

RASNET Annual Conference 2022

Presented by Abdulai Rufai
ilim College, Dallas.

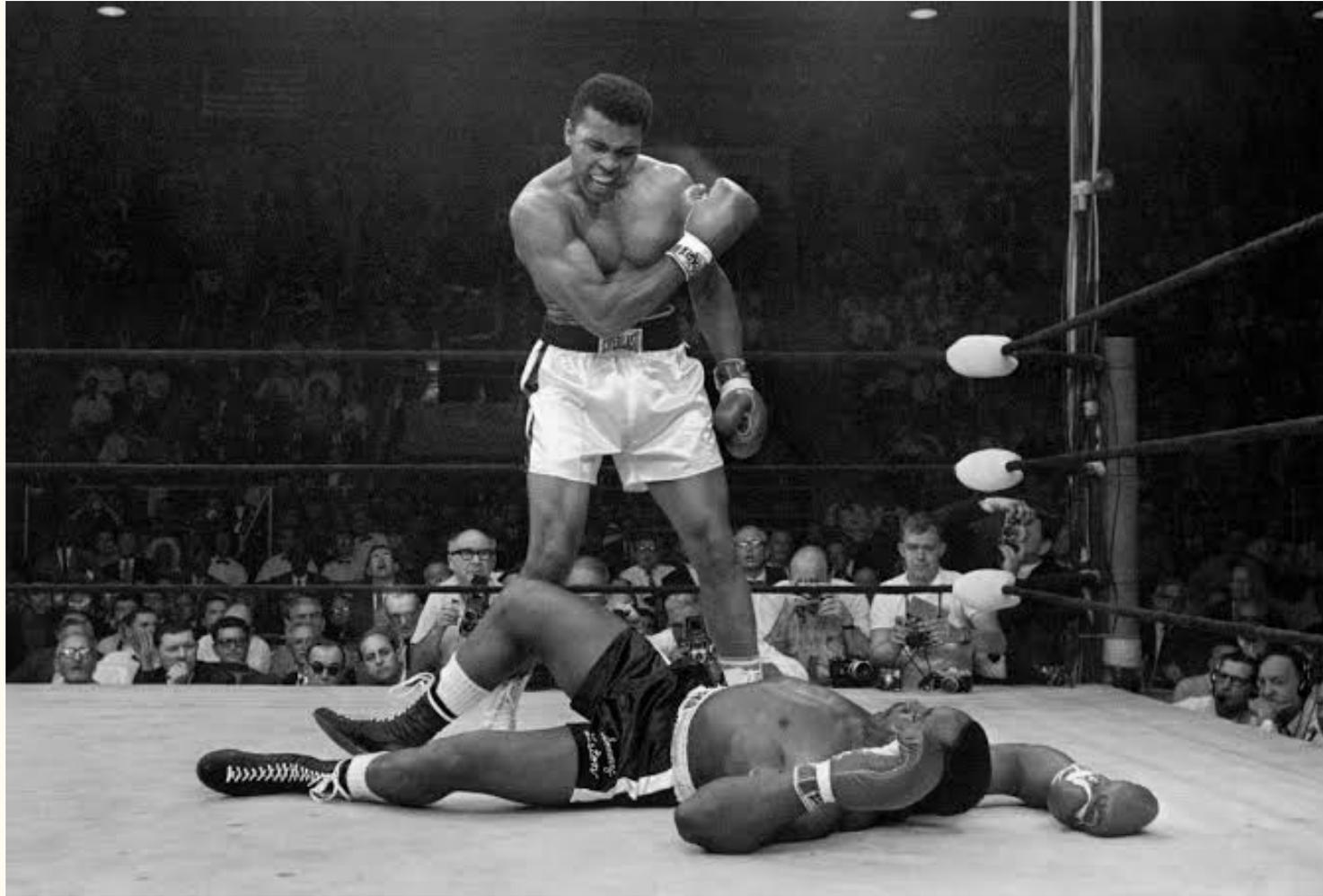
AOS 3.3: Significant Life Experience and Religious Beliefs.

Muhammad Ali 1942-2016

Synopsis

Brief overview of Muhammad
Ali's life.

- Ali's professional and private life
 - Born name Cassius Marcellus Clay. In the city of Louisville. Kentucky, USA
 - African American boxer. Heavyweight Champion
 - NOI, Sufi, Sunni 1986. Elijah, Malcolm X
 - Significant Life Experiences
 - Refused draft to fight in Vietnam. 'Unjust war is against the teachings of the Quran'
 - Lost crown but becomes evermore popular. Nationalist. Business(Champ Burgers). Exhibition fights. Among greatest sports personalities.
 - Parkinson Disease.
 - Death 2016
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1964 - Muhammad Ali vs Sonny Liston

Impact of illness

Parkinson Disease

- Diagnosed in 1984. At first he was in denial. Just another opponent to ‘whup’ albeit silently
- Later he accepted it and went public. Destined to happen.
- Champion in promoting awareness. Became a more devout Sunni. Managed disease until the very end.
- Before SLE used flamboyancy and fame to spread the word of God and voice grievances
- Would like to be a Muslim Billy Graham. Prepared to meet his Lord
- <https://youtu.be/6TN9dw54khw>

Religious beliefs





Muhammad Ali praying before a conference/match.

Ali's religious beliefs

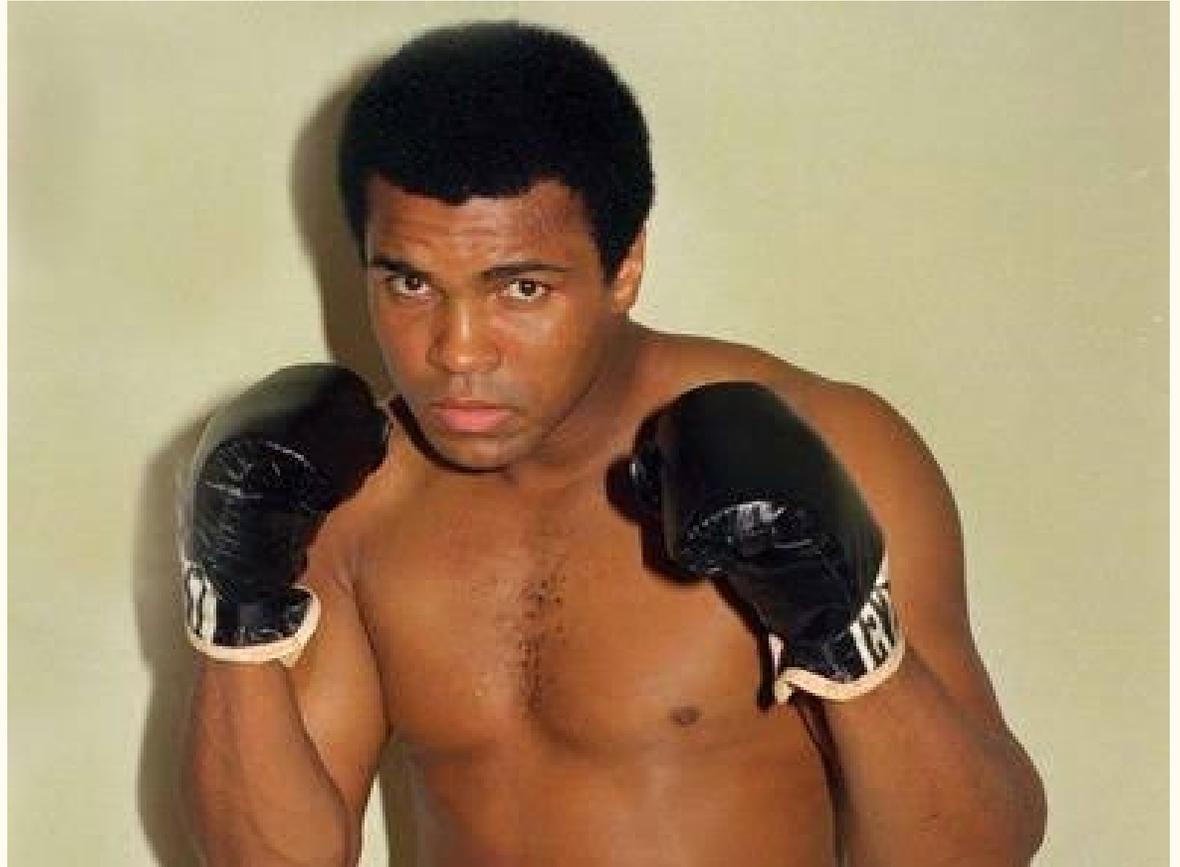
His belief system

- Suffering is a test from Allah. Quran 2:155
 - Allah tests those whom he loves the most: Hadith
 - Suffering is expiation
 - That Allah created Mankind to worship Him. Quran 51:56. "... Jinns and Humans..."
 - Misfortunes are blessings in disguise. Hadith
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Focus of area of
study

Focus of area of study

- a member's **level of adherence** to, **understanding of** and **faith in relevant religious beliefs** and their **engagement with the related expressions**
- **prior to** the experience, **during** the experience, and **after** the experience
- Before SLE. Discussed earlier
- During: Came to terms with disease. Active Travelled. Awareness. Islam
- After: Gallantly battled SLE for 32 yrs.



Source:Britannica



Faith in religious beliefs

Having strong hope in the religious belief

- All achievements attributed to Allah.
 - The 5 pillars of Islam. Prioritized faith.
 - Prayed before fights with religious mentors. Belief God on side of believer. Quran 65:3.
 - “I talk to God everyday. If God is with me no one can defeat me” (Soul of a Butterfly)
 - Ubiquitous. Interfaith discussions and debates.
 - Faith in belief that sufferings are blessings in disguise. Parkinson a chance to strengthen faith. “The only way I could deal; with this challenge.....life” Soul. p147
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Engagement

With related expressions of
religious beliefs

- Belief that the soul purpose of creation is to worship Allah. Unconditional obedience. “ I don’t drink alcohol; I don’t smoke cigarettes; ...”
 - Charity work. Prophet’s Hadith about 3 benefits reaching the dead.
 - Philanthropy: Parkinson disease research. Lobbied the and politicians.
 - Special Olympics. Make a wish Foundation
 - \$60 Million Muhammad Ali Multicultural Centre.
 - Youth Centers. Tours to Pakistan, Afghanistan, etc. UN Peace Ambassador
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Ali's understanding of religious beliefs

General Islamic beliefs alongside
Sunni and Sufi beliefs.

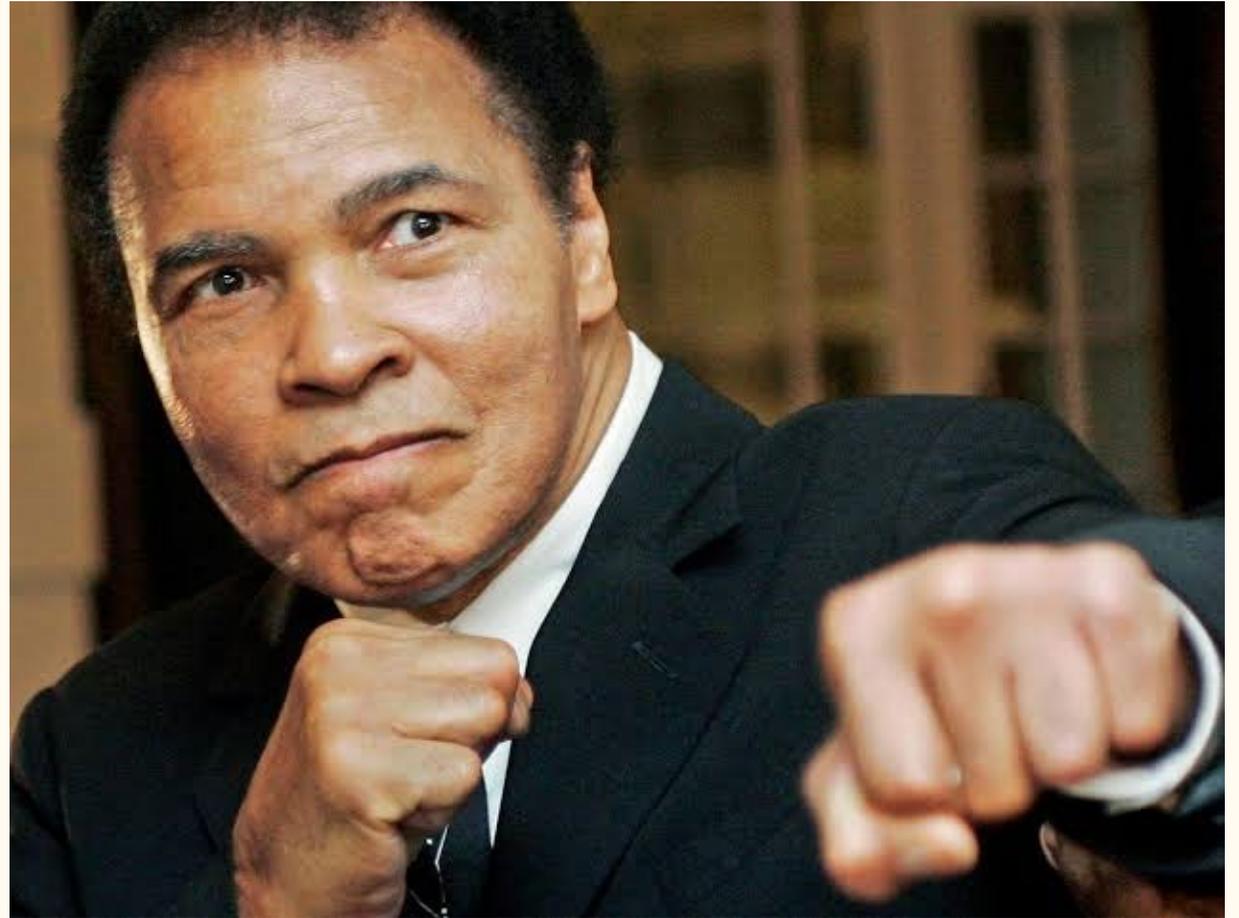
- Unique journey in search of true Islam
 - Nation of Islam. Gullible and fanatic young man. Misguided concepts. Racist ...
 - Developed skills for highly analytical approach to beliefs/connections.
 - Would leave denomination if quest for faith and knowledge not met.
 - Adopted Sufism in 2005. Readings of Inayat Khan
 - Later adopted Sunni-Sufi Islam. Guidance of scholars including Grand Mufti of Syria.
 - Developed the knowledge and confidence to engage people in religious dialogue.
 - Engaged on mission to prove to people about the existence of God at the least opportunity.
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Adherence

- Beliefs reflected in day-to-day life.
- Refusal to join army and fight in Vietnam.
- Quran teaching: No fighting in an unjust war. No killing of innocent people.
"Whosoever killed a person ... it shall be as if he had killed all mankind" (5:32).
- As Sufi, applied aspect of spiritual experience to belief in mystic prayer.
- Incantations and long secluded and prayer and supplications.
- Less attracted to material wealth.
Dispensed of wealth. "when I die, I will take nothing with me.
- Like Malcolm X, Ali made trip to Mecca for Hajj.
- Acknowledged hadn't taken holy sites seriously in the past.
- Changed his perception about race issues in America. "Hating people ... plain wrong"
- Travelled expansively to Africa and the Muslim world. Promote universal brotherhood. Religious duty

Muhammad Ali's Legacy

Frail and immobile from the effects of Parkinson, Muhammad Ali declared just before his death: “Many fans wanted to build a museum to acknowledge my achievements,” Ali said. “I wanted more than a building to house my memorabilia. I wanted a place that would inspire people to be the best that they could be at whatever they chose to do, and to encourage them to be respectful of one another.” Timeline
His words and actions continue to inspire millions.



Source: NBC news

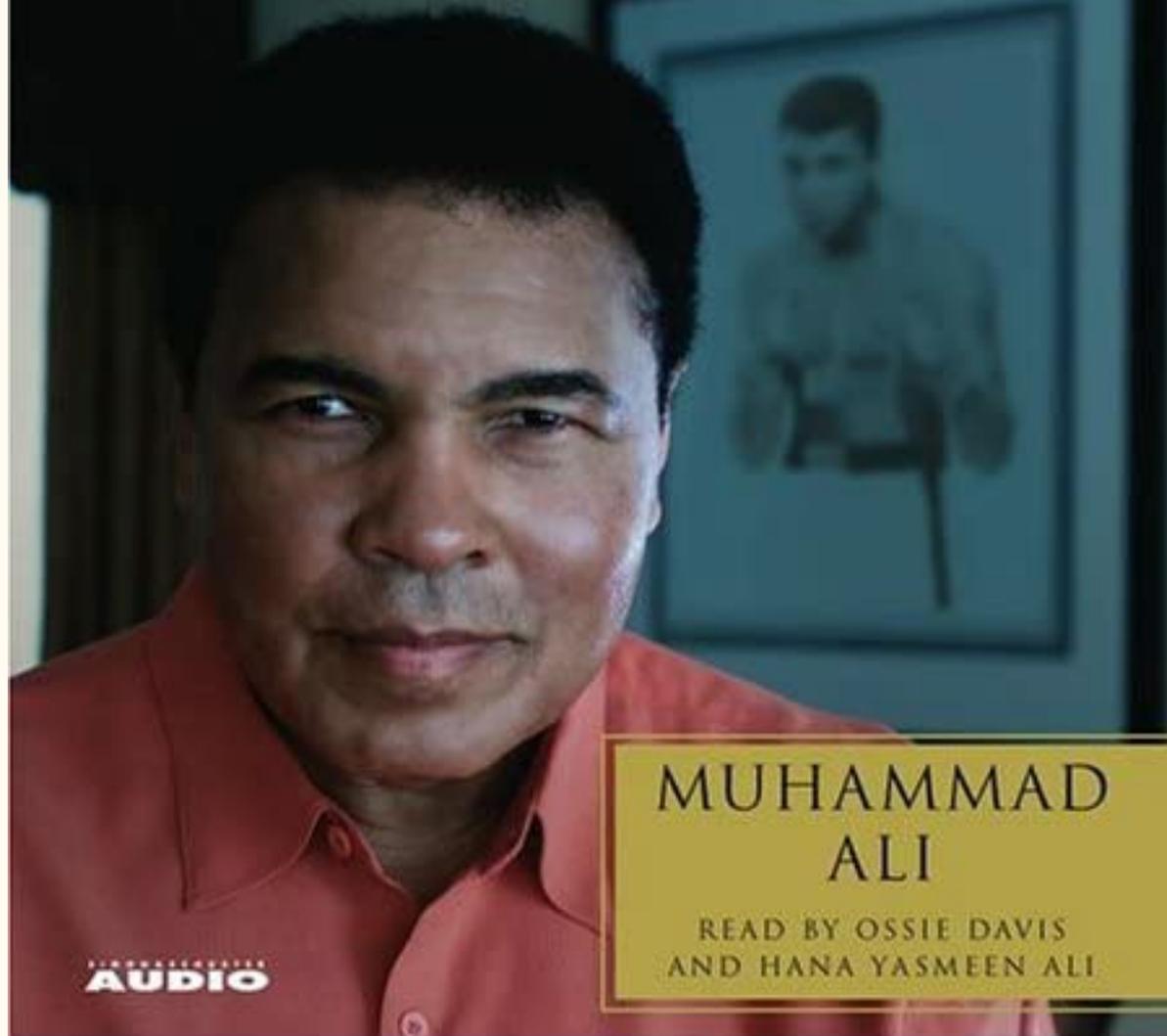
Thank you
Any Questions...

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- The Soul of a Butterfly (Muhammad Ali with Hanna Yasmeen Ali)
- The Greatest: my own story (Muhammad Ali)

UNABRIDGED

THE SOUL OF A BUTTERFLY
REFLECTIONS ON LIFE'S JOURNEY



MUHAMMAD
ALI

READ BY OSSIE DAVIS
AND HANA YASMEEN ALI

 AUDIO