SOFTWARE & TECH

Noble Drew Ali The Exhuming Of A Nation

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Introduction

The phrase **"Noble Drew Ali: The Exhuming Of A Nation"** evokes a powerful image: the unearthing of a buried history, a spiritual resurrection of a people long told they had no past of their own. Noble Drew Ali, born Timothy Drew in 1886 in North Carolina, was one of the most enigmatic and influential religious leaders of the early 20th century. He founded the Moorish Science Temple of America in 1913, a movement that sought to awaken African Americans to their true heritage as "Asiatic Moors" and to reclaim a national identity stripped by centuries of slavery and colonial history. The concept of "exhuming a nation" captures the central mission of Drew Ali's work: not to create something new, but to dig up and restore an ancient lineage, a proud legacy, and a sovereign consciousness. Over a century later, his teachings continue to resonate, inspiring debates about identity, spirituality, and self-determination. This article explores the life, teachings, and lasting impact of Noble Drew Ali, and examines why the idea of "exhuming a nation" remains a potent call for many today.

Who Was Noble Drew Ali? The Prophet of Moorish Identity

Noble Drew Ali was born Timothy Drew in 1886 in North Carolina, though some accounts suggest he was born in 1883. Early in his life, he traveled widely, spending time in the Middle East, Egypt, and possibly India, where he encountered Islam, Eastern mysticism, and the concept of Moorish identity. Upon returning to the United States, he began preaching a message that directly challenged the prevailing narratives of Black inferiority and the notion that African Americans had no history before slavery. In 1913, he founded the Canaanite Temple in Newark, New Jersey, which later evolved into the Moorish Science Temple of America.

Drew Ali's core teaching was that African Americans were not "Negroes," "colored," or "Black"—terms he considered labels of subjugation. Instead, they were descended from the ancient Moors of Northwest Africa and Southwest Asia, a people who had established great civilizations and introduced culture and science to Europe. He asserted that the true nationality of his followers was "Moorish" and that their religion was Islam, though not the orthodox Islam later adopted by many. Drew Ali's movement was both a religious revival and a political awakening, emphasizing self-reliance, pride, and the reclaiming of a heritage that had been deliberately obscured.

The Exhuming Of A Nation: Unearthing a Silenced History

The phrase **"exhuming of a nation"** is not just a title; it is a profound metaphor for Drew Ali's work. To exhume means to dig out from the ground, to recover something that has been buried. Drew Ali argued that the true history and identity of his people had been buried under centuries of propaganda, slavery, and colonialism. The "nation" he sought to exhume was the Moorish nation—a once-great civilization that spanned Africa, Europe,

and the Middle East.

The Moorish Identity and National Consciousness

According to Drew Ali, the key to liberation was understanding one's true nationality. He taught that every person on earth belongs to a distinct nation, and that nation gives them a legal and spiritual standing in the world. By adopting the label "Moorish American," his followers could legally assert rights that were denied to "Negroes" in the United States. This was not merely symbolic; Drew Ali issued "nationality cards" and "fezzes" that his followers believed would protect them from oppressive laws. The exhuming of the Moorish nation thus involved a massive educational campaign: teaching people to reject false names, to read their own history in the Bible and in alternative scriptures, and to see themselves as descendants of conquerors and builders.

Teachings and Scriptures: The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple

Drew Ali's primary written work is the **Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple of America**, also known as the "Circle Seven Koran" (due to the circle and seven stars on its cover). This text is not the traditional Quran of Islam but a compilation blending biblical narratives, Moorish history, Masonic influences, and Drew Ali's own revelations. In it, Drew Ali "exhumed" stories of prophets like Jesus and Moses, reinterpreting them as Moorish or Asiatic figures. For example, he taught that Jesus was a "Asiatic" man who preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who were actually the Moors. This reframing gave followers a direct spiritual lineage that elevated their identity.

The Circle Seven Koran also contains practical instructions for living: dietary laws, dress codes, the use of fezzes and flags, and a call for peace and assimilation with other races, though with a clear sense of Moorish superiority in matters of heritage. The "exhuming" here is textual: Drew Ali dug through history and scripture to find a place for his people, a place that was proudly non-European and pre-colonial.

Legacy and Influence: From Moorish Science to the Nation of Islam

The impact of Noble Drew Ali's movement cannot be overstated. While the Moorish Science Temple itself fractured after his mysterious death in 1929, its seeds grew into larger and more famous organizations. The most direct successor is the **Nation of Islam**, founded in 1930 by Wallace Fard Muhammad, who—according to NOI tradition—was a student of Drew Ali and may have even been a member of the Moorish Science Temple. Fard Muhammad adopted many of Drew Ali's core concepts: the rejection of the "Negro" label, the idea that Black people were originally "Asiatic," and the need for a separate nation. Elijah Muhammad later expanded these teachings, but the foundation was laid by Drew Ali.

Moreover, Drew Ali's emphasis on historical recovery influenced later movements like black nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and the Afrocentric school. His argument that African Americans had a pre-slavery heritage that was sophisticated and powerful directly challenged the racism of the time. Even organizations that do not follow Moorish Science per se have borrowed from his language: the phrase "exhuming a nation" appears in speeches and writings of leaders who seek to revive indigenous African spirituality or reclaim stolen artifacts. Drew Ali's exhuming act was not just spiritual but also legal and political. His followers were encouraged to file lawsuits, claim sovereign rights, and even set up their own courts—an early form of what we now call "sovereign citizen" movements, though often with more religious justification.

Controversies and Criticisms

No discussion of Noble Drew Ali and his nation-exhuming mission would be complete without acknowledging the controversies. Critics point out that much of Drew Ali's history is historically inaccurate. The Moors were indeed a prominent medieval civilization in North Africa and Spain, but Drew Ali's claim that all African Americans are descended from Moors, and that Moors originally populated the Americas before Columbus,

lacks archaeological and genetic evidence. Scholars view the Circle Seven Koran as a pastiche of sources rather than a sacred text of revelation.

Furthermore, the movement was plagued by internal strife after Drew Ali's death. He died under suspicious circumstances after a conflict with a rival leader, and the temple splintered into factions. Some groups descended into cult-like behavior, and there have been legal confrontations with authorities over issues like the wearing of fezzes (which resemble military medals) and the refusal to accept U.S. jurisdiction. Nonetheless, for many adherents, the historical accuracy is less important than the psychological and spiritual empowerment the teachings provide. The "exhuming" is a metaphor for awakening self-worth, not a doctoral dissertation in history.

The Exhuming Continues: Modern Relevance of Noble Drew Ali's Vision

In the 21st century, the idea of exhuming a nation has taken on new dimensions. Among the most visible contemporary groups are the **Moorish Sovereign Citizens**, who have been involved in court cases and occasionally armed standoffs with law enforcement. They argue that they owe no allegiance to the U.S. government because they are members of a sovereign Moorish nation. While these actions are often criticized as legally baseless and sometimes dangerous, they show the enduring power of Drew Ali's central claim: that identity is the key to freedom.

Simultaneously, there is a growing interest in Moorish identity among African Americans who seek an alternative to mainstream Christianity or Orthodox Islam. Online communities share the Circle Seven Koran, hold virtual study groups, and debate Drew Ali's prophecies. The "exhuming" today often involves DNA testing, genealogical research, and the celebration of Moorish and Amazigh (Berber) cultures. Social media has allowed Moorish Science to spread far beyond the urban centers where Drew Ali first preached. A new generation is rediscovering his message: that before colonization, before slavery, there was a nation—a great nation—and its descendants are worthy of respect and autonomy.

Conclusion: The Unfinished Exhumation

Noble Drew Ali's life and work represent a radical act of historical imagination. The phrase **"Noble Drew Ali: The Exhuming Of A Nation"**captures the essence of his mission: to dig deep into the soil of time and recover a name, a faith, and a dignity that had been buried by oppression. Whether one views him as a prophet, a charlatan, or a visionary, there is no denying that his message touched a deep nerve in the African American experience. He gave people a story in which they were not victims but heirs to a glorious past. A century later, that story continues to be told, debated, and lived. The exhumation is not complete; every time someone picks up the Circle Seven Koran, wears a fez, or proudly calls themselves a Moor, they are adding another shovelful of earth. Noble Drew Ali did not merely talk about exhuming a nation—he started the work. The rest remains for those who carry on his legacy.

- Key takeaway: Identity is not given; it is excavated.
- Key takeaway: Spiritual and historical narratives can empower communities even when contested.
- Key takeaway: The call to "exhume a nation" is still alive, challenging us to examine who we think we are and who we might become.

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