad Ali both refused to go to war. So what Meghna is saying,

if I could just interpret it, is that the Nation of Islam is one of the oldest anti-war movements. And have always—through your dad and Muhammad Ali's examples, and some of your older brothers who refused. So everybody, the whole Nation of Islam has refused to fight in wars. And that's not very well known, frankly.

**Jahan:** And if I might also add, part of the context for our discussion is that this year, 2025, is 70 years from the African Asian conference at Bandung which was in 1955. The first time that the independent leaders of African and Asian Nations got together was in Bandung, Indonesia. And what's interesting is that on their program the resolution of the conference was the demand for freedom of all the people of Africa and Asia that were still under colonialism. But also a commitment to use the combined power of these states for world peace. And President Sukarno says something to the effect of, we have to use our physical power but also our moral force for peace. A lot of ways we see the work of the Nation of Islam and that period also in that spirit.

I'm also interested in how, again, tying this thread of peace to this question of revolution—because I also know that the leaders of the Nation of Islam have had a very good relationship with many revolutionaries, like the Libyan Revolution and Muammar Gaddafi or the Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro. Again, on this thread of contributing to the peace movement, Minister Farrakhan has gone to those countries and expressed solidarity with those leaders, those governments. Those governments that may be in the minority in terms of their moral commitment and of course have been targeted by the United States.

Drawing from that, my question is: if you could speak more about how these historical examples of these revolutions—of the Nation of Islam's relationship and solidarity with these revolutions—contributes to our understanding of revolution, the peace movement, and as we've been saying, the need to morally educate the people. You're saying there's protests, but the real challenge is transforming the hearts and minds of the people so that they truly know the power they have even in the face of governments.

**Min. Ishmael:** Well, when you look at what we share in common with our Cuban family, our Libyan brothers and sisters. And of course, during the period of the 50's and the 60's we saw and witnessed African nations that were throwing off the yoke of European and Western colonialism and imperialism. And what we shared in common is that these nations and the Nation of Islam want to exercise

our freedom and right to self-determination. It's really simple. And we do not want to be under, or influenced, controlled, and directed by the Western powers. That is the whole struggle. The revolutionary struggle is throwing off the yoke and getting rid of colonialism, neocolonialism, and the unjust power and control of Western Civilization over these nations and peoples who are legitimate, sovereign nations in all of those countries. It was the grip and the hand of European powers or America that did not allow for those people to exercise their rights for self-governance. And they wanted to control and monopolize and take advantage of the resources that are in the African nations, and take control of those resources. And those resources rightfully belong in the hands of the people of those lands.

## Infinite Capacity of Human Beings/The New to be Born

**Dr. Monteiro:** Can I ask a question? The Honorable Louis Farrakhan, after the Million Man March, took several world tours to many governments. He was a great friend of Muammar Gaddafi's and, I would think, a great friend of Fidel Castro's. Would you consider these to be in some form the representatives of the government to come? Is there something about them, and I would put the Nation of Islam among them, something about them that represents the atonement that must occur to prevent a great war of Armageddon? Or if there is that war, that they will become the light to illuminate the path forward? Here I'm talking specifically of three people: The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, Muammar Gaddafi, and Fidel Castro.

**Min. Ishmael:** There is no system of governments on our planet that even comes close to what is going to replace what we lived under. The scripture points us to a very special human being that is born. It's a prophecy in the book of Isaiah 9:6, "Unto us a child is born, a son is given. And he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Mighty God, and Everlasting Father. And of the increase of *His* government and peace, there shall be no end." Upon his shoulders is a government. Then the scriptures says, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the minds of men what God has prepared for those who love Him." There is no government on this planet that comes close to the new government, which would be a universal government. All we know is it will be established on the basis of the three essential principles of life: freedom, justice, equality. But democracy, there's elements of socialism that we can see may be a part of the new system

of government. But Communism, Democracy, Capitalism—these are failed. They have failed the people. So the new government is nothing of what we have been under and are used to. It's new.

**Dr. Monteiro:** How does the Asiatic Black man play into this? And if I could just add: Meghna, who was born in India, was really taken by your comment yesterday that Indians and India are the original people. And interestingly, she went to Du Bois's novel *Dark Princess*...

**Min. Ishmael:** Dead center. The Asiatic Black man, as taught to us by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. The original man. Maker. Owner. Cream of the planet Earth. God of the universe. So the world as we know it has come from the womb of the Black man. First man, that we were talking yesterday. As the Bible says, "From one blood all nations came. And God appointed their times and their boundaries." So, as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, the Black man is the first and the last. And then he said if there even is a last, Alpha and Omega. He said there is no end to the black man because he has no birth record. Every day that has a beginning has an end. You can't put a date on the beginning of the original man, the Asiatic Black man.

Going to scripture again, "As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end." So if everything started from one blood, and it started from the first man, the original man, the Asiatic Black man. Then the new beginning on our planet starts the same. It will start from the Asiatic Black man. And there you have the first man or the original man that will bring in a brand new world. That is what, when you come now to Black America, as distinguished from the Native and the original people of our planet. They are all over the planet. What makes the Black man in America so special? And what puts him at the very center of what we are talking about? It is because, as we spoke yesterday, it is written that in the end God would choose a people who are considered no people at all. He would take the despised and the rejected. He would take the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the dead. Not dead people in cemeteries, but a people who have been destroyed. This is how God proves himself.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Is that the rejected stone that becomes the cornerstone?

**Min. Ishmael:** The stone that the builders have rejected, becomes the headstone. That cornerstone, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, is us. God chooses a people from the furnace of affliction. He takes the tail and he makes it the head. He takes



the despised and the rejected and he makes them the new rulers on our planet. Then the scripture says, “And this is marvelous in our sight.” See? But that is the power of God, and that is what the Nation of Islam represents. It’s something totally new.

**Dr. Monteiro:** Yeah, it is. You’re right.

**Min. Ishmael:** How do you explain it? Look at the knowledge that can only be found from this fountain source. The Elijah Muhammad, he represents original man. He’s the first man. He’s the first raised by God from a despised and a rejected and a dead people. God took an unlearned man and poured knowledge and wisdom inside of that man, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s head. That the scripture says, “As it is written, that God would take a foolish people and confound the wise with.” That is what you read in the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Nothing but wisdom. Nothing but wisdom that illuminates, enlightens, takes you into fields of knowledge and science where everyone is studying. And this man, a Black man from America, sheds light on the origin of the races, gives us insight, knowledge, science on what foods to eat, what foods to stay from. Gives us knowledge dating all the way back into trillions of years. He’s the first man and that’s what makes this so special. And the future of the Black man in America is to serve God in the establishment of His kingdom and the establishment of the universal government—where all of us, regardless to your race, your color, your ethnicity, your class, your creed—all of us will live together in peace. Where’s the proof of it? The heart of the Black man.

Yet, we have in our heart, Dr. Monteiro, that Heart of God that forgives. No matter what is done to us by the same oppressor, we offer forgiveness. It’s a heart made through suffering and pain, but a heart that is made to give justice to all people. No other heart on this planet is like ours. They come into our church, they shoot us in our homes, and we can go into the court and pray for the murderer. Now the problem with that is we don’t go in the court and pray for our own brothers. But for the enemy: forgiveness and prayers. We are the people of God and the scriptures say, “They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

Transition

**Jahan:** Your title, if we are correct, is National Assistant Student Minister to the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan—

**Min. Ishmael:** We put the “Student” in front.

Student National Assistant Minister.

**Jahan:** Okay. Student National Assistant Minister. So if you could speak a little bit about your duties in that role. And, particularly, I mean, I think we’ve noticed that lately you’ve been speaking as well and delivering messages on behalf of the Honorable Minister Farrakhan, particularly at Saviours’ Day. So if you could speak a bit about the significance of that as well.

**Min. Ishmael:** Thank you. Well, the scope of responsibility and duties under that title is to assist in the ministry, in particular, and that in terms of the day-to-day administration, it is to ensure and to make sure that all of our student ministers in our nation in 130 cities, whatever their needs are and then there could be some challenges that arise or problems that come up, to give a guidance, and direction, and helping to solve those matters that come up. That’s a lot of responsibility there, but then there is the preparing and delivering The Message each and every week from here, the flagship mosque, the headquarters, and, of course, it is webcast around the world every Sunday. So delivering the Word—that is a heavy, heavy, heavy, heavy, responsibility. So delivering the Word and helping to administer the affairs of the Nation of Islam, from the position of Student National Assistant Minister.

**Jahan:** So you’re also tasked at times of speaking on behalf of, or delivering, Minister Farrakhan’s message.

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes. That’s very humbling. Just to be asked by him. Because I don’t see myself as being qualified or better than the other student ministers that are in the Ministry throughout the country. I respect and admire and learn a lot from my brothers in the ministry. The Minister has asked on, well, all the occasions that he’s unable to speak, for me to carry the day. Over the years, it was two or three—Day of Atonement, Anniversary, Keynote address. [He] says that I had to deliver and then more recently this February. Saviours’ Day. For which the message was “Repent,” but the kingdom of God is at hand. So I’m very, very humbled to be able to serve and assist the Minister Nation in this capacity. It comes with a lot of responsibility, of course, and I try not to think about that, and just be concerned about, you know, doing whatever it is that Allah would have me to do—put my trust in him. The Minister and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad has made it, I would say, easy for any one of us in the Ministry. Because I often compare what we are tasked to do to a musician. Especially the classics. When you learn violin or you learn the piano or the viola—any of those instruments—and when there is the organizing

of a symphony, but the score is not authored or composed and written by the musician, they put that up and they take their instrument and they following notes and so they are playing the Great Masters of Classics, be it Beethoven or Bach. I feel the same. I have to work on my instrument, whatever instrument that is, but the score is already written. I just have to put my heart in it. Practice those notes as so with the millions of words of the Minister. So I’m just piecing it and pulling it all together because it’s not my message. It’s not my Word, I’m not the author of the Word. It’s already been authored. The composer has already written the score. Now all I have to do is practice it and put my heart into the heart of my father and the Minister. Then the words that they already have spoken that are repeated, or lifted, now that Word has life in it. But the life and the energy and the light in that Word is unleashed by the love of the heart. It’s unleashed by the faith of that person that goes to that Word; then you can unleash the power that is in the Word and feed it to others. The eyes become open, the ears are open, the mind is open, but it’s not my Word. It’s the Word of God. Now, the spirit comes through. That’s different because you could repeat the words, but it can be flat. But when you lift that Word in [your heart], your heart is in that Word, and you are taking in the heart, the sentiment, the will, the desire of God that is in that Word, then you become the vessel, or conduit, of that Word. He makes it easy for us.

**Dr. Monteiro:** No transition is really easy, Minister Ishmael. You know, you are a brilliant theologian.

**Min. Ishmael:** I don’t consider myself a theologian. I’m a student. (Laughter)

**Dr. Monteiro:** I was just thinking as I’m listening to this conversation that somehow, in some way, in schools of philosophy, and Union Theological Seminary or wherever, students will have to listen to this. This is, if you want to use the word, this is Black Liberation Theology, pure and simple. But no transition is easy. My heart goes out to you because we are still dealing with human beings. They can be very noble but then they can be petty. So are you prepared to face the human factor, the human being, for whom the Word is the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan? And, if you understand where I’m coming from, you don’t have to answer it, but I know there will be difficulties, and as you mentioned yesterday—Cointelpro has not ended. The Nation of Islam is viewed by the establishment as a greater threat than any revolutionary organization in this Society. And we know they are already busy in planning. So that’s all I wanted to say. I think you understand.

**Min. Ishmael:** I am prepared as Allah would have me prepared. My faith is in Him. I think we said it yesterday—whatever role I am to play as I am doing what I’m doing today. I can’t concern myself with tomorrow. What we have is today. Whatever Allah would have any of us to do, we’re in his Hands. When we’re humble enough to see that it’s not about me, it’s not about you, it’s about Him, then we are at peace. One day a brother came to me and he said, “Oh, I feel secure and confident that the Nation is in good hands with you.” I said, “Oh, you’re making a very bad mistake.” (Laughter)

**Min. Ishmael:** The Nation is in the hands of Allah. I said, “If you put that kind of confidence in me and I die tonight then your faith is shattered.” I said, “No, no, don’t do that, you’re hurting yourself.” Faith is the key here. So, you know, there’s a lot of attention on me, naturally, because as the one that speaks on behalf of the Minister, you’re going to be the focus. It’s a test both ways. It’s a test on the people and, then, of course, it’s a test on the person. I have been blessed to serve as The Minister’s assistant Minister for many years and, as time has gone on, he has promoted me, if you will, to that position of Student National Assistant Minister. But again, I don’t know if I will live to see the sunset today. So I think it’s vanity to think too much of yourself. I don’t think about tomorrow. I don’t think about the responsibility. I’ll put it like this—I don’t concern myself with it. I go to sleep at night. I never had that kind of thought ever, because if God has me to do this, that, or the other and I’m in His hands, but I’m of no illusion that it’s all God at the end of the day. I thank you for the wonderful accolades and comments but I know I am not qualified to even do what I am doing today. Now I want to be more and more humble and I just want to serve, and I do love serving, and I’m comfortable with that. But spotlight and this—that’s not Brother Ishmael. I enjoy helping people in any way. If it’s bringing you a glass of water, I’d love to do that. If it is to comfort you as you mourn, it gives me great joy to lift your spirit, to make you happy, put a smile on your face. I am a people’s person and I do love people, but I love to serve people in whatever capacity that is, I enjoy that. So whatever the future holds I can’t tell you, I can’t tell you, and in truth you can’t say what the future holds. We can have speculations and people could say, “Oh, no that’s gonna be this, that or the other.” Well, what if it’s not? We set ourselves up for disappointment when we have, I would say, illusions. We have illusions and haven’t come into reality yet, so you really don’t know. But we all will soon know. You use the word transition. I didn’t understand exactly what you saw in your mind as a transition from one stage or one condition to another or one position to another.



**Dr. Monteiro:** Well, Minister Farrakhan is not speaking. You delivered the Saviours’ Day [address], and maybe you’ll deliver the next one. That is something of a transition, you agree?

**Min. Ishmael:** Yes, yes, of course. Definitely.

**Dr. Monteiro:** But it seems like things are very orderly. This [interview] is a great tribute to the whole Nation of Islam and the consciousness of the believers and of the leadership, especially minister Farrakhan. This is something extraordinary. Something very extraordinary.

**Min. Ishmael:** When the enemy talks about Black leadership, and historically speaking, that of all of our Black leaders, there has not been, with the exception of Elijah Muhammad, smooth transitions, or one that that greatly leader prepared for the evil accident of time. We have not prepared, as a people, well for the future. But this is what makes the Nation of Islam so extraordinary, because you have continuity from Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan, with the exception of those three years, but that’s so small. And what you see in place today is continuity. The message being consistent, the message being on point. No deviation from that. What made it easy for me for Saviour’s Day was that my teacher sat with me: here is the subject, here’s what I would like you to say, here is what I would like for you to go research and study. Then he leaves it to the student to go and pull it all together. The beauty of the Minister is that he didn’t give me a speech and said *go*. He gave me principles, he gave me guidance, he gave me many words, and then he said, “Listen, Allah will guide you.” Then he tells me, “Put your trust in Allah, the spirit will guide you, Allah will guide you how to say it.”

Now that’s a very wise, confident teacher who trusts in the higher power that he’s serving and getting it to his student in a way that allows for whatever God intends. In preparation for Saviour’s Day, all of my prayers, I had over two hours of recordings from different notes and then he actually told me, “Allah will guide you to pull from the scriptures.” But my prayer was, every day, all through the day, I prayed I said, “Allah, this is your day. This has nothing to do with me. All I want is for my vessel to be empty enough and the heart to be removed of any vanity, pride, ego so that your Word and Your Spirit can come through this vessel because it has nothing to do with Ishmael, it has everything to do with Allah, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan. Let the people see you. Empty myself. You take the biggest stage.” You know people who have big egos or are vain or are self-seekers—that blows your head up. Oh, the

lights are on, the cameras, thousands of people in front of you, thousands watching was the furthest thing from my mind. (Laughter)

**Min. Ishmael:** It’s true. But the Minister is just such a wonderful example, as you said, and teacher. So when they say, you know, there’s no leadership in the Black community... But not when it comes to the Nation of Islam. As you said, [it is] very well organized and disciplined. This allows for us to provide effective leadership and guidance for our people because it’s stable. You have stability here, of leadership, in the Black community unlike any other organization, and it’s consistent. That is a great testament to the leadership which is divine leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Minister. Many [wonder]—what’s going to happen to the Nation when the Minister is gone? I kind of laugh because they underestimate the power of the God that backs the Nation of Islam. When the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, “The Nation will never fall again,” what could make him speak that with such confidence? Because he knew and he knew from God. So the Nation of Islam is secure against all of those forces because the forces that the Nation of Islam had to contend with yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Well, those forces did not succeed yesterday and they don’t succeed today, what would make you think they would succeed tomorrow. We’ve stood the test of time and against the greatest opposition. That credit can only be given to God. That’s why we say as Muslims, *all praise is due to Allah*. And as long as we remain humbled to that, we’re good. We’re good. You have some more questions.

## Son of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad

**Dr. Monteiro:** We began yesterday with your biography and we learned a lot about you. In fact, your biography is kind of the biography of your beliefs. You have told us so much about yourself by telling us what you believe in. But I think we want to return, as we end, to you, your biography. I have said to you how much I was an admirer of your mother, but then I found myself recently becoming an admirer of your brother, Rasul, and I’m not alone in that. There are many, many people who claim that there was something about him. You talk about the heart and I guess I’d like to express my condolences. I know that was a great loss.

You also said yesterday at the end of our conversation that you went for seven years not knowing who your father was. I guess that was the same for Rasul.

Could you kind of talk to us about that? How you were able, I guess you and your mother and your sisters and brothers, to overcome those things? And how you became, and how Rasul, I guess I would like to know, became who you are? These people with such deep commitments and deep values—I don’t think there’s anyone, I know none of us here can be in your presence without feeling that there’s something deep happening in you. But it was not always easy. That’s what I’m trying to get at. Until you were seven, you didn’t actually know who your father was. What was the impact of that on you? And when you found out what impact could that have had on you?

**Min. Ishmael:** You know, my dear brother, what my mother gave her children is what allowed us to persevere, endure, and rise above human emotions that circumstances and conditions trigger or manifest from us. She gave us the greatest treasure that any parent could give their child—God. Sounds so simple. But my mother introduced us to Allah, God. So as a young child, to know this that is said in the Quran—nothing happens except by the permission of Allah. Whether it is His permissive or active will at work—it’s all Him. That principle is what allowed for me and us to redirect our feelings, our hurt, our pain, from individuals, from the difficult circumstances, and take it to the God. Because, ultimately, He is responsible. Now that’s on some small level, but it is a critical principle for all human beings who struggle in life’s circumstances. All of us have experienced something of not-so-good. We are people that have experienced trauma. But when you step back to see the bigger picture, to learn that we are all ready for this. Victims of circumstances that we did not create. This world of evil just didn’t happen—it was designed. There are no chances or coincidences in the universe. This is a very orderly universe. And unlike the physicists and the astronomers that look at the *appearance* of the universe and they conclude that the universe, that order, came after chaos. Chaos brings order but there’s an order hidden from the chaos or confusion that you see. This is a very orderly universe that is designed, if you will, by the Creator, in their patterns, in our universe. But there’s no such thing as chaos and confusion. Where God is concerned, when chaos and confusion comes, it comes to correct something. To ensure that the order or whatever the God has determined will accomplish its purpose... So my Blessed Mother raised her children with Allah, with God as the focus. Then after meeting my father for the first time, I only had three years and then he was gone. That’s another transition, and experiencing rejection, envy, jealousy, all kind of stuff... My saving grace, my sibling’s saving grace, was to keep our focus on the God, because without



*Min. Ishmael and portraits of the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad.*

that, I wouldn’t be where I am today. Boy, these are long answers. (Laughter)

The most important part of this for me, personally, is that it has nothing to do with me. I’m so insignificant and irrelevant to this. It has everything to do with the two men that are above my head on this wall. And that man right there, and that man right there, as we say yesterday, I would not be here, Mother Tynetta would not have been a wife of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, there would not have been an Ishmael, a Rasul, and my younger brother Akhmed and my oldest sister Medea, from the union of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Mother Tynnetta, if it were not for Master Fard Muhammad. Master Fard Muhammad told him to take on wives and produce more children. The answer to your questions, see, is because I had to ask as a young boy,



*why do I have to be born under these circumstances?* And when I learned that it was not out of my father’s desire... it wasn’t a man that was up in age that the enemy had presented to the public, and that one of his students had thrown out there that Elijah Muhammad had sex with his teenage secretaries. Malcolm knew, and Malcolm could have defended his teacher. We just had never been acquainted with a messenger of God though we read of it. We don’t condemn David. We don’t condemn Solomon. We don’t condemn Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him as Muslims). We don’t condemn Abraham. Look at all of the prophets. What was the purpose? It was to produce children that would carry on a divine mission ordered by God. So when I learned as a young boy that it was his teacher that ordered him... Ordered, see? If it’s out of lust, you don’t need somebody to tell you to go take on a woman. Not for no sex pleasure. Wives! Responsibility.

Elijah Muhammad was a responsible father and husband to his family. No man that just takes on women like a man out of his own carnal mind, and his own appetite of the flesh, to take pleasure from a woman. That’s not why I’m here. That’s not how Rasul came to birth. We came to birth because a man has a mission. We came to birth because Master Fard Muhammad, his teacher, ordered him to take on wives and to produce children. For what purpose? Those that condemned him, of all of his children, you’re talking about Rasul today. You’re not talking about the first children. Who’s out in front? Another son of Elijah Muhammad that loves his minister. The man of his choice. He didn’t tell me, *go with Farrakhan*. It happened because it was already divinely arranged. And when I was questioning in my mind, as a teenager, as a 14-year-old—is this the man who does the work of my father? So that experience in Washington D.C., I saw my father coming through him and when I saw him later on that evening in his bed, I just threw myself on him and spread my body on his body in that bed. How does that happen? It’s a divine arrangement. I’ve been with him ever since. He didn’t put me in this position because I’m a son. You could say he always wanted to do well by his teacher and by his family. Some people say, “Oh, brother Ishmael is where he is because he’s a son of Elijah Muhammad.” But if I can defend myself a little bit—do you have a dumb person in front of you? Do you have someone that does not love? His father, the God, and the minister? Do you have someone that does not represent Him well? Not only in word but in passion and spirit? Evidently he didn’t have me to deliver the Saviours’ Day message because I’m just a son. Evidently, it’s because I love him deeply, my father, the cause, and the spirit of God. I see all the passion at the end of that Saviours’ Day. Hundreds of people were sending

in comments: young people, people outside the nation, and I broke down in tears. Because the thing that I said I prayed for is what they wrote. I felt God. It wasn’t about Ishmael. I heard the minister, I felt the minister’s spirit. I heard the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

My neighbor who’s in his 80s, he said, “I tell you, Ishmael, I would have liked to have seen and heard the minister, but I have to be honest, and don’t get me wrong when I say this, but I didn’t miss him, because I heard him in you.” I just broke down. I broke down and all the comments were that. Because it isn’t about me. It’s about God. And my mother put that in me as a child. And Rasul. And Akhmed. And Medea. My siblings. Without God, there’s no way in heck that I would have survived, we would have survived, made it this far, be where we are, because it’s all about him. There’s a lot of emotional trauma, you can imagine. You talk about transitions. I’m blessed to not have transitioned yet...

### Ending Remarks

**Min. Ishmael:** I’ve never given an interview like this. The broad range, and the deeply personal questions which, of course, only Dr. Monteiro could do. He has followed and studied the Nation of Islam for so many years and he’s familiar with, of course, Minister Farrakhan, of course, Elijah Muhammad but when it comes to Ishmael: Mother Tynetta, Rasul, so he has that, you know, that personal connection.

**Dr. Monteiro:** I was not afraid to ask you personal questions because, you know, I felt, for some reason, that I could, because of what I had experienced with you. It was very moving for reasons that I can’t explain, but I just feel a great deal of pride. This mosque was not supposed to happen. It’s just a wondrous thing. I don’t want to talk too much.

**Min. Ishmael:** We should get together more to just talk, you know, more. I would like to know more about your efforts and the how we can collaborate more. Because God has put us together and my brothers in Philly, I’m gonna try to be in Philly this year, I’m gonna let you know. But I am very honored and humbled by our relationship because it’s a beautiful one. I can’t explain it except that our hearts, our spirits, our souls... we are vibing. (Laughter)

**Dr. Monterio:** Destiny. Destiny.

**Min. Ishmael:** I think so.

## China and America: For Men to Know Men

ALICE LI

There is fear, antagonism, and competitiveness about the rise of China and little room to know the truth. However, while the American-dominated, neoliberal world order unravels, China is playing a major role with the rest of colored humanity in discovering and creating an economic, political, and philosophical alternative. As Americans question the legitimacy of its ruling class, it is untenable for us to ignore or remain ignorant of China and it calls for us to take up our own revolutionary traditions of learning, peace, and solidarity with the world. As such, I hope to identify some of the key accomplishments of new China, explore the defining role of its masses and revolutionary leadership in these triumphs of modernity, and propose that there is a path for America and China towards peace—that is, through the revolutionary vision and example of Afro-America.

Headlines on China center on its manufacturing and technology. China’s ripples in these areas are undeniable given that in recent years, China has dominated global manufacturing output and seen leaps in fields such as electric and solar power, information technology, and artificial intelligence. Yet what is life for millions of Chinese? Little acknowledged and less understood by the West are China’s achievements in poverty reduction, mass education, and transportation infrastructure. Within just a single lifetime, China has lifted nearly 800 million people out of extreme poverty, raised adult literacy to 97 percent (when it was 65 percent in just 1982), and built more than 40,000 km of high-speed railways since the first was opened in 2008. These astronomical figures can seem abstract until one has experienced or seen the change for themselves. People, many concentrated in rural, far-dispersed villages, particularly in the western and central plateaus and basins of China, who had little food to eat, lived in dilapidated conditions, or had limited means to earn a living were guided in agricultural methods or moved to more fertile lands, connected to electricity and clean water, and provided opportunity through industrial jobs and vocational training. Children whose parents could not read or write were the first in their families to receive an education, go to university, learn about worlds beyond, and bring back new skills, new experiences, and new ideas. Distances that once prohibited frequent exchange and travel between the varied peoples of China, of distinct dialects, religions, and ethnicities, have been bridged by high speed rail, mass transit

systems, and roads. These are impressive milestones as each successive generation has seen their communities and children’s lives change and improve.

Vast changes are hardly possible without the large-scale mobilization of the masses and their talent. Where did the nation find the nearly 2.9 million public servants to travel to live for months and years among the poor, to understand the reasons for their poverty, and to share their knowledge, labor, and hearts? Questions of the economic, political, and civilizational development of a people do not lend to easy answers or simple paths. Following the oppression, humiliation, and civil strife of the 19th and 20th centuries, what gave the Chinese people the faith and fortitude to fight, make sacrifices, retreat, and then rise the way they have in the 21st century? The speed and scale of China’s achievements have been extraordinary, evoking admiration, jealousy, disbelief, and suspicion. What is China’s vision for the future and their children? Is it a vision of arrogant hegemony, or one closer to a world house as our own Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned?

### THE CHINESE PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE FOR MODERNITY

As an ancient people, the Chinese carry long-held civilizational values of reverence and deference to a political elite. These values extend back through its pre-modern dynastic system and its earliest proponents include Confucius, who sought for a philosophy of peace, harmony, and rule for the Chinese people. They assume that an elite with moral character, wisdom, and experience should govern the people with compassion and ability. However, these values faced challenges in the 19th century. The Chinese state had become a semi-colonial, feudal state riddled by the chaos of wars and extractive treaties. The Chinese were a predominantly poor peasant people and the Qing dynasty was unable to protect or serve their interests. The people were ignored and exploited and they rebelled to overthrow dynastic rule.

Following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China consolidated support to take state power for a people’s democracy. They fought for a modern state where the masses of people would have a voice in the affairs of their nation. When Mao declared the “People’s Republic of China” in 1949, it signaled the sovereignty of the ordinary Chinese against the interests of a few



or the foreign. This state has continued to experience different stages and different problems. And as such, it has experimented and evolved since its founding to realize the meaning and concrete reality of its revolutionary ideals and of modernity.

Though statehood was achieved in 1949, questions of the people's livelihoods and of democracy remained—it was difficult for a people that were poor and mired in civil strife to participate and contribute to their society. Hence, the responsibility of the new independent state and its vanguard was to raise the material standards of the people and their capacity for continued governance. Deng Xiaoping, a veteran of the Communist Party of China and its next leader, restored political stability to the country and introduced reforms that would bring China out of economic isolation and deprivation. China established special economic zones for foreign investment and manufacturing during a time when the American ruling class sought higher profits by outsourcing to countries with lower labor costs. China's students were sent abroad to learn the ways of Western science and technology. This philosophy of “韬光養晦” (tāo guāng yǎng huì) or “biding one's time and keeping our head down while building one's own strengths,” popularized by Deng, continued with his two successors at a time of Western financial, military, and cultural dominance in the late 20th century.

China's current leader, Xi Jinping, picks up from this arc of modern Chinese history. Mao and Deng had represented the earlier stages of the Chinese people and the struggles of its leadership to achieve independence and economic modernity. The trials and toils of the nation in these earlier periods have resulted in its political and industrial development and Xi is a son of this maturation. He has continued to advance the political integrity and performance of China's governing bodies to better represent and serve the people. Xi has mobilized and focused the nation's material resources and human talent towards eradicating poverty and building a “小康社会” (xiǎo kāng shè huì) or “moderately prosperous society.” With the improvements in their general welfare, the Chinese people see the results of their sacrifices and support their government. These advancements have given the nation a newfound confidence and elevated the potential of the people and its leaders to believe, envision, and build a future.

At a time when the West faces a crisis of rule and stagnation, the Chinese are taking on new frontiers. They are making breakthroughs in science and technology. They are grasping for what it means to be Chinese—today in China, one sees a birth of Chinese aesthetics rather than a turn to Western styles and the revival in the studies of ancient Chinese philosophers rather than an imitation of the political and social theories of the Western elite. And they are facing the responsibility of being a nation that makes up nearly

a fifth of the world's population and has become an economic, political, and ideological force.

### A NEW WORLD ORDER: THE CALL FOR PEACE

“It is, then, the strife of all honorable men of the twentieth century to see that in the future competition of races the survival of the fittest shall mean the triumph of the good, the beautiful, and the true; that we may be able to preserve for the future civilization all that is really fine and noble and strong, and not continue to put a premium on greed and impudence and cruelty.”

*The Souls of Black Folk*

W.E.B. Du Bois

The modern history of the Chinese people is part of the world history of the previous century that has been marred by the development of the few at the cost of the many, by wars and the loss of human lives, and by dominance and immorality. Yet, it is also part of that wonderful history that has seen the greatest peoples' struggles for freedom, the cooperation of once colonized nations, and the development of new principled relationships between men. To understand the current changes in the world now coming out of Asia and Africa, we need to understand the tasks and what remained unfinished of that revolutionary history. And in doing so, we are faced with the duty to know our revolutionary legacy so that we may join China and the world not in war, but in peace and brotherhood and answer the shared questions of modernity.

In April of 1955, the leaders of Asia and Africa came together in Indonesia for the Bandung Conference, “the first intercontinental conference of colored peoples in the history of mankind.” The conference represented nearly half the world's population, with different languages, religions, traditions, and histories. Countries that had recently achieved independence or were still battling for independence, including China, India, Ghana, Libya, Afghanistan, Indonesia, faced the questions of modernity and sought dialogue with each other. At a stage of world history in which the masses of ordinary people were increasingly conscious of and in exchange with those beyond their immediate villages, tribes, and communities, what were to be the economic, political, and moral basis of their development and of their exchange? Due to colonialism, the rich civilizations of Africa and Asia were held back from these crucial questions of modernity. Bandung represented a new beginning of relations that would no longer be mediated by the Western colonial powers and their world view of supremacy, exploitation, and war. While there were differences against the backdrop of the Cold War, the countries conversed for seven

days and laid down principles for national equality and sovereignty, economic cooperation, and world peace. Of most importance, the leaders emphasized a moral and spiritual framework for civilizational contact on the basis of respect, understanding, and cooperation. They underscored the need for people to know each other, exchange ideas, and collectively solve the economic, political, and moral questions of modernity. The transformation of ordinary men and women would be needed to actualize the Bandung principles and create a new world for all humanity.

Seventy years later, today, there is a revival of the Bandung spirit with the formation of BRICS+, led by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and the Belt and Road Initiative among others. Countries that have continued to face poverty, been dismissed within the framework of Western neoliberal institutions, and lacked alternative mechanisms for cooperation are finding new opportunities and real progress for the uplift of their people. The progress has been promising, including those in infrastructure development and financial modernization. Despite complexities, challenges, and conflicts, there have been sustained calls for peace and civilizational exchange. Notably, BRICS has opposed the attacks on Palestine with individual members taking a harder stance. In 2023, South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice of the United Nations for committing genocide.

The world is forging new relationships and the American ruling elite faces a crisis of rule as it meets the distrust and contempt of its people. Yet the dying order and its elaborate network of media reporting, universities, and celebrities still continues to be able to stoke disunity and provoke war. What will the American people turn to in this transitional moment in history? Will we follow the narratives of the ruling elite and face the changes in the darker world with hostility? Or will we turn to a different set of relations and take up our responsibility to bring about peace and a new world in becoming? The revolutionary history and example of the Black Freedom Struggle in this country point to a path towards the latter.

In the 20th century, the American ruling elite suppressed not only the freedom struggles of Asia and Africa—in Korea, Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, the list goes on—but also the sympathies of the American people through the “Red” scare. Yet despite the cost and dominant anti-human ideology, Black America has consistently sought to know and express solidarity with the darker world. In the 1950s, W.E.B. Du Bois was arrested and tried by the state for being a “foreign agent” for his peace activities towards disarmament and abolishment of the atomic bomb. Yet he continued to visit, learn, and write of the democratic experiments of the Soviet Union and China, stating that the great tragedy of the age was that “men know so little of men.” Paul

Robeson advocated for the freedom of Black America and the unity of Africa. He sang the liberation songs of the Soviet Union and of China. For those activities, the state confiscated his passport for nearly eight years (which prevented him from attending Bandung in 1955). In spite of the persistent demonization of the North Vietnamese and glorification of war as patriotism, Muhammad Ali refused induction into the U.S. Armed Forces—“my conscience won't let me go shoot my brother, some poor hungry people in the mud for big powerful America... and shoot them for what?” As a result, he was convicted, fined, stripped of his Heavyweight Title, and suspended from boxing.

Du Bois, Robeson, and Ali were able to see through the fog of the American consensus for war because Black folk in America have seen both the facade and the truth of America. From the days of slavery through the promise of Reconstruction to the Third American Revolution, they have both heard and felt what America said about them—that Black folk are backwards and have no history—and known and strove for who they are—a people capable of building civilization. Through their religion, art, music, literature, and revolutionary history, Black Americans have sought to answer the question of “What is the human and its relationship to others?” I argue that this profound endeavor and world view has created a new human being, able to see the downtrodden people of the world wherever they are in their struggle for peace and uplift. They have connected the Black Freedom Struggle in America to the anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa. And they have created a synthesis with world civilizations centered on the demand for freedom and dignity—Martin Luther King, Jr. adopted the philosophy of “satyāgraha” or “truth-force” and the Nation of Islam an Afro-Asiatic religion for the liberation of Black America.

We are surrounded by a culture that is pessimistic and skeptical of all—we are a lost people without a creative engine towards the future. However, as the revolutionaries of the Black Freedom Struggle exemplified, we must cultivate a spirit of optimism and curiosity about the world. As Asia and Africa battle to be born, we must seek to study and know the world's revolutionary history and development for our fixed assumptions of our relationships to the world may be challenged. Is China really our enemy? And we must demand for peace—to resolve differences not through the destruction of man, woman, and child but through intelligent dialogue and creative solutions. For in peace, we may find that we and the world's people share common questions of modernity that will require human fraternity to progress. How do we ensure that the material needs of 8.2 billion people are met? What is the purpose of our lives? Can the good, the beautiful, and the true in life triumph and become the guiding stars of human activity and striving?



# Three Black Kings: Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and Sun Ra (Part One)

MICHELLE LYU

In 1974, Duke Ellington writes his final composition *Three Black Kings (Ballet for Orchestra)*. This tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. grieves King’s 1968 assassination, and eulogizes him alongside Black Kings Balthazar and Solomon. Ellington described the Bible as containing “all the other books” and in his vision, Martin King is lifted up among the guiding stars of humanity’s sky. Ellington is discovering Truth, and modernizing it.

Just as we received the gift of one King, we received a single Duke. Or as he was affectionately called, The Duke of Ellington. Such men are the royals of our civilization; those who are instruments of all that is pure and futuristic in our young yet weary nation that struggles to be reimagined. Of the disparate sounds and strivings of the enslaved African, Duke articulated a new language, orchestrated the letters of America’s musical alphabet. All modern music to emerge from this country that can move the hearts and souls of men, women and children, has been shaped by the creative, intellectual efforts of Duke Ellington and the Ellington Orchestra.

Duke Ellington’s great achievements as a composer can be felt and appreciated by intuition. *Mood Indigo*, one of his most recognizable compositions, is arresting in its fresh beauty and understated complexity. Much of Ellington’s music has been heard in this way, remembered for its original beauty and sound. However, Ellington’s music cannot be known in its completeness until it is listened to consciously. Duke’s compositions express his revolutionary ideas and place him as one of the greatest writers of a new musical literature in the 20th century. His life and works extend from the revolutionary history of human consciousness and world movements in the struggle for freedom.

The revolutionary music created by Black folk has not just been forgotten today, it has been deliberately lost and misunderstood. The cultural landscape today is so commercial, so produced and lonely that it has shattered people’s imaginations of what is possible. That this music is not broadly known, and especially by youth, can only be explained by the decisions of an elite who have decided what parameters of culture and art are permitted. But in America, Black geniuses created great music, so that we may have, renew and create great music again.

America’s true music grounds itself in the Sorrow Songs, which W.E.B. Du Bois called the enslaved

Black worker’s articulate message to the world. This message from Black folk is a modern vision of freedom, that if taken up by the world’s people will advance world civilization to a new height. Today it is the key to moving humanity from the worldview of the European Renaissance and everything white, to a more complete modernity whose origins are in the anti-slavery struggle; and it belongs to the world.

## DUKE ELLINGTON AND THE BLACK WORKER

The anti-slavery struggle culminated in the formal Emancipation of the enslaved proletariat by 1863. For two decades to follow, this newly freed people embarked on the journey of Reconstruction to build a new democracy that included the whole American people. The unfulfilled promises of this freedom movement were halted by the white supremacist social order and ushered this new people northward, into cities like Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and New York. Duke Ellington, born 1899, was raised at this inflection point in history and sought to tell this story of the African American’s heroic journey into modernity. In doing so, he was writing the story of the whole American people.

He composes *Mood Indigo* in 1930, “A story about a little girl and a little boy. They are about eight and the girl loves the boy. They never speak of it, of course, but she just likes the way he wears his hat. Every day he comes to her house at a certain time and she sits in her window and waits. Then one day he doesn’t come. *Mood Indigo* just tells how she feels.”

*Mood Indigo* reflects the uniquely modern vision emerging from Black people. This worldview poses the problem of how to develop as a human being within a Western society that weathers and dims the human spirit and cleaves the natural human instinct to love. It is a simple, almost folk story that expresses the interior life of any human being living through modernity who experiences the disappointments of it.

The coming of Emancipation made possible the existence of Black genius because there were newly possible, though still severely limited, social possibilities for the African American. Chattel slavery was legally obsolete, and Black people could only rise from what had been the lowest place a people had ever been forced into. As Black folk and their leaders rose to create this new freedom, the

social system responded with new and unusually cruel forms of white supremacy such as the overturning of Reconstruction and brutalities of Jim Crow.

Duke watched and recognized the paradoxes of this moment in a white supremacist America’s development. His grandparents had been slaves in the South, and his parents labored serving white folk in segregated Washington D.C. But as America inevitably swung toward modern development, Black and white folk began to grow closer in their experiences and aspirations.

This may be most clearly seen in Harlem of the 1920s and 1930s, the backdrop to the early creative period of the Ellington Orchestra and Ellington’s composition *Black and Tan Fantasy*, named for the segregated Harlem night clubs. These Black and Tan clubs were crowded nightly with all white guests entertained by all Black performers, whose own friends were not allowed in. White folk needed and sought out Black art to redefine themselves in a society whose definitions were changing, but at the same time feared what had made Black art possible: this dark stranger’s true experience, and the greatness of his human will.

In 1923 Ellington moved north from Washington D.C. to New York. The group secured a residency at the Cotton Club in Harlem in 1927 and consolidated into a united orchestra. For the next few decades, Ellington focused his compositions on the story of Black people in America and their strivings for freedom, such as his first major symphony *Black, Brown and Beige* which he called “a tone parallel to the American Negro,” debuted at Carnegie Hall in 1943 but left unrecognized in its time.

Black people, above all the world’s people, learned from necessity to hew their humanity from stone in a white social order constructed on the assumption of their inhumanity. What emerged was a new way of seeing, knowing and acting, a criteria for the new human being. Black artists like Ellington and Charles Mingus saw at the start of the 20th century that the European framework could no longer meet the needs of reality. Its science, religion, art and philosophy fell short at the hem of the African American’s experience. In a modern America still overdetermined by European notions, love would suffer; and if love suffered, then generations of children and modern civilization itself would lose something vital. It was hard to know how high the price would be.

Mingus, in many ways Duke’s greatest successor, wrote of losing true love again and again as a young man, who because of the color line was always targeted by a social reality that could and would not permit him to live freely. Another love slipped away through his hands before he was ten, but “had this moment of pure love lasted forever, I’m sure they could both have survived all life’s problems.”

## ELLINGTON AND THE AFRO ASIATIC FUTURE

In W.E.B. Du Bois’s 1928 novel *Dark Princess*, a Black man from the South named Matthew Towns holds a unique vision of the future, which he delivers to the world after encountering leaders of Afro Asian nations in Berlin. When he meets a young royal princess from India, there is perfect compatibility between the visions of these familiar strangers. These leaders from Egypt, India, China, Japan and Africa gather to solve the problem of imperialism, but their achievement depends on something Matthew alone knows: the formerly enslaved Black worker’s message to the world of how freedom for humanity can be achieved through resolving the problem of the color line.

*“America is teaching the world one thing and only one thing of real value, and that is, that ability and capacity for culture is not the hereditary monopoly of a few, but the widespread possibility for the majority of mankind if they only have a decent chance in life.”*

A cornerstone of the anti-slavery worldview is belief that it is the lowest of the low and not the elite and powerful who are the creators of civilization. This explains how Ellington and his musicians, directly out of the shadow of slavery, prophetically saw the unfolding freedom of the Afro Asiatic world in the 20th century.

It was entirely natural in his encounters with African and Asian people for Ellington to see Black folk reflected back to him in every face. In India he meets an ordinary man, “the blackest man I’ve ever seen in my life, and he has the most beautiful face I’ve ever seen. It is pure, completely positive, showing absolutely no sign of any susceptibility to any degree of negativity.” More than a color, black was a pure value emerging from moral depth, and so he saw black as simply the most beautiful.

*“I want to see if this thing is true, if it can possibly be true that wallowing masses often conceal submerged kings.”*

The orchestra was itself composed of submerged kings, men like Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney and Cootie Williams whose expressions of natural genius were made possible by the cradle of Ellington’s leadership. Without this opportunity, they would have remained in the soot of a white supremacist society that trapped its people in mediocrity, and especially trapped the possibilities of all who were Black.

Harry Carney was the longest-serving member of the orchestra. He was invited by Duke to join the orchestra when he was only 17 and for the next five decades remained until his death, “Of all of the groups



that I'd heard, his was the most outstanding. And he was playing original compositions—things that you wouldn't hear from anybody else but Ellington." His involvement showed the deeply democratic character that explained the loyalty, united discipline and joyful creation of the orchestra. "Every time there was an addition to the band, the new instrumentalist seemed to give Duke new ideas and something to draw from and add in his writing." All these men shared something in common, which was their knowledge of the color line and their determination to free humanity from it.

These musicians were talented artists who taught themselves and each other. Hodges and Carney were friends who grew up together in Boston in the 1920s, "We used to get together and listen to records. And, of course, I've always been a great admirer of Johnny. I was trying to play alto in the same vein, and I stuck as close to him as he would allow me. It did me an awful lot of good." Duke composed with, around and for the unique voices of his musicians, such as the unforgettable features of Carney in *Sophisticated Lady* featuring Carney, or Hodges in *Isfahan*. "As Duke's band grew and new members injected their personalities, he was inspired to write." When Johnny Hodges died, Duke recognized "our band will never sound the same." The musicians' witness and the brilliant music they produced was evidence of how much Duke loved his musicians, and how much they loved him.

Not enough is known about the artistic contributions and lives of these musicians due to the need of a white supremacist society to obscure

true, creative culture that has the power to topple and break all myths. If these men had been white, it would be taken for granted today that we know and celebrate their names. But if they had been white, they also could never have created this music. They would not have been able to see and know what they did. However, in a future where men are free from the color line, their music is known, celebrated and loved by the people forever. Ellington, along with his successors Charles Mingus and Sun Ra each saw this future freedom as a reality, and developed men in order to reach it.

When the Ellington orchestra first visited the Afro Asiatic world in 1963, everything that passed through the musical construction of their orchestra became modern. Upon their visit to India, an Indian newspaper expressed why *Mood Indigo* was "the mood of the century." Their people, who were also struggling against British colonialism which had kept the people poor, miseducated and uneducated, resonated with the blue disappointments of the modern world.

In 1969 when the orchestra performed *La Plus Belle Africaine* in Africa, Ellington opened the performance by dedicating the composition to Africa, which he felt was right "after writing African music for 35 years." He placed Black people as a cornerstone of the world's people and actively articulated these connections, and created these new ties. In his suites and songs dedicated to the world, such as *Mount Harissa* for Lebanon or *The Sleeping Lady And The Giant Who Watches Over Her* for Mexico, a piece that personifies the myth of two mountains, Duke affirmed again and again that modernity was the birthright of



*The Ellington Orchestra arrives in Japan, 1966. Left to right: Harry Carney, Duke Ellington, Paul Gonsalves, Russell Procope, Stephen James, Jimmy Hamilton, Sam Woodyard (rear), Buster Cooper, Cat Anderson, Johnny Hodges, Herbie Jones, Chuck Connors. Source: Music is My Mistress, 1973*

colored civilizations.

Ellington, one of the most prolific composers in the history of American composition, created an amazing output of hundreds and thousands of works over his life. Among these, many were dedicated to civilizations across Africa, Asia and Latin America, reflecting how he bound his people with darker humanity as a whole. Every new composition arrived as a beautiful flower, respectfully gifted to each civilization and her people.

*"If Mr. Towns' assumption is true, and I believe it is, and recognized, as some time it must be, it will revolutionize the world."*

CHARLES MINGUS, THE SACRED MUSICIAN

Charles Mingus was the perfect inheritor of Duke Ellington's language for a new moment in history. He came up in a time of individual virtuosity among Black musicians, which Ellington's groundwork had made possible by giving the confidence and language for a later generation to inherit. Charlie Parker, Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Max Roach, John Coltrane and Miles Davis and many others each became recognizable bandleaders and creators during the flowering of this music, when it touched the wider American and international consciousness. Among these giants, Mingus was exceptional in his genius as a composer and a creative, intellectual force who advanced art as modern and revolutionary.

By the 1940s, the white supremacist music industry began to consolidate into a system to control the artistic terms and depress the purity of the music, and keep Black artists poor. "I am Charles Mingus, half black man, not even white enough to pass for nothing but black. I am Charles Mingus, a famed jazzman, but not famed enough to make a living in this society." It was a renaissance of Black genius, but under the yoke of an ever-evolving white supremacy, few of these geniuses survived and lived as they should have. This was white supremacy's natural reaction to the flourishing of pure Black art that so fiercely challenged the myths of the color line. Charles Mingus articulated this threat and spent his life battling directly against it because he saw how high the stakes were. "If the people are separated from their music, they die."

He modeled artistic integrity in a time when it was becoming increasingly difficult to do so. "Monk and Bird are dying for what they believe." But he saw the changing American landscape clearly and how her people thirsted for higher moral and spiritual ideals. "I don't know why they don't want the kids to hear good music. Is it because it would make them healthy?" He created beautiful music to fill this void.

Despite the brutal pressures of a white commercial industry that encouraged Black musicians to sell out, Mingus was unbending in his commitment to Truth, Love and Beauty. He looked to the musicians that had walked before and with him, and felt it was his duty to heighten; to never betray the best of what they had given. "Bud, Fats, and Bird—they're like saints to me. There won't be many more of those guys, I don't think. Like sacred musicians, they gave everything. I think they really thought they were telling the people—being like ministers in a way, to give the people the message, the spirit to live."

If Ellington protected the musicians of his orchestra, Mingus took the responsibility of protecting all musicians, the people and the music itself. He was fiercely protective of other Black musicians. In a public letter to Miles Davis in 1955, one of the best-paid jazz musicians at the time, Mingus wrote to his brother, "You're playing the greatest Miles I've ever heard, and I'm sure you already know that you're one of America's truly great jazz stylists... Truly, Miles, I love you and want you to know you're needed here."

Miles Davis, who was far more popular among Black and white audiences, is a mirror to appreciate how special Charles Mingus really was. Davis was also an original voice and creative genius, but he did not have a concept of the sacred in the way Mingus did. With extreme gentleness Mingus wrote, "You're too important a person in jazz to be less than extra careful about what you say about other musicians who are also trying to create." At age 36, musician Eric Dolphy died tragically young due to racist untreatment when he fell into a diabetic coma in Berlin in 1964. Shortly before his death, he read a brutal attack from Miles on his music printed in *Downbeat* and was crestfallen, responding that he loved and respected Miles.

Mingus loved Eric Dolphy, with whom he'd worked closely. "Usually, when a man dies, you remember—or you say you remember—only the good things about him. With Eric, that's all you could remember. I don't remember any drags he did to anybody. The man was absolutely without a need to hurt." "Eric Dolphy was a complete musician." The passing of Eric Dolphy and other pure musicians like Bud Powell and Fats Navarro affected him deeply because he so much saw himself in them. And because their deaths were unjust and could have been prevented, if only man was willing to know man: "I'm beginning to feel even this earth is more than man needs for himself if he loved his brother."

Charles Mingus was a guardian, defending all pure beings in a morally broken society. He loved them as he loved children, and he referenced children constantly because he loved them and he loved the future. He composed beautiful art that he wished for children to hear and know. In his 1972 *Let My Children Hear Music* he improvises a beautiful



symphony *Adagio Ma Non Troppo*, showing what he believes the young are capable of hearing, knowing, creating, and what they deserve.

MINGUS AND THE MODERN HUMAN BEING

Most universally, Charles Mingus modeled how the individual human being can become modern without becoming white. He advanced the science of how to become deeply human in an inhuman society, deeply feeling in a society that rejects feeling, intuition and instinct. He grew up in Watts, Los Angeles, born 1922 to a Black and Chinese mother and Black and white father, and pursued a self-identity which emerged from the Black worldview as a modern identity, one that dealt with the future.

“It’s about a kid like you who believed.” Mingus recognized the moral necessity of developing his own unique humanity as an instrument of a higher message, “He was born believing but as he grew, everything around him, beginning with his parents and sisters and teachers, everybody seemed to say that what he believed wasn’t so...

“So somehow he became two personalities, one as sincere as the other, and then three, because he could stand off and watch the other two. The reason was that he suspected maybe the people who didn’t believe might be right, that there was nothing to believe in. But if he accepted this and put down the beautiful honest good things he’d lost out on all he could have gained if he’d never lost his belief in believing.

“He had to hold onto both believing in disbelief and believing in belief.”

W.E.B. Du Bois, born 1868 described the double consciousness of Black folk: “an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” Generations later, Mingus developed the idea of triple consciousness, a third personality who could stand off and witness the struggle between the Black soul and white society, unending until white supremacy ends. If being a Black man, and furthermore a Black revolutionary artist in a white supremacist society, Mingus needed to become three selves in order to survive, then this implied only struggle, or striving could unite these three into one, “Which one is real?” “They’re all real.”

The third consciousness, who “stands forever in the middle, unconcerned, unmoved, watching, waiting to be allowed to express what he sees to the other two” was like a God who saw that the fall of white civilization was inevitable, for it failed to sustain all that is human, and in time would reorder the world toward justice. To keep growing as a human being, apart from the bondage of white supremacy, Mingus recognized that man needed faith in this Black God.



Charles Mingus with his daughter Carolyn, 1964. Credit: Jill Krementz.

In 1959 he writes *Self-Portrait in Three Colours*, its tender beauty emerging from this faith and science of threes.

The future can only be inherited by leaving the white world, letting it go. In *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, composed 1956, Mingus tells how the myth of white supremacy crippled white civilization. “This composition is actually a jazz tone poem because it depicts musically my conception of the modern counterpart of the first man to stand erect.” The first modern man to stand erect, the white man, through dominion and rape subjugated the non-white peoples of the world, “but both his own failure to realize the inevitable emancipation of those he sought to enslave, and his greed in attempting to stand on a false security, deny him not only the right of ever being a man, but finally destroy him completely.”

It is from this departure point, the total exhaustion of white civilization and the creation of a new human being that has nothing to do with whiteness, that we then move to Sun Ra.

In Ellington, Mingus and Sun Ra’s imaginary, there stands a higher future awaiting humanity: civilization unbound by racism, poverty and war. It is toward this freedom that we reach and struggle.

*This is part one of a two-part essay on the work and lives of composers Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and Sun Ra.*

The Soul of John Brown

BLAISE LARAMEE

“If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”

*Job 14:14*

“Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

*Gitanjali 35*

Rabindranath Tagore

The martyr’s spirit widens after death. Given to a great cause, offered in sacrifice for a principle, their life spins out and upward, toward the infinite and into the living history of men’s consciousness. Such a man was John Brown. And yet as the years march on, the wide lesson of his life has been flattened. Some know the song, and can sing, “His soul goes marching on,” but of what quality was the soul, and what moved it? What was the height and depth and breadth of his life? What forged that spirit, so unyielding and yet so tender, so moved by the suffering of the enslaved that he would die to see them free? What could the soul of John Brown mean to the American people today, and especially to the masses of white poor? And could we, in our time of great confusion and moral crisis, see such a spirit live again?

RECLAIMING A REVOLUTIONARY

John Brown is an enduring symbol of American history, and for good reason. He holds a special place of honor in the heart of Black folk. But we must be clear on the reason his life holds an eternal lesson, or risk losing a potent weapon for the people. For many today, Brown’s life is shortened to just the three days of his attack on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in 1859, and thus a two-dimensional John Brown is produced and reproduced.

He is claimed by elements of the white left and by those whose conception of revolution begins and ends with armed struggle and guerilla warfare, who romanticize the gun and the individual act of violence. For them, John Brown is exemplar of the anarchist propaganda of the deed, a Luigi Mangione hoping to incite wider violence and popular revolt with a brave but doomed act. Brown is sometimes claimed by Marxist theorists and his life squashed into a limiting framework of pure class consciousness.

Brown today is also honored by liberals as simply a “historical” figure without any consideration for

what history he occupied, remembered in name but stripped of substance. For example, “The Spirit of John Brown Freedom Award” is given each year by the John Brown Lives! nonprofit to a wide range of recipients of any cause considered progressive, from immigrant rights to environmental justice. Past awardees include Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine and Aaron Mair, president of The Sierra Club.

But Brown is much more than his fateful raid at Harpers Ferry. To understand him we must come to him through the striving of the Black proletariat for freedom—we must come to him through W.E.B. Du Bois. For it was the institution of slavery which sought to crush the humanity of the Black proletariat, and the Black proletariat’s struggle to break its shackles and seize freedom, which mortally wounded the conscience of John Brown and made clear to him the moral choice of his time and of his life.

It is John Brown’s moral choice to reject whiteness and struggle to defend the humanity of Black folk that, more than the shock of his attack on Harper’s Ferry, or even the attack itself, makes him a man for today. He saw the anti-slavery struggle as the struggle of his time which held in its great and terrible circumference all others. In the midst of a stifling white supremacist social system, and against all social laws of the day, Brown made a choice—and it is this capacity to make the moral choice which makes every ordinary human being an extraordinary force for change. The moral imperative is the revolutionary imperative, and the choice before us today, as it was for Brown then, is the moral choice.

John Brown found ambivalence to slavery, that great denial of Black humanity, too great a burden for his spirit to bear. Brown called the struggle against slavery “a cause which every citizen of this ‘glorious Republic’ is under equal obligation to do, and for the neglect of which he will be held accountable by God,—a cause in which every man, woman, and child of the entire human family has a deep and awful interest.”

It was because he knew and loved the enslaved that Brown could not stand idle. Du Bois writes, “Of all this development John Brown knew far more than most white men and it was on this great knowledge that his great faith was based. To most Americans the inner striving of the Negro was a veiled and an unknown tale: they had heard of Douglass, they knew of fugitive slaves, but of the living, organized, struggling group that made both these phenomena possible they had no conception. From his earliest

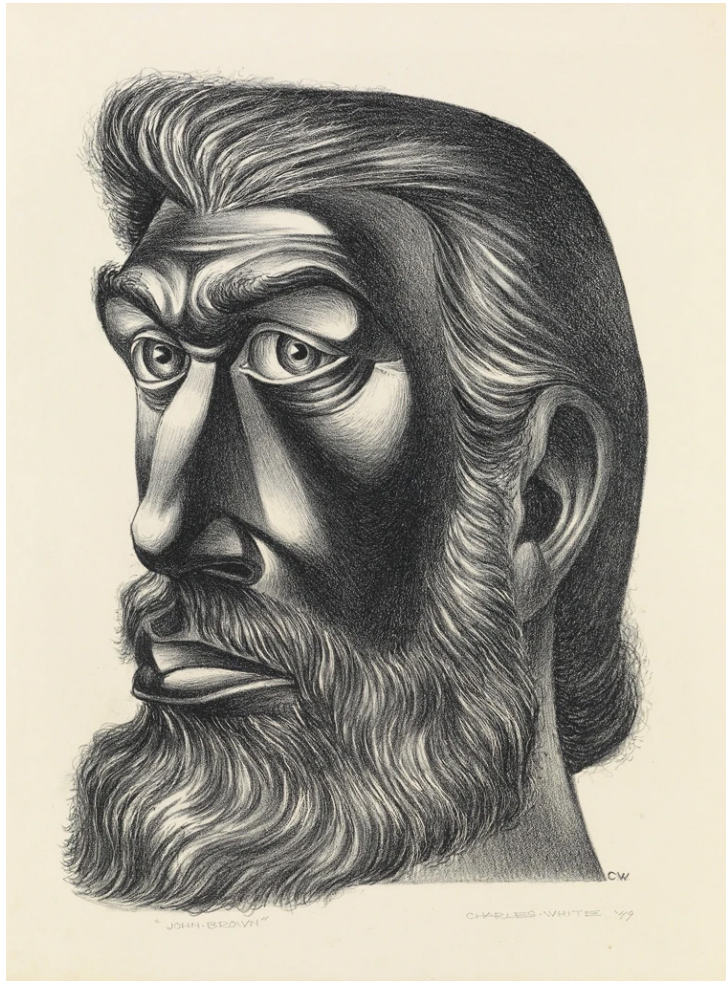


interest in Negroes, John Brown sought to know individuals among them intimately and personally. He invited them to his home and he went to theirs. He talked to them, and listened to the history of their trials, advised them and took advice from them.”

Brown was confronted with slavery in his childhood. He was born, writes Du Bois in *John Brown*, “as the shudder of Hayti was running through all the Americas, and from his earliest boyhood he saw and felt the price of repression—the fearful cost that the western world was paying for slavery.”

Du Bois tells, “But in all these early years of the making of this man, one incident stands out as foretaste and prophecy—an incident of which we know only the indefinite outline, and yet one which unconsciously foretold to the boy the life deed of the man.” After driving cattle to the home of a landlord, Brown was invited in, and met an enslaved boy beaten and abused right in front of him by his host. Against this inhumanity Brown’s young soul chafed and he asked, troubled, “Is God their Father?”

“And what he asked,” writes Du Bois, “a million and a half black bondmen were asking throughout the land.”



“John Brown,” Charles White, 1949

As a child Brown learned the English Bible, its language and logic, but his religious upbringing was soft and sensitive, nourished more by wandering in the cathedral of the forest than in the pew on Sunday, and it was only later that the child’s simple but strong morality would become that of an iron Christian love. He calloused his hands with all kinds of physical work and with all kinds of people, “now a land-surveyor, now a tanner and now a lumber dealer; a postmaster, a wool-grower, a stock-raiser, a shepherd, and a farmer.” The cold hand of death entered his life early and often, teaching him as no school teacher could the brevity and sanctity of life, taking first a lamb, then his mother, his first wife, and nine of his children.

It was Brown who struck in Kansas bloody blows for a state free from slavery in a civil war before Civil War, who rode out at evening with deadly justice on his brow and rode back at daylight with widows behind. It was the steel of Brown’s principles that led him into financial battle with the might of the wool industry when, for a time, he was a prominent seller of farmers’ wool. And it was those same unrelenting principles that ruined him when powerful buyers colluded to lowball his fair-priced product and Brown refused to yield. Before injustice the personality of Brown, like a great oak, could never bend, and would not break.

But it was also Brown who “When any of the family were sick...sat up himself and was like a tender mother,” recounted his children. When one of his daughters was ill he stayed up all night nursing her with what medicine and comfort he had, and when she died he broke down and wept. This, too, was the personality of John Brown.

All this went to the making of a thinking, feeling man, not merely a derivative of economic laws or collusion of disinterested historical forces but a conscious, grasping soul, “ever looking here and there in the world to find his place. And that place, he came gradually to decide in his quiet firm way, was to be an important one.” James Baldwin in his essay “The Creative Process” considers the possibilities that existed for a new kind of freedom and a new relation between people in a young America. He writes, “But the price for this is a long look backward whence we came and an unflinching assessment of the record. For an artist, the record of that journey is most clearly revealed in the personalities of the people the journey produced.” And up against Brown’s questing personality, grating and scraping and bleeding, rose the evil of slavery and the moral crisis of white supremacy.

### THE MORAL CHOICE: REJECT WHITENESS, REJOIN HUMANITY

So what is the spirit of John Brown for today? We know it must be a moral choice which rejects

whiteness, which is a separation of yourself from humanity. To know the spirit of John Brown today, and the possibilities of the moral choice, we must know the souls of Black folk. We must ourselves be transformed by the Black freedom movement and by the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr.

Previous European movements and revolutions had made their focus the individual, his rights and ability to reason. King recognized in America a need for a transformation of the individual for the transformation of society, and for a “moral revolution of values.” To build a new society requires new human beings. This new human being is responsible not just to a class or nation but to all of humanity, and only the force of love is fierce and wide and strong enough to bind all of humanity to this new human being. What is the great power of this love? It is that no one can keep themselves separate from humanity, no one can accept the delusion of safety, no one can be white, who loves humanity. The great theorist and soldier of this revolutionary and transformative love was King.

In his sermon “Paul’s Letter to American Christians” King tells of the indispensability of love to the American struggle for freedom and democracy. “You may even give your body to be burned, and die the death of a martyr, and your spilled blood may be a symbol of honor for generations yet unborn, and thousands may praise you as one of history’s supreme heroes; but even so, if you have not love, your blood is spilled in vain...Without love, benevolence becomes egotism and martyrdom becomes spiritual pride. The greatest of all virtues is love.”

Here is a great lesson for the young people of today. While many forces in our society pressure youth to individualism and materialism, to be concerned only with your own comfort, career, and image, and sell us the lie that we can live separate from the suffering and pain of those around us, King challenges us to an alternative set of priorities and to new values. It is in commitment to the uplift of humanity that the individual finds their greatest freedom, and life its greatest meaning. This is a powerful message to the youth of today: that you need not act alone, and more than even what you do, it is the moral choice and the animating purpose behind the act that ultimately affects the greatest change in yourself and in the world. It is the evolving moral consciousness of people, and their decision to forego safety and act upon that all-humanity conscience, which more than any other force moves history forward.

We have as evidence of the transformative power of this revolutionary love and the moral choice to reject whiteness the lives of those in the Civil Rights movement. When King put out the call for people to come South and join the struggle for Black liberation, students and ministers and ordinary people of all kinds answered. They rejected the false safety whiteness promised them and cast their lot in with the striving

of Black folk, joining picket lines, marches, voter registration drives, and lunch counter sit-ins.

We have as evidence people like Reverend James Reeb, a unitarian pastor who, moved by the TV footage he saw of police attacking marchers on “Bloody Sunday,” answered King’s call and flew South to join the marches from Selma to Montgomery. On March 9th, Reeb and two other ministers eating at an integrated restaurant were attacked and brutally beaten by white men with clubs. He died two days later. King eulogized Reeb, saying, “His crime was that he dared to live his faith; he placed himself alongside the disinherited black brethren of this community,” and “demonstrated the conscience of the nation.” He was one of those who “dares to love and rises to the majestic height of moral maturity.”

Or remember Viola Liuzzo who, watching the “Bloody Sunday” march on TV, joined a protest at Wayne State. Leaving her children with a friend, she called her husband and said this “was everybody’s fight” and drove to Selma, where she volunteered to transport marchers back and forth from Montgomery in her car. While driving she was overtaken by members of the Ku Klux Klan who, seeing her with a young Black man named Leroy Moton, shot and killed her. It is the long moral arc of the universe which solemnly bends to touch the grave of Liuzzo today and honors her courage.

Jonathan Daniels, a seminary student, answered the call in August 1965 and was arrested with 28 others for picketing the white-only stores in Fort Deposit, Alabama. After being denied parole and held in a jail without air-conditioning for six days, they were released, and Daniels along with a white Catholic priest and two young Black activists walked to a nearby store for a cold drink while waiting for transportation to arrive. At the door to the store they were stopped by white construction worker and deputy sheriff Tom Coleman, who aimed a shotgun at seventeen-year-old Ruby Sales. Daniels pushed Sales out of the way and was killed by the shotgun blast. Of Jonathan Daniels, King said, “The meaning of his life was so fulfilled in his death that few people in our time will know such fulfillment or meaning though they live to be a hundred.” Daniels himself wrote, “We go to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. We go to stand with the captives and the blind and the oppressed. We go in ‘active non-resistance,’ not to ‘confront’ but to love and to heal and to free.”

There has been written, if the people will take it up, a new covenant for the people of America in the struggle of the Black Freedom Movement. Under this new covenant and unmediated by whiteness, new human and national possibilities can be born. It is the spirit of King and the struggle of the Black Freedom



Movement for freedom, peace, and democracy which transforms the moral choice for today and which makes possible a life worthy of humanity. To rejoin humanity is to take up a responsibility for humanity, to build, as King says, the World House and the Beloved Community, to be “caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” It is through the fiery heat of this love and the light in the eyes of this new human being which passes the soul of John Brown to us today.

### THE PRICE TO PAY, THE LIFE TO GAIN

We live in a great convulsion, when the world order established after World War II, of guaranteed American economic and intellectual hegemony, collapses with a titanic weight, and like the sudden shift and snap of a continental plate, precedes the release of enormous human energies. “Even armed with this morality of the club,” writes Du Bois, “and every advantage of modern culture, the white races have been unable to possess the earth.”

The white poor, promised safety and protection by the logic of whiteness, find themselves in a boneyard of former industry, their wages stagnating, infrastructure crumbling, school funding an afterthought to missile packages for endless wars, and their lot more and more in common with the Black poor.

Does Trump recognize this? Does the MAGA movement? There is a stirring in the consciousness of the people that propelled Trump to power, that tide of discontented, those anti-elite working people bone-weary of war, who have felt the hollowing of the nation’s industry as a starving man feels the hollowness of hunger.

But more than just an economic crisis, they find themselves confronted, like Brown, with a moral and civilizational crisis. The great tide of people, poor, many without an education, or often in spite of one, come groping, searching, begin to stretch out a hand, begin to ask of themselves and each other the questions that shake the foundations of history: What, if not this, will our country be? What principles are we to live by? What ideas will be my guide now that the university, the government, even the church, the institutions I once trusted, have proven themselves inadequate to the task of a human life? What does freedom mean, and how will it be achieved? There is undoubtedly a deep disdain for the rotting status quo of liberal vanity, and a desire for a truer democracy, but there is not yet a conception of its cost, or of the path forward.

“The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression,” writes Du Bois again and again in *John Brown*. Now the cost of slavery has become the cost of empire, and Americans today are finding that the cost of empire is too great. What does white modernity offer? Did John Brown find a resolution to that crisis in his time? He found it offered spiritual death, and

he rejected it, electing to be hanged instead, but elevated in death to a more perfect freedom: the freedom to labor in love for humanity and especially the oppressed.

As long as we have the courage to make the moral choice, to reject whiteness and rejoin humanity, the spirit of Brown will be there. In the struggle for a new society and a new civilization, which follows the torch of darker humanity after the great death throes of white modernity have rolled away, we will need new human beings. It is the great capacity and test of each of us to choose our allegiance, as Brown chose, and I think it is no exaggeration to say that this choice is between life and death. I do not know each stumble and leap that marks the path ahead, but I know the way forward must be navigated by the moral choice, and that the struggle of Black folk for freedom is our inheritance for the future.

After the raid on Harpers Ferry failed, John Brown was captured and brought to trial by the United States government. The verdict was guilty, the sentence death. In prison, Brown turned to his journal.

“I can trust God with both the time and the manner of my death, believing, as I now do, that for me at this time to seal my testimony for God and humanity with my blood will do vastly more toward advancing the cause I have earnestly endeavored to promote, than all I have done in my life before.

“My love to all who love their neighbors. I have asked to be spared from having any weak or hypocritical prayers made over me when I am publicly murdered, and that my only religious attendants be poor little dirty, ragged, bare-headed, and barefooted slave boys and girls, led by some gray-headed slave mother. Farewell! Farewell!”

So died John Brown.

“This was the man,” writes Du Bois. “His family is the world.”

So there is still, for each of us, a price to pay. And that price, though not blood or the gallows, may yet be our life. But to lose the unlife of whiteness and gain the life of moral responsibility to humanity, and struggle with those in chains? What a prize!

For what life does whiteness offer? It is no life at all, but a shadow of one, a pale imitation, cut off from the great flow of Life. For John Brown, to lay that burden down meant to take a greater one up, a task that might require your life as collateral, but which frees your soul. That price is the death of the old self which clung to the impossibility of safety, to that delusion of separateness, to sterility and still water, to eternal sick-sweet boyhood. And then after, striving upward and outward, comes a rebirth—into complexity, to maturity, to reality, into the Beloved Community: to humanity.

It is the only choice, and it is not a choice anyone can make for anyone else. But you’re not alone, for the world makes this choice every day, every hour, again and again, with you. We have, urgently and fiercely, a great responsibility to make it, and despite the lies we’ve been told and the bribes we’ve been offered, we do have the strength to make it, if we will.



*"No. 13 John Brown, after long meditation, planned to fortify himself somewhere in the mountains of Virginia or Tennessee and there make raids on the surrounding plantations, freeing slaves." Jacob Lawrence, 1977*



# Freedom (for Attica)

MUHAMMAD ALI

Better far, from all I see  
To die fighting to be free.  
What more fitting end could be?

Better surely than in some bed  
Where in broken health, I'm led  
Lingering until I'm dead.

Better than with prayers and pleas  
Or in the clutch of some disease  
Wasting slowly by degrees.

Better than a heart attack  
Or some dose of drug I lack.  
Let me die by being Black.

Better far, that I should go;  
Standing here against the foe  
Is the sweeter death to know.

Better than the bloody stain  
On some highway where I'm lain  
Torn by flying glass and pane.

Better calling death to come  
Than to die another dumb,  
Muted victim in the slum.

Better than of this prison rot;  
If there's any choice I've got  
Kill me here on the spot.

Better far, my fight to wage  
Now, while my blood boils with rage  
Lest it cool with ancient age.

Better violent for us to die  
Than to Uncle Tom and try  
Making peace just to live a lie.

Better now that I say my sooth;  
I'm going to die demanding Truth  
While I'm still akin to youth.

Better now than later on  
Now that fear of death is gone;  
Never mind another dawn.

# Truth

MUHAMMAD ALI

The face of Truth is open,  
The eyes of Truth are bright,  
The lips of Truth are ever closed,  
The head of Truth is upright.

The breast of Truth stands forward,  
The gaze of Truth is straight,  
Truth has neither fear nor doubt,  
Truth has patience to wait.

The words of Truth are touching,  
The voice of Truth is deep,  
The law of Truth is simple:  
All you sow, you reap.

The soul of Truth is flaming,  
The heart of Truth is warm,  
The mind of Truth is clear,  
And firm through rain and storm.

Facts are only its shadow,  
Truth stands above all sin;  
Great be the battle of life,  
Truth in the end shall win.

The image of Truth is the Cross,  
Wisdom's message is its rod;  
The sign of Truth is Christ,  
And the soul of Truth is God.

Life of Truth is eternal,  
Immortal is its past,  
Power of Truth shall endure,  
Truth shall hold to the last.



