GOVERNMENT

**Agreements, Standards, and Accountability**

**by way of**

**Mutual consultation
(am’rahum shuura bay’nahum)**

**Essential Principles for the Community of IWDM**

**A PROPOSAL FOR RATIFICATION**

**Submitted By**

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**On behalf of**

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# The Synopsis

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed (IWDM) taught our community that government is one of the four rivers[[1]](#footnote-1) of societal life that needs to flow for society to flourish; that it was one of the four birds[[2]](#footnote-2) that needed the wings of an eagle for our society to soar to the heights of its promised destiny. Yet, the bird of government, as it applies to the Community of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed (CIWDM), is the least understood, least talked about, and least agreed upon bird of the four.

If the river of government remains dry, the CIWDM is doomed by the laws of Deen Al-Fitrah.[[3]](#footnote-3) The masjids may be here. There will be muslims, jumu’ah prayers, eids, schools, etc., but they won’t reflect the true Community of IWDM. What will remain is a pillar of salt, preserving a testimony that Imam Mohammed and those who were supposed to develop the new mind, culture, and social order from his teaching, were once here.

Upon the passing of Imam Mohammed there was a movement to prevent a leadership or governmental structure from emerging and this movement was absolutely necessary…for its time. It was necessary in order to protect our community at one of its most vulnerable points—the death of its leader. It was necessary in order to give our community time to understand the need and importance of governance in our community life and how that governance could be fashioned and implemented without falling victim to the pitfalls that Imam Mohammed warned us about[[4]](#footnote-4).

The ideas of “autonomy” and “leadership-is-local” took root and were lifted up to ensure that no enemies, opportunists, charismatic speakers or well-meaning misguided believers could take control of the community and intentionally or unintentionally bring it to ruin.

The principles of autonomy and leadership-is-local were also necessary to force each local area to become stronger and self-sufficient, because the strength of the whole depends upon the strength of its parts. The pressure on each individual and local area to grow was necessary then, is necessary now, and will always be necessary. However, where there is no balance, the structure is easily toppled. Sometimes it falls down on its own, because its weight is not evenly balanced.

The Community of IWDM is unbalanced and the benefits from the principles of autonomy and leadership-is-local are being negated by the problems caused by the imbalance.

Autonomy and “local only” thinking are regressing our community in various ways, because we are reverting to tribalism[[5]](#footnote-5) and nomadism[[6]](#footnote-6) and diverging from each other towards our own local concerns so much so that we are no longer interested in larger community goals, much less willing to sacrifice to work towards them.

The abandonment of the principles and powers of unity and collective, collaborative action have broken one of the two legs we need and crippled our ability to combine our forces when appropriate to transport our community to its promised destination.

While autonomy is an essential principle to preserve in the life of the community of IWDM, it must be balanced and tempered with the essential principle of unity; i.e. mutual consultation and collective, collaborative agreement. The only way to operationalize both of these principles in a way that has meaning and benefit is to accept, confirm and embrace the idea that it is appropriate for our national community to utilize the principle, practice and process of Amrahum Shuraa Baynahum to make binding Agreements with each other that establish Standards for each other that we can hold each other Accountable for implementing.

Agreements, standards, and accountability are vital to the process of governance and will enable our entire community to collaborate and agree on standards that address critical matters, hold each other accountable for implementing those agreements and define consequences for breaking those agreements. Just as autonomy has been adopted as a principle and a practice in the life of our community, so must we balance it with government in the form of agreements, standards, and accountability as principles and practices in our community life.

This document is a proposal for approval and adoption by the CIWDM. We hope that it will be approved by the majority of Imams in all Sections[[7]](#footnote-7) and then ratified by the registered voting community members of the masjids in all sections of the country.

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# The Background

More than six years after the passing of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, our community is facing a number of potential crises and we are approaching crossroads that can lead us down a road of no return, if we take the wrong road. Yet far too many do not perceive the changing scenery in our masjids that indicate we are traveling down the wrong path.

We are facing major challenges, such as an aging population of adults, a shrinking population of active young people and insufficient education, economic, cultural and governmental strategies that consciously move us toward our destiny. Most alarming of all is that we are facing ideological challenges from internal forces as well as external forces. These forces knowingly and unknowingly are guiding Imams as well as believers into a metaphorical fornication and adultery as they steer us towards thinking and actions antithetical and destructive to the leadership and direction of Imam W. Deen Mohammed and his community.

Yes, anti-IWDM ideas are running rampant throughout our community and we are losing masjids because we are redirecting the Imam’s people to traditional thinking when we should be training his people to help traditional people come into the brighter light of Al-Islam as reflected by the Qur’anic explanations of Al-Islam by Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

While these challenges are recognized and admitted by many of us, we can do nothing about it, because *“we are not certain about whether we are a single community of people with a common destiny who are obligated to each other or whether we are a bunch of individual autonomous masjids pursuing our own local goals without regard or care about national progress and direction.”[[8]](#footnote-8)* In some circles, saying the word “national” has become taboo.

The CIWDM has become so local-only focused that we are currently unable to verify, much less ensure, that as a community we are working from the same page. We do not even appear concerned about whether unity is operating as a principle and force in our lives. Are these not signals and signs of danger?

Over the past two years the Conveners of Imams Associated with the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed (hereafter referred to as Conveners) have conducted five Community Leadership Summits (CLS) in four different Sections of the country, bringing together leaders from major organizations in the CIWDM as well as other influential individuals, and local community members to discuss issues and survey the major concerns and observations.

By the time we reached our fifth CLS event, it became clear that many people believed that the issues and problems described were symptoms of a larger core problem: the lack of leadership, representation, and structure; that is, the lack of strategic, coherent, cohesive, collective, cooperative action to deal with our problems as a unified community. In short, the lack of government and governance.

Through the CLS sessions, as well as other situations in the community, the Conveners recognize that the need for our community to define, adopt and adhere to a governance process is more important now than ever before. Imam Mohammed got rid of the dictators, but in his absence some have resurfaced.

Imam Mohammed gave us freedom and autonomy, but in his absence (and while he was living) we have gone to the other extreme. We are so free now that when people steal from the community, it’s the victims’ problem not ours. When people take masjids built by the pioneers and turn them into a place foreign to us, it is no big deal because it is that local masjid’s problem, not ours.

In the absence of our great leader as the glue to hold us together and help direct us as a collective to the promised destiny, and our conscious decision not to replace one single leader with another, a new glue is needed to keep this body together as a whole and in sync with each other. That new glue is Am’rahum Shuraa Bay’nahum. That new glue is the river of government.

The Conveners agreed to produce three proposals that relate to governance in the CIWDM. These proposals are based upon principles and ideas espoused by Imam Mohammed and already recognized as valuable in the CIWDM. Our hope is that the proposals, after being scrutinized and revised via the Shuraa process, will be voted upon and adopted at the upcoming National Imams meeting in Columbus Georgia at the end of July, 2015.

# The Introduction

This document is one of three proposals on Self-Government submitted by the Conveners of Imams seeking the approval and ratification of the specified principles and actions described herein by the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

This document proposes that government is one of the four essential components of life as outlined by Imam W. Deen Mohammed and that there must be a practical, operational application of government to our community life that impacts and benefits our lives and moves us towards the achievement and fulfillment of our shining destiny.

This document proposes that we must have a practical, operational application of mutual consultation in our lives and that the mutual consultation must lead to concrete decisions in the form of agreements, standards and measures of accountability, which are reduced to writing and carry the weight of law for us to reap the benefits of the river of government for our society.

The ideas in this document are proposed to you with the belief that if we do not add bones to our clump of living flesh by adding organization, structure, and process to our community life, we will never have a working body with a human form that can stand up erect and even-footed (balanced) and impact the adults of the world for good.

Without the proper measure of government in our community life, we fear that the CIWDM will be assimilated, dissipated, overrun, abandoned or at best marginalized because we never assembled ourselves into something strong, powerful and attractive with the means to protect our vital interests from the debilitating influences already inside of our gates.

This proposal makes the case for why we need each of these essential components of government and presents the requirements for beginning to implement these principles. As mentioned earlier, the good news is that Imam W. Deen Mohammed has already established that we need these things and he has told us that he left it up to us to administer our life and affairs.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In this proposal, the Conveners call on the Imams and the people of Imam W. Deen Mohammed to embrace the ideas described herein that will enable us to establish a beautiful model of Islamic Democracy, which is critical to creating a model community, an example for Muslims around the world, for America, and for those people in Western nations who say that Al-Islam is the enemy of Western civilization.

# The Case for Government

Allah says in Surah (chapter) 7:185; “Do they see nothing in the **government** of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah hath created? (Do they not see) that it may well be that their terms are nigh drawing to an end? In what message after this will they then believe?”*[[10]](#footnote-10)*

In this verse, Allah is asking if we see anything of value in the government and organization of all that HE has created in the heavens and the earth and in everything therein. Allah is asking us if there are no lessons we can learn from the “Systems of Knowledge”[[11]](#footnote-11) that HE has created. If we listen to the Qur’an with our inner ear, we can hear Allah saying, “Human being, what is the matter with you?! Can you not see the guidance for governing, structuring and organizing yourselves in the things that I have created as signs and benefits for you?”

In Surah 87:1-3, Allah says, “Glorify the name of thy Guardian-Lord Most High, who hath created, and further, given order and proportion; who hath ordained laws and granted guidance.”

This verse simply reinforces the fact that organization, structure, government, law (limits) and guidance are things that are built into the fitrah (natural patterns or nature) of what Allah has created. We call it, Deen Al-Fitrah. In fact, it is built into the very soul of the human being.[[12]](#footnote-12)

It is indisputable that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) recognized the need for government and implemented it masterfully during his lifetime. All Muslims heap praise upon the shining example of Medina, the city of light (Medinah Munarawah).

The major triumph of the prophet was that he was able to organize and structure disparate, autonomous tribes into a unified community under an agreement (charter of Medina) accepting an established leadership (the prophet and his staff). In fact, the Muslims were not victorious until the prophet set up government in their lives.

There are many references from Imam W. Deen Mohammed regarding the essential necessity of having government in our lives. Most of us are well aware that government is one of the four major influences that must be thriving for community life to be possible and healthy. Consider this quote from the Imam:

“So, getting back to the point, we are social and spiritual beings; social and spiritual beings, essentially. We’re political beings, too. But what makes us political beings? You see, start with that. That is the core of life and the core of life will explain everything else. So what makes us political beings, if G-d has made us really social and spiritual beings from the start? It is the need in the social/spiritual. The social/spiritual life will grow and it will become big. The bigger it becomes in numbers, the more we are aware that we need some kind of **government**; we need to have this governed for the good of all. So what requisitioned government or politics? My social nature.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

In the above quote, Imam Mohammed makes it crystal clear that the need and desire for government in our lives is produced by our very nature. It comes from our soul, spirit and social nature. We need it.

The question for this community is where is our government? Where is government in our version of community life? Where is our model of community government? As a community, we are close to a lump of flesh (fetus lump). We have blood flowing through us; we have social life flowing through us, but we do not have strong bones that give us a skeletal structure so we can stand up in Qiyam as a community and move about the larger society as a single entity or life form. A governmental system is required in order for us to practice Deen Al-Fitrah, as explained by the logic of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

Imam Mohammed further makes this point during a lecture on the meaning of the Fig and the Olive.[[14]](#footnote-14) Referring to Surah 95:1-3, he likens the stages of growth in a community to that of the progression of the fig to the olive to Mount Sinai to a city of safety and security.

He says, “The fig has a lot of water. If you would cut it open and look at it—That is, dissect it so to speak, and look at it to see what pattern is revealed inside it, you would find that its seeds are grouped together. But, they don't form a real pattern. There is no real order, except just a circle. Alright! So it represents simple grouping. Is that right? The design in the fig represents a simple grouping!

Alright! The human being comes into the "Teen"(the fig) as a social group. The human being’s conscience is that of a fig; meaning, no elaborate ideas, no elaborate order. He has no complex order of how his life should be. It's very simple! It is, simply, just being together. Isn't that the nature of man first? That is to just be together, to just group. Am I right? After he groups, then he begins to plan how best to survive as a group. Right?”

So, he explains that there is a stage of development where we just stay together just to be together, because of our social bonding. This is the fig. A simple grouping; no real planning, no deliberate and sophisticated strategies. No serious operations.

Next he describes the olive. He says, “Alright! So later, he is challenged to become an olive. Now, we come to the olive. The olive, you can't take it and just bite down on it and just chew it up. You better be careful eating the olive. You might break off a tooth. The olive has a very hard seed. If you go to chewing that thing, it has meat on the outside, but if you are not careful, you will hurt yourself. And when you dissect the olive, you see what? You see central focus! The seed is in the center. Thus, the essences are centered, right? Whereas, in the fig the essence or the life of that fruit is scattered, scattered out, but yet, grouping. The olive is not scattered out. It is right centered. And it is not many, it is one. One, is that right!? The olive, the seed is one, not many, but just one! However, with the fig, it is many.

 So, this is how we group together to get the benefit of each other. We come into leadership. We want one! We want one leader! And he is going to center all of us, right!?”

So the olive represents the establishment of a leader that creates the vision and the focus for the community. Then the Imam goes on to say,

“After we get leadership, what do we want? Government!! We want government. After leadership, leadership wants government (Turi Seeneen - Mount Sinai). The law came to order society under one government. And Moses was told ‘Don't take too much responsibility on yourself.' That is what Jethro, the priest, told him. He said, ‘You will wear yourself out. Delegate authority, so your government will grow!’ Isn't that what he told him? Yes!! Mount Sinai is government! But what kind of government? Inspired government!! The word, itself, tells us that G-d, himself, inspired the government (Turi Seeneen - Mount Sinai)”

Following this natural progression, after a special leader like the leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, comes the time to establish government; an inspired governmental process that unites and focuses the energies and potential of the people by protecting the balance between freedom and autonomy and responsibility and unity.

We believe the case for government in our community life is clear, but the nature, form, design and implementation of that governance process has not been fully and formally described and adopted. Imam Mohammed referred to our governmental process as Islamic Democracy; he outlined its governing principles and he established the framework for implementing it when we are ready.

At a Ramadan Session with Imams in Athens GA in February 1995, Imam Mohammed described Islamic Democracy as the pursuit of Islamic social justice in the establishment of an Islamic social order. The establishment of a just (fair) society or social order based upon Islamic principles is what he means by Islamic Democracy.

The Imam said at this Ramadan Session, “Now, let us look at the sunnah, what is called the sunnah. With the fard and the sunnah, you will see clearly Islamic democracy; Islamic social justice. That's what we mean by ‘Democracy’—by Islamic Democracy—Islamic social justice, Islamic social order, a just social order. An Islamic, just, social order founded upon justice. You might say, ‘Oh, this was founded upon Taqwa.’ That's right, Taqwa is justice, too. That's the beginning of justice.”

The Imam is explaining two things in the above quote. He is telling us that when you study the sunnah of the prophet as well as the things that are established as fard (obligatory), you will see that the prophet was always in pursuit of giving justice to the individuals he dealt with and establishing justice for the social order he led. The second point the Imam makes is that this social order is established upon Taqwa, because you must be sincerely G-d conscious in order to establish an Islamic society built upon fairness and justice.

The idea of Islamic Democracy is comprehensively explored in one of the other proposals from the Conveners titled, Establishing Islamic Democracy,[[15]](#footnote-15) by Imam Bashir Ali, who is the National and Midwest Section Convener of Imams Associated with the CIWDM.

The focus of that proposal is to describe the essential framework and processes required for government and Islamic Democracy to be established as they relate to the current local, sectional, and national organizations in the CIWDM.

The focus of this proposal is to help the community of IWDM realize that IWDM’s support for autonomy and strong local leadership and focus does not mean he supported laissez-faire[[16]](#footnote-16) community life and the abandonment of government and mutual obligations to one another as a driving force in our lives.

The acknowledgement and acceptance that government should be a living influence in the life of the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed (CIWDM) is the first principle that needs adoption.

**We urge you to consider and approve the case for government in the social order of the CIWDM.**

# The Case for Am’rahum Shuura Bay’nahum

Allah tells us in Surah 42:38, “Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance;”

Most of us know that Imam W. Deen Mohammed was a strong advocate for Shuraa. There are many, many statements like the one below where the Imam urges us to practice Shuraa.

“G-d says to us, ‘Order upon the principle of Shuraa, of mutual consultation.’ This is a meeting of the minds, the mutual meeting of the best minds, discussing the matter and coming up with a consensus; a judgment they all support. Right? That’s what G-d says to do.”[[17]](#footnote-17) This quote is from a conversation on March 14, 2008 in Boston, Massachusetts on the topic of “Support Religion for Social Dignity and Community Empowerment.”

Decision-making by way of mutual consultation, am’rahum shuura bay’nahum (Shuraa), is a concept that is probably 100% acknowledged in the CIWDM. However, what it means in practice, especially when it comes to government at the sectional, national and even local community contexts, is still a matter of individual interpretation.

This is understandable, because Shuraa takes place on many levels in our lives. Muslims are people who believe in consultation, because Prophet Muhammad told us that “G-d’s hand is over the group.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Thus, we engage in informal and formal consultation about matters that are situational or long-standing, personal or communal (local, sectional, national or international).

But, to implement the principle of Shuraa in a practical way so that it can yield benefits to us as local masjids and as a whole community, we must agree on some of the procedures.

There are issues and concerns that are local, some that are specific to a Section (region), and others that are national and international. The CIWDM must define our methodology, practices, procedures for mutual consultation at each of these levels so that our people can learn and understand how our community model works.

Each local masjid needs to have a fair and just way that its membership can participate meaningfully in the Shuraa process. This does not mean that every little decision has to be voted on by all of the members. The Shuraa of the group can put someone in charge and give them the responsibility and power to make decisions. It just needs to be fair and effective.

We also need a Shuraa process by which we can reap the benefits of collaboration and cooperation in each Section of our community. Our local masjids and their local Shuraa processes must be connected to a process defined for the Section so that a fast, efficient, and effective decision making task can be performed when needed at the Section level.

Our Section Shuraa process should connect to a National Shuraa process. A national Shuraa process enables the CIWDM to benefit from the group intellect and will (desire) in responding to situations that are affecting us across the entire community.

In addition to connecting our masjids together, we have many organizations, businesses and other entities that play significant roles in our community life. We need to ensure that they have a way to plug into the Shuraa process, independently from the masjid.

So, an organized and formal Shuraa process is a mechanism that makes a reasonably fair group consultation possible and practical, especially in a place like America where technology makes it easy. Al-Islam, Deen al-Fitrah, and the customs of this community are not compatible with tribalism and nomadism. We must balance freedom and autonomy with responsibility, mutual obligations and unity.

Imam Mohammed quoted the following hadith, “Ibn 'Umar reported the Prophet (pbuh) said: "He (Allah) will not gather together my Ummah or he said (the) Ummah of Muhammed upon error and going astray. The hand of Allah is with the group. And whoever strives to separate (from the group) strives towards the fire."[[19]](#footnote-19)

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Imam Mohammed said, “In Al-Islam it says, ‘G-d’s control is on the group;’ it is on the community, not on individuals. That means the collective body is ultimately the voice of G-d. Civilized nations respect the will of the people, the will of a nation. If they determine that the position that their nation has taken expresses the will of the people, they respect it. Although other interests may cause them to violate what they respect, they do respect it; they acknowledge that it is the will of the people. And those who want to keep a cruel control or cruel hand over the people or on the people, they will confuse those outside and make them think that the people's will is different from what it really is. But in time, the truth is made known and the will of the people has to be recognized.” [[20]](#footnote-20)

As mentioned earlier, Imam Bashir Ali’s proposal, Establishing Islamic Democracy, explores the mechanics of our existing Shuraa processes. This proposal seeks your acknowledgement and acceptance that Shuraa should be a living influence in the life of the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed at all levels (local, section, national) and the second principle that should be adopted and put into practical application.

**We urge you to consider and approve the case for Am’rahum Shuura Bay’nahum in the social order of the CIWDM.**

# The Case for Agreements and Accountability

Surah 2:282 makes the case for putting important agreements in writing. Below, we extract two excerpts from verse 282 for clarity, as it is one of the longest verses in the Qur’an. It says, “O ye who believe! When ye deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties. Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate, but let him fear his Lord Allah and not diminish aught of what he owes.”

The other immediately relevant part of the verse 2:282 states, “Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period, whether it be small or big. It is more fair in the sight of Allah, more suitable as evidence and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves. But, if it be a transaction which ye carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if ye reduce it not to writing. But take a witness whenever ye make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm.”

In this section of the proposal, we present the case that the members of the CIWDM can make binding agreements with each other and also hold each other accountable for keeping or breaking those agreements. We are not merely allowed to do so by Islamic law, but we are instructed to do so by Allah, because it is advisable. We should be encouraged to make formal agreements and commitments with each other rather than trying to avoid doing so. We should be making stronger binding commitments to each other rather than trying to explain why we don’t have to have obligations to each other.

Allah tells us in the above verses to reduce our agreements to writing, because it serves as evidence of the terms and obligations of the agreement and it prevents doubt and uncertainty about the responsibilities and actions expected by the parties to the agreement.

One of the monumental achievements of Prophet Muhammad was the written agreement (charter) created in Medinah between the various groups after extensive negotiations (Shuraa) with each of the tribes. Shuraa followed by a written agreement created the basis for a unified governmental process that is still heralded as a superb accomplishment 1400 years later.

As mentioned in the previous section on Am’rahum Shuraa Bay’nahum, Shuraa is not mutual consultation for consultation sake. It is consultation between people for the purpose of making decisions. When people work together and consult with each other to arrive at decisions, those decisions are the agreements they have reached as a result of their deliberations.

But, decisions and agreements are meaningless and without integrity, if there are no consequences for breaking or violating those agreements. Decisions that can be made today and discarded tomorrow on a whim without repercussions are not the bones[[21]](#footnote-21) that a community’s governmental life and future can be built upon. When bones are broken, it is a painful affair. The bigger the bone, the greater the pain. If we can disregard and disrespect each other without a care, then we are jelly fish, a fetus lump of flesh, without a spine and skeleton with which we can stand upright as a human society. What good is divine wisdom, if it is not applied and adhered to?

So, accountability for keeping our agreements is something we must agree upon, if our efforts at Shuraa and government are to have any meaning whatsoever and chance for success. Furthermore, defining the consequences for breaking agreements is as important as defining the agreement itself, if our efforts at Shuraa and government are to have any value whatsoever and chance for success.

Imam Mohammed said this, “According to the Qur'an or the Word of G-d to us, ‘... and fulfill the contracts which you have made.’ Contract also means a promise, not only a business contract or serious agreement that you made. It also means a promise and if you make a promise, you keep your promise. That is righteousness.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Our agreements are promises to each other and it is righteousness that we keep our promises to each other.

The goal and purpose of government in an Islamic Democracy is to facilitate the implementation of the guidance of Allah, the will of the people that is in harmony with Allah’s guidance, and the mobilization of the human and material potential of the society in harmony with Allah’s guidance and purpose.

Please take a moment to reflect on this lengthy, but important, excerpt from Imam Mohammed on why Satan wants to break up things and people that should be united together. The CIWDM belongs together. We are one people with common purposes and a common destiny. We cannot accomplish our purposes and destiny, if we are separated in our thinking, plans, and actions.

Imam Mohammed, speaking at Jumu’ah on January 3, 2003 at the Taqwa Islamic Center in Chicago IL said, “G-d wants to bring together those things that should be together. G-d created those things that belong together to be together and to be brought together, if they are not together. And to stay together like husband, wife, family. G-d created family to be together and to stay together. Satan wants to break families up.

This scheme of Satan, perhaps, is the scheme that all the other schemes can be seen under or this one scheme can reveal all of the other schemes. What I am talking about is his scheme to break up that which should be together, to divide that which should be united, to separate that which should be together.

To break up families is one of the objects of the Satan. That is what he has to do. Because, if he doesn't break up families, then there is an authority in the life of the people. Family is an organization. Family is an institution. The whole society has been built upon the institution we call family.

The family is the mother of all other units of society. Family mothered all other units of society. It is deserving of a discussion in detail. When he divides the family, the father has no authority, no voice in the house. The mother has no authority or no voice in the house. The children in the family are all separated, and the family is disunited.

Then when Satan makes his appeal, who do the children turn to, to see if he should be obeyed or not? Nobody turns to anybody in the house to see if they should obey the invitation of Satan. When that family is disunited and the members have no respect for the parents, for the father, for the mother, then the voice of Satan can come in easily.”

 It is clear that a community is based upon a common unity and this common unity should be reflected throughout the four birds of life, which includes governmental life. Such unity is only possible through Shuraa, agreements, and holding ourselves accountable to our agreements.

While the members of our society must have the freedom and autonomy to focus on local development and individual interests, we also understand that freedom as described by Imam Mohammed, is not chaos, anarchy or the freedom to destroy our community using the scheme of Satan to break us apart from one another. It is the freedom to accept the responsibility to design and develop our special life.

While there are many more arguments that can be made, we believe the case has been made that it is natural for us and we are obligated to Allah and to each other to make agreements with each other for our common good and that we can hold each other accountable for our actions, including prescribing consequences for breeching our agreements.

**We urge you to consider and approve the case for Agreements and Accountability in the social order of the CIWDM.**

# The Case for Standards

The case for Standards is a call for the adoption of the principle that through our Shuraa process the CIWDM can make agreements to pursue and uphold specified standards germane to the orientation, growth, and progress of the leadership and direction of the Community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed.

Standardizing best practices and definitive positions enables our community to reflect a common identity and have real unity across the country. It encourages and facilitates the adoption of those practices that we think will best advance our community and it educates our people about how our community operates and what we are trying to achieve.

Allah says in Sura 3:103, “And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves. Remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for ye were enemies and HE joined your hearts (in love), so that by HIS Grace, ye became brethren. Ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire and HE saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make HIS Signs clear to you, that ye may be guided.”

One of the principles in this verse is the idea that we hold on together to the rope of guidance that Allah has given to us so that we are not a divided people. Another important idea in this verse is that we should remember HIS favor upon us, because HE brought us together and made us brethren, when we were once enemies (knowingly or unknowingly).

These principles have a valuable application for our community’s governance methodology. The great ideas, practices, customs that we have received from our leaders (Prophet Muhammad and Imam W. Deen Mohammed) and the ones we have discovered ourselves are the ropes that we should hold on to and make standards for ourselves by way of Shuraa and agreement, and to which we hold ourselves accountable for implementing.

 Surah 3:104 says, “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.” We are to hold on to those precious standards we agree upon and call each other to adhere to and strive to execute the standards that are ma’aruf (things recognized or known as good) and we should call each other to leave the weaker and doubtful practices that we may have held on to before and have agreed to discard.

To be clear, by standards we mean the specific details of the actions and efforts that we have produced agreements upon which we have obligated ourselves. These are the bones, the structures, the applied practices and principles, upon which some of our community life is governed. These standards are our rules, our fiqh, and in some cases our law.

We are a group; a community, that is to uphold the standards of excellence and put down the standards of mediocrity. Thus, our community is mandated to take Shuraa on what standards should be upheld, make agreements to adhere to the standards, and hold ourselves accountable for meeting those standards. These fundamental processes of taking Shuraa, defining and then agreeing on standards open the door for creating a governance process and a model community that we can be proud of and others will come to admire once they learn about how we conduct our community life affairs.

While there are many more arguments that can be made, we believe the case has been made for the value of upholding standards.

**We urge you to consider and approve the case for Standards by way of Shuraa in the social order of the CIWDM.**

# The Requirements for Implementation

The good news is that the requirements needed to implement approval of these principles of action are already within the existing framework of our national community life. All decision making begins with the Shuraa process and we have the framework already in place for taking Shuraa at the local, section, and national levels.

The majority of our people are connected through a local masjid. That local masjid has a governing structure, which should include an elected Imam who is ratified every 1-4 years, an elected Majlis (board of directors) who are elected and ratified every 1-4 years, and a membership of people who are afforded the Islamic Democratic process of electing and ratifying their leadership and governing bodies and participating fully in shaping the direction and character of their local Muslim community.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The community members who elect their Imams and representatives should also have the opportunity to weigh in on matters of local concern. The leadership (Imam and Majlis) should always govern justly by considering the input through Shuraa of the people. By way of vote and consensus, the local masjid agrees on things to do and they work together to carry out the agreements.

Similarly, the Imams who are the elected representatives of their local masjids, elect or ratify a representative from among themselves every two years to serve as the Section Convener of Imams. The Convener calls the Imams together at the Section level to discuss matters of relevance to all of the masjids in the Section.

The Imams deliberate on matters that pertain to the improvement of all the masjids in the Section. They agree on those matters where they have the authority and ability to make the decision and where appropriate they take matters back to their local areas to discuss the concern with their people. This is essential in order for a true Islamic Democracy to unfold and for as many people as possible to be participants in our social order.

Through Shuraa with the people of their masjid on the issues that are being deliberated, the Imams obtain the opinion of their masjid and they come back to the Sectional Shuraa process representing the opinion of their local masjid. When all of the opinions or votes of the local masjids are combined together, the majority consensus represents the opinion or decision of the Section.

Similar to what happens at the local level, once there is a consensus on a matter at the Section level, all local masjids in the Section make an agreement to work to implement the idea or action.

Finally, the Section Conveners who are elected by the local Imams, elect and ratify a representative every two years to serve as a National Convener. The National Convener calls the Section Conveners together for discussions and Shuraa on matters that pertain to and affect the entire national community. These matters are discussed by the Conveners and where appropriate they take Shuraa with each other and form a consensus opinion.

On matters affecting masjids across the country, the Section Conveners seek Shuraa with the Imams in their Section who in some cases can vote on behalf of their masjid and in other cases are required to take Shuraa with the people in order to obtain the people’s opinion on an issue.

This wonderful process makes it possible for our entire community to take Shuraa on critical matters affecting our individual lives and affords our leaders the opportunity to truly represent and reflect the will of the believers. This improves the overall satisfaction of the people and eventually their productivity and engagement as well. It also puts our community on the path of self-governance, where we as a group can collaborate and agree on standards (laws) that we place upon ourselves to make ourselves better. These standards of agreement are in fact a critical achievement towards putting the river or power of government to work in our community life as a force for our progress.

For example, certainly the believing followers of Imam Mohammed would want his commentary to feature prominently in our masjids and we know there are many Muslims, who attend our masjids, who do not want his commentary to feature prominently. Their hope is that we neglect to transmit his approach to Al-Islam effectively to new converts and the next generation so that it will eventually fade away as we get older and pass on.

As one measure of protection, our community could take Shuraa on whether or not local masjids that identify with the leadership and community of Imam W. Deen Mohammed shall include language in their local bylaws that tie our masjids to the Imam’s language and logic and to the direction and laws of the CIWDM.

We have a process in place that enables us to implement a self-governing action such as the one described above. This same process also allows us to specify the consequences or penalty for masjids that reject the agreed upon standards of operation that result from a majority consensus (ijma’a) decision.

Some people shudder at the thought of there being some penalty or consequence for not complying with an agreement. The thought of feeling like someone outside of myself or my locale having an influence on things happening in my locale feels like my freedom is being stepped upon. But, is that the right way to feel and think? Is it a natural or Islamic feeling or idea? If your national community, whom you claim to be a part of, makes a decision for the good of the whole and you feel like it’s someone from the outside imposing upon you, what does this say about your relationship to your community?

Deen Al-Fitrah shows us that consequences for actions and events are built into the very fabric of the creation. Everything that happens produces a consequence. Al-Islam and the Qur’an tell us repeatedly that there are consequences for our actions that lead to paradise or the fire. Muslims should not fear the idea of consequences. We should be concerned about unjust consequences, unfair consequences, consequences that enslave us to other than Allah and the destiny of this community. But, we should not fear to have consequences that protect us, that guide us, that ensure we preserve our march to the promised destiny.

Government, agreements, standards, even Shuraa mean nothing…absolutely nothing, if these things can be brushed off like dust. The noble ideas that have been serving humanity and established by our Holy Books would be meaningless, if there are no consequences for throwing them behind our back. The same is true for agreements we make with each other. Why waste each other’s time?

If we as a community do not want structure and law, then we don’t want the bird of government to serve our community life and that means we are content with the life of a clump of flesh or a jelly fish. It would be mean that we do not want a spine that holds us in an upright position, but rather prefer to be spineless allowing us to slither on the ground if we choose or just comfortably stroll around at our leisure like a four-legged cow or goat, grazing on the grass, living off the lay of the land. Our enemies are perfectly happy to keep us sleeping until we die in our sleep. Then they can inherit the assets of the Inheritor (Warith) of the Deen of Muhammad.

If you can see this vision and its wonderful possibilities. If you can see how the bird of government can help us soar up high into the heavens. If you know in your heart that while we must protect our ability to act individually and independently at the local level, we must also protect our ability to act collectively as an independent people at the national and international level, then we believe you recognize the case for establishing the requirements to implement government in our lives.

**We urge you to consider and approve the case for establishing the requirements for implementing government by way of Shuraa in the social order of the CIWDM.**

# The Conclusion: Do We Approve?

This proposal was not written just to inform. It is not written just to educate. It is not written to just complain or explain. The effort put into producing this proposal was not just to provide you with additional knowledge. No indeed, it was written to propose concrete action steps that we believe should be adopted now and we are seeking the CIWDM’s approval (or rejection) of the proposal.

The Conveners seek the community’s approval or rejection to adopt, pursue and implement the cases of Government, Am’rahum Shuraa Bay’nahum, Agreements and Accountability, and Standards as described herein.

If approved, the Conveners will accept the approval as a mandate to strive for a true implementation of the Shuraa process so that everyone will have transparency and can participate in the Islamic Democratic process.

The opportunity to vote on this proposal is forthcoming. Please subscribe to Muslim Journal and pay attention to ongoing announcements and information leading up to this opportunity and keep an eye on the national community website, [www.iwdmcommunity.com](http://www.iwdmcommunity.com).

1. The Four Rivers represent the four natural aspirations in the life of people; the aspirations for education, business, culture and government, according to Imam W. Deen Mohammed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Four Birds are the same as the four rivers. They represent the four aspects of community life: education, business, culture and government, according to Imam W. Deen Mohammed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Deen Al-Fitrah refers to the laws and patterns in creation upon which the true religion is based. Allah made the universe with laws and patterns that govern it and HE ordained for mankind a religion based upon these same laws. This concept is based upon Surah 30:30 in the Qur’an. Find a more thorough explanation in the book, “The Work of Imam W. Deen Mohammed: Impacts and Implications,” by Dr. Mubaashir Uqdah—www.uqdah.com. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Tribalism is the behavior where individuals and their friends or special interest groups are more concerned about their own self interest than they are about the whole of the nation or community. In the CIWDM, tribalism is manifested by a concern for the local masjid and individual interests without a greater concern that the local masjid and individual interests are serving and supporting the goals and direction of the larger community. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Nomadism in the CIWDM refers to the Muslim who likes to travel throughout the community taking from many masjids, but not putting down roots in a place or project to help advance the community in a meaningful way. They enjoy going everywhere, but they do no meaningful work anywhere. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The CIWDM is comprised of seven Sections or regions: New England, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southern, Southwest, Midwest, and the West. We use the term Section rather than Region for two reasons: 1) To indicate more clearly that we are parts of a whole. 2) To facilitate the redrawing of our Sections as our demographics change. It is easier to redefine sections than it is to redefine a geographical area. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Uqdah, Mubaashir (2014-11) Quotation from the Standards and Accountability presentation at the November 2014 Community Leadership Summit in San Diego CA. Search the iwdmcommunity.com website for presentation. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ali, Bashir. (2015) Establishing Islamic Democracy. [www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section\_conveners/documents](http://www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section_conveners/documents). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur’an. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A translation by Imam W. Deen Mohammed of the phrase in Surat Al-Fatihah: “Rabb Alameen,” Usually translated as “Lord of all the worlds.” All worlds exist because they are structured systematically upon knowledge; truth. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Qur’an. See Surah 91:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Mohammed, W. Deen. (1997-12-22) Speech: The Soul is Both Male and Female. Harvey IL. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Mohammed, W. Deen. “The Growth of Human Consciousness Part II.” Go to <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Language-Commentaries-of-WDeenMohammed> and search for the title. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ali, Bashir. (2015) Establishing Islamic Democracy. [www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section\_conveners/documents](http://www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section_conveners/documents). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Wikipedia.org. “The phrase *laissez-faire* is French and literally means "let [them] do," but it broadly implies "let it be," "let them do as they will," or "leave it alone." [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ali, Bashir. (2015) Establishing Islamic Democracy. [www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section\_conveners/documents](http://www.iwdmcommunity.com/iwdmcommunity/section_conveners/documents) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Tirmidhi Hadeeth Collection. Book 33 Hadith 10 or Vol. 4 Book 7, Hadith 2167. Also <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/33/10>. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Tirmidhi Hadeeth Collection. Book 33 Hadith 10 or Vol. 4 Book 7, Hadith 2167. Also <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/33/10>. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Mohammed, W. Deen. From the book of lectures, Selected Talks III, Chapter Four. Jumu’ah delivered at the Harvey Islamic Center. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Structures and principles. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Mohammed, W. Deen. (1999) Speech at the Annual Islamic Convention. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The Islamic democratic process if often expressed through monthly status reports and regular community open forum discussions. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)