

reject the inherently racist tenets of the Nation of Islam and in 1975 Ali turned to orthodox Islam, as practised by the majority of the Muslims in the world. Muslims believe all mankind, black and white, are creations of God and there is no superiority of white over black, or black over white. The only 'superiority', in the sight of God, is of the person who is more pious and does more good deeds.

After his spiritual re-awakening in 1975, Ali began to rediscover Islam. In the years since, he has acknowledged some of his earlier shortcomings. He became more serious about his spirituality and spreading the word of Islam. He has undertaken numerous efforts designed to further world peace and charitable causes. Today he regularly visits a mosque about 30 minutes from his estate. And he begins every day with the first of the five prayers to God, kneeling and facing Makkah.

It is stated that he is the most recognizable man on Earth. And decades after he burst upon the world scene at the 1960 Olympics, Muhammad Ali remains a magical figure, known and loved throughout the world.



The
Young Muslims UK

The Islamic Society of Britain is a national organisation with branches throughout the UK. Together with its dynamic youth wing, The Young Muslims UK, it aims to 'Enable and Inspire people to live by Islam', by introducing Islam to the people of Britain.

The Islamic Society of Britain and Young Muslims UK are not just other groups, rather they are about bringing Muslims together regardless of their gender, ethnic background or colour. It is a meeting point for all concerned Muslims who see Britain as their society and as their home.

No longer can we afford to sit idle and watch events unfold. On the Day of Judgement God will ask us what we did to change the situation around us. Indeed all this is part of our test. We urge you to come forward and join us and help us to change the society around us.

If you would like to know more about Islam or have any other queries please contact:



**The Islamic Society of Britain
and the Young Muslims UK
PO Box 7539, Birmingham B10 9AU**

**Tel: 0845 087 87 66
info@isb.org.uk
www.isb.org.uk**

This leaflet is sponsored by Muslim Information Service. The Muslim Information Service aims to produce, and make readily accessible, information on Islam for all sections of society. It is funded by Radio Ramadan Glasgow and is a department of the Islamic Society of Britain.
web: www.misonline.info email: info@misonline.info

MUHAMMAD

Ali



Reflections of a MUSLIM

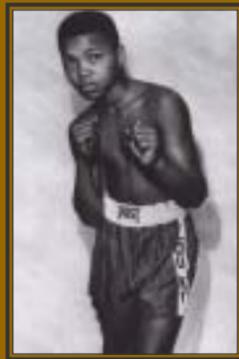
In 1954, at the age of 12, Cassius Marcellus Clay went to the police to report the theft of his new bicycle, sobbing the details to an officer named Joe Martin, and angrily threatening that he would "whup" the thief when he caught him. Officer Martin suggested that maybe the 89-pound stringbean should learn to box first! And the rest, as they say, is history.

He won the Kentucky Golden Gloves 6 times. In 1960, at 18, he won the gold medal at the Olympics in Rome. And the young man who 'floats like a butterfly; stings like a bee' would become World Heavyweight Champion three times (more than anyone else), proving that he was 'The Greatest' in Boxing history.

But there was always far more to him than what took place in a boxing ring. He joined the racist Nation of Islam in 1963 and changed his name to 'Muhammad Ali'. His new religion led him to refuse induction into the armed services in 1967, a decision that transformed him from athlete to political protester and made Muhammad Ali a part of the US's debate over the Vietnam War. As a result he was stripped of his titles, and banned from boxing for three and a half years.

Over time, as with Malik Shabbaz (Malcolm X) before him, Ali came to





About His Early Days

When I was growing up, what did I see? Jesus is white. Superman is white. The President is white. The angels are white. Santa Claus is white. We look at Miss America we see white. Even Tarzan, the King of the Jungle in Black Africa, he's white! That's brainwashing, the

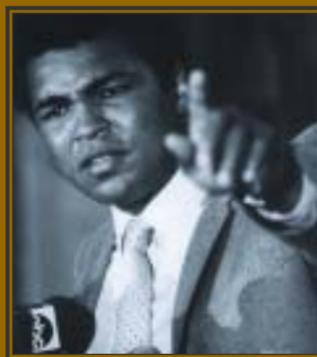
biggest lie ever told children... They think everything good has to come from someone white. Muhammed Ali, His Life & Times by Thomas Hauser (TH) p188

About Malik Shabbaz (Malcolm X)



Ali is intensely proud of his past, but if there is anything he looks back on with regret it is his cruel and hasty rejection of Malcolm. One of the first things Ali did... was to...pull out a photograph of himself and Malcolm... 'That was Malcolm, a great, great man,' he said in his low whisperly voice. David Remnick, author of King of the World, p303

It was a pity and a disgrace he died like that, because what Malcolm saw was right, and after he left us, we went his way anyway. Colour didn't make a man a devil. It's the heart, soul, and mind that count. Muhammad Ali, TH p111



About Refusing to go to Vietnam

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10 thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam, while so-called Negro

people in Louisville are treated like dogs? If I thought going to war would bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people, they wouldn't have to draft me; I'd join tomorrow... I have nothing to lose by standing up and following my beliefs. So I'll go to jail. We've been in jail for 4 hundred years! Muhammed Ali, April 10 1967, Sports Illustrated

I envy Muhammed Ali. He faces a possible 5 years in jail and he has been stripped of his heavyweight championship, but I

still envy him. He has something I've never been able to attain and something I know very few people possess. He has an absolute and sincere faith. I'm not worried about Muhammed Ali. He is better equipped than anyone I know to withstand the trials in store for him. What I'm worried about is the rest of us. Bill Russell, June 19 1967, Sports Illustrated



About His Family Life

Women were always offering themselves to me. I had 2 children by women I wasn't married to. I love them; they're my children... But that

wasn't the right thing to do. It hurt my wife; it offended God. It never really made me happy. But ask any man who is 40 years old – if he knew at 20 what he knows now, would he do things different? Most people would. Muhammed Ali, TH, p310

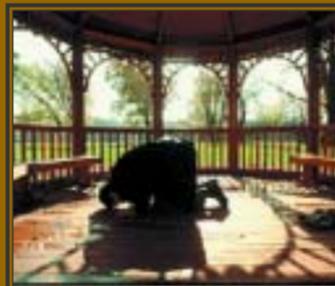
And I can say I believe Muhammad is completely faithful to me. He'd never do anything to deliberately hurt me. And at this point in his spiritual growth, he wouldn't do anything that would be an affront to God. He knows he has a life after this life, and he takes that very seriously... Lonnie Ali, Ali's current wife, TH, p473

I was a very devout Catholic until my freshman year. But then I began to question my religion. I started to study Islam... The main thing was the fact that in Islam there is only one God and there are no other gods. And once I'd started thinking about it, I realized that God is too powerful to have had a human son and been here in human form. Jesus was a great prophet, but there's only one God. He is worthy of our worship, and no other god is worthy of that. Lonnie Ali, TH, p470

Once when I was 7, I (came home from school and) found a strange person in my bed. I ran right down to my dad and rambled on about burglars! He calmed me down and explained that the people in my bed... were a homeless family that had no place to live and no food to eat. Hana Ali, Ali's 7th child, author of More Than A Hero

About His Faith - Islam

I repeat, 'My prayers, my sacrifices, my life, and my death are all for

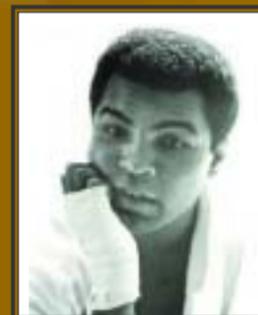


Allah.' So this is what I sincerely believe. I've held my faith over the years... I've turned down 8 million dollars in movie contracts, recordings, promotions and advertisements because of my faith. Muhammed Ali, WKCR-FM Radio broadcast

Most people don't pray until they're in trouble. When people need help they pray a lot. But after they get what they want, they slow down. If a man takes 5 showers a day, his body will be clean. Praying 5 times a day helps me clean my mind. Muhammed Ali, TH, p463

I am a Muslim. I am an American. Islam is a religion of peace. Islam does not promote terrorism or the killing of people. I cannot sit by and let the world think that Islam is a killing religion. It hurts me to see what radical people are doing in the name of Islam. These radicals are doing things that God is against. Muslims do not believe in violence. If the culprits are

Muslim, they have twisted the teachings of Islam... God is not behind assassins. Muhammad Ali, Sept 2001, The Courier-Journal Louisville



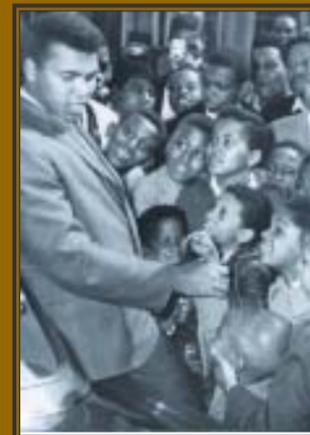
About His Health

My health is in the hands of Allah, who has ways of testing us. Whatever happens, happens. I ain't the greatest -- it's Allah. I gave myself a job. I work for God. Muhammad Ali, View from the Corner; Time Magazine

Sometimes I think too many people put me on a pedestal before and made me into an idol. And that's against Islam; there are no idols in Islam. So maybe this problem that I have (Parkinson's Syndrome) is God's way of reminding me and everyone else about what's important. I accept it as God's will. And I know that God never gives anyone a burden that's too heavy for them to carry. Muhammad Ali, TH, p500

What Others Say About Him

In his quiet, he's almost louder than he was when he was ranting and raving. There's something about him that's so powerful and



lovable. Billy Crystal, Actor, in Through The Eyes of the World

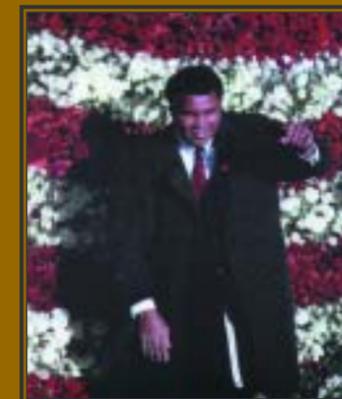
Outside the ring, it was him who taught me. He taught me patience; he taught me decency. I watched how he reacted to everything. I saw things done to him that made me sick to my stomach. And all he'd say was, 'You have to forgive people.' Angelo Dundee, Muhammad Ali's Trainer TH, p460

A few weeks before the 1974 fight in Zaire, Ali received a phone call concerning a little boy who was in hospital with leukaemia. Right away, Ali jumped on the next flight out, went to the boy's hospital, gave him a hug and a kiss, and looking him in the eye said, 'I am going to Africa to win back my title. I'm going to win my battle, and you're going to win yours.'

Much later, after winning back the title, Ali received a second call from the boy's parents explaining that it didn't look as if the boy was going to make it. Once again he was on the next flight out, and when he arrived at the boy's bedside, he told him, 'I told you that we were going to win our battles together. I won mine; now you are going to win yours.' The boy looked up at him and said, 'No, I'm going to heaven to meet God, and I'm going to tell Him that I knew you, and that you were my friend.' Gene Kelroy, Training Camp Administrator, in More Than A Hero

And Lastly...

Everything I do now, I do to please Allah. I conquered the world, and it didn't bring me true happiness. The only true satisfaction comes from honouring and worshipping God.



Time passes quick; this life is short. I see my daughter Maryum. Yesterday she was a baby. Now she's grown and ready to get married. My hair is grey... God doesn't allow you to go back and live your life over again. But the older you get, the wiser you get; and in the time I got left, I'm living right. Every day is a judgement for me. Every night when I go to bed, I ask myself, 'If God were to judge me just on what I did today, would I go to heaven or hell?' Being a true Muslim is the most important thing in the world to me. It means more to me than being black or being American. I can't save other people's souls; only God can do that. But I can try to save mine. Muhammad Ali, TH, p501

(photographs courtesy of Chrysalis Publications and through them Howard Bingham)