

# Nation of Islam

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## RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

**Required Daily Observances.** For Nation of Islam (NOI) members, personal prayer is required five times a day. The exact prayer times for each locality are available from a variety of sources. The contract minister or volunteer may have a schedule that states the beginning time of each prayer for the specific institution. Websites are also available that will print accurate times for prayers (for example, type Salat or Muslim Prayers in a search engine). Ritual washing is required, as well as a clean place where the prayer can be made. Nation of Islam members face Mecca on a clean surface (e.g., prayer rug, towel, mat, carpet, or any other material that is kept clean and used only for this purpose), and prostrate themselves before Allah as prescribed in religious law. Prayers can be made individually. In Bureau institutions, prayers can be made during breaks at work or in between classes at school. If an inmate is in the Special Housing Unit and a

prayer rug is not permitted, an extra towel will suffice. Once the prayer has started, the inmate should be able to finish without interruption. During certain times of the year, the evening prayer comes in around the institution's 4:00 p.m. stand-up count. It is suggested that participants not begin their prayer after the unit count has been cleared, but wait until the institution count has been cleared in case of a recount. Nothing interferes with an institution count.

**Security note: Daily Prayers:**

- Inmates should have opportunity to pray five times daily.
- Other than Jumah, it is recommended that prayers be made individually throughout the day.
- Prayers can be made at work detail sites, school, or units during break times.
- If prayer comes in during official count time, inmates should wait until the count is cleared.
- A clean area, prayer rug, or towel (e.g., as a substitute in SHU) may be used.

**Required Weekly Observances**

- Jumah Prayer.
- A time for study (preferably 2 study meetings per week).

**Security note:** A reasonable length of time for Jumah is one and a half hours. Jumah includes the midday daily Islamic prayer and a message (khutbah) delivered in two parts. In the community, Tuesday afternoon is devoted to study. Video viewing is more appropriately reserved for study times rather than Friday afternoon Jumah. It is never appropriate to allow the posting of a sergeant-at-arms outside the meeting room during inmate prayer or study.

**Required Occasional Observances.** In his letter of December 1, 1998, Louis Farrakhan stated that the Nation of Islam would begin to observe the fast during Ramadan, a month in the Arabic lunar calendar and the month in which Muslims throughout the world fast. The fast begins at dawn and ends at sunset. Depending on the sighting of the moon, the fast may be 29 or 30 days long. Eating and drinking stops at dawn. During the day no eating, drinking, or sexual activity can take place. At sunset, the fast is broken by eating fruits and drinking water or juice. The evening prayer is made, followed by a complete vegetarian meal.

The sacrifices associated with fasting are designed to instill discipline, heighten

awareness of religious duty and dependence upon Allah, and be reminded of the hunger associated with being poor. During this month, those who have been materially blessed are able to be generous to those who have little or nothing.

**Security note:** The Nation of Islam observes Ramadan with Muslims throughout the world. Inmates who are sincerely motivated to observe the December fast, however, may do so as a personal or private fast.

## RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

**Savior's Day, February 26.** The Nation of Islam celebrates the birthday of W. Fard Muhammad, who brought salvation, restoration, redemption, and reconciliation to them. This is a day free from work for NOI inmates.

**Savior's Day, October 7.** On October 7, the Nation of Islam celebrates the birthday of Elijah Muhammad. This began in 1985, since most current members have not met W. Fard Muhammad. Since most members have had their lives transformed through the work of Elijah Muhammad, this day is also celebrated. This is a day free from work for NOI inmates.

**Holy Day of Atonement/Reconciliation, October 16.** Undergirding the concept of atonement is perfect union with Allah. Louis Farrakhan outlined the eight steps involved in the process of atonement and reconciliation in his speech on the Holy Day of Atonement, October 16, 1995, the day of the Million Man March in Washington, DC. This is a day free from work for NOI inmates.

- Point out the wrong. Often, people need to be told when they are wrong, because they don't always see it themselves.
- The next step is to personally admit the wrong.
- The third step involves confessing the wrong. The first confession is made to Allah and then to the individual who has been wronged.
- The fourth step is repentance. In repentance a feeling of remorse or regret for the deed takes place.
- Atonement, the fifth step, involves a willingness to do something, to make amends for the wrong done.
- The next step then becomes forgiveness. Through forgiveness one grants pardon for the wrong done, in essence to declare the individual innocent of the wrong done.
- The seventh step is reconciliation and restoration. Once one has been

declared innocent or has been pardoned, restoration to the original place which was held before in the relationship takes place.

- The original place of restoration is perfect union with Allah.

This process of atonement and reconciliation is not done overnight, but takes time.

**Security note:** It is appropriate for inmates who adhere to the tenets of the Nation of Islam to choose from their holy days (i.e., Savior's Day or Holy Day of Atonement), the day on which they will hold their once-a-year ceremonial meal.

## RELIGIOUS ITEMS

### Personal Religious Items

- Star/Crescent medallion and chain.
- Lapel pin.
- Prayer rug.
- Pillbox cap, solid color, to be worn in the Chapel only.
- Kufi, solid color only (decorated kufis are not authorized).
- Holy Qu'ran.
- Holy Bible.

**Security note:** Lapel pins and pillbox caps may be worn during services in the Chapel area only.

### Congregate Religious Items

- Prayer rug.
- Bow tie.
- NOI flag.
- Holy Qu'ran.
- Holy Bible.

**Security note:** Appropriated funds may be used to purchase bow ties. Because these are not worn against the skin, the bow ties may be regarded as Chapel property, purchased and secured in the Chapel. This ensures accountability for an item that, in other circumstances, could be used to change an inmate's appearance. Bow ties are to be worn in the Chapel during services only and stored in the Chapel.

**Searches.** While NOI inmates place great value in the Holy Qur'an, Bible, and other religious items, these can be handled by other people. Staff are expected to show the same respect for such items as for religious articles belonging to all traditions. Religious articles are not to be mishandled, thrown, placed on the floor, brought into the bathroom, or placed on the toilet or basin.

**Security note: Fruit Of Islam.** No FOI apparel or accouterments are authorized in BOP facilities. **The FOI is not a group authorized to meet in the BOP.** Because it is paramilitary in nature and an NOI internal security system, and the discipline requires drills and military gestures, the FOI is never appropriate for inmates. Only the religious dimension of the NOI is approved for meetings and teaching in BOP institutions.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

**Requirements.** Those who wish to be members of the NOI must declare they accept the teachings of the NOI and submit a basic pledge card to the processing department at the National Center, with a copy to the National Prison Reform Ministry Office. New members must ask through the pledge card or a letter to have their names written in the "Lamb's Book of Life." The NOI processing department will send a letter to each new member stating the entrance of their name into the Lamb's Book of Life.

**Security note:** Inmates seeking membership may request through a letter to have their names written in the "Lamb's Book of Life." Inmates may not distribute pledge cards to other inmates.

**Total Membership.** No information is available.

## **MEDICAL PROHIBITIONS**

No information is available.

All inmates receive TB screening by PPD (mantoux method) unless medically

contraindicated. The antigen used in the skin test does not contain pork or pork derivatives. Similarly, HIV screening is mandatory.

**Security note:** TB Screening by PPD is a public health issue in which all inmates must participate without exception.

## **DIETARY STANDARDS**

On December 1, 1998, Minister Louis Farrakhan delineated the principle of gradualism and encouraged Nation of Islam members to no longer eat meat or fish. Pork and pork byproducts are prohibited in any NOI diet.

The religious diet of NOI members can ordinarily best be met through self-selection from the mainline, which includes the no-flesh option.

## **BURIAL RITUALS**

No information is available.

## **SACRED WRITINGS**

- Holy Qu'ran – Preferred translations are those of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Yusef Muhammad.
- Holy Bible.
- All revealed scriptures.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **Headquarters Location (Main Office)**

Headquarters and Mosque Maryam  
Nation of Islam National Center  
7351 South Stony Island Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60649  
(773) 324-6000

Only organizations chartered under the above-listed name should be considered NOI-affiliated mosques.

NOI contractors and volunteers must have a letter of endorsement from the National Office of Prison Reform Ministry to provide volunteer or contract services.

## HISTORY



*Wallace Fard Muhammad*

The Nation of Islam was founded by Wallace D. Fard, later known as Wallace Fard Muhammad, in Detroit, Michigan, in 1930. He went door-to-door to sell his wares and his doctrines. He carried with him a newspaper called “Lost-Found Nation of Islam to the Wilderness of North America,” which he used as part of spreading his message. His message was three-fold: a) Christianity is a tool in the hands of white slavemasters to control the minds of black people; b) white people are devils, the embodiment of evil; and c) the only hope for black people in America is total separation and self-reliance. He established the Temple of Islam headquarters in Detroit and declared himself to be the leader of the Nation of Islam. By 1933, he had 8,000 followers. He found it necessary to train several ministers to help him, one of whom was Elijah Poole, an auto worker unemployed due to the Great Depression. In 1934, a second temple was founded in Chicago and the following year Fard Muhammad mysteriously disappeared.



*Elijah Muhammad*

Elijah Muhammad, born Elijah Poole on or about October 7, 1897, in Sandersville,

Georgia, moved his young family to Detroit in 1923 and found work in one of the automobile factories. When Elijah Poole met W.D. Fard for the first time, he stated of Fard, "He didn't have to tell me that he was Allah. When I first met him, I knew him. I recognized him. And right there I told him that he was the one the world had been looking for." After Fard Muhammad's disappearance, Poole changed his name to Elijah Muhammad and announced that the "Master" had designated him the "Messenger" and the successor and custodian of his revelation. After World War II, and having spent time in prison for refusing to be drafted, Elijah Muhammad moved back to Chicago. The Nation of Islam expanded greatly during those years. Among the converts were two persons who later made great contributions to the Nation – Malcolm Little and Louis Walcott. Elijah Muhammad wrote a number of books, started several newspapers, and continued the teachings he had learned from W. Fard Muhammad. He died in 1975 of congestive heart failure.

Most of the rapid growth the Nation of Islam experienced came about because of the dynamic personality of Malcolm Little, who became a convert while in prison. Because of his unyielding devotion to Elijah Muhammad, he became the national spokesman for the Nation. He established many temples in North America, and attracted many with his emphasis on cultural concerns, discipline, solidarity, and African identity. He changed his last name to X, because Little was his slave name and he did not know the name of his family of origin.

In the early sixties, Malcolm X became somewhat disillusioned with the Nation of Islam and slowly moved towards orthodox Islam. He finally made a break with the Nation and began his own organization along orthodox Muslim lines in 1964. In 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated in New York City.

Wallace D. Muhammad, now known as Warith Deen Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad, became the leader of the Nation of Islam after the death of his father. He had received several suspensions from the Nation but was fully restored in 1969. Under his leadership, the Nation moved towards mainstream Islam. The Nation of Islam changed names several times, from Bilillian Community, to World Community Al-Islam in the West, to American Muslim Mission, to becoming part of the Muslim faith community.





*Louis Farrakhan*

In 1977, Louis Farrakhan broke with Warith Deen Muhammad and first used the name Original Nation of Islam, which was later changed to Nation of Islam. Louis Farrakhan was born Louis Eugene Walcott in New York City on May 11, 1933. He attended college for two years, but left to become an entertainer. In 1955, while on tour, Walcott attended a Nation meeting on Chicago's South Side. At one point during the meeting, Elijah Muhammad looked at him and said,

“Brother, don't pay attention to how I speak. Pay attention to what I am saying. I didn't get the chance to go to the white man's schools, because when I tried to go, the doors were closed. But if you take what I say and place it into the beautiful way of speaking you know, you can help me save our people.”

This meeting changed his life. Louis Farrakhan joined the Nation of Islam, gave up his musical career, and worked his way up to become Minister in Boston. He was appointed Minister to the mosque in New York City and in 1965, became the National Representative of the Nation of Islam. Under his leadership, the Nation has flourished and developed many different programs. In 1988, the Nation of Islam repurchased its Mosque in Chicago and dedicated it as Mosque Maryam, the National Center for Re-training and Re-education of the Black Man and Woman of America and the World. The Nation of Islam has made several economic investments, held an International Savior's Day in Ghana, and organized the Million Man March on October 16, 1995, and the Million Family March on October 16, 2000, in Washington, D.C.

The Official Name of the Nation of Islam is: The Muhammad Mosque and/or The Lost-Found Members of the Nation of Islam in the West.

As with other religions, various leaders tend to emerge and sometimes divide the group. Nevertheless, all groups within the Nation must meet under the umbrella of NOI for prayer, study, and audio/video programming.

## THEOLOGY

**The Muslim Program.** A summary of the beliefs of the Nation of Islam written by Elijah Muhammad appears on the back inside page of each issue of *The Final Call* magazine. These are responses to frequently asked questions by both blacks and whites.

### **What the Muslims Want:**

a. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.

b. We want justice. Equal justice under the law. We want justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or color.

c. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society.

d. We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves, to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own – either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to provide such land and that the area must be fertile and mineral rich. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years – until we are able to produce and supply our own needs.

Since we cannot get along with them in peace and equality, after giving them 400 years of our sweat and blood and receiving in return some of the worst treatment human beings have ever experienced, we believe our contributions to this and suffering forced upon us by white America, justifies our demand for complete separation in a state or territory of our own.

e. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons. We want freedom for all black men and women now under death sentence in innumerable prisons in the North as well as the South.

We want every black man and woman to have the freedom to accept or reject being separated from the slave master's children and establish a land of their own.

We know that the above plan for the solution of the black and white conflict is the best and only answer to the problem between two people.

f. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout the United States.

We believe that the Federal government should intercede to see that black men and women tried in white courts receive justice in accordance with the laws of the land – or allow us to build a new nation for ourselves, dedicated to justice, freedom and liberty.

g. As long as we are not allowed to establish a state or territory of our own, we demand not only equal justice under the laws of the United States, but equal employment opportunities – NOW!

We do not believe that after 400 years of free or nearly free labor, sweat and blood, which has helped America become rich and powerful, so many thousands of black people should have to subsist on relief or charity or live in poor houses.

h. We want the government of the United States to exempt our people from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice under the laws of the land.

i. We want equal education – but separate schools up to 16 for boys and 18 for girls on the condition that the girls be sent to women's colleges and universities. We want all black children educated, taught and trained by their own teachers.

Under such schooling system we believe we will make a better nation of people. The United States government should provide, free, all necessary text books and equipment, schools and college buildings. The Muslim teachers shall be left free to teach and train their people in the way of righteousness, decency and self respect.

j. We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited. We want the religion of Islam taught without hindrance or suppression.

These are some of the things that we, the Muslims, want for our people in North America.

## **What the Muslims Believe:**

a. We believe in the One God Whose proper name is Allah.

b. We believe in the Holy Qur'an and in the Scriptures of all the Prophets of God.

c. We believe in the truth of the Bible, but we believe that it has been tampered with and must be reinterpreted so that mankind will not be snared by the falsehoods that have been added to it.

d. We believe in Allah's Prophets and the Scriptures they brought to the people.

e. We believe in the resurrection of the dead – not in physical resurrection – but in mental resurrection. We believe that the so-called Negroes are most in need of mental resurrection, therefore they will be resurrected first.

Furthermore, we believe we are the people of God's choice, as it has been written, that God would choose the rejected and the despised. We can find no other persons fitting this description in these last days more than the so-called Negroes in America. We believe in the resurrection of the righteous.

f. We believe in the judgement; we believe this first judgement will take place as God revealed, in America.

g. We believe this is the time in history for the separation of the so-called Negroes and the so-called white Americans. We believe the black man should be freed in name as well as in fact. By this we mean that he should be freed from the names imposed upon him by his former slave masters. Names which identified him as being the slave master's slave. We believe that if we are free indeed, we should go in our own people's names – the black people of the Earth.

h. We believe in justice for all, whether in God or not; we believe as others, that we are due equal justice as human beings. We believe in equality – as a nation – of equals. We do not believe that we are equal with our slave masters in the status of "freed slaves."

We recognize and respect American citizens as independent peoples and we respect their laws which govern this nation.

i. We believe that the offer of integration is hypocritical and is made by those who are trying to deceive the black peoples into believing that their 400-year-old open enemies of freedom, justice and equality are, all of a sudden, their "friends."

Furthermore, we believe that such deception is intended to prevent black people from realizing that the time in history has arrived for the separation from the whites of this nation.

If the white people are truthful about their professed friendship toward the so-called Negro they can prove it by dividing up America with their slaves.

We do not believe that America will ever be able to furnish enough jobs for her own millions of unemployed, in addition to jobs for the 20,000,000 black people as well.

j. We believe that we who declare ourselves to be righteous Muslims, should not participate in wars which take the lives of humans. We do not believe this nation should force us to take part in such wars, for we have nothing to gain from it unless America agrees to give us the necessary territory wherein we may have something to fight for.

k. We believe our women should be respected and protected as the women of other nationalities are respected and protected.

l. We believe that Allah (God) appeared in the Person of Master W. Fard Muhammad, July, 1930; the long-awaited "Messiah" of the Christians and the "Mahdi" of the Muslims.

We believe further and lastly that Allah is God and besides HIM there is no god and He will bring about a universal government of peace wherein we all can live in peace together.

**Allah is God.** In the *Message to the Black Man*, Elijah Muhammad states that "God is a man and we just cannot make Him other than man, lest we make him an inferior one; for man's intelligence has no equal in other than man" (Ch. 3). As soon as he met W.D. Fard and asked him who he was, Fard said,

"I am the one that the world has been expecting for the past two hundred years." I said to him again, "What is your name?" "My name is Mahdi; I am God, I came to guide you into the right path that you may be successful and see the hereafter." He described the destruction of the world with bombs, poison gas, and finally with fire that would consume and destroy everything [in] the present world (Ch. 8, section 10).

**Creation.** Allah created the world many millions of years ago and the original man in

creation was the black man.

**Yacub.** Yacub was the scientist who created the white man. He took a recessive gene from the original man and created the white man. The white man would rule for 6,000 years, then the judgement would come. Yacub created a race of devils who kept the black man ignorant, enslaved him, gave him the wrong food to eat, and provided him with a false religion, namely Christianity. When the 6,000 years of domination are completed, judgment day will come.

**Resurrection.** There is no afterlife, so resurrection takes place when the “mentally dead so-called Negroes” come to their senses, worship the true Allah and his prophets, and follow the teachings of Islam. The “Days of Allah” are the battles between right and wrong. It is through these battles that the righteous, the Muslims, will soon rule the earth again as they did before the creation of the white race.

**Principle of Gradualism.** This principle was introduced by Minister Louis Farrakhan on December 1, 1998. The principle states that just as there was a gradual revelation of the Qur’an lasting 23 years, so many of the principles introduced by Elijah Muhammad were but beginnings and are now being developed to their logical conclusion. For example, Elijah Muhammad stated that the ideal diet is a vegetarian diet, although he was fully aware that not all could begin at that point, so he allowed eating of meat and fish. The Nation of Islam as an organization and its members are now mature enough to follow the ideal diet, which is vegetarianism. As Louis Farrakhan writes,

“His (i.e., Elijah Muhammad’s) first order in the process of changing our diet was to get us away from eating the prohibited swine flesh, the meat of wild animals and the scavengers of the sea. Then, He took us away from the coarse flesh of beef, then, He taught us that no meat or flesh was good for us. Finally, He said to us the best foods for us to eat are fruits and vegetables....This is part of the process of gradually bringing humanity back to the original diet that allowed human beings to live hundreds of years rather than the three score and ten years (seventy years) given in the Bible.”

Another example of gradualism was the Ramadan fast during December. In December, the days between sunrise and sunset are short. This has allowed members to experience the positive impact fasting has, both physically and spiritually. In addition, the fast drew attention away from the excesses associated with Christmas holidays. The time has come for members of the Nation of Islam to fast during the lunar month of Ramadan, in accordance with the instructions found in the Qur’an and Sunnah.

**How to Eat to Live.** In the two-volume set *How To Eat To Live*, the Honorable Elijah

Muhammad set forth the dietary principles outlined by W. Fard Muhammad. These were the principles used by Louis Farrakhan to state that the official diet of Nation members no longer includes flesh of any kind.

- Both the Bible and the Qur'an forbid eating pork and pork byproducts. In addition, wild animals, birds and beasts such as raccoons and possums, turtles and their eggs, and frog legs are prohibited foods.
- The scavengers of the sea, such as oysters, crabs, clams, snails, shrimp, eels, and catfish are prohibited foods. Fish that weigh more than 50 pounds should not be consumed.
- Peas, lima beans, vegetable kale, sweet potatoes, and white potatoes are additional foods that ought not to be eaten. Small navy beans are good to eat.
- Finely ground whole wheat bread is good. White bread, corn bread, pastries, and starchy foods and sweets are not good to eat.
- All food should be cooked thoroughly.
- Tobacco and alcohol should not be used.
- Although certain meats and fish are permissible, the ideal diet is vegetarianism.

To prolong life, Elijah Muhammad encouraged his followers to eat one meal a day or, if possible, one meal every other day, preferably at the same time of day. Babies and small children should eat twice a day.

Fasting is critical to remaining healthy. Elijah Muhammad states in Book 1, Chapter 6,

“Fasting is a greater cure of our ills, both mental and physical, than all of the drugs of the earth combined into one bottle or a billion bottles. Allah (God), in the person of Master Fard Muhammad, has taught me that fasting with the right kind of food is the cure for our ills.”

**The Fruit of Islam (FOI).** The Fruit of Islam is responsible for security and safety of the leaders and property of the Nation of Islam. W. Fard Muhammad established the FOI because of fear of trouble with unbelievers and the police. The FOI is a paramilitary organization within the Nation and provides military training to men and boys. In part, the FOI instills a sense of discipline in its members, a trait many have never experienced before. Members of the FOI are “trained into the *knowledge* of what the aims and purposes of Islam are. They are to clean up people who are not clean *morally* as well as *spiritually* in America and to make them fit to become good members of society.” (This quote was printed in a letter to NOI inmates at FCI El Reno, Oklahoma.)

The Fruit of Islam is not an authorized group in the BOP. Because it is paramilitary in nature and an NOI internal security system, and the discipline requires drills and military gestures, the FOI is never authorized. The FOI lapel pin is not permitted in BOP facilities. Only the religious dimension of the NOI is approved for meetings and teaching in BOP institutions.