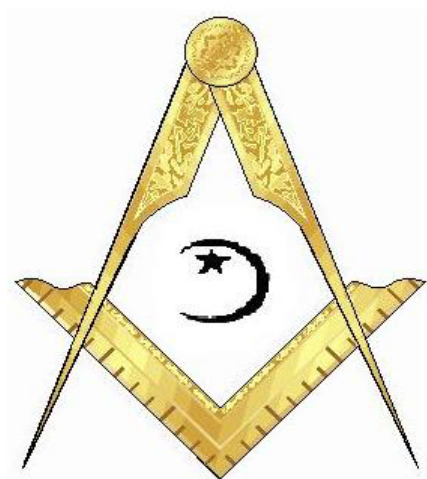


The Craft and the Crescent



Freemasonry and the Black Muslim Movement in America

By Michael R. Scheiderer

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Introduction

This paper sets out to show the influence of Freemasonry in the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the groups leading up to the NOI's formation and those who rose out of it. These groups were created out of necessity because of the unfavorable social atmosphere towards African-Americans in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century.

The groups that lead up to the Nation of Islam were the United Negro Improvement Association led by Marcus Garvey and the Moorish Science Temple founded by Noble Drew Ali. I will touch on each of these groups and show their relation to the Nation of Islam and the influence that these two groups had on W. D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad, the two men who are responsible for the creation and development of the NOI theology.

Many books have been written about each of the groups listed above, so I will not go into a great deal of their general history. I have listed a selected reading page for further study. The order of Freemasonry is the grandfather of all fraternal organizations and has had some impact on each generation. Freemasonry has been segregated for most of its history in the United States, yet, its impact on both black

and white societies cannot be disputed. Many leaders of both races have been members of this organization, and the teachings of Freemasonry show in their actions.

Freemasonry had filled a need in the two cultures of both black and white.

African-Americans have transformed Freemasonry into a social and religious sect that continues to be a driving force in society today.

Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association



(Marcus Garvey)

Marcus Garvey started the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 in Jamaica. Its international headquarters were moved to Harlem, New York in 1919. At this time, they claimed a membership of two thousand⁹. The purpose of this organization was to unite the black people, and they did this by teaching the black man and woman to be independent of white society. Mr. Garvey wanted the black race to be financially independent of the white man. He encouraged parents to give their children black dolls and told his followers to worship a black Jesus within the African

⁹A Brief Look at the Roots and development of The Nation of Islam by Bradley Price Roderick

Orthodox Church.”⁴

Marcus Garvey was a member of Prince Hall Freemasonry. Mary Lefkowitz states “To a large extent, the UNIA was organized along Masonic lines: it had a significant benevolent function: It had a constitution based on the Masons’; it also had a “potentate,” and the potentate’s helmet closely resembled the ceremonial hat worn by Masons in special parades“.¹

Note the picture above has Marcus Garvey in a similar uniform to that of a Knights Templar of the Masonic order. Many African-American Freemasons at the time believed that Freemasonry actually started in the advanced civilization of ancient Egypt. This helped African-Americans identify with Freemasonry as it was thought to be based on ceremonies in ancient Africa. One of the UNIA’s main doctrines was that the black man should leave America and return to their homeland of Africa.

⁴ A Brief Look at the Roots and development of The Nation of Islam by Bradley Price Roderick

¹ Lefkowitz, Mary. *Not out of Africa: How Afro centrism Became and Excuse to Teach Myth as History*. New York: Basic Books, 1997

Noble Drew Ali and the Moorish Science Temple of America



(Noble Drew Ali)

A man named Timothy Drew founded the Moorish Science Temple (MST) in 1913. He was born in North Carolina on January 8, 1886. He converted to Islam after a visit to Saudi Arabia. Marcus Garvey and his group heavily influenced Drew, and after Garvey was deported in 1927 many of his followers joined Drew's organization. He took the name Noble Drew Ali and proclaimed himself as a prophet of Allah (God). He was a member of the Ancient Egyptian Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, or commonly called the "Black Shriners". The men in this MST wore fezzes as part of their dress. They were also required to wear colored shorts with elastic just below the knee and uniforms or robes of purple or red, which resembled those worn by the Shriners. They were considered to be Asiatic or Moors instead

African-American. He taught that the Moors were superior to the white race.

Noble Drew Ali stated that Jesus, according to the Temple teaching, as a black man tried to redeem the Black Moabites, only to be executed by the white Romans.

In their meetings, they would practice rites that were not to be spoken of outside of the order. They had their own marriage ceremonies that consisted of thirty members, and were conducted by the Divine Minister. If they were to quit the order they would be required to commit suicide according to the oath taken upon joining. Outside of their meetings would be placed a guard who would push a button that would turn on a light at the podium. This let the speaker know if some unwanted guests were coming in so that they could change their tone of speaking. They had different colored lights for different occasions, depending on whether or not they thought the visitor to be a government informer. Some of the titles of their officers are as follows:

Grand Sheik
National Counselor
Lieutenant Governor
Sheik
Minister Assistant Grand Sheik
Divine Minister
Supreme Grand Advisor
Supreme Grand Governor

They would carry membership cards with them at all times, which consisted of the following:

This is your nationality and identification card for the Moorish Science Temple of America, and birthrights for the Moorish Americans, etc. We honor all of the divine Prophets, Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha, and Confucius. May the blessings of the God of our father Allah, be upon you that carry this card. I do hereby declare that you are a Moslem under the divine laws of the Holy Koran of Mecca. Love, truth, peace, freedom, and justice. I am a citizen of the U.S.A.

Noble Drew Ali, the Prophet, 1104 Sedgwick St. Chicago, Illinois

They were required to learn an examination of question and answers to be part of the organization. This was taken from the examination portion of Freemasonry.

Noble Drew Ali also wrote the Koran as revealed to him by Allah, containing the Moorish view or creation to the end of time and the fulfilling of prophecies. Ali's Koran focused on the history of the black man and his evolution to its current state.

This Koran in no way resembles the Holy Koran used by practicing Muslims.

After death of Ali, John Givens El claimed to be the new Prophet and continued the organization. It is still in existence today, mainly in major cities. There have been

several off-shoots mainly because of power struggles within the organization.

Wallace D. Fard and the Nation of Islam



(Wallace D. Fard)

The Nation of Islam was started after the death of Noble Drew Ali and the exile of Marcus Garvey. There was a need to fill the void in the Black Nationalist movement. The founder of the order was named Wallace D. Fard. Many authors have claimed that he was a member of the Moorish Science Temple of America, and in some of the records of the MST the name W.D. Fard is found, but in the book History of the Nation of Islam by Elijah Muhammad, he states that Fard “was no follower of Noble Drew Ali.”² Nevertheless, the similarities of the two groups including their theology cannot be disputed. Since many of the new members of the NOI were from the other two groups, there can be no doubt of their influence of the order. It is also stated that Fard was influenced by the Jehovah’s Witnesses. He

² Muhammad, Elijah. *History of the Nation of Islam*. Atlanta: Secretarius Memps, 1993

encouraged his followers to listen to broadcasts of the Reverend Rutherford.

There were other names of the order such as “The lost found Nation of Islam in the wilderness of North America,” which was technically the first name of the order. Other names included “Allah’s Temple of Islam.”

Bradley Price Roderick, who wrote an online article titled, “A Brief Look at the Roots and Development of the Nation of Islam“, states “Few of Fard’s doctrines originated in the Qur’an. He was heavily influenced by the teachings of Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali”.¹²

Some of the ideologies that he borrowed from Freemasonry and incorporated into his new religion were as follows: New members were required to study, memorize, and recite material about the order, and they must pass the test to be able to advance in the order. The oral teachings were called “The Secret Ritual of the Nation of Islam.” In the thirties, shortly after the founding of the Nation of Islam, there was an incident in which a member of the order in Detroit participated in a holy sacrifice of a white man in his home. Apparently, there was a book of doctrine and ritual written by

¹² A Brief Look at the Roots and Development of The Nation of Islam, online paper by Bradley Price Roderick

W.D. Fard that stated that if a member killed three white men he would be promised a place in paradise. He claimed to be Allah in person and set up a theology that in no way conforms with mainstream Islam. I could go into deep detail of his religious teachings cited in numerous writings, but I would stray from the purpose of this paper. Fard's reign over the nation lasted only three years, before he vanished never to be heard from or seen again. The FBI tried for years under J. Edgar Hoover to locate the leader, but without success. Before he disappeared he instructed and left in charge Elijah Poole.

The Nation of Islam under the Honorable Elijah

Muhammad



(Elijah Muhammad)

Elijah Muhammad became the driving force and spiritual leader of the NOI after the disappearance of Fard. Elijah Muhammad himself had been a Freemason and a member of the Ancient Egyptian Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (A.E.N.O.M.S.) in the Detroit area, but later dropped his membership from both organizations. Throughout his career as “The Messenger of Allah” for the NOI many of his teachings and theologies centered on Freemasonry. One of his speeches entitled “A True Mason”, Mr. Muhammad seems to be unsure of how he really feels

about Freemasonry. He states, "Never has any so-called American Negro been taught by white people to believe in Almighty God, Allah, and His true religion, Islam. Only in higher organizations or we say Masonry." He goes on to state, "In the Masonics, there is little teachings at the top mostly of this particular order that mentions the teachings of Almighty God, Allah. But you have to pay a lot of money to become a 33rd degree Mason; therefore, you are an absolute victim, as Isaiah teaches you. That you buy that which does not bring you any gain. To buy that kind of teaching does not gain you the Hereafter."⁵ From these two statements, one would conclude that Mr. Muhammad first believes that the only way to understand Islam is in the higher degrees of Masonry. Then he states that Masonry will not get you to the Hereafter. Later in the talk, he states, "a Mason cannot be a good Mason unless he knows the Holy Qur'an and follows its teachings. This book is the only book that will make a true Mason. The Bible will not make you a true one."⁵ So we are to assume that Freemasonry will teach the black man about Islam, the Holy Qur'an will make you a true Mason, but you are a victim and you will not receive any gain or life in the Hereafter if you become one. The only reason for these statements

⁵ Speech by Elijah Muhammad. www.muhammadspeaks.com

⁵Speech by Elijah Muhammad. www.muhammadspeaks.com

I believe is that he would rather the black man spend his money supporting the NOI instead of Freemasonry.

Elijah Muhammad also taught the following concerning Freemasonry and the NOI. The three ruffians in the 3rd degree represent certain countries, and are as follows: Jubelo-England, Jubula-France, and Jubelum-United States. He stated that these countries enslaved the black man but the United States killed him. Hiram Abiff, who represents the black man, was killed with a setting maul, therefore making him mentally dead, he states, "You are the answer to it all. You are Hiram Abiff yourself. Yes sir, you are the one. You are the one that has been hit in the head, and it takes a long time for that head to heal.....] say my friend you are the one that has been blindfolded on. You are the one that ought to be crying for light and more light, but you are not, your reaching for the blindfold"¹⁰. He also taught that the East gate represented Africa, the West gate the West Indies, and the North was North America, which in turn makes it the place of darkness. The apron represents the covering that was given to the white man when he was forced out of Africa, to hide his nakedness. The cable-tow represents the chains that he was lead out of Africa

¹⁰ The Secrets of Freemasonry, Elijah Muhammad, Secretarius 2002

in.⁸ Elijah Muhammad also taught that there were 360 degrees of knowledge, and the Masons only had 33 degrees of that knowledge. So the Masons were inferior because of their lack of knowledge. Elijah Muhammad in his book The Secrets of Freemasonry states, "Men of higher knowledge use the term "light" to describe knowledge not common to the common man. Many of the founding fathers of this country were, and still are, high degree Masons and Shriners. They have sworn oaths not to reveal, what they call, secrets. It just so happens that the "secrets" they are bound by oaths to keep secret, just happen to be the truths to free you and I from our grave of ignorance". The book also states, "The Honorable Elijah Muhammad pointed out that the first three degrees of Masonry were the answer to their slavery, but how many of them understood that and have demonstrated a significant work to prove it? The white man gave it to blacks, but the applicable elements were gutted out." Mr. Muhammad also believes that Freemasonry and scripture elude to him, "He was able to demonstrate works beyond what any man is known for. The symbolism in the scripture dealing with an architect being killed and his body being lost, was a sign, the seal of which was broken by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

⁸ The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley, Ballantine, 1965

Not only did he teach the knowledge, wisdom and understanding on this matter, he also demonstrated the fulfillment of it. He told the world that it wasn't his knowledge, and rightly so, judging by what the white legislators stated, he said he got it from Allah (God) who had come, as the scripture, as well as the symbolism in Masonry testifies to: "That the searchers found the dead man, but couldn't lift him." He also claims that Marcus Garvey did not have the right grip to raise the black man so God sent them Elijah Muhammad. From what we just read, it is easy to see that Elijah Muhammad drew a great deal of his teachings from Freemasonry, and applied them to the Nation of Islam. He also used Masonry to reassure his followers that he was the "savior" of the black man in America.

The Nation under Minister Louis Farrakhan

Minister Louis Farrakhan made several references to Freemasonry in his speech at the Million Man March. In his first mention of Masonry he states,

“And the layout of this great city, laid out by a Black man, Benjamin Banneker.

This is all placed and based in a secret Masonic ritual. And at the core of the secret

of that ritual is the Black man, not far from here is the White House. And the first

President of this land, George Washington, who was a Grand Master of the

Masonic order laid the foundation, the cornerstone of this Capitol Building where

we stand.”¹⁸ Later in his speech, Minister Farrakhan has this to add about

Freemasonry, “So, I’m going to make a new covenant with you. Oh, Black Man.

The secret of the Masonic Order is the secret of Hiram Abif (ph). The Secret of

the Masonic Order is a master builder that was hit in the head. The secret of the

Masonic Order is a master that ruffians roughed up. I think one of the ruffians was

named Jubilo (ph) Furman (ph). And another was named Jubilee (ph) Bilbow (ph).

And another one was named Juilum (ph) Jesse Helms. These racists hit him in his

head and carried him on a westerly course and buried him in the north country, in a

¹⁸ www..cgi.cnn.com/us/9510/megamarch/10-16/transcript/

shallow grave. Many tried to raise him up but they didn't have the master grip. It would take a master to come after him".¹⁸

Here he uses some of the same rhetoric as Elijah Muhammad, he just changes countries with names. "You are a white shriner. The black shriner don't integrate the shrine. Why don't you black shriners integrate the shrine? Because in the shrine, you are the essence of the secret. They don't want you there. They'll have to tell the world, it's you we been thinking about all along".¹⁸ For some reason, most of the founders and or leaders of the Black Muslim movements have this preoccupation with the Shrine. I believe that this all stems back to Noble Drew Ali and his shrine spin-off the MST. I'm still trying to figure out how Freemasonry and the Shrine fit into the atonement of the black man, which was the purpose of the Million Man March.

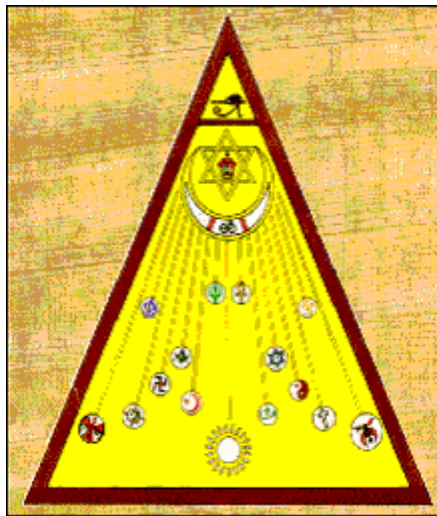
Minister Farrakhan seems to be steering the NOI more toward being Black Militants than the unorthodox teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Most of his public speeches do not mention the beliefs of the NOI, which leads one to summarize that most join the NOI for the "Black Movement" and not for the religious aspects of

¹⁸ www.cnn.com/us/9510/megamarch/10-16/transcript/

¹⁸ www.cnn.com/us/9510/megamarch/10-16/transcript/

the sect.

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors



(Malachi Z. York)

The United Newaubian Nation of Moors was founded by Dr. Malachi Z. York, whose title is Supreme Grand Master, in 1967 in Brooklyn, New York. At this time, he used the name Amunnnubi Rooakhptah. The name of his

group was called the Ansaar Pure Sufi. His first group of followers were mainly stray black Muslims. In 1969, they changed their names to the Nubian Islamic Hebrews, and again changed their name in 1972 to the Ansaru Allah Community, which followed Orthodox Islam beliefs. In 1993, they purchased a 476 acre game ranch in Eatonton, Georgia . At this time they took their current name the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. They call their complex Tama-re, or the "Egypt of the West". They claim that they are part of a Native-American tribe called the Yamassee, and they are ancestors of Egyptians who migrated from the Nile Valley to the Georgia countryside prior to the continental drift that separated the continents. At the entrance to the complex is a sign that states the Nuwaubians as a fraternity, Lodge #19 of the Ancient Mystic Order of Melchizedek. Dr. York seems to have molded his version of Freemasonry and Shrine rituals into his own religion, as we will see in the following paragraphs.

His main teaching is that religion is a spell and that the only person who can save you is yourself, and we should receive our rewards here on earth instead of the afterlife. They practice no specific religion and believe in living harmoniously with mother nature. They claim to be a fraternal organization consisting of all races and

faiths. The groups sacred texts consist of York's 460 books called scrolls. Dr. York claims to be an extraterrestrial being from the 19th galaxy called Illyuwn, and he arrived on planet Earth on March 16, 1970. On this date, the comet Bennett's was visible, which he claims was his spacecraft.²¹ The organization has also borrowed some of its teachings from the Theosophical Society founded by Helena Blavatsky and a prominent Freemasons named William Wynn Westcott and William Woodman.

Dr. Malachi Z. York 33°/720° claims to have deep ties to the Masonic Fraternity. According to an email exchange Ezekiel, who is a Mason and a Moor, as well as member of the Prince Hall Research Society, Dr. York has stated that he was the Imperial Grand Potentate (Internationally). He is also the leader of Mahdi Temple #19 ILL. He claims to be a 33rd degree in the The Ancient Egyptian Order and Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of the Northern and Southern Jurisdiction. He is also the Grand Master of the Newaubian Grand Lodge, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons Inc. Ramses II Mir #9. He also states that he is a Scottish Rite Freemason of Amos Grand Lodge of Macon, GA and Deputy Grand Master of Pride of Georgia Lodge A.F&A.M.. He states that he was commissioned to rewrite the handbook for the International Supreme Council of

Shriners, because it contained many errors and he could translate the original Arabic into English. The Lodges that he claims to have been raised in are not recognized by either the Prince Hall Grand Lodge or the Grand Lodges of the Various States. He states that he went to Egypt and other Arab and African countries and found the true teachings of Freemasonry. He is quoted to have said "So we move and work on a much higher levels than the sects that the original doctrine has divided into by self-righteous leaders. Something that must be done away with. After they finish their 32nd degree or their 12th degree to the Knights Templar, they become Muslims anyway, so this is the civilizing of the Greeks and doesn't really apply to us the true seed of the Quraish Tribe. The Black Arabs".

Dr. York has also written two books on the subject of Freemasonry, one is titled Prayers for the Sons of Light-A Masonic Prayer Book From 1 to 33, and The Universal Lessons of The Masonic Lodge-The Secret Degrees and Studies of M. M. Master Mason. Almost every picture you see of York he is wearing some sort of Masonic regalia. His followers wear Shrine fezzes and are seen quite often wearing them in public, which causes some confusion for the people of Georgia because they associate this group with the A.E.O.N.S. He has somewhat

successfully made Freemasonry a religion, and his compound shows how much money and resources his followers are willing to give up to follow his teachings.

Nation of Gods and Earths - The 5%ers



(Clarence 13X)

The Nation of Gods and Earths, or otherwise called the 5%ers, were founded in 1964 by Clarence Jowers Smith (13X) who was a former member of the Nation of Islam's Temple #7 in New York City's Harlem district. They were then known as the Five Percent Nation of Islam. Clarence was a lieutenant in the Fruit of Islam and a student minister. He held beliefs that did not follow the teaching of Elijah Muhammad and was suspended from the NOI for teaching classes that did not follow the Nation's norm. He was called by his followers "Father Allah", and claimed to be God himself. He founded the "Allah School in Mecca", and claimed that Harlem was Mecca and Brooklyn was renamed Medina. The meetings of the group are called parliaments. He reinterpreted the NOI book of Lost-Found Lessons which are arranged in question and answer form familiar with the Freemasons, which resulted in the table below. His message included a system of teachings which

he called Supreme Mathematics and the Supreme Alphabet. The web site www.thetalkingdrum.com states, "For Five Percenters, Islam is less a religion than a science that can "break down" ordinary words through linguistic gymnastics. For instance, in the Supreme Alphabet "A" stands for Allah, which, broken down, stands for Arm, Leg, Leg, Arm, Head, thereby proving that the divinity of Allah is physically present in humankind. Each letter is called a degree. According to their doctrine, once one memorizes the Lost-Found Lessons of the divine sciences they become fully divine. Men then take the name God and women take the name Earth, which is a twist of Gnostic tendency with Afro centric teachings. On a web page about the 5%ers the author states this about Freemasonry, "(the) 33° was given to them to clean themselves up in their savage state of existence. These degrees deals with the 5th science known as Geometry, Geometry and working tools was used for them to build themselves a living quarters to dwell in and not continue to live in the caves that they were confined or bound in. This science of masonry was given to free them from their savage way of life. To begin to bring a civil character to the white man. Thus the name "Freemasonry". This is why not black man or woman should not be freemasons, for this was not given or meant for them. Black people are the originators of

mathematics and science, we shared this with the white man (in order) for him to clean themselves up”³.

Many of their teachings go along with that of the NOI, in that the white man is the devil, but they also include all unscrupulous and deceitful people in this category, regardless of color. Their belief teaches them that the black race was the original race and the creator of civilization.

They break down the African-American community as follows:

85% - the masses who are ignorant of true ‘divine self’

10% - the corrupt rulers over the 85%

5% - the truly righteous followers of Father Allah

His teachings also included carry-overs from the NOI, in that the original man (Blackman) was the Supreme Being, God. He stated that Supreme means the most high being means to exist. God, therefore, is the name given to the highest form

³ Immortal Birth of Allah-Rise of the Five Percenters, Immortalbirth.com

of existence: the Blackman.

Many of the members of the 5%ers are of the younger generation of African-Americans. From what I can tell, they are basically black nationalists who want to belong to a “religious group”, but do not want to live up to the strong moral teachings of the other “black Muslim” groups.²¹

²¹ University of Virginia, Robert Rafalski research paper for Sociology 257: new religious movements

Conclusion

The Black Muslim groups grew out of Freemasonry. They simply changed the teachings to interchange with their version of Islam. For all intent purposes these groups were formed to be black nationalist organizations, under the veil of religion. They have filled the void of unity in the black community, yet none of these groups really have brought black people together.

The true tenets of Freemasonry would do a much better job at bringing people together and to focus on improving oneself instead of blaming others for their problems. These groups have placed a great divide within the black community that continues to this day. Many people who join these groups simply wish to belong to something, regardless of the theology or sacrifices they must make, while the leaders line their pockets with the hard earned money of their members.

I truly believe that Prince Hall Freemasonry does more for the black community, and it's young men than all of these groups put together.