

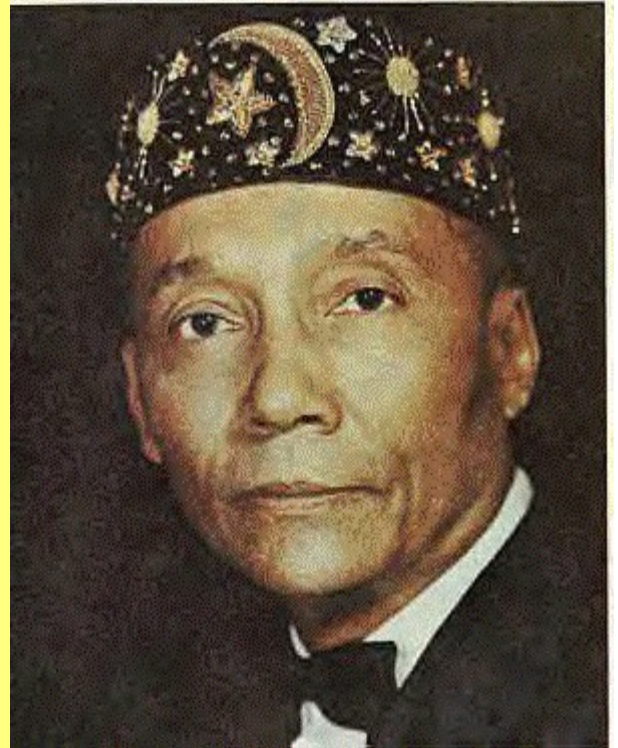
# ANSWER TO CRITICS

**By Messenger Elijah Muhammad**

*The following is an excerpt from an interview granted to the National Educational Television Network. The series of interviews took place in Phoenix, Arizona, and were conducted over a period of several days, by the staff of San Francisco station KQED.*

**QUESTION:** How would you describe your mission?

**ANSWER:** My mission is to give life to the dead. What I teach brings them out of death and into life. My mission, as the Messenger, is to bring the truth to the world before the world is destroyed. There will be no other Messenger. I am the last and after me will come God Himself. I do not say I will live so long as that, but when God comes, if it pleases Him, I may be with Him. However, if I am not with Him, this is the final. The truth I bring will give you the knowledge of yourself and of God.



**QUESTION:** Earlier, when we spoke of defections, you mentioned something about the fact that Jesus has similar defections -- would you explain?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Such defections are nothing. The public should not think it's strange, this time in which we live. We have the actual spirit of God moving among the people.

**QUESTION:** Well, now if in time, sir, your grandson, Sharrieff or your son, Wallace or Malcolm, ever expressed the desire to return to follow you again, would you accept them?

**ANSWER:** There is nothing unforgivable, the Holy Qur-an teaches you. The only thing that is unforgivable is this: that you will not accept Allah as God and not accept His Messenger as His Messenger. These two things are one, we say, the belief in Allah is the belief in the Messenger of the Prophet of Allah. The belief in the Messenger or the Prophet of Allah is a belief in Allah, if you disbelieve in one you disbelieve in both. You cannot believe in one and disbelieve in the other. This is the knowledge the world has not realized, and this is what God wants the world to know. When God chooses His representative for the people, He speaks to the people through that representative, and if the people will accept that representative (we call them prophets, apostles or messengers), then they are accepting Allah. But if they reject him and still say they believe in Allah, they are considered enemies of Allah and disbelievers. Because that is Allah in that representative and you cannot accept one without accepting the other. You have got to accept both. You cannot get the blessings of Allah if you reject His Messenger. Now, these boys that you were referring to, they do not worry me; I do not give my time arguing with them or talking about why they believe or disbelieve. I do not even argue with them because I knew these things in the beginning. I knew they would act like this, some of them. I was told about this 34 years ago. But they did not know these things, and I am not excited, as the public would be, or as the public would like to see. In some cases, if the son disbelieves in his father, his father must be wrong. But that is not so when it comes to a Messenger of God. If we say that is true, then it stands true in the common life of the family. There are some children who never sincerely accept their father as they should. There are some fathers who never accept their children as they should. So this is the nature of the human family of the earth, and when it comes to spiritual teachings, it is also the same. Not all of the family of a

Messenger are such as Noah and Lot. They do not always have true believers, but that did not detract one atom from his messengership. You do not take advantage of that unless you get into war or trouble with God. You do not say, "I do not believe in him because his own wife or his own son does not. Why should I follow him?" You would be getting yourself in trouble, because that is given. I do not care anything about those who fall away from me after I have pointed out the truth to them and despite this they get wrong and go away from that truth. I am not responsible for this, for whatever they say against me, it is against themselves. What they preach and tell the people in order to get the people to disbelieve in me is much like Absalom and his father, David. Absalom stole the affection of the people because he thought he looked better and younger than David. He thought, therefore, the people would follow, that he could steal the people over to himself and get rid of his father as king and be king himself. But he was not to be king. The man that was to be king had yet to be known; that was Solomon. These facts are all put there to deepen our knowledge, and time repeats these things over again and again. And so this is what we face today, and I am not surprised the public is surprised, some of them at the deviation of Malcolm or my son Wallace. I am not surprised. But they cannot yet say that I am not the Messenger of Allah. They cannot take that away from me.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Muhammad, would you make some statements about Dr. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement?

**ANSWER:** Yes, I think Rev. King has been doing a good job according to his knowledge. He has been trying to do his best to get our people some justice in the way of civil rights. I believe that he means well, and I believe he would have done better if he had known more about the time and the people and the history and what must be done in such times. He has the desire to see his people dealt with according to justice and not according to injustice. But he does not know that he is living in the time when justice is bound to come to his people. However, it is only through Divine and not through civil government. And that goes for most of the groups who are trying to do something for the betterment of our people. They, most of these leaders, have good intentions, but they just don't have the right instruments to work with, and they do not know how to use the instruments, since they were not appointed to do the job. But all of our people today have the desire to do something for themselves and, first of all, to see injustice removed from the whole. We have suffered injustice at the hands of the white people for 400 years, and today some want to be called "Citizens of America," but all of this without the qualities that go along with freedom. We are today, I repeat, imbued with the spirit of justice for our people, and something must be done. This oppression cannot go on forever. What the civil rights movement is trying to do is just another effort to bring home to our people a better life. But this is the time when our people should and will get a better life on a permanent scale. NOT on a TEMPORARY scale. The political administration may change every 4 years. The Constitution gives to the people of America. And if we understand it well, it was not written with the so-called Negro in mind. It was written for the white citizens of America and not the slaves. The slave is not mentioned there and it was not in the mind of these lawmakers that he should share equal justice with the master. No, he was considered to be the property of the master. Therefore, the servant or the slave cannot get justice -- equal justice -- with the master unless the master wants to give up his position as master. If the master gave up his position as master, the slave would soon become his equal, and the slave would probably vote for equal justice, go to the White House or become the ruler of the country, if the equal justice were obtained all the way through as it should be. But the Constitution was written by white people for white people and not for you and me. We were under the slave-masters at that time, and again I would like to make clear: I am not fighting those leaders who are trying to do something good for our people, or get something better for them. But I do oppose them in their way of opposing that which is good and which would be just and permanent for our people. For we now have come to the time when we want justice and equality. We want freedom equal with other people. They have never made us citizens, and under their law we cannot be made citizens. We could never be citizens as stated in their first slavery courts. If we want to go into the facts about it, we are not the equal of the American white man, nor are we citizens with him here. We are in alien country. We are aliens and not citizens. And this is proof that we have to admit and not to try to hide to make some black brother feel good. To tell a black brother that he is a citizen and has equal rights is like telling a child to go to sleep on the 24th night of December and on the next morning awaken and Santa Claus will have left a present in your stocking when THAT is Santa Claus talking. And the child, when he grows up, learns that. Well it is the same thing

with us. We have had a lot of Santa Claus teaching, and now we are growing up because we know that a lot of these Santa Claus teachings were nothing but a lot of pacifiers. We are no longer satisfied to be pacified. We want something permanent.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Muhammad, even though the Economic Plan was only introduced in August of this year, (1964) what has been the response?

**ANSWER:** We are really surprised at the response we have received. In fact, it is increasing daily, and we have to set up more secretaries to take care of the donations that are coming.

**QUESTION:** Is this coming from all over the country?

**ANSWER:** Yes, sir, from everywhere. For 3 years, we want to see what we can do. We're going to put the donations in banks that have already been established. We are not going to build one until we have need to do so. By the end of the 3 years, we can tell what we can do. It costs perhaps a million dollars or more to set up a bank, and the government has much to say about how this is done. Those who understand banking systems will be called in by us to help set up such a system for our people.

**QUESTION:** Are any of your aims perhaps similar to the middle-class aims of acquisition of properties and material goods? Do you think the objectives of this plan are similar to those of the white middle-class?

**ANSWER:** What are white middle-class aims? Will you tell me that?

**QUESTION:** Ordinarily I would say it is the acquisition of property of material things. Now do you think in the savings plan idea there will be a number of Negroes who will submit monies to save for those particular white middle-class idea which seem to be unimportant at the moment?

**ANSWER:** Well, the purpose of the Economic Plan is to fight poverty and want, as I have said; this includes material things. We need better housing, for instance. We also need farms to grow our food.

**QUESTION:** Do you think Johnson's War on Poverty Bill will by any assistance at this time?

**ANSWER:** I do not know the details of his plans. But I would say this, as a subject people who have given all they had for the independence of the white man, whoever is President should do something to aid the so-called Negro of America, to protect him from brutal treatment, from poverty and from want. America is able to feed Europe and part of Africa and is able to finance them. Yet, the poor slave who helped her build up her country and establish her banks that are bursting with money, he has nothing to say about this. She should do more to aid her so-called Negro in the way of putting him out for self. She should make him independent and not dependent. She should put a stop to police brutality, which is absolutely condoned by the government. The police are free to beat and kill us at will, and they are not punished for this. This should be done by whoever is in the White House as the ruler for the next four years. They should stop injustice. The time is now when a stop will be put to it if America herself does not cease mistreating the so-called Negro. The Negro is going to get his freedom because he is not the forsaken race he was a few years ago. There are definite divine plans being made to help him. He will be divinely helped from now on. The government can help the so-called Negro in many ways. I do not say the government should take us and set us down and make us lazy so we will not want to work for ourselves. I do not condone that sort of thing. No, help us to get a chance of doing something for ourselves. We are no more a people who can be classified as a necessary people for use only as servants. We are too many. We are 22 million people; no nation needs that many just for servants. I was born in the South. I married and went to Detroit with my two children in 1923. I know the South and the Southern white people. They are actually a people who envy any success that comes to the so-called Negro in any way. If you own a little more than the white man there, why he's against you; he may even kill you. He may bomb you or destroy your property. He just doesn't like the fact of your having anything. Whether in court, in justice or in any way. This is naturally in their blood. They want the black man

to have nothing but hell, excuse the expression, that's all they desire and they are tickled to death to see you in a hell of a condition. They are angry when they see you trying to live prosperously. They will make trouble with you if they think that you are trying to be at peace.

**QUESTION:** Is that only the white man in the South?

**ANSWER:** No, he's up here in the North, too, but he is not as numerous in the North as he is in the South. This is almost dominant in the South. The North has a fair share of the evil. That's why the Negro cannot get any place, because he is in a race of people whom they do not intend to ever see prosper too much. So, therefore, we should look forward and try to get the government to agree to let us go somewhere by ourselves and build a nation of our own and on some of this land that we helped get. When we were brought here as slaves they didn't have 50 states, but now they have 50 states and they have offered the so-called Negro, who numbers in the millions, not the tiniest state in the union. Nor have they offered to give him anything like revenue coming from countries they have conquered. We helped them to conquer the Philippines. We helped them conquer Japan. All right, what have we gotten from this? What commerce have we gotten from this? We got nothing, as revenue, for our deaths. Only they gave us death when we returned back home. If we were given any credit for it back, we would feel that we did something good, perhaps, for the people. But we were hated when we got home. We were cast out and shot down on the streets and highways, just for the fun of it. They were innocent people. They would kick a black man and push him around and try to force him to say something that they could claim as the reason why he was killed. Therefore, the people just don't want you, and why should we say, today, after 400 years, "Let's try to plan to live with the white American people and get along with them in peace" when we have not been able to live with them in peace for 400 years.



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