The individual and Social Process of Pilgrimage

Three Sacred Journeys to Mecca

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Introduction

Pilgrimages are, perhaps the most powerful rituals performed by religious members. Most religions prescribe a pilgrimage of some sort, and pilgrims often return from their sacred journey with a new sense of self, a reaffirmed religious identity, a new outlook on society, and a strong social solidarity with others of the same faith. In addition, pilgrimage carries pilgrims into the holy land, where, in the past, prophets received revelations from God and performed miracles, and/or where important religious figures performed unequaled acts of piety. As a result, the rituals of pilgrimage center on the actions of these prophets and religious figures, allowing pilgrims from all time periods to interact with and internalize a common religious history "where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again" (Turner 1978, 6).

Almost all pilgrims describe their pilgrimage experiences as ethereal, where events are supernatural, prayers are most likely to be answered, and the possibilities are endless. Some pilgrims emphasize the impact of their experiences in formulating new solutions to their homeland's social, political and religious problems. Others describe themselves walking amongst the prophets, or undergoing a metaphorical rebirth as important religious figures. And others describe their initiation into the Islamic community and the larger Islamic World. Whatever the case may be, pilgrims describe their sacred pilgrimage experiences as influential and transformative. But how does pilgrimage facilitate such experiences? Do all pilgrims, performing the same pilgrimage from different time periods and geographical backgrounds, interact with and internalize the sacred rituals and symbols of pilgrimage the same way? One anthropologist states that pilgrimage represents the

belief “that somewhere beyond the known world there exists a power that can make right the difficulties that appear so insoluble and intractable here and now” (Morinis 1992, 1). This being the case, is pilgrimage restricted to the individual experience while in contact with this “power”? Or does it play a larger role in society?

It is the contention of this paper that pilgrimage is not only an individual process that influences and transforms the pilgrim as he or she performs the sacred rituals involved, but that it is a social process that impacts the pilgrim’s society after the pilgrim returns home. And furthermore, that the pilgrim’s unique socio-political and religious background acts as a filter through which he or she interacts with and internalizes pilgrimage. This interaction influences how pilgrims experience pilgrimage and helps explain the differences and similarities among them.

The analysis of pilgrimage in such a way is best accomplished through individual pilgrimage accounts. These accounts shed light not only on the pilgrim’s own reflections on the sacred rituals he or she is performing, but on the unique interactions and internalization of the sacred symbols involved that make the pilgrim’s sacred experience. Furthermore, analyzing the pilgrim’s actions upon returning home reveals the possible social impact of his or her sacred journey. As Victor Turner states with regard to individual accounts: “documents or oral narratives of the personal experiences and observations” allow anthropologists to “envisage the social process” of pilgrimage (1974, 167-8).

Thus, three accounts of the Muslim pilgrimage, or hajj, will be analyzed in this paper. These accounts will exemplify pilgrimage as an individual and a social process, while examining the various factors that influence how pilgrims experience pilgrimage and react upon returning home. There are a number of reasons why the hajj has been selected for such an analysis. First, in Islam the hajj is one of the most important religious acts for Muslims to perform and draws over two million pilgrims each year. As a result, the hajj has

become "the largest single gathering in one place at one time for one purpose on earth" (Wolfe 1997, xiii). Second, Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world today, and the Muslim population is rapidly increasing throughout the world, including the Western countries. In addition, modern transportation is allowing Muslims continents away from Mecca to easily perform the hajj and return home. And finally, the hajj rituals have remained virtually the same since the Prophet Muhammad established them in the seventh century. Therefore, all Muslims perform the same rituals, allowing for a comparison of Muslim pilgrims performing the hajj from a wide variety of social, cultural, geographic and historical backgrounds.

There are many hajj accounts that have been translated from a number of different languages, and numerous guidebooks are available to pilgrims that explain the history of the hajj and correct performance of its rituals in detail. In addition, some noteworthy texts have been written on the hajj with respect to travel and migration (Ian Netton 1993; Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990), African pilgrimage routes and traditions (Birks 1978; al-Naqar 1972), and the Malaysian hajj (Matheson and Milner 1985). Ian Netton, for example, compiled writings from a number of authors in order to explain the importance of the"search" for knowledge while on the hajj, whether it be the knowledge of important scholars of the time, a sacred knowledge of the hajj and Islam, or simply a knowledge of the hajj rituals and symbols (Netton 1993). Eickelman and Piscatory take a similar approach, using a combination of writings, to explain the physical and "spiritual movement" of pilgrims towards the "centre," emphasizing the "image of a flexible Islam in thought and practice" (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990). And Michael Wolfe, in his book *One Thousand Roads to Mecca*, presents accounts from twenty-three different pilgrims, cutting across time periods and geographic locations, and introducing each account with a short description of the pilgrim and the socio-political background from which he or she came (Wolfe 1997). However,

while these texts are extremely important in understanding the diversity of hajj accounts with respect to time and location, they disclose little about how pilgrims proceed through the sacred rituals of the hajj and only a small segment of how the hajj functions as an individual and a social process.

Presenting some specific questions will help clarify the approach this paper intends to take in analyzing pilgrimage, specifically the hajj. For example, how do individuals from different regions of the world, with different cultures, and living under different political circumstances, experience the hajj and interact with the sacred symbols involved? And upon completing the hajj pilgrimage, how do individuals act after returning to their homeland? Or does the pilgrimage end at all? One scholar states that rituals and symbols "express the world's climate and shape it," insinuating social change through man's interaction with symbols and rituals; but are all individuals "shaped" by the hajj in the same way (Geertz 1972, 170)? And if not, what accounts for the differences? Many scholars have argued that the hajj in the Medieval period was an important factor in maintaining the Islamic social structure of the time. If this is the case, does the hajj function differently in the modern period, where nationalism and secular rule have spread into Islamic lands, and where Muslims often perform the hajj from countries in which they are a minority?

In order to answer these questions, a theoretical foundation must be established. This will be accomplished with references to a number of different theoretical writings. Victor Turner's models of "rites of passage" and "structure" and "anti-structure" will be used to explain the phases through which pilgrims proceed as they perform the hajj, and the ramifications of the unstructured social atmosphere that is often re-created through pilgrimage rituals and which pilgrims often find in direct opposition to their structured homelands. In addition, Mircea Eliad's view on "sacred history" will be used to explain why pilgrims often feel as if they are "amongst" the prophets, or experiencing a metaphorical

rebirth as one of the prophets. And finally, the writings of Ian Netton and Eickelman and Piscatory will be utilized to explain the importance of the pilgrim's motivation to embark on the pilgrimage, the "historical shifts" of pilgrimage that occur over time, and the influence of travel itself on the pilgrim's sacred experience.

Therefore, this paper will employ the analysis just described in order to illustrate that not only is pilgrimage, specifically the hajj, a powerful religious process that can transform individual Muslims, but, just as important, that the transformation is shaped by the individual's social, cultural, religious and political background. The pilgrim's background would most likely hold little significance in analyzing guide books written by pilgrims on how the rituals of the hajj should be performed, although they may reveal minute differences in religious practice among Islamic sects, or historical trends in Medieval Islam pilgrimage routes. But it becomes very significant in analyzing individual journals, accounts, and commentary of the hajj. Embedded within these writings are important signs representing how the individual interacts with the hajj rituals and symbols, the hajj experience, which is directly related to the individual's unique personage. As Alan Morinis explains:

> Experience must be analyzed in relation to social and cultural patterns, in the attempt to make sense out of why certain experiences are common to some pilgrimages and not to others (1992, 17).

In addition, the analysis of hajj accounts used in this paper will not only exemplify the individual transformation in relation to the influences just described, but also the possible social impact resulting from pilgrims returning to their homelands upon completing the hajj. The importance of these facets of the hajj is evident in a statement by a Pakistani hajji, who explains:

> Each haji goes through the journey conditioned by his self and by the those of the period when he undertakes the journey. His mood, learning and devotion coupled with the general background and the specific experiences during the

> pilgrimage would determine the end product. Permutations and combinations run into billions so as to produce variety of results (Zafar 1978, xi).

In short, the hajj will be analyzed as a socio-political religious process that is shaped by the pilgrim's background and individual mind set, revealing a few of these "billions" of "combinations."

Three pilgrims will be analyzed in depth using this approach to pilgrimage. First, Ibn Battuta, perhaps the most famous Medieval traveler, will be analyzed within the historical atmosphere in which he traveled. And while Ibn Battuta performed the hajj centuries before the other two pilgrims that will be presented, his pilgrimage will be useful in understanding the role of the hajj in maintaining the Islamic social structure of the time, and the motivations of many pilgrims in making the sacred journey. His account also helps in understanding the importance of the unique political and social climate in which many modern pilgrims find themselves when departing for the hajj, and allows for a general comparison between pilgrimages of different time periods. As Eickelman and Piscatori present regarding the history of the hajj:

> There are indeed discernible historical shifts in ideas as well as practices–as, for example, in the distinct appearance of *rihla* text and their association with the hajj beginning in the twelfth century, and the emergence of an explicit notion of "Morocco" in the sixteenth (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990, 11).

And as will be illustrated, the "historical shift" between Ibn Battuta's fourteenth century hajj and the modern hajj is very evident.

Second, the hajj of Malcolm X, the twice converted twentieth century black activist from America, will be examined in the socio-political and religious context from which he departed. His case not only exemplifies the modern pilgrim arriving in Mecca from non-Islamic lands, but the unique internalization of sacred symbols, rituals and the new

reflections on society that take place as the pilgrim performs the hajj. Furthermore, analyzing his actions upon returning to America discloses the social and political ramifications that often result from the modern pilgrim's experiences. This is evident in Malcolm's actions after returning from the hajj, when he used his popularity to attack the Nation of Islam and present his new belief that Islam was the only solution to America's race problem. His account also reveals that the social atmosphere of the hajj is often seen in direct opposition, as an "anti-structure," to the pilgrim's every day society. In Malcolm X's case, this resulted in an extreme religious and ideological transformation.

Lastly, the writings on the hajj by Ali Shariati, the politically active twentieth century Iranian Islamic modernist and teacher, will be examined and used to explain the modern pilgrimage in more detail. His writings and lectures on the hajj reveal the important phases that pilgrims undergo as they proceed through the rituals of the hajj, the meanings that the modern Muslim often associates with the hajj, and the metaphorical rebirth, or walking amongst the prophets, that often occurs while performing the hajj. His writings also help in understanding how the pilgrim's socio-political and religious background acts as a filter through which sacred symbols and rituals are internalized; for Shariati this internalization led to the belief that the hajj was the ultimate revolutionary experience. Shariati's influence on the Iranian society is also evident in his writings on the hajj following his return to Iran. Finally, Shariati represents the modern pilgrim who arrives in Mecca from Islamic lands where secularism and Westernization have taken hold. This paper by no means suggests that these pilgrimages represent all of the pilgrimages from the pilgrim's historical period or region. Rather, they are case studies of famous pilgrims who represent the segment of society from which they came. In other words, there were, and still are, numerous pilgrims arriving in Mecca from similar backgrounds, with similar experiences, and who most likely experience the hajj in the same way. Other pilgrims with different past experiences and

coming from different socio-political religious atmospheres, however, may interact and internalize the hajj very differently. Finally, the pilgrimages used in this paper exemplify pilgrimage as an individual and a social phenomena, not restricted to the hajj, that pilgrims from any religion experience as they interact with, and internalize sacred symbols and rituals on their pilgrimage.[1] It is also important to note that analyzing pilgrimage in such a way leaves the doors open for more extensive analyses that cut across time period, culture, race, etc., all of which influence the pilgrim's mind set upon entering the pilgrimage. However, before diving into a hajj-specific theoretical model, the hajj and its rituals must be understood.

The Hajj: its Rituals and Symbols[2]

The hajj is not simply a meritorious ritual for the pious, but a duty placed on all Muslims by God to perform once in his or her lifetime.[3] It is also one of the five pillars, or bases for being Muslim and its importance is equaled only by the other four pillars; declaration of faith (shahadeh), daily prayer (salat), fasting during the month of Ramadan (sowm), and giving alms to the poor (zakat). Furthermore, the hajj is thought of as a "reinforcement of the shahedeh, the designated first pillar. As the first is the profession of faith, the last, the hajj, is its reaffirmation" (Farmayan and Daniel 1990, xiv).

The Prophet Muhammad's last revelation upon completing the hajj rituals in 632 C.E. exemplify its importance to the Muslims of that time and for Muslims in every coming age: "[T]his day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and am well

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[1]Many of the theories used in this paper have been applied to other religions, and, therefore, are not restricted to the hajj pilgrimage in Islam.

[2]The descriptions of the rituals and symbols presented in this paper are taken from Long 1979, Peters 1994, Shariati 1992, and Wolfe 1997.

[3]Individuals with health related problems, insufficient funds, or an inability to leave their homeland because of dangerous political circumstances are released from this duty.

pleased that you have chosen Islam as your religion" (Surah 5:4). Why this day? And more importantly, why was Islam perfected this day? Perhaps, because the hajj rituals contained all of the important symbols of Islam, representing: the Muslim community, or ummah; the importance of prayer; the internal and external struggles, or jihad; the importance of monotheism, or tauhid; and the active resistance against the temptations of Satan.[4] As Barbara Metcalf explains:

> By undertaking the hajj, the pilgrim in principle affirms his individual responsibility for obedience to God and claims his place among the community of faithful people (1995, 100).

In addition, not only did the hajj contain all of these sacred symbols, but it required Muslims to participate, interacting and surrounding themselves with sacred symbols in a specific manner and for a specific period of time.

The rituals of the hajj are taken directly from the Prophet Muhammad's "own observances, particularly at the Farewell Hajj" (Long 1979, 9). The hajj must take place between the eighth and thirteenth days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the twelfth monthly of the Muslim calendar.[5] The first necessity for a Muslim who wants to begin the hajj is to take care of all debts, provide properly for his or her family while on the hajj, and be in a pure mental state (Ibid., 12). Once this is accomplished, a statement of intention is made. The statement is a simple declaration of intent to perform the hajj, and in most cases the umrah.[6] Once this is completed, the Muslim pilgrim may then depart for Mecca.

Entering Ihram

[4]It should be noted that the rituals of the hajj remain intact as the Prophet Muhammad performed them on his last hajj in 625 A.D.

[5]The Muslim calendar is calculated by the moon, and is therefore shorter than the Gregarine year.

[6]The umrah is the shorter hajj, and may be performed at any time, although it is most often performed with the longer hajj.

Entering the state of Ihram takes place somewhere along the journey to Mecca. Specific stopping stations, or Miqat, are set up along the pilgrimage routes for those not able to pass through Medina, the traditional spot for entering Ihram. Ihram is attained through the shedding of normal clothes, the donning of special garment, the verbal prayer of the hajj, and the verbal statement of Tabliya. The Tabliya is said while entering into the state of Ihram, and repeated throughout the hajj: "Labaik-Allah-huma-Labaik," or 'Here we are, here we are." These words, according to a Hajji from Pakistan, "bring man face to face with Allah in complete humility and to make him say with conviction, 'Here I am, here I am'" (Zafar 1978, 25). Ihram is more than a simple ritual; it is a purified spiritual state that is held until the hajj's completion. While in Ihram, the Muslim is forbidden from sexual relations, bathing, marriage, perfume, the covering of the head (except for women) and face, and the shedding of blood. As will be illustrated in the upcoming hajj accounts, entering into the Ihram is often the point where the pilgrim enters a state "neither here nor there" and "betwixt and between," where pilgrims can see "not only what is," but "what may be a formulable domain" (Turner 1978, 3).

The Tawaf (performed directly before the Sa'y for the Umrah, or alone for the Hajj)

Once the pilgrim has entered Mecca, he or she proceeds to the Ka'ba, which is located at the center of the al-Haram Mosque. The Tawaf consists of making seven circuits around the Ka'aba. During each circuit, prayers are repeated praising God, asking for His forgiveness, and thanking Him for the opportunity to perform hajj. Many Muslims kiss or point to the black stone, a sacred stone sent down to man from God and embedded in the corner of the Ka'ba. The seven circuits are done in a counter-clockwise direction and "suggest the ancient world's seven planets circling the sun" (Wolfe 1997, xxii). Once the seven circuits are finished, a prayer is performed at the Station of Abraham, where Abraham

is believed to have prayed, and water from the well of Zamzam is drunk (Peters 1994, 6).

The well of Zamzam is also traced back to the time of Abraham. After building the Ka'ba, Abraham left his son Ishmael and Ishmael's mother, Hagar, in Mecca. Ishmael became very thirsty and Hagar ran between the mountains of al-Safa and al-Marwah looking and praying for water. When she returned, Ismael dug into the earth, revealing the well of Zamzam (Peters 1994, 3).

The Sa'y

The Sa'y consists of running between the mountains of al-Safa and al-Marwah seven times, representing Hagar's search for water. At each mountain the pilgrim faces the Ka'ba with his or her hands outstretched and repeats a prayer. Muslims who are performing the Umrah and Hajj perform the Sa'y directly after the Tawaf, but those who are performing the hajj alone may postpone the Sa'y until the end of the hajj.

The Arafat Procession

On the eighth day of the hajj month, the pilgrims set out for the Mina Valley where they spend the night. This is a time for socializing, when all Muslims can converse equally without class, race and cultural distinction (Shariati 1992, 124). The next morning they leave Mina for Mount Arafat and begin the Yawm al-Waquf, or day of standing. This is where pilgrims gather, pray and listen to sermons, or qutbahs. Once the pilgrim has reached Arafat, it is believed that he or she is purified by God, and all sins washed away. Arafat is seen as "a place set a side for spiritual reunion, where pilgrims travel to re-form family ties, seek pardon, reclaim faith, and re-collect their spirits" (Wolfe 1997, xxiii).

The Nafrah

The Nafrah, or "rushing ", takes place on the next morning. All pilgrims rush to the

city of Muzdalifa, also called Mash'ar, where they spend another night of prayer and socializing. Pilgrims also gather stones here for the upcoming encounter with Satan.

Jamrat al-Aqabah and Id al-Adha (Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Days)

After spending the night in Muzdalifa, the pilgrims proceed to a section of Mina where they begin the ceremony of Jamrat al-Aqabah, or "stoning of the Jamrat." There are three pillars that the pilgrims focus on during this rite of the hajj. The three pillars are said to represent the angel of darkness, or Satan, who tempted Abraham to disobey God. Abraham stoned the evil angel seven times declaring "God is great" and "in the name of God " (Peters 1994, 253). Therefore, the Jamrat al-Aqabah is an emulation of Abraham. The first pillar is struck by stones once the first day, and all three pillars are struck one time each in the subsequent two days.

The Id al-Adha, or "feast of sacrifice", may be performed on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth day of the hajj. The rite comprises the slaughtering of sheep, goat, or camel, whose throat is cut in the direction of the Ka'ba. The sacrifice represents the pilgrims giving up the most cherished thing in life, which could be a daughter, a position in society, or a talent (Shariati 1992, 159). The sacrifice is based on God's commandment to Abraham that he must sacrifice Ishmael to show his dedication and submission. When Abraham started to cut Ishmael's throat a sheep appeared in Ismael's place. Ishmael did not resent his father, but instead thanked and prided him for his devotion to God (Long 1979, 20-21; Wolfe 1997, xxii). Id al-Adha is not only celebrated by Muslims performing the hajj, but is celebrated throughout the world by all Muslims at the same time.

Finishing the Hajj

The hajj is complete when the Muslim has a ritual haircut, and completes the Tawaf al-wada or "farewell Tawaf." Once the Tawaf is finished and the al-Haram Mosque is exited, the

Muslim takes the title of “al-hajj” or “hajji,” one who has completed the hajj, and can return to his or her homeland.

The Hajj from a Theoretical Perspective

In order to analyze the hajj as an individual and a social process, a theoretical model must be established that explains: 1) how pilgrims enter into a sacred state upon leaving their homelands, 2) how pilgrims proceed through complex rituals, 3) how pilgrims interact with and internalize sacred symbols while performing these rituals, 4) how the pilgrim’s unique socio-political and religious background influences the inter-action and internalization of religious symbols and rituals, and 5) how social change is possible through complex rituals such as the hajj.

Religion, Ritual and Sacred Symbols

Let us begin developing this theoretical model by drawing from the school of thought of cultural anthropologists such as Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz to state that religions, and within religions, rituals, contain sacred symbols that allow man to form a relationship with and comprehend religion, his place in society, and how he should structure his life accordingly. And furthermore, that certain complex religious rituals allow man to tap his religious spirituality and view his normal day to day life from an objective standpoint that often times results in social change. The former is best elucidated by Clifford Geertz, who explains that:

> Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people’s ethos-the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood-and their world-view-the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order (Geertz 1972, 167).

He further elaborates that not only do these symbols “synthesize a people’s ethos,”

but that, relating to the latter statement, they "express the world's climate and shape it" (Geertz 1972, 170). From this theoretical standpoint, religious rituals and symbols reflect man's religious culture, and as man interacts with these rituals and symbols, he has the ability to internalize their meaning and apply them to his mundane life.[7] And when man applies these meanings to his every day life it affects the society around him, resulting in social change. Indeed, this is the case, as Geertz reaffirms:

> The dispositions which religious rituals induce thus have their most important impact-from a human point of view-outside the boundaries of the ritual itself as they reflect back to color the individual's conception of the established world of bare fact (Ibid., 176).

If this view of ritual is accepted, then pilgrimage can be viewed as a complex set of rituals and symbols that act as a medium between man, religion and society. But while this explains the importance and significance of rituals and religious symbols, it explains very little about the process itself--the interaction that takes place between man, society, and religion. The process becomes especially significant with respect to a complex ritual such as the hajj, which all Muslims are required to complete and perform the rituals from a wide spectrum of cultural, political, historical, and individual backgrounds.

Thus, while Geertz's model is extremely useful in understanding the importance of the interaction between religious symbols, the individual, and society, a more specific model is needed to explain the other aspects of pilgrimage. In order to do this, however, other ritual specific models must be examined. Perhaps the most important is Victor Turner's model of structure and anti-structure, along with his later incorporation of pilgrimage into the

[7]I use "mundane life" here to refer to an individual's secular day to day activities, culture, political system, etc..

model.[8] This model is the most suitable for analyzing pilgrimage, and has been used extensively by other authors similarly.[9] However, while Turner's model will be the underlying model for analysis, other ideas from anthropologists and historians of religion, some specifically with regard to Islam, will be used to add to or revise Turner's model.

Having already defined the role of religious symbols and rituals in society through Geertz, we can now comfortably say that the hajj pilgrimage is much more than a set of mundane rituals that Muslims from around the world perform every year in and around Mecca. In fact, the hajj is a socio-political religious process that carries Muslims into the threshold of the very sacredness upon which Islam was founded. Here, the use of "sacred" is most suitably defined by Alan Morinis, who refers to the term as "valued ideals that are the image of perfection that a human being sets out to encounter or become on a pilgrimage" (1992, 2). Utilizing this definition implies that the pilgrim enters the hajj with a preconceived notion that the hajj will relay or facilitate an understanding of these "ideals." This is an important concept in evaluating the hajj as a sacred religious rite, because individuals who do not enter the hajj with faith in its Islamic "image" will not pass through the rituals and internalize sacred symbols in the same way as those who have fully embraced it, or are of a mind set that is open to being influenced towards embracing it.

Up to this point I have explained the role of religious symbols in rituals and society and the importance of the hajj in Islam. I have also briefly touched upon the concept that individual transformation takes place on the hajj and that there is a possibility of social

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[8]See Turner 1977, and Turner 1978.

[9]Some examples include Alan Morinis, *Sacred Journeys*, and Matheson and Milner, *Perceptions of the Haj: Five Malay Texts*.

change when pilgrims return from the hajj. I have also made it a point to emphasize that individuals enter the hajj from different cultural, political and individual backgrounds. This is an important factor that needs to be kept in mind when analyzing the hajj. While all individuals participate in the same specified rituals, that have changed little, if at all, since the last pilgrimage of the Prophet Muhammad, every individual enters the hajj with a unique set of experiences.

Therefore, the hajj experience must be analyzed with respect to the pilgrim's mind set and socio-political background with which he or she departs home, enters the hajj preoccupied, and with which the pilgrim interacts and internalizes sacred rites and symbols. And as will be illustrated in the next section, the hajj analysis must not be restricted to the pilgrim's experiences within the sacred hajj rituals. Why? Because, while there is a possibility for transformation and an objective reflection on society *within* the hajj rituals, the results are often not left behind in Mecca, but taken home.

Rite of Passage and Anti-Structure: An Individual and a Social Process

Now that the importance of ritual and symbols, along with the individual's relationship with them, has been explained, it is necessary to propose a model that will allow an analysis of the hajj as a sacred rite, a social process, and an individual experience. Victor Turner's influential model on the role of ritual and pilgrimage in religion and society will help in developing this model. One of the most important aspects of Turner's writings, with regard to this paper, is his placement of pilgrimage within an individual and cultural context. He describes pilgrimage as:

> Very much more than its theology. It is a field of social relations and cultural contents of the most diverse types, formal and informal, orthodox and heterodox, dogmatic and

> mythical, often juxtaposed rather than fused, interrelated, or systematized. Attempts to revive a national or regional culture and language may select elements of the otherwise 'receding' structural and ideological orders for renewed emphasis in pilgrimage beliefs, behavior and symbolism (Turner 1978, 106).

Here, Turner addresses the diversity and importance of pilgrimage as interpreted and used by individuals from different social backgrounds. Furthermore, he describes how the pilgrimage experience may incorporate or extend into the national, political, and cultural sphere of the pilgrim's homeland.

With regard to pilgrimage, Turner focuses on what Arnold van Gennep, a French folklorist, describes as "rites of passage," or the movement of pilgrims through three phases: separation, the limin-or threshold, and re-aggregation (Turner 1977, 94; Turner 1978, 2-3).[10] While the first and last phases, separation and re-aggregation, are fairly straight forward, the middle phase of liminality is much more complex. As illustrated in Figure 1., separation is the exit from an individual or group's current society or, as Turner explains, the "symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group, either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or from a relatively stable set of cultural conditions" (Turner 1978, 2). The last phase, re-aggregation, is the return to this social structure, or a "reincorporation," where the pilgrim "returns to classified secular or mundane social life" (Turner 1977, 94; Turner 1978, 2). As can be observed in the diagram, the pilgrim returns to his or her society different, somehow filled or transformed from the experience. The liminal phase is the most important concept with regard to this transformation, and must

[10]See Gennep 1990, Turner 1977, and Turner 1979 for a detailed explanation of the original use by Gennep and Turner's application to pilgrimage.

therefore be described in depth.

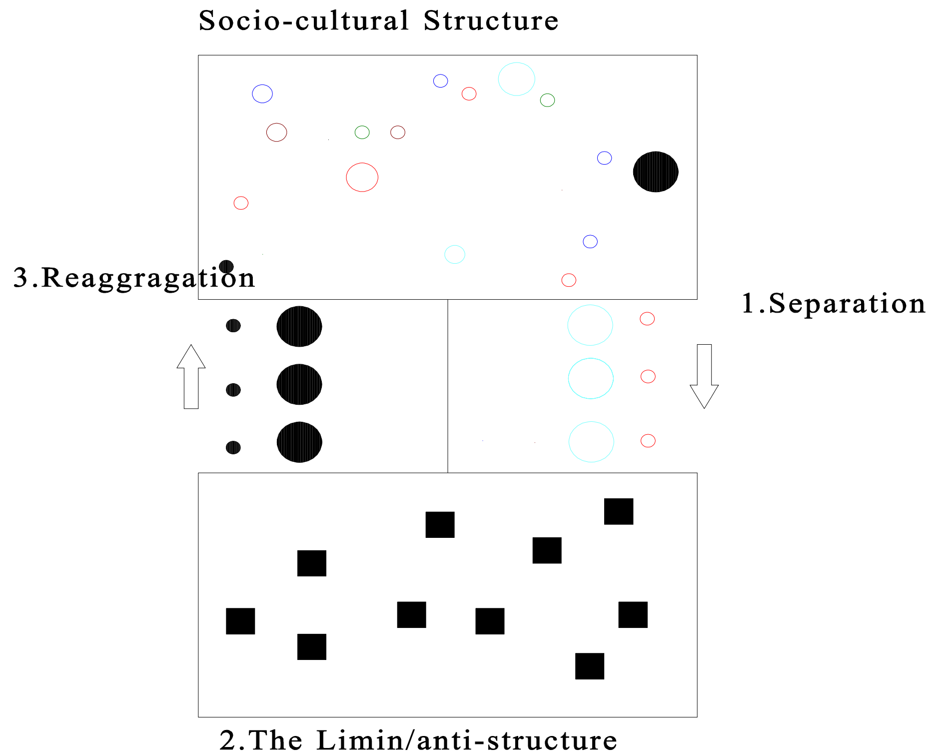

Figure 1: Model of Structure and Anti-Structure

The limin is the phase in which "the characteristics of the ritual subject (the 'passenger') are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner 1977, 94).[11] Within the hajj, the liminal phase is where the pilgrim enters into a sacred state, and is surrounded by sacred symbols wherever he or she turns. It is also the period where individual transformation is possible; where complete objectivity takes place and the pilgrim's most profound insights into life are

[11] While the term "liminal" refers to the phase, the state of being in the liminal is referred to as "liminality."

made.[12] This most often begins for the Muslim pilgrim once he or she has entered the state of Ihram, and from this point until the end of the hajj, the pilgrim is able to see not only "what is going to be," but "what may be a formulable domain" (Turner 1978, 3). This "formulable domain" may be the same for most pilgrims, but what this domain is formulable for can be very different-it may be an erasure of racial inequality, a reinstatement of pure Islam, a dissipation of the political elite, or a reaffirmation of a Muslim community's place in the greater Islamic World. However, as will be illustrated in the chapter on Ibn Battuta, pilgrims often enter into the liminal phase well before arriving in Mecca.

In *The Ritual Process,* Turner goes into depth in differentiating between the "structure" and the "anti-structure," or "communitas" of society (1977). While the "structure" represents a society encompassing differentiated social, economic and political roles, the "anti-structure" represents the "communitas," where no such distinctions exist. According to Turner, these two terms represent different "models" of society. He differentiates between the two as:

> It is as though there are here two major 'models' for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of political-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of 'more' or 'less'. The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (Turner 1977, 96).

While Turner differentiates between the two models, he also explains the two in terms of a vacillating, symbiotic relationship (Ibid., 128-32). At some point the communitas

[12]For a more detailed description of Liminality, see Turner 1978, 2-10 and Turner 1977, 94-5.

inevitably becomes the structure. With regard to religious communities, this usually takes place when the utopian-like community, often established by a Prophet or divine leader, begins to take on a structure that allows for social class, political elite, etc., to form. (Ibid., 132-3). However, this is not the end of the communitas, according to Turner, because certain rites have the ability to recreate the communitas through the elimination of the individual in the liminal phase (Ibid., 137). In other words, certain rituals lead individuals into a state of liminality where they join with a group of others who are in the same state. This allows for the recreation of the communitas, which is similar to the one that existed at the time of religious inception. Turner further backs this point by explaining that:

There is a dialectic here, for the immediacy of communitas gives way to the mediacy of structure, while, in rites de passage, men are released from the structure into communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas (Turner 1977, 129).

This is where the pilgrimage becomes influential and pivotal in an individual transformation and social change. Not only does the communitas act to separate and free individuals from structure, but "they incite men to action as well as thought" (Ibid., 128). Therefore, the individual goes through a process of transformation that influences his or her outlook on life, which in turn influences those around him or her–society. While in most cases some sort of transformation takes place during this period, Turner makes sure to emphasize that individuals returning from the communitas to the structure most often return to their previous position, or are "re-aggregated" into society (Ibid., 94).[13] However, this does not mean that he or she returns to that position the same person. For example, a king

[13]The final phase after the pilgrim passes through the "liminal."

who performs the hajj still returns from the hajj as a king, but he may have a new sense of religious responsibility that influences the way his society is treated, laws are applied, money is spent, etc.. In addition, pilgrims return home with a new title, elhajj or hajji; a title of respect that signifies religious wisdom.

Sacred History and the Islamic Community

Having used the hajj in the previous example, it can now be presumed that the hajj recreates Turner's "communitas." But how does this occur? And how does this occurence function in the bigger picture within the Islamic World? I have already briefly described how the pilgrim's entering into Ihram often parallels Turner's second phase of rites of passage, "the limin."[14] And as the pilgrim moves closer to Mecca, and enters into the rituals of the hajj upon arrival, the state of liminality becomes stronger. The pilgrim, dressed in the same white attire as every other pilgrim, becomes aware that there is no longer a distinction between Muslims- as in social status, personal identity, etc.. In personal hajj accounts this most often takes the form of a change from the "I" to the "We." This is similar to Turner's "communitas."[15] For instance, one pilgrim writes at great length to question his use of "We" and eventually concludes that: "Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was amongst us in History and with him all of us constituted the 'We'" (Zafar 1978, 4-9). Similarly, Ali Shariati repeats throughout his book on the hajj that at some point along the hajj the pilgrim must destroy the "I" and become the "We" (1992). Turner describes a similar process that takes place in the liminal period, which functions to recreate the communitas:

[14]Page 22.

[15]Turner goes into detail on the writings of Martin Buber, who explains the "essential we" and the transformation from "I" to "though." Turner categorizes this as "liminal" and "roughly equals the spontaneous communitas". See Turner 1977, 127-137 and Buber 1958.

It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station of life (Turner 1977, 95).

Turner's description of how the communitas results from this "ground down" and "uniform condition," and of the subsequent role it plays in society, is extremely important in analyzing a pilgrimage such as the hajj. But while Turner hints at the importance of the religious roots in some communitas, his model is ill-equipped to fully explain the simultaneous metaphorical "becoming" or "being amongst" prophets and other historical religious figures. As the pilgrim before stated, the "We" includes the Prophet Muhammad, and, while not explicitly stated above, Shariati also goes into depth to explain how the pilgrim must "become" Abraham.[16]

Perhaps Mircea Eliade's explanation of religion's "sacred history," in his book *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, will help explain this phenomena. However, it must be kept in mind that Eliade's application of "sacred history" falls within his larger model of initiation, which is much different from Turner's model and not applicable to the hajj in this paper's approach.[17] According to Eliade, sacred religious rites, specifically initiation rites, re-create the "world in which things took place for the first time" and where "an act, thenceforth religiously repeated, was performed for the first time" (Eliade 1994, xv). He further links this history to the prophets, angels, and other "supernatural beings" that brought religion to

[16]Shariati's explanation will be described in detail in chapter V.

[17]Eliade is interested in the initiation rites of pre-modern religions, where the rituals are often secret and performance is restricted to a specific age group. In addition, he describes the necessity for "old initiates" and "spiritual masters," who guide the initiate and represent the historic "supernatural beings" that exist within their religious sacred history. This is very different from what Turner is after, which focuses on the social atmosphere of rituals such as pilgrimage, and its opposition to the religious member's every day society. See Eliade 1994 for more detail.

mankind: “To attain the initiate’s mode of being demands knowing realities that are not a part of nature but of the biography of the Supernatural Beings, hence of the sacred history preserved in the myths” (Ibid., xiv). Thus, sacred rituals have the ability to bring religious members back in time, into the community created by the prophets, and into contact with the prophets and history that surrounded them. The applicability of this outlook on the hajj should be obvious: the centrality of the Ka’ba, the Holy House built by the Prophet Abraham; the rituals of the hajj taking the pilgrim in the footsteps of the last Prophet Muhammad, who established Islam as it is practiced today. This also helps explain how pilgrims interact with the rites and symbols of the hajj, which represent and carry them into the time of Abraham and Muhammad–the two prophets who, as mediators between God and man, brought the sacred hajj rituals to mankind. The result is often the pilgrim’s metaphorical “rebirth” as Abraham, as Ali Shariati so often emphasizes, or the more common feeling of being “amongst” Muhammad and Abraham.

Travel, Motivation and Identity

There are two more important factors that need to be taken into account before moving on to hajj accounts: motivation and travel itself. As touched upon in the introduction, Ian Netton focuses on the pilgrim’s motivation to partake in the hajj. Netton breaks the motivation to journey, in this case the rihla, hijra or hajj, into two main categories, which are applicable to pilgrimages of all ages and regions: the search for external knowledge, and the search for internal knowledge.

> The migrant, pilgrim and traveler ineluctably seek knowledge as they proceed and this naturally increases as a result of each experience and encounter. But on every hijra, hajj and rihla they travel within themselves as well...an external social dimension and often deeper, internal spiritual aspect which is a yarning for knowledge-and, for the devout Muslim, a yearning for the source of that knowledge as well (Netton

1993, xiv-xv).

Netton further breaks motivation into categories, specific to historical time period, such as a search for “satisfaction of a basic wonderlust,” or “recognition and/or power” in the case of the 14th century pilgrim (Ibid., 57). Eickelman and Piscatori also contribute to the importance of motivation with regard to the hajj. As stated in the introduction, the authors use a wide variety of accounts from different time periods and regions to illustrate that “the image of a flexible Islam in thought and practice thus emerges” (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990, xiv). This “flexibility” is attained through the pilgrim’s “motives,” which are often very different. This is supported in the statement: “the injunction to undertake the hajj is not necessarily invested with the same meaning for all Muslims” (Ibid., 8). Alan Morinis further backs this point, making an important distinction:

> The distinction must be made between those who are drawn to the pilgrimage place by hopes of grasping that force, to make themselves over into the ideals it embodies, and those who merely seek to tap the force for instrumental or other effective ends (1992, 6).

Therefore, the motivations, or intentions, in performing the hajj are an important aspect to keep in mind when analyzing personal accounts, and help us understand what kind of transformation takes place when the pilgrim is interacting with sacred symbols and rituals, and how he or she responds upon arriving home. And although we may not have specific accounts explaining these motivations, it may be possible to draw them from the hajj accounts themselves.

Eickelman and Piscatori also expound on the importance of travel as “political and social action” (1990, 3). Focusing on the importance of the individual Muslim’s identity, they explain how travel often allows for a change in identity, a connection with an extended

Islamic community, and a change in the outlook of home.

Indeed, the reality is that religious communities, like all 'imagined' communities change over time. Their boundaries are shifted by, and shift, the political, economic, and social context in which these participants find themselves...In the hope of creating new horizons, travelers set off from home, encounter 'others' and return with a sharpened awareness of differences and similarities (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990, 4-5).

Combined with the pilgrim's interaction with sacred symbols and rituals, this helps explain the reflections they have on their homeland, and the new conceptualization of the Islamic community, or ummah, that takes place on the hajj. And because travel is inevitably linked with pilgrimage, Turner's rites of passage can easily be understood within this concept; the pilgrim separates from his homeland because of travel, enters into the state of liminality and Islam's sacred history after traveling away from their homelands, and reenters the previous society, often with a new identity and feeling of inclusion within the larger Islamic World.

This section has provided a theoretical foundation for analyzing the hajj as a powerful set of rituals and symbols and as an individual and a social process. The importance of the pilgrim's individual mind set and background have also been discussed in relation to how pilgrims internalize their experience on the hajj, and the endless possibilities that may result. However, the focus of this paper is to understand the hajj and its impact through the eyes of the individual pilgrim–the pilgrim's hajj experience. Therefore, the theoretical foundation is important insofar as it helps us understand the individual's hajj through his or her words and actions during the hajj, and upon returning home. Analyzing the hajj in such a way uncovers how the individual experiences and internalizes the hajj, and why this experience and internalization is different or similar to other pilgrims coming

from different backgrounds–culture, country, historical period, etc.. And while Ali Shariati and Malcolm X provide the most in depth reflections and commentary on the hajj, it is more appropriate to begin with the sacred pilgrimage of Ibn Battuta and the 14th century atmosphere through which he traveled. His account reveals an amazing interaction and internalization of sacred symbols, which began shortly after his departure from Tangier and continued until his arrival in Mecca, leading him into parts of the world he had no plans of traveling upon setting out on the hajj.

Ibn Battuta: The 14th Century Traveler

Now that a theoretical foundation has been established, it is possible to analyze the hajj through personal writings and commentary. Beginning with a brief discussion of the famous hajj of the 14th century traveler, Ibn Battuta, and then moving on to a detailed analysis of the 20th century hajjs of Malcolm X and Ali Shariati, it will become evident that the hajj personifies a rite of passage, an initiation rite, and an individual and social process. Furthermore, the writings on these pilgrimages will disclose the pilgrim's personal relationship with sacred religious symbols and rituals and the subsequent transformation and reaffirmation of Islamic identity that take place while on the hajj, and which is evident in the pilgrim's actions upon returning home.

Few detailed accounts of the hajj exist from the pre-modern period, and of the accounts that do exist, even fewer contain clues of the individual's personal relationship with sacred symbols and reflections on the hajj itself. Instead, we are often left with detailed accounts of the cities, routes, and historical events of lands journeyed through to reach Mecca, and of Mecca itself. There are also problems with the accounts themselves, and many scholars are skeptical of the events, cities and people with whom these pilgrims claim

to have come in contact with.[18] Of the early pilgrimage accounts, the journey of Ibn Battuta, entitled *Rihla* and written by Ibn Juzayy on the orders of the Moroccan Sultan, is the most well known. While much of the account is criticized for events often being exaggerated and some of the places he visited suspect, it contains crucial information relevant to this paper. For example, whether Ibn Battuta exaggerated events and claimed to have seen doubtful miracles does not mean that he did not believe that he experienced and observed things as such. And, in fact, many of these exaggerations reinforce the idea that pilgrims enter into a "realm neither here nor there" and "betwixt and between" (Turner 1977, 95).[19] Richard Netton backs this point, explaining that Ibn Battuta often has "an inability to explain adequately the paranormal phenomena which he actually thinks he has witnessed" (1984, 137). Nor is it a concern from this perspective that Ibn Battuta's account most likely takes detailed descriptions of cities from the journey of another well known pilgrim from Iberia, Ibn Jabayr (Dunn 1986, 313).

The importance of Ibn Battuta's account lies in the relationship he forms with his sacred environment on his journey to Mecca and the ability to analyze these experiences as an individual and a social process. There are a few major problems, however, that impede a full analyses of Ibn Battuta's hajj using the theoretical approach presented in the last chapter. First, there is a lack of historical documentation on the life of Ibn Battuta before departing on his hajj, and after his return thirty years later. Second, the long time gap between the beginning of his journey and the writing of his experiences after returning to Morocco call into question his ability to recall experiences as they existed at the time he

[18]For a more detailed evaluation of some of these problems see Beckingham 1993.

[19]Recall that this is an important attribute of Turner's concept of "liminality."

experienced them. And finally, due to the expectations of the time, Ibn Battuta's audience was not interested in his individual thoughts and reflections, and thus, there is a primary emphasis on detailing the people he meets and the cities he visits.[20] All of these are necessary for a full understanding of a pilgrim's sacred experiences while performing the hajj, and the multi-faceted role of the pilgrimage, both for the individual pilgrim and for the society from which he comes. Therefore, the hajj of Ibn Battuta will be used, in general, to reflect the preoccupations and motivations of the 14th century pilgrim and the meanings that were often associated with sacred symbols on the journey to Mecca and within the various hajj rituals. This is significant in composing a comparison between time periods and will facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between the modern pilgrim and his or her sacred environment. Moreover, keeping in mind Ibn Battuta's hajj when analyzing the modern hajj will accentuate the importance of the hajj to the modern pilgrim, who attempts to tap his sacred roots, reflect on the modern socio-political society he is coming from, and internalize the meaning of the hajj experience in a unique way. Before moving on to the hajj of Ibn Battuta, however, the society of the Islamic Middle Period, through which he traveled and performed the hajj rituals, must be understood.[21]

The Islamic Social Structure and Travel in the Middle Islamic Period

Ibn Battuta is often compared to Marco Polo by Europeans and Middle East scholars alike. But the most important difference between the two, one which is extremely important for this analysis, is the fact that while Marco Polo was a complete stranger in the lands he

[20]It should be kept in mind, however, that Ibn Battuta details more personal information than the accounts of other well known hajjs, such as Ibn Jabayr. This is one of the primary reasons Ibn Battuta's account is used in this paper.

[21]I take the definition of "Islamic Middle Period" from Dunn, who defines the period as 1000 - 1500 C.E..

traveled, Ibn Battuta “remained at home” (Netton 1984, 135). And although Ibn Battuta may have traveled through lands with different dialects, dress, and customs, the Islamic social structure and moral code remained similar to his homeland. Dunn affirms this, stating that:

> Therefore almost everywhere Ibn Battuta went he lived in the company of other Muslims, men and women who shared not merely his doctrinal beliefs and religious rituals, but his moral values, his social ideals, his everyday manners. But, above all, he possessed a consciousness, more or less acutely formed, of the entire Dar al-Islam as a social reality (Dunn 1986, 7).

This is further backed by a Tunisian historian who relates that Islam in this period was “a finished, mature, fully coherent civilization, displaying a coherent identity over a vast geographical range” (Dunn 1993, 76). Consequently, Ibn Battuta’s journey was conducted in an Islamic atmosphere that emphasized an Islamic lifestyle, social interaction occurred under a set Islamic moral code, and laws fell under the Islamic legal code of the Shari’a. And as will be illustrated, his descriptions of the lands he traveled through to reach Mecca reaffirm this concept.

Another important attribute of the Middle Islamic Period, and one often associated with maintaining the Islamic social structure just described, was the strong religious emphasis on obtaining knowledge. This is evident in the prevalent use during this period of the Arabic terms, rihla and talab al-ilm, which refer to “travel for the sake of acquiring religious knowledge” (Gellens 1990, 50). Due to the large area that the Islamic empire covered, scholars often traveled great distances to reaffirm hadith, gain access to important

religious texts, and acquire a transmission of authority from learned men.[22] This resulted in the constant movement and exchange of knowledge throughout the Islamic empire. As Gellens states with respect to this attribute in Islam:

> The hadith literature reminds the believer that the search for knowledge is intimately tied to the physical act of travel. In this regard, several themes recur in the principal hadith collections: teachers and the learned as the only valuable human beings; the high merit of seeking and spreading knowledge; traveling in order to gather it; and the possession of knowledge as a sign of grace which reduced distinctions of birth and rank among Muslims (1990, 53).

This being the case, it is not surprising that the hajj, which was a duty incumbent on all Muslims and which required travel, became closely associated with obtaining knowledge. This also explains one of the major motivations, other than the hajj itself, that pilgrims in Ibn Battuta's time had to embark on the hajj.

Ibn Battuta: Motivation and Liminality

Ibn Battuta is most famous for the length and distance of his journey, which encompassed four trips to Mecca, over 70,000 miles, and covered an area ranging from Morocco to what is now China. This being the case, some important questions come to mind concerning Ibn Battuta's motivation before departing Tangier, and his later continuation to other regions of the world after completing his first hajj. For example, did Ibn Battuta's original goal of performing the hajj become overshadowed with a lust for travel and meeting the rulers and scholars of the time? Or was there something sacred and liminal about his entire journey, which fell under his original purpose--the hajj? Many authors are

[22]The hadith are the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

curious about Ibn Battuta's interest in Sufi shaykhs, shrines, and teachings, but as Ian Netton states, "Ibn Battuta cannot, in his dealings with Sufis, be said to have fully embraced the Sufi path. Even so, the orders remained a source of endless fascination for him" (Netton 1984, 135).[23] As such, how do we explain the repeated anecdotes and miracles that Ibn Battuta links to these men and makes a point to emphasize? And most importantly, could it have been the case that Ibn Battuta entered a sacred state upon leaving his homeland, and continued to form relationships with sacred religious symbols, holy men, and religious knowledge itself in a sacred way on his long first journey to Mecca, his travels after performing the hajj, and on his subsequent returns to Mecca? Indeed, this appears to be the case, and will become clear as specific examples are used to illustrate how Ibn Battuta's liminal state facilitated a linkage of his sacred experiences to a predetermined destiny of travel and Islamic reaffirmation. As discussed previously, the nature of society throughout the lands he traveled–i.e., Islamic lands under the Shari'a–could definitely have facilitated such a liminal state. However, because of the length of Ibn Battuta's journey, and the often long, detailed, descriptions of places, events, and people he came in contact with, this paper will restrict its analysis to Ibn Battuta's first hajj between 1325 and 1327 C.E.. It should also be kept in mind that Ibn Battuta often did not leave the specific dates he arrived in cities or of the events he experienced as he traveled towards Mecca. Consequently, the events described in this paper lack dates and are described in the linear manner that he recalled from the long two year journey.

Departure from Tangier

Ibn Battuta departed for the hajj from his home town of Tangier in 1325. Growing up

[23]See also Dunn 1986,Netton 1993, and Netton 1986.

in a major port on the Strait of Gibralter, Ibn Battuta was inevitably exposed to a diverse population of Muslim and Christian traders from throughout the Middle East and Europe. As Dunn states regarding Tangier:

> With rough Berber soldiers tramping through the steep streets to their warships, Christian and Muslim traders jostling one another on the wharves and in the warehouses, pirates disposing of their plunder in the bazaar, the city imaged the roisterous frontier excitement of the times...It was the sort of place where a young man might grow up and develop an urge to travel" (1986, 18-19).

Little is known about Ibn Battuta's family. What is known is that some of his family members were educated in Islamic Law and held positions as judges and scholars (Ibid., 19). Therefore, as would be expected of a youth in his position, Ibn Battuta received an education with a strong religious emphasis, which "was one worthy of a member of a legal family" (Ibid.). And while Islamic scholarship was strong in cities such as Fez and Granada, they "could no longer provide much cultural leadership" (Ibid, 30). This "leadership" would be found in the great cities of the Middle East, such as Cairo, Baghdad, and Damascus. This, combined with the emphasis on "travel for the sake of acquiring religious knowledge," which was touched upon earlier, definitely had an influence on Ibn Battuta. This is supported by Gibb, who states:

> The Pilgrimage was, for an ambitious youth, not only the fulfillment of one of the duties laid by his Faith upon every able-bodied Muslim, but also an opportunity to broaden his education and enhance his qualifications for judicial office by contact and study with famous scholars of the East" (1958, x).

In addition to this motivation, Ibn Battuta was influenced by the sufi tradition, which emphasized obtaining blessings, or baraka, from pious shaykhs.

With this in mind, Ibn Battuta most likely had multiple motivations for departing from Tangier to Mecca, making it a point to visit cities where prominent Islamic scholars and shaykhs resided. However, what becomes evident from his account is that these motivations were most likely absorbed by a sacred state that would link knowledge, his contact with learned men, and his experiences with the overlying state of being a pilgrim. As Michael Wolfe explains about Ibn Battuta's hajj, which reflects this linkage: "'Seek out knowledge even as far as China' is one of the Prophet Muhammad's best-known sayings. Ibn Battuta took it literally" (1997, 54). Therefore, regardless of his intentions external to performing the hajj itself, the hajj, Mecca, and Islam remained the focus and focal point of his journey, intertwined with his daily activities. Moreover, Ibn Battuta did not set out with the intention of visiting many of the great Islamic intellectual centers on his first hajj; he would visit them only after receiving a "miracle" that guided him in their direction. Some of these "miracles" will be described in depth shortly, but first it is necessary to outline Ibn Battuta's separation from his homeland of Morocco.

Ibn Battuta's departure from Tangier was not as smooth as would be inferred from the previous description of the similar Islamic lands that he traveled. It took only a few hundred miles before he realized that he had finally separated from his homeland. On arriving in Tunis, a fever stricken Ibn Battuta stated:

> On all sides they came forward with greetings and questions to one another, but not a soul said a word of greeting to me, since there was none of them that I knew. I felt so sad at heart on account of my loneliness that I could not restrain the

> tears that started to my eyes, and wept bitterly. But one of the pilgrims, realizing the cause of my distress, came up to me with a greeting and friendly welcome, and continued to comfort me with friendly talk until I entered the city, where I lodged in the college of the Booksellers (Gibb 1958, 12).

It is here that Ibn Battuta felt his complete separation and entrance into an unfamiliar setting, surrounded by strangers. But his time of need was quickly met by a fellow Muslim who rescued him, reaffirming his confidence in Islam and the ummah. It is also after this point that he began to encounter meaningful anecdotes and experienced miracles that would lead him into unexpected lands.

Liminality: Sacred Miracles and Anecdotes

There are a number of passages in Ibn Battuta's *Rihla* that strongly suggest that he did not expect to visit areas such as Syria and India, and, more importantly, that he had entered into a liminal phase of his pilgrimage well before arriving in Mecca. This phase would begin shortly after his departure from Tangier, and continue throughout his journey to Mecca. Exemplifying this phase, are Ibn Battuta's interactions with learned men and sacred places, which are highlighted by magical experiences and important Islamic lessons that take the form of "miracles" and "anecdotes."[24]

One of the first "miracles" that Ibn Battuta experienced is described as, *A miracle of this shaikh* (Gibb 1958, 31). According to Ibn Battuta, Shaikh al-Murshidi, who he was staying with in "a small town in Egypt," insisted that he sleep on the roof (Ibid.). Upon waking up the next morning, he related an amazing dream journey:

> I dreamed that I was on the wing of a huge bird which flew

[24]These are marked in the text by headings like "miracle of" so and so, and "anecdote."

> with me in the direction of the *qibla*, then made towards the Yaman, then eastwards, then went towards the south, and finally made a long flight towards the east, alighted in some dark and greenish country, and left me there (Gibb 1958, 31).

The following morning, Ibn Battuta recounted the dream to the shaykh, who replied:

> You shall make the Pilgrimage [to Mecca] and visit [the tomb of] the Prophet [at al-Madina], and you shall travel through the lands of al-Yaman and al-Iraq, the land of the Turks, and the land of India. You will stay there for a long time and you will meet there my brother Dilshad the Indian, who will rescue from a danger into which you will fall (Ibid., 32).

Ibn Battuta's dream would be fulfilled in later years, after performing his first hajj, but the importance of the account lies in the linkage of Ibn Battuta's sacred experience with the pilgrimage he had set out to perform, and the religious men he would meet along the way. One should note that the details of the dream focus first on the hajj, and then, once completed, on future travels. And just as important, Ibn Battuta's sacred dream was interpreted by a learned man whom Ibn Battuta firmly believed had a close relationship to God and Islam. This dream reveals the almost canon-like quality he attributed to these men, and the influence they exercised over his actions and thoughts throughout his sacred journey.

Another such miracle that occurred shortly after the one just described took place in upper Egypt, where he came in contact with Sayyid Sharif Abu Muhammad Abdallah al-Hasani, who Ibn Battuta describes as the "saintliest of men" (Ibid., 66). On this occasion, he told the Sharif that he was on his way to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage, whereas the Sharif told him: "You will not succeed in doing that on this occasion. Go back, for you will make your first Pilgrimage by the Syrian Road and no other" (Ibid.). However, Ibn Battuta disregarded the advice and continued the way he had originally planned. Similar to the previous miracle, the shaykh's words would come true, and he was forced to turn around

and take the route through Syria (Gibb 1958, 66). Observe that not only did the shaykh foretell that he would travel through Syria, but that it would be his "first Pilgrimage," as if he knew that there would be more to come.[25] Again, Ibn Battuta was experiencing his journey in an ethereal fashion, and as he moved toward Mecca, miracles pushed him into areas of the world he had no plans of traveling when he departed from Tangier in 1325.

While the "miracles" just described link Ibn Battuta's hajj to his further travels, the "anecdotes" that he related reflect his firm belief in Islam, and his membership in a larger Islamic community. Ibn Battuta's "anecdotes" range from the unique experiences of specific Muslims, who have overcome impossible temptation or, in some cases, who have committed atrocious acts against other men, which resulted in severe punishment, to basic observations of noticeable events taking place around him. Whatever the case may be, there is a supernatural quality about the accounts that influenced Ibn Battuta's outlook on the Islamic World in which he was traveling.

One such "anecdote" was drawn from his stay in Dimyat, where the men shaved their beards and eyebrows in the example of a well respected shaykh, Shaykh Fath al-Takruri (Ibid., 38). Ibn Battuta, curious to the motivation of the un-Islamic act, recounted the amazing story of al-Takruri. According to Ibn Battuta, al-Takruri was a good looking man who refused a women who "invited him to fulfil his desires" (Ibid.). Shortly after his refusal, the women tricked him into entering the gates to her home, where her guards forced him into her bed chambers. Upon arriving in her chambers, the shaykh found an unusual solution to his predicament:

> When he saw that there was no way out for him, he said 'I

[25]Ibn Battuta would perform the hajj four times before returning to Tangier.

> shall do as you wish, so show me the closet', and she showed it to him. He took water in with him, and as he had in his possession a sharp razor, he shaved off his beard and eyebrows and came out before her. She, horrified at his appearance and indignant at what he had done, ordered him to be put out. Since God preserved him from temptation by this means, he retained the same appearance ever after, and all those who follow his Way shave the head, beard and eyebrows (Gibb 1958, 38).

Although it is not the Islamic norm for Muslim men, especially pious men, to shave their beards and eyebrows, the story reflects Ibn Battuta's admiration and confidence in the pious acts of Muslims outside of his homeland. Such an experience also allowed him to internalize the belief that he was a member of the larger Islamic community, which was dedicated to upholding true Islam.

Another such "anecdote," that Ibn Battuta extracted from his personal observations, took place in Damascus. As he walked through the city, he observed a slave boy who dropped a Chinese porcelain dish, which broke into pieces (Ibid.). Immediately after the accident, someone told the boy to take the pieces to "the custodian of endowments for utensils" (Ibid.). Upon arriving at the official's office he,

> thereupon received from him enough to buy a similar platter. This endowment is one of the best of good works, for the boy's master would undoubtedly have beaten him for breaking the dish, or at least have scolded him, while he too would have been heartbroken and upset because of that. The benefaction is thus indeed a mender of hearts–may God well reward him whose charitable zeal rose to the height of such an action (Ibid., 38).

Again, Ibn Battuta associated the story with God and the benefits of acting in such a

way towards other Muslims, regardless of status. However, he must have seen such acts while growing up in Tangier, so why did he find this experience worth noting? Because, as noted numerous times previously, Ibn Battuta was in a liminal state that allowed him to see "not only what is going to be", but "what may be a formulable domain" (Turner 1978, 3). In other words, even though he may have seen similar acts at times in his life, the occurrence within the hajj allowed him to internalized the act as much more than an act; it became representative of his perception of Islam and his membership in the larger Islamic community. And furthermore, his observation of such an act on the pilgrimage, which is favored in Islam, heightened his awareness of how all Muslims should act towards others, including himself.

Arrival in Mecca and the Power of the Sacred Center

Upon arriving in Mecca, it appears that Ibn Battuta became overwhelmed by the sacred symbols with which he was presented. He went into great detail about the sacred objects themselves, but left little indication of how he reflected on the rituals he was performing or the objects he came in contact with. Instead, we are left with descriptions that end with comments such as "God profit us by our kissing it and touching it, and bring to it all who yearn for it," pertaining to the Black Stone of the Ka'ba (Gibb 1958, 197). In fact, he spent more time relating anecdotes and stories than describing rituals. This is most likely due to the expectations of the 14th century reader, who should, like most Muslims of this time period, be adequately educated in the hajj rituals. In addition, perhaps to Ibn Battuta, everything in Mecca was miraculous and expected to be as such.

This is evident in one of the "anecdotes" that Ibn Battuta recounted in Mecca. According to Ibn Battuta, some of the retainers of Amir Abu Numayy, the ruler of Mecca at that time, watered their horses at a famous convent (Gibb 1958, 222). Upon taking the

horses back to the stables:

> they were seized with colics and threw themselves to the ground, beating it with their heads and legs. Word was brought to the amir Abu Numayy, who went in person to the gate of the convent, apologized to its poor recluses, and begged that one of them should go back with him. This man rubbed the beast's bellies with his hand, when they expelled the water from that well which they had in their stomachs, and were relieved of their pains. The retainers never again ventured to appear at the convent except for good purposes (Ibid., 223).

The "anecdote" is obviously an attempt by Ibn Battuta to convey the concept that power and status are meaningless in Mecca. And although Ibn Battuta did not comment on the hajj rituals themselves, the universal wearing of Ihram garments and communal performance must have further backed this belief.

Ibn Battuta also recounts a powerful miracle while in Mecca. The miracle is simply described as "His story," referring to "Hasan the Maghribi, the demoniac, a man of strange life and remarkable character" (Ibid., 229). According to Ibn Battuta, Hasan, who circumambulated the Ka'ba at night, met a stranger, described as a "faqir," who told him that his mother missed him greatly and asked him if he would like to see her (Ibid.). After agreeing, Hasan met him the next night and the faqir asked him again if he would like to see his mother. On replying "yes" the faqir magically took him to his mother's house, thousands of miles away. After returning to Mecca, the man demanded that he never tell about his journey. However, Hasan succumbed to the pressure of his master, a shaykh, who demanded to know where he was the night before. Ibn Battuta then explained that:

> the Shaikh then said 'Show me the man', and came with him by night. The man came according to his usual custom, and when passed them Hasan said to his master, 'Sir, this is he'. The man heard him and struck him on the mouth with his hand saying 'Be silent, God make thee silent'. Immediately his tongue became tied, and his reason went. So he

> remained in the Sanctuary, a demented man, making circuits night and day without either ablutions or prayers, while the people looked upon him as a means of blessing and clothed him. (Gibb 1958, 230).

In recounting such a story, Ibn Battuta revealed the power of the sacred center and that even the most pious of men can be humbled for their actions. And although the man was humbled by silence, his continuous circling of the Ka'ba was an act of such piety that the people received "blessings" from him, and provided him with the necessities of life. Exemplifying this is Ibn Battuta's concluding remark on the story: "God Most High profit [us] by him!" (Ibid., 230).

Ibn Battuta's hajj consisted of much more than his time in Mecca and the performance of the hajj rituals. He departed from Tangier with a solid Islamic education and numerous motivations and expectations that can easily be linked with the 14th century emphasis on obtaining knowledge. However, once Ibn Battuta separated from his homeland, his motivations became absorbed by his primary objective–the hajj. Ibn Battuta's account also contains many clues about the personal mind set, the interaction with and internalization of sacred symbols and, finally, of the liminal state that pilgrims such as himself experienced upon leaving their homelands. Of these clues, the "miracles" and "anecdotes" leave the most convincing clues that the long journey to Mecca often became a sacred experience in itself, encompassing months to many years. In addition, the unique Islamic social structure and morality that existed in 14th century reinforce the notion that pilgrims maintained a feeling of inclusion within the Islamic community throughout their long hajj journeys. Consequently, pilgrims were continuously surrounded by sacred symbols in their everyday activities. In this respect, the hajj served not only as a rite of passage, taking the pilgrims into a liminal state, but also as an initiation rite, bringing them into the larger

Islamic community. And as will be illustrated in the next two pilgrimages, Ibn Battuta's hajj experience differs greatly from the experience of the modern pilgrim.

Malcolm X: A Black Nationalist Hajj

> I've just visited the Holy city of Mecca where I've seen thousands of pilgrims of all colors worshiping together in perfect peace and brotherhood. It is a sight such as I've never seen in America. It was wonderful to behold~Malcolm X (DeCardo 1996, 208).

Malcolm X is most known for his radical black nationalism and affiliation with the schismatic religious group, the Nation of Islam (NOI). And while his ideologies changed dramatically after his hajj in1964, his assassination less than a year later diminished public awareness of the significance of the event and his simultaneous conversion to Sunni Islam. As a result, many Americans had a difficult time understanding Malcolm X's new positions on race and society after his pilgrimage to Mecca. Fortunately for this analysis, he left behind ample statements, letters, and speeches both on his hajj, and upon his return to the United States. These texts, along with speeches and writings before his hajj, permit a full analysis of Malcolm X's hajj as a rite of passage and as an individual and a social process. Furthermore, taking into account the political, social and religious situation in America during this time period makes it possible to glean the important role of the hajj in Malcom's transformation, and the unique reflections and beliefs that resulted from his interaction and internalization of the sacred rituals and symbols of the hajj. In short, the analysis of Malcolm X's hajj will uncover one of the "billions" of "combinations" that result from the pilgrim's unique mind set, background, and liminal experience which "determine the end product" of the hajj (Zafar 1978, xi).[26]

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[26] See also page 4 of the introduction.

So how did Malcolm X, a man who equated white men to devils, judgment day to the final rule of blacks on earth, and Elijah Muhammad as a prophet, return from the hajj such a changed man, disregarding his anti-white racial rhetoric and fully embracing Sunni Islam? What is revealed through his personal letters while on the hajj, and statements after returning to America, is that the hajj allowed him to separate from the American society in which he lived, enter into a liminal state, and find in the hajj the most powerful sacred religious symbols he had ever encountered–unconditional brotherhood, the ummah, the white Muslim and the final Prophet Muhammad. In contrast to Ibn Battuta, Malcolm X arrived in Mecca to perform the sacred ritual from a society where he was not only a minority, but a minority within a minority; black and Muslim. And in fact, Ibn Battuta would most likely not even have considered Malcolm X a Muslim until shortly after his arrival in the Middle East.[27] In addition, Malcolm X did not enter the hajj from a society where Islam functioned as an overlying structure of life and morality, as Ibn Battuta did. Therefore, it is not surprising that he was extremely aware of his new surroundings and the initial suspicion by many Middle Eastern Muslims of his not being a true Muslim. This was evident in Saudi Arabia where, even though he possessed a letter from a prominent Muslim in America, he was held by the authorities and redirected to the Saudi religious court (Wolfe 1997, 492). However, once Malcolm X was allowed to participate, and began the actual hajj itself, he became absorbed by the Muslim community around him, and realized the true sense of "brotherhood"; the same "brotherhood" that Ibn Battuta experienced on his liminal journey six centuries before.

[27]Most mainstream Muslims did not consider the members of the Nation of Islam followers of true Islam, and Malcolm did not convert to mainstream Islam until shortly before his hajj.

Therefore, even though Malcolm X performed the hajj through a much different cultural and political lens than Ibn Battuta, he still experienced events and interacted with sacred symbols in a liminal fashion that he internalized, influencing his future actions. So how did the hajj rituals, remaining the same as when Ibn Battuta performed them centuries before, facilitate such a new way of thinking and behavior with the same power for a new Muslim such as Malcolm, who came from a secular ruled, Christian dominated society? What becomes evident is that Malcolm X's genuine search for the "true Islam," combined with his past experiences, allowed him to enter a sacred state upon arriving in Mecca. Furthermore, Malcolm X's sacred experiences on the hajj allowed him to reflect on America's social problems and formulate new solutions within the sacred history of the Prophets of Islam. While Ibn Battuta embarked on a long journey that would encompass "miracles" and "anecdotes" that would reaffirm his already established Islamic beliefs and lead him into unknown lands, Malcolm X was thrown into an Islamic land that he knew little about. He would, however, experience a sort of miracle in Sunni Islam, and discover what he believed the ultimate solution to the race problem in America. But in order to understand just how Malcolm X experienced the hajj, and what kind of impacts it would have on his life, it must be analyzed within the context of, 1) his experiences leading up to the hajj, 2) the volatile racial situation in America, and 3) his struggles with the Nation of Islam and subsequent second conversion to Sunni Islam.

Malcolm X: From Harlem Hustler to the Nation of Islam

Malcolm X's pre-Nation days can be broken into two periods: his early childhood, and his wayward youth days as a Harlem hustler. While his childhood encompassed a number of racially motivated events and a black nationalist atmosphere at home, his latter years of crime and associations with white women ended in imprisonment and a bitterness

toward the white system that would not easily disappear. Both induced a susceptibility to the teachings of the Nation of Islam. Details concerning Malcolm X's childhood are beyond the scope of this paper, and will, therefore, be summarized into a few important events and influences that led to his embracing the Nation's Islam.[28]

The first major encounter with racism that Malcolm X experienced took place when he was only four years old. His family's home, which was located in a white neighborhood where "most whites made no secret of their prejudice" in Lansing, Michigan, was fire bombed by the KKK (DeCardo 1996, 45). To make his impressions of the racial situation in America even worse, only a few years after the bombing Malcolm's father was killed under controversial circumstances, which the black community believed racially motivated (Malcolm X 1992,10). In addition to these events, his father's removal from the family created a situation where his mother had increasing difficulty taking care of the family. As a result, Malcolm was first placed in a foster family and later sent to a "detention home because his behavior had worsened" (DeCardo 1996, 53). In the detention home, Malcolm lived with a white family and attended an all white school where he began to develop strong views on the treatment of blacks. A comment in his autobiography about this period revealed his increasing awareness that the treatment he received was very different from his white schoolmates:

> What I am trying to say is that it just never dawned upon them that I could understand, that I wasn't a pet, but a human being. They didn't give me credit for having the same sensitivity, intellect, and understanding that they would have been ready and willing to recognize in a white boy in my position (Malcolm X 1992, 27).

Malcolm's religious upbringing also had a great impact on his views on religion and

[28]For a detailed description of Malcolm X's life, see his autobiography: Malcolm X 1992.

race. His father was a Baptist minister and his family encouraged the children to "cultivate their own personal belief in God," and emphasized the teachings of Marcus Garvey, which advocated black nationalism, a black God, and the return of blacks to Africa (DeCardo 1996, 13-17). Taken together, Malcolm's negative experiences with whites and black oriented religious background as a child greatly influenced and justified his later confidence in the Nation of Islam and the anti-white ideology it preached. According to DeCardo:

> Malcolm's idea of religion was heavily influenced by the kind of politically sensitive religion he had known in his family as a boy...Malcolm felt that any religion that did not truly benefit people, especially black people, was not logical and thus not believable (Ibid., 76).

Malcolm was eventually introduced to the street life of Boston while visiting his sister for a summer. Having lived in a small, predominantly white, community, he was moved not only by the huge black community, but the continuous activity that surrounded him (Malcolm X 1992, 35). Shortly after his summer visit, Malcolm dropped out of school and moved to Boston, where the street life quickly became a fascination and way of life (Malcolm X 1992, 40-42).[29] It was also a period of his life he looked back on in disdain. As Malcolm himself reflected on his hustling days after converting to the Nation of Islam, "I was a very wayward criminal, backward, illiterate, uneducated-type of person until I heard the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad" (DeCardo 1996, 63). His days of crime, hustling and sleeping with white women culminated in his arrest for burglary. According to Malcolm, the long eight to ten year sentence that he received was not due to his crime, but his association with white women; "When the judge sentenced me, he told me, 'this will teach you to stay away from white girls.' I took him at his word" (Ibid., 74). He pent seven years in prison, from

[29]Malcolm moved to New York after living in Boston for three years. He moved back and forth between Boston and New York until his imprisonment in 1946.

1946 until 1952, where he began developing his intellectual skills and became an avid supporter of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam.

As just described, it was in Prison that Malcolm X began to exert his intellectual ability through reading and writing, and where he embraced the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. The Nation's combination of black nationalism and sense of a superior being must have been easy to accept for a black individual with a strong Garvey background and sour experiences with racism such as Malcolm. DeCardo affirms this, stating that "the Nation appealed to his personal motives and goals, allowing him to reorder his life on a number of levels while–for the first time–fusing his personal religious sense with his black consciousness" (DeCardo 1996, 84). Moreover, the Nation taught that the black man was not only superior to the white man, but that on judgment day there would be an "inextinguishable fire that would consume the white man's world" (DeCardo 1996, 114).

There were, however, a few aspects of the religion that Malcolm was hard pressed to accept. First of all, the Nation taught that the founder, W.D. Fard, was God, and Elijah Muhammed was his prophet. This was the same problem that he previously had with Christianity, as he "had never believed that Jesus was divine" (Ibid., 82). However, the charisma of Elijah Muhammad and the nationalistic base eventually won Malcolm over. As DeCardo states: "But Malcolm X was a true believer in Elijah Muhammad, and his religious confidence was more than sufficient compensation for all the other dubious aspects of the Nation's doctrine" (Ibid., 131). These initial concerns regarding the Nation reappeared later as his relationship with the Nation began to deteriorate.

Malcolm X: The Minister and Voice of Elijah Muhammad

From the day he met Elijah Muhammad in 1952 until his silencing by the Nation of

Islam in 1963, Malcolm X dedicated his life to preaching the word of Elijah and establishing new congregations throughout the United States. It soon became apparent that Malcolm's dedication, charismatic style of speaking, and ability to relate to blacks pushed him into the forefront of the Nation in obtaining new members, and expressing the groups political views to the press. According to his brother, Wilfred:

> He more or less made his own niche. Nothing was done to hinder him...what they wanted was numbers and wanted people, and he was doing this on his own. So they just stepped back and let him take over and do it because he was doing better than anybody else (Decardo 1996, 101).

It was also during this period that Malcolm X's nationalistic and anti-white ideologies were pushed to the extremes by the Nation of Islam. For example, he stated that not only was the white man a "devil" and the "skunk of the planet earth," but that "everything on the earth that is good is dark...Black soil is richest and if God made man from the earth, he too must have been dark like you and I" (Decardo 1996, 104-5; Malcolm X 1993, 251). In addition to reducing the American white man into the "devil," Malcolm X also spoke out against the civil-rights movements, like the NAACP, who pushed for integration. And although he may have respected the leaders of such group for their strength and energy in fighting the American system, he could not support them. As Peter Goldman surmises:

> He could not, of course, have joined the civil-rights movement–not on its terms. Its announced goal was integration; Malcolm, like the younger movement radicals, came to appreciate the value of desegregating our society–forcing us, that is, to recognize the humanity of black people–but he could not have entered a struggle whose informing dream was to 'free' the blacks by integrating them into the company of white people (1973, 92).

All this would change, however, as Malcolm X reached toward the East for answers, became increasingly ostracized from the Nation by Elijah Muhammad, and finally performed the hajj and converted to Sunni Islam in 1964.

Malcolm's Break with the Nation and Religious Reorientation

Malcolm X was not oblivious to the fact that his increasing popularity was causing many of the members of the Nation, including Elijah Muhammad, to become concerned. Nor was he unaware of the rumors circulating that a few of the female secretaries had borne Elijah's children out of wedlock. According to Malcolm, he had been aware of the accusations against Elijah "as far back as 1955," but "the very idea made him 'shake with fear'" (Malcolm X 1992, 295). However, he actively pursued these accusations only after he realized that his differences with the Nation were irreconcilable. Malcolm X's last years with the Nation were marked by jealousy, betrayal, and misunderstanding. And even though the relationship between Malcolm and the Nation was disintegrating rapidly, and the animosity and resentment displayed towards Malcolm by the Nation increasing, most of the Nation's followers never expected that he would ever completely break from the Nation. According to Goldman:

> What I didn't know then was that everything he had been and had believed for twelve years was disintegrating for him. Most of us simply assumed that he would be back as a Muslim, that he was too valuable for the Nation to let go. Malcolm guessed otherwise. His chickens had come home to roost–the jealousies, the wounded vanities, the nasty business of the Messenger and the secretaries (1973, 120).

In May of 1964, Malcolm made a derogatory statement regarding the assassination of President JFK and was suspended from speaking by Elijah for ninety days.[30] And while Malcolm accepted the punishment and took full responsibility for his actions, it is apparent that many of his jealous enemies within the Nation saw the suspension as an opportunity to

[30]This was the famous "coming home to roost" comment that inferred that JFK's assassination was the result of the white racism and hate in America. Many journalists, however, believed this comment to infer that JFK got what was coming to him. See DeCardo 1996 and Malcolm X 1992 for details.

destroy his reputation in the eyes of Elijah and the Nation. The situation deteriorated further as Malcolm realized that he would never be allowed to speak again, and that Elijah's "family and officials in Chicago were determined completely to undermine [him]" (DeCardo 1996, 193). However, as bad as the situation appeared, Malcolm continued to display his confidence and belief in Elijah Muhammad. As Charles Kenyatta states, "Malcolm loved Elijah better than his own sons loved him" (Goldman 1973, 123). Exemplifying Malcolm's continued support was his attempts to use Qura'nic text to justify Elijah's actions regarding the illegitimate children (Malcolm X 1992, 299). While Malcolm's intentions were for the good of the Nation, some of the other ministers saw the action differently, and convinced Elijah that he was simply trying to ruin the reputation of the leader (Ibid., 299). As a result, the Nation began to take action against Malcolm, requiring him to return his property and, at one point, asking one of the members to place a bomb in his car (Ibid., 308).

It is also likely that Malcolm's interest in forming a stronger bond between the Nation and the Muslim World and Africa was seen as a threat to the divine nature of Elijah and the unique ideology that Elijah preached in America. As DeCardo relates:

> Malcolm X was fundamentally an internationalist, both in his political and religious orientation; Elijah Muhammad was parochial, and he saw his trip to the Middle East, and any contact with the Islamic world in general, only as a means of gaining recognition as a legitimate leader within the Untied States (1996, 145).

Consequently, Elijah must have understood that if his followers began to understand mainstream Islam, they would question his divine image, which contradicted Muslim belief in the Prophet Muhammad as the last and final Prophet. In addition, it would have exposed his unorthodox teachings on race, prayer and judgment day.

Malcolm's loyalty and public support of Elijah continued, even after his property was seized, his life threatened, and his formal break with the Nation, in March of 1964. This is

evident in his speeches shortly before his departure to Mecca. For instance, in his Declaration of Independence on March 12, 1964, he stated that:

> I still believe that Mr. Mohammad's analysis of the problem is the most realistic and that his solution is the best one. This means that I too believe the best solution is complete separation, with our people going back home, to our African homeland" (Breitman 1990, 20).

There were, however, a few meager deviations from his previous statements that signify a change in Malcolm's stance regarding his outlook on the race problem in America. First was his willingness to "use a more flexible approach toward working with others to get a solution to" the "problem" (Ibid., 20). He had previously denied outright his willingness to work with any segregationists, or any other black groups willing to work within the white system. Most likely, this was the result of his new freedom from Nation, and his need for a new following. Secondly, instead of relying on the "complete separation" and "return to Africa" solution, he referred to the ideas as "the best solution" and a "long range program" (Ibid., 19).

While Malcolm remained loyal to Elijah and the teachings of the Nation before he departed from the United States in 1964, his confidence in Elijah Muhammad as a Prophet disappeared upon his return from the hajj. In addition, his ideological stance on the race issue changed drastically. However, it must be kept in mind that while Malcolm's public image appeared to be a full turn, his views on the return to Africa solution had been changing, as noted in the previous paragraph, and he had also been in contact with Sunni Islam through Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi, a Professor from Cairo who was teaching at the Islamic Center of New York at the time (Malcolm X 1992, 319).

The Hajj: A Spiritual Enlightenment

When Malcolm X arrived in Cairo in 1964 he had already visited the Middle East and

Africa a few years earlier, but his firm belief in Elijah Muhammad as a Messenger and the ideology of the Nation of Islam restrained his intellectual ability to observe and internalize the socio-religious environment around him. His second trip was not only free from these constrains, but was carried out as a pilgrim, prepared to enter into a sacred state and form a relationship with Islam's sacred rituals and history. The results would be very different than his first trip, and Malcolm himself was not prepared for the kind of experiences the hajj would lead him into. This is evident in a statement he made in his autobiography that, "I never would have believed possible–it shocked me when I considered it–the impact of the Muslim world's influence on my previous thinking" (Breitman 1990, 58). So when did Malcolm realize that his journey had taken on a sacred existence of its own, allowing him to reflect back on his previous life and form new ideologies based on these reflections and new experiences? And what exactly was it that transpired on the hajj that resulted in Malcolm's later statement that his hajj "broadened" his "scope" more than his previous "thirty-nine years on this earth" (Goldman 1973, 166)? The first clues that Malcolm X had entered into a sacred state "betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification" are evident in his personal letters on his experiences before arriving in Mecca (Turner 1977, 95). Commenting on his flight from Frankfurt to Cairo, where he was surrounded by other pilgrims like himself from all over the world, he wrote:

> Throngs of people, obviously Muslims from everywhere, bound on the pilgrimage, were hugging and embracing. They were of all complexions, the whole atmosphere was of warmth and friendliness. The feeling hit me that there really wasn't any color problem here. The effect was as though I had stepped out of prison (Malcolm X 1992, 321).

And although this is before he had entered the state of ihram and donned the proper clothing, his insight into his new environment exemplify the liminal state he was experiencing. As Malcolm moved from Frankfurt to Cairo, from Cairo to Jedda, and from

Jedda to Mecca, his liminal experience became more powerful and influential. Consequently, on the plane to Jedda he made a similar comment, explaining that,

> in the plane were white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair–all together, brothers! All honoring the same God Allah, all in turn giving equal honor to each other (Ibid., 323).

However, while Malcolm noticed the brotherhood and color blindness of those around him, he also noted his discomfort at being an "American Muslim," who was forced into "watching others who knew what they were doing" (Ibid.). His discomfort is further demonstrated in a comment regarding his passport: "[it] signifies the exact opposite of what Islam stands for" (Ibid., 325). And to make his feeling of discomfort and estrangement even worse, the Saudi authorities separated him from the pilgrims he had befriended on the plane after seeing his passport, and announced that he must prove his religion to the Muslim high court (Wolfe 1997, 492).[31] As DeCardo so insightfully observes regarding the beginning of Malcolm's hajj: "the first hours of Malcolm's hajj appeared to be a re-enactment of his own personal spiritual journey; family, separation, alienation and confinement" (DeCardo 1996, 205).

Malcolm's discomfort was soon relieved, however, when a friend of Dr. Shawarbi, Dr. Omar Assam, arrived in Jedda and convinced the authorities to release him for the hajj. Malcolm's interaction with Omar, who Malcolm stated "would have been called a white man in America," can be viewed as the watershed for his upcoming ideological reorientation and reflections while performing the hajj rituals (Malcolm X 1992, 331). And what becomes apparent through Malcolm's observations while in the presence of Omar, and later among

[31]He explains in his autobiography about how he befriends many of the Muslim pilgrims on the plain. This is evident in a statement shortly after he was detained that "My friends were going to have to go on to Mecca without me."

the waves of pilgrims in the hajj rituals, is that one of the most powerful sacred symbol that he interacted with and internalized on the hajj was the white Muslim. Exemplifying this is Malcolm's statement regarding Omar; "I was speechless at the man's attitude, and at my own physical feeling of no difference between us as human beings" (Ibid., 331).

It did not take long before Malcolm began formulating strong statements regarding his experiences within the hajj rituals themselves. Shortly after his return from the lesser hajj, or umra, where Muslims circle the sacred Ka'ba together and run between Mt. Al-Safa and Al-Marwah, he appeared to have already formulated his initial thoughts and reflections on American society. Upon returning to Jedda after performing the Umrah, Malcolm referred to the internalization that took place in the rituals and the new solution to America's race problem that they were leading him towards. He wrote:

> America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases the race problem from its society...Before America allows herself to be destroyed by the 'cancer of racism' she should become better acquainted with the religious philosophy of Islam, a religion that has already molded people of all colors into one vast family... (Breitman 1990, 59-60).

Furthermore, Malcolm directly linked his experience as a pilgrim and his relationship with Islam's sacred history to his new observations and solutions. He stated:

> The experiences of this pilgrimage have taught me much, and each hour here in the Holy Land opens my eyes even more. If Islam can place the spirit of true brotherhood in the hearts of the 'whites' whom I have met here in the Land of the Prophets, then surely it can also remove the 'cancer of racism' from the heart of the white American, and perhaps in time save America from imminent racial disaster (Ibid., 61).

It is significant that it is not in America, or any other place, that he formulated these thoughts, but on the hajj and in the "Land of the Prophets." His new ideas were reconfirmed

and solidified during his pause on Mt. Arafat and the following rituals of the greater hajj.

Within the greater hajj rituals, Malcolm's time at Mt. Arafat appears to have left an even greater impression on his thoughts and reflections on society. As Michael Wolfe explains, pilgrims "see Arafat as a place to set aside for spiritual reunion, where pilgrims travel to re-form family ties, seek pardon, reclaim faith, and re-collect their spirits" (1997, xxiii). Not surprisingly, then, it was on Mt. Arafat that Malcolm revealed his most profound insights into his relationship with the multi-colored Muslim brothers around him, and the black Muslim problem in America.

> While I was on the top of Mount Arafat I swore to Allah that I would eliminate racism from the American Moslem movement. I swore that when I got back to America, I would spread the true message of Islam and rid its followers from any deviation (DeCardo 1996, 207).

The statement is a far cry from Malcolm's speeches for the Nation, where he decried the white man as a "devil" and "enemy" of all black men. Indeed, his sacred interactions and liminal state while on the hajj allowed Malcolm to separate himself from his previous ideologies and see the world in a different light.

It was also on Mt. Arafat that Malcolm finally rejected Elijah Muhammad's message and Prophethood, which had monopolized his thoughts in the Nation for so long. He stated, regarding Elijah's position:

> I realized how very dangerous it is for people to hold any human being in such esteem, especially to consider anyone some sort of 'divinely guided' and 'protected' person (DeCardo 1996, 207).

Therefore, it was on the hajj that Malcolm saw the problem of Elijah's teachings clearly, and for the first time since his first conversion and introduction to the Nation in prison, he was released from the obligation and dedication he had maintained towards the man he firmly

believed a divine Messenger for so long.

Malcolm X traveled to Africa upon completing his hajj. In Africa he continued to reformulate his ideas, the most significant being his reorientation from his previous belief that a physical return to Africa was the best solution, to a necessary "return to Africa philosophically and culturally" (Breitman 1990, 63).

Malcolm X: A New Muslim's Return to America

Malcolm X returned to America and presented a completely different ideological outlook from before his departure. With a new energy, he preached that: 1) Islam was the solution "that erases the race problem," 2) the white man, while still responsible for the injustices against blacks in America, was not the devil, 3) a philosophical and cultural, not a physical, return to Africa was necessary, 4) he was a Sunni Muslim and willing to work with any group interested in progressing the black American, and 5) the race problem in America was not simply an American problem, but a "world problem." Exemplifying his new stance is a speech he made in May of 1964, where he stated:

> We will work with anyone, with any group, no matter what their color is, as long as they are genuinely interested in taking the type of steps necessary to bring an end to the injustices that black people in this country are afflicted with. No matter what their color is, no matter what their political, economic or social philosophy is...(Breitman 1990, 70).

And in 1965, shortly before his death, he further stated:

> Before I get involved in anything nowadays, I have to straighten out my own position which is clear. I am not a racist in any form whatsoever. I don't believe in any form of racism. I don't believe in any from of discrimination or segregation. I believe in Islam (Ibid., 162).

Here, Malcolm's deviation from his previous belief in the Nation's Islam is clear: Islam does not teach discrimination or any other form of racial differentiation. However, while Malcolm firmly believed in these new ideals, he still made it a point to emphasize the difference between the "white man over here in America" and the Muslim white man in the

Middle East (Ibid., 163). According to Malcolm, America was not a society "that practices brotherhood," and, therefore, individuals needed to be judged on character and actions (Ibid., 163). This easily conformed to his belief in Sunni Islam and God's judgement of human action, which is left to God and God alone; in this case the atrocities committed against the black man in America. As would be expected from such a turnaround, many of Malcolm's former friends and associates from the Nation labeled him as a "hypocrite," the most negative name a black Muslim could call someone. For not only had he stated that the Nation of Islam taught "racism," but he had reestablished himself as a spokesman, this time for his own organizations (DeCardo 1996, 269). Malcolm X was also aware that his life was in danger as death threats increased after his return from the hajj, and his house was firebombed in February of 1965 (Goldman 1973, chapter 27). Representative of this is the statement made to him by his assassins directly before his death in February of 1965 to "keep your hand out of my pocket!" (Ibid., 274). And although Malcolm was assassinated less than two years after his separation from the Nation of Islam, his charismatic leadership and ability to propose a new Islamic solution to the race problem in America had a profound impact on weakening the ideology of the Nation of Islam and influenced the outlook of a great number of African Americans.

The hajj provided Malcolm X with a sacred experience that allowed him to both reflect on the American society in a new way, and formulate new solutions and ideologies that would dictate his actions upon returning to America. Furthermore, Malcolm's past experiences with racism, the Nation of Islam, and preoccupation with the black struggle in America acted as a filter through which he internalized the sacred symbols of the hajj and reformulated his outlook. While the hajj took Malcolm into the hajj rituals and sacred history of Prophets of Islam, his background directed him towards specific aspects of the hajj and

its symbols. The most powerful of these were the ummah and feeling of brotherhood among all Muslims, regardless of race or social position, the oneness of God, and the finality of the Last Prophet, Muhammad. Taken with his deep interest and susceptibility to powerful spiritual experiences and his intention of performing the hajj as a Sunni Muslim, it is not surprising that hajj acted as a kind of “anti-structure” and “communitas” that was in direct opposition to the segregated, unbalanced, society from which he came. Consequently, the hajj pulled Malcolm’s thoughts and ideology towards the “communitas,” in this case the social atmosphere of the hajj, influencing his future thoughts and actions upon returning to America.

As will be supported in the next section, Malcolm X’s hajj is similar to other pilgrims of the 20th century. Whereas Ibn Battuta lived in a land with an Islamic dominated social structure and morality, many of the modern pilgrims come from lands where the laws are secular and religion restricted to the private confines of the home. Moreover, many Muslims who treat Islam as a political ideology and way of life are oppressed and subject to arrest, as was the case for Ali Shariati. As a result, the hajj takes on an important role for pilgrims in tapping their Islamic roots and Islam’s sacred history. This reaffirms their Islamic identification and inculcates a new outlook on the societies from which they come. In this aspect, similar to what was stated about Malcolm X’s hajj, the hajj acts as an “anti-structure” to the extremely structured societies in the world today. And while the hajj of Ibn Battuta took a long period of time, the modern pilgrim is often thrown into the hajj within hours, impressing on the pilgrims the differences between their experiences within their every day society and the social atmosphere of the hajj. This isn’t to say that a socio-political structure did not exist in Ibn Battuta’s time; it definitely did exist, but the basic underlying customs,

manners, morals and ideals were similar among most Muslims, regardless of status or position within the social structure.

Table 1: Time Line of Malcolm X's Life

Date	Event
May, 1925:	Born in Omaha, Nebraska
Nov., 1929:	Family's house is burned down by KKK
Sept., 1931:	Father is killed under mysterious circumstances
Feb., 1941:	Moves to Boston to live with his sister
March, 1943:	Moves to New York
Feb., 1946:	Begins his eight to ten year prison sentence
1948:	Introduced to the Nation of Islam and converts
Feb., 1949:	Moves to Chicago and lives with Elijah Muhammad
April, 1957:	NOI member is beaten by NY police, Malcolm gathers protesters
Dec., 1963:	Silenced by Elijah Muhammad for comments on Kennedy assassination
Feb., 1964:	Member of NOI tells Malcolm he has been asked to place a bomb in his car
March, 1964:	NOI demands that Malcolm return all property, including his house
April, 1964:	Leaves the U.S. for Mecca
May, 1964:	Returns to New York after visiting the Middle East and Africa
June, 1964:	Tells CBS that six women are involved with Elijah Muhammad's adultery
July, 1964:	Reports to the police that two men have assaulted him in front of his house
Feb., 1965:	House is firebombed
Feb., 1965:	Shot and killed while giving a speech

Ali Shariati: The Islamic Modernist

> The hajj is all of Islam. Islam in words is the Qur'an. In human beings, it is the Imam. And in movement or action, the hajj. It seems as if everything which God wished to say to humanity was spilled, all at once, into the hajj...In general: a consciously selected group movement towards Eternal Primordiality and Infinite Perfection: God~Ali Shariati (Shariati 1992, 44).

Ali Shariati had many things in common with both Malcolm X and Ibn Battuta when he departed from Iran on his two hajjs in 1970 and 1971. Similar to Ibn Battuta, Shariati arrived from a Muslim land with a strong educational background in Islam. Therefore, it is not surprising that the hajj did not mark a major shift in Shariati's Islamic belief and ideology, in contrast to Malcolm X's hajj. Instead, similar to Ibn Battuta, it was a culmination, reaffirmation and representation of his beliefs and thoughts until his departure from Iran. However, there are a great number of similarities between Shariati and Malcolm X that were not in common with Ibn Battuta, and which represent Muslim pilgrims coming from secularized, Western oriented societies. For example, by the time the two men departed on the hajj, both had experienced social inequality, political upheaval, and had become popular spokesman for the oppressed and destitute. Furthermore, they both found the powerful sacred symbols and rituals of the hajj influential upon their social and political outlook. Ibn Battuta, on the other hand, left no signs of such preoccupation with inequality or oppression, and instead, focused on obtaining knowledge and connecting with the Islamic world, which he felt a part of.

What becomes apparent in analyzing Ali Shariati's hajj is that he, similar to Malcolm X, found the sacred Islamic community of the hajj, recreated and preserved through the rituals established by the Prophet Muhammad, in direct opposition to the socio-political atmosphere from which he came. The political and social atmosphere in Iran leading up to Shariati's hajj definitely had an impact on Shariati's belief in this opposition. Even though

Iran was an Islamic society, where the Shari'a had traditionally been applied, the policies of secularization and Westernization that the Shah was instituting during Shariati's time was drastically changing society. As a result, there was an increasing socio-economic gap, which forced many Iranians to look towards alternative ideologies that would erase inequality and Western economic and political domination. Many looked to Marxism for answers to these problems, others to the traditional Shi'a clergy, and a growing number, like Shariati, to a modern interpretation of Islam. And as would be expected, the government of the Shah viewed these alternatives as a threat to the existing power structure and took extreme measures such as imprisonment, assassination and exile to prevent these ideologies from spreading. Ali Shariati was a victim of all three.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that Shariati was also well aware of the power and magnitude of the hajj in instilling a sense of freedom and Islamic pride in individuals living in oppressive, unequal societies like his own. This is evident in his writings on the hajj, where he stated that the hajj is Islam "in movement or action," and that the "hajj is all of Islam" (Shariati 1992, 44). But Shariati did not stop at simply explaining the hajj in terms of individual freedom and pride. He called on his fellow Muslims to set out on the hajj, to understand the meaning of the rituals they are performing, to become the idol-destroying Prophet Abraham, and to continue the hajj until death (Shariati 1992). And as will be illustrated shortly, his message concerning Iran is clear: living out the hajj and Islam's sacred history leaves no room for oppressive rulers like the Shah, or a clergy that is unwilling, or unable, to teach true Shi'a Islam.

While viewing Malcolm X's hajj as a rite of passage and an individual and social process required an analyses of his speeches and letters on a variety of topics before, during and after the hajj, Ali Shariati left a detailed, hajj-specific, account of the actual rites

and processes themselves. These experiences and reflections on the hajj, composed of his speeches and writings shortly after his first and second hajj, have been compiled into a book, *Hajj: reflections on its rituals.* In the *Hajj*, Shariati uses his educational background in sociology and Islamic history to reveal the phases that pilgrims enter into upon setting out on the hajj, and the interactions with sacred symbols, rituals, and Islam's sacred history that take place within the rituals of the hajj. He also takes into account the variation of cultural, political and individual backgrounds that pilgrims enter into the sacred realm of the hajj with, and which influence the pilgrim's sacred interactions. And finally, Shariati sheds light on the correlation between these interactions and the possible social and political outcomes.

The Young Islamic Modernist

Ali Shariati began to form both his Islamic ideologies and political views at a young age through his father's involvement at the Centre for the Propagation of Islamic Truths. According to Rahnema:

> The groundwork of his socio-political consciousness was laid in the Centre for the Propagation of Islamic Truths...its purpose was to demonstrate that Islam possessed a marrow which could provide real solutions to the emerging social, political and economic problems (1998, 49).

It was also at the Centre that Shariati learned to speak on Islamic topics and came into contact with the leading Iranian Islamic modernists of the time. Shariati continued his involvement in the Centre until his departure to France in 1959, developing his Islamic ideology and learning about possible solutions to Iran's political problems. Upon completing high school, Shariati followed in his fathers footsteps and entered the Teachers Training College in 1950 (Ibid., 39).

During his youth, Shariati's also became fascinated with the Islamic figure, Abu Zarr

(Ibid., 58).[32] Abu Zarr was a companion of the Prophet who, according to Shariati, "defies wealth, power and even religious authority to save the 'authentic' Islam of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden" (Ibid.). Shariati's fascination with the figure signified his early empathy with the lower class and belief that the Shi'a clergy was not upholding true Shi'a Islam. His disenfranchisement with the clergy later developed into an essay called "red Shiism."[33] Abu Zarr was the first of a long string of Islamic figures that Shariati would try to emulate, culminating on the hajj with the great Prophet Abraham.

While Shariati attended the Teachers Training College, Iran's political atmosphere became extremely volatile and he began to involve himself in the nationalistic, anti-Western, political movements in support of Mosaddiq. Through the Centre, Shariati had been exposed to the increasing foreign presence in his country, which culminated in the Allied invasion in 1941 that replaced Reza Shah with his son, Muhammad Reza Shah.[34] Muhammad Reza Shah continued his father's extreme reformations and allowed Iran's oil supplies to be dominated by the West. The result was a general bitterness towards all foreign presence in Iran, which Shariati easily absorbed. As Cleveland relates:

> Virtually all sectors of Iranian society resented the prominent role played by foreigners, whether they were Soviet Engineers, British oil expert, or U.S. military advisers (1994, 273).

It is not surprising then, that Ali Shariati became an avid supporter of Mosaddiq, who called for the nationalization of oil and the overthrow of the Shah and managed to strip the

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[32]Shariati translated a book from Arabic on Abu Zarr in 1951, incorporating his own views on the Islamic figure.

[33]"Red shiism" was an article written much later in Shariati's life that explained how the true Shiism was polluted and misdirected the Shia population after the Safavid dynasty took control. See: Shariati 1980.

[34]It should also be noted that British and Soviet troop occupied parts of Iran from 1941 to 1946. See Cleveland 1994, 178.

Shah of his powers in the summer of 1953. His political activity, along with his firm belief in Islam, is evident in a speech he made in 1953 on "the contradiction between Islam and the monarchy" (Rahnema 1998, 53). However, shortly after his speech he saw the American backed coup d'etat that resulted in Mossadeq's arrest and the complete restoration of the Shah's power. Shariati was also arrested and interrogated for his activity in support of Mossadeq in 1954, and spent seventeen days in prison (Ibid., 56).

Upon completing his degree in teaching, Shariati entered into the University in Mashad in 1955 and received a scholarship to study in France in 1959. This period of Shariati's life, shortly before, and while in France encompassed a one month prison sentence, activity in various anti-Shah political groups, and a rigorous study of Sociology and Islam. In France, Shariati's political activities are evident in his participation in establishing the Freedom Movement of Iran, and the Second National Front, movements which denounced the Shah's political activities and supported the anti-Shah Mosaddiq forces, which had been driven underground since the coup in 1953 (Rahnema 1998, 95-7).

Shariati was also introduced to a number of new ideologies and philosophies in France, which had a profound impact on his thinking. According to one writer, regarding Shariati's time in France:

> He was able to examine and gain direct knowledge of different schools of social and philosophical thought and social behavior, as well as the works of philosophers, scholars and writers..He was particularly attracted to Islamic studies and Sociology and he studied these subjects formally (Algar 1979, 21).

This new infusion of knowledge helped Shariati formulate new ideas regarding Iran, and solidified his confidence in a modern interpretation of Islam that he believed "constituted the most effective medium of communication with his compatriots" (Rahnema 1998, 124). Upon returning to Iran from his study abroad in 1964, he was arrested at the border for his

activity in the anti-shah political organizations during his studies abroad.

Following in the Footsteps of Abu Zarr

After his release from a six week jail sentence, and multiple interrogations by the Iranian secret police, SAVAK, he taught at various high schools and served a short time with the Ministry of Education (Rahname 1996, 131).[35] However, his main objective was to teach at a university, and he was finally offered a job at Mashhad University in 1965 (Ibid., 142). It was at Meshhad University that Shariati began to obtain a large following. According to Ajami, "in the decade or so that followed, Shariati emerged as the most compelling voice of Iranian Moslem modernism" (1986, 2).

At the heart of Shariati's teachings was his belief that Islam erased both social and economic inequality, and that Islam, specifically Shi'a Islam, required Muslims to overcome the temptation to live in any way contrary to this belief. While the former belief was stated outright, the latter was hidden in Islamic terminology and metaphors in order to avoid the wrath of SAVAK. He also challenged his students to look past the superficial Islamic facts they learned in school and in the Mosque, and to find the "correct knowledge"; "to learn and know Islam correctly and methodically." (Shariati 1979, 28-9,60). This obviously had far reaching repercussions among the two most powerful anti-Shah groups in Iran, the Marxists and clerics. However, while his teachings were seen as a threat to these groups, his charismatic personality and the intellectual challenge he presented his students gained him a large audience and following from all ideological backgrounds.

Shariati's lectures and writings leading up to the hajj have a number of different features. The foundation for his ideology was based on the Islamic concept of "tauhid," or

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[35]The SAVAK was the Iranian military police, trained by the British and known for its brutal techniques against any who opposed the Shah.

oneness. Traditionally, the concept was used to refer to the oneness of God, and used in opposition to "shirk" or belief in something other than God. But, according to Shariati:

> It means regarding the whole of existence as a single living and conscious organism, possessing will, intelligence, feeling and purpose...Tauhid sees the world as an empire; shirk as a feudal system..Tauhid bestows upon man independence and dignity. Submission to Him alone–the supreme norm of all being–impels man to revolt against all lying powers, all the humiliating fetters of fear and of greed (1979, 82).

While Shariati simply described this as his way of looking at society, the underlying political tone is obvious: the Shah, in secularizing society and forcing Iranians to submit to his will was going against the "tauhid" and must be overthrown in the name of Islam.

In addition to his focus on the "tauhid," Shariati also used a number of different Islamic figures to advance his beliefs. With respect to the Imam, Shariati formulated a modern interpretation of the Islamic figure, declaring that the "idea" of the Imam:

> Promotes the idea of revenge and revolt, faith in the ultimate downfall of tyrants...It prepares all of the oppressed and justice-seeking masses who await participation in the revolt (Ajami 1986, 3).

Again, Shariati interpreted the figure in terms of revolution, revolt, and a reestablishment of true Shi'a Islam. He also went into great detail about the importance and meaning of Cane and Abel, who represent monotheism verses polytheism; oppressed verses the oppressor; and the deprived verses the usurper (Shariati 1979, 97-110). In interpreting the figures in an Islamic context, Shariati began to understand Islam's sacred history and apply it to the modern age. And while Shariati was digging deep into Islamic history before embarking on the hajj, it would be on the hajj where he would experience a metaphorical rebirth as of one of the most important figures in Islam; Abraham.

In the late 1960's Shariati also began to give lectures at the Hosseiniyeh Ershad, an Islamic institute in Ershad. The revolutionary tone of his lectures increased at this time,

along with the crowds, which inevitably caught the eye of SAVAK, who were watching him closely.[36] In 1969 he gave the speech, "The Islamic community and religious leadership," considered "one of his most revolutionary lectures" (Rahnma 1998, 237). According to Rahnema,

> Echoing the condescending view of representative democracy which prevailed among revolutionaries in the 1960's, Shariati argued that as long as the masses in underdeveloped and poor countries remained 'ignorant, slave-like and decadent' an enlightened revolutionary leadership was necessary to effect the transformation of society's old modes of thought and its defunct ways (Ibid., 237).

This would be one of the last lectures he would give before being forbidden to speak by SAVAK for seven months. A few months after he was allowed to speak again he embarked on his first hajj.

Shariati's increased activity against the Shah, and firm belief that Islam was the best solution to Iran's social, political, and religious problems were preoccupations as he entered into the sacred state of liminality and interacted with the sacred symbols and history of the hajj. They shaped the way he experienced the hajj, and in turn, were shaped by the hajj. And as will be illustrated through his writings on the hajj, Shariati's hajj experiences developed into the ultimate weapon against inequality and oppression; the hajj itself.

The Hajj: The Ultimate Weapon

Ali Shariati's *Hajj* is much more than a detailed commentary on the rituals and sacred history of the hajj. It is the synthesis of all his beliefs up until he departed for the hajj, and a revolutionary guide book for all pilgrims who live in nations of inequality, secularism, and greed. As Said Haider states in the introduction to an English translation of

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[36]SAVAK had interrogated Shariati multiple times after he started lecturing about the intention of his lectures. See Rahnema 1998.

Shariati's *Hajj*:

> Muslims, quick to quote their Prophet about acquisition of knowledge, remain ignorant..they are split among forty-six nation states who viciously guard their 'sovereignty' with total disregard for the interests of the ummah. They bow before the false gods of nation, language and culture and carry on their intrigues and vendettas reminiscent of the Age of Ignorance (jahiliyyah)...Ali Shariati personifies the lament of our epoch and the light of the grottos of our existence (1992, 8,10).

Similar to his lectures and writing prior to the hajj, the underlying emphasis of Shariati's *Hajj* is on the "tauhid," the ummah, and important Islamic figures in Islam's sacred history. However, while Shariati had previously spoken of the concepts like the "tauhid" as possibilities, which had existed at some point in the past, his performance of the hajj allowed him to observe, participate and interact with them in the present. And what becomes apparent upon analyzing Shariati's writings is that his immersion in Islam's sacred history throughout the rituals of hajj guided him on a path from "I" to "we," along the very footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, and into a metaphorical "rebirth" as the idol-destroying Prophet Abraham. But he does not stop at simply explaining and commenting on his experiences. He urges his readers and listeners to become Abraham, to "live like Abraham and in your own age," and to "move your people out from the stagnant swamp of life" (Shariati 1992, 98). Thus, the hajj becomes a revolutionary set of rituals that continue, even after completing the rituals, becoming the ultimate weapon in fighting inequality, oppression, and anything that apposes the "tauhid." The similarities between what Shariati is describing and the theoretical models of Turner and Eliade should be obvious: pilgrimage is an individual and a social process that leads pilgrims from their every day society into a sacred realm of religious history that influences the pilgrim and the pilgrim's society upon returning home.

And while pilgrims like Malcolm X must have had a very difficult time comprehending

the rich Islamic history into which they were thrown upon entering the hajj, Ali Shariati was very familiar with his new sacred environment. Why? Because all of the Islamic concepts and ideas that he had been formulating up until his departure–his concept of "tauhid," his emulation of Islamic figures such as Abu Zarr, his interpretation of Cane and Abel, and his belief in Islam as a solution to Iran's problems–were a small sample of what he encountered on the hajj. This is not to say that he understood the power of the experience he would have on the hajj, and in fact, his writings before embarking on the hajj rarely refer to the pilgrimage. Rather, his deep knowledge of Islamic history and conceptualization of Islam as a way of life allowed him to appreciate the meaning and power of the hajj as an individual and social force better than other Muslims. Shariati's ability to combine Islamic history with his personal experiences on the hajj resulted in a unique conceptualization of the hajj that make his readers and listeners feel as if they are an "actor," performing the hajj alongside Shariati.[37]

The relationships that Shariati forms between the hajj, Islam's sacred history, and the pilgrim are evident from the outset of his hajj. Shariati begins his reflections with the first sacred ritual of the shorter hajj, the ihram. Emphasizing the importance of this ritual in separating the pilgrim from every day society and in destroying the pilgrim's individuality and status, he declares:

> Clothes are a sign, are a separation, a manifestation, a mystery, a degree, a title, a privilege. The color, design and quality of it all mean: Me...Throw them away at the appointed time. Put on the shroud. Wash out all colors. Wear white Whiten and harmonize with all colors. Become all. Emerge from your me-ness like a snake which sheds its skin. Become the people (1992, 58-9).

[37]Shariati often equates the pilgrimage to a play, where the pilgrim is the "actor" and God is the "director." See Shariati 1992.

He further equates the ihram to "death," calling for the pilgrim to "Die before you die" (Ibid., 59). According to Shariati, performing the ihram is much more than a ritual, it is a state or phase. He further described it as the point of separation, where the pilgrim's old self, the self of "shirk", must "die," and the point where the pilgrim enters into a sacred\liminal state. It as the point where pilgrims prepare for a metaphorical rebirth as the Prophet Abraham. Drawing from the Qu'ranic verse, "Verily, Abraham was an ummah," he tells the pilgrim: "And you now go to become Abraham-like" (Ibid., 62).[38] The rebirth is further elucidated in another statement, where he tells the pilgrims to "offer" themselves and say:

> Behold, O God, I stand before Thee, no longer the slave of Nimrod or the servant of the taghut but in the form of Abraham. No longer in the clothes of coercion, a coercive wolf, deceitful fox, greedy rat, humiliated and submissive lamb but in the clothes of a human being, in the clothes I will wear to meet Thee tomorrow when I shall rise from the dust (Shariati 1992, 65).

And as Shariati takes his audience into Mecca and onto the Station of Abraham, his message to become Abraham is stronger:

> You who appear in Abraham's role, who stand in Abraham's station...live like Abraham and in your own age, be the architect of the Ka'bah of faith. Move your people out from the stagnant swamp of life, from the dead-like living, from the quiet sleep of the abasement of tyranny and from the darkness of ignorance (Ibid., 98).

The political undertones of Shariati's reflections are obvious. Not only was his hajj destroying the pilgrim's social, economic and political identity, but it was utilizing the Prophet Abraham to instill a revolutionary responsibility on all pilgrims coming from societies ruled by rulers such as the Shah. But this is only a description of the shorter hajj, which, according

[38]Verse 16:120.

to Shariati, was preparing the pilgrim for the real journey, the greater hajj; where the pilgrim has "gained the worthiness to be told: 'leave the Ka'bah'" (Ibid., 114). In short, the real hajj for Shariati begins at the Ka'ba, and matures throughout the rituals of the greater hajj. The rest is a separation and preparation.

Shariati describes the rituals of the greater hajj in terms of three stages: Arafah (knowledge), Mash'ar (consciousness) and Mina (love, faith).[39] The significance of the stages are described in terms of movement, pause, and contemplation. The pilgrim pauses at each, becoming aware of the science of mankind and the ummah at Arafah, consciousness of God, tauhid and the self at Mash'ar and finally, faith and love for the one God at Mina (Shariati 1992). Once the pilgrim has passed through Arafah and Mash'ar, he is prepared to face Satan and sacrifice his most loved possession at Mina, becoming a true member of the ummah.

Mount Arafah is the furthest point from the Ka'ba, and the place where nothing is required but pause. This is the place where pilgrims come together as Muslims, regardless of race, status, or position. It was on Mount Arafah that Malcolm X had his most profound insights into the colorless society around him, promising to erase racism in the black movement in America. Shariati's insights are similar:

> A complete town of nations without a government. A community of human races, colorless. A combination of all countries of the world, no frontiers. The whole earth upon a plain...Discriminations! How few (Ibid., 124).

This is the shortest pause, where the pilgrim must give himself "to the flood" of Muslims around him, and must quickly move on to Mash'ar (Ibid., 132).

And while Shariati describes the pause in Arafah as "collective," the pause in

[39]The greater hajj is also referred to as the "tamattu" or longer hajj.

Mash'ar is "singular" (Ibid., 127). The time in Mash'ar is a time of individual preparation, where each pilgrim is a member of "Abraham's army" and gathers pebbles for the upcoming fight with Satan.

> The stormy tumultuous sea of people think of combat and gather arms. Everybody thinks about his own deed in the darkness of Mash'ar; stoops down upon the earth; reaches among the stones; fingers and feels the stones searching for pebbles to throw in Mina (Ibid., 139).

This is obviously an attempt by Shariati to create an analogy between the preparation for war at Mash'ar and the pilgrim's struggle at home. This is exemplified by a statement regarding the stones: "Smooth, polished, round, smaller than a walnut and larger than a pistachio. What does it mean? It means: bullet" (Shariati 1992, 129).

Once Shariati has moved from Mash'ar to Mina it is further evident that he is no longer simply talking about an awareness of God, the "tauhid" and ummah, but of "a revolutionary ummah" (Ibid., 141). And it is at Mina that Shariati's most revolutionary statement is made, leaving no Muslims exempt from the duty bestowed on them by the hajj:

> This is not a mechanical society. It is a revolutionary ummah. The knowledgeable, those who practice, the politicians, the devotees, the worldly, the religious and...are artificial borders for artificial, defective people but the ummah is a revolutionary society, a society not based on a series of class hierarchies. It is a society upon the Way, a moving caravan, with One God, one way, one qiblah and all from one tribe, children of one father and servants of One God. **Its intellectuals fight, its fighters worship and its worshipers think** (Ibid., 141).

It is also at Mina that the pilgrim's "bullets" are used against the three idols representing Satan, also known as Iblis. And each of the three days at Mina must include a stoning, which Shariati explains can represent different things, depending on the "intention of the stone thrower"(Ibid., 192). But before the pilgrim can defeat Satan again after the first stoning, he must perform one more ritual: the sacrifice. Representative of Abraham's

willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, to prove his undivided belief in God, the pilgrim sacrifices an animal. But Shariati's metaphoric rebirth as Abraham presents a deeper reflection of the ritual:

> You are Abraham. You have brought your Ishmael to the place of sacrifice. What is your Ishmael? What is it? Your rank? Your reputation? Your position? Your profession? Your wealth?...You know yourself. You should bring all of it, whatever it is, whoever it is to Mina and choose it for your sacrifice (Shariati 1992, 159).

This is the final act that sets the pilgrim free, and allows an unconditional love and belief in God, the tauhid, and the ummah. However, according to Shariati, the hajj does not end upon completing the final ritual and he ends his reflections on the hajj with a determination, a warning, and a calling:

> O haj! Where are you going now? Towards your home? The world? Are you leaving the hajj as you had come? Never!...do not leave the House of the People. Do not again restrict yourself. Do not leave the ihram; do not put on your own clothes...You are Abraham! Step into the midst of the fire–the fire of tyranny, ignorance–in order to save humanity from the fire–the fire of tyranny, ignorance (Ibid., 251-2).

And thus, Shariati's *Hajj* describes a transformation, a metaphorical rebirth, and a resulting revolutionary "army of monotheism" that will fight for the reestablishment of God's Islamic community in the present day, no matter what the cost.

Arrest and Exile

Upon arriving back in Iran from his first hajj, Shariati immediately began giving lectures about the meanings of its rituals, symbols and sacred history.[40] Shariati's return was marked by a new energy and confidence in his teachings, as well as a new responsibility. As Rahnema explains:

[40]These lecture, along with his writings, make up his book, *Hajj.*

It seemed as if Shariati had quickly forgotten the seven months ban on his public speaking and the grief and pain that it had caused him. As if inspired by his own description of Abraham's single-handed and bold rebellion against all polytheistic elements (Rahnema 1996, 244).

And while the hajj was by no means the beginning of Shariati's revolutionary Islamic ideology, as described earlier, it does appear that his pilgrimages inspired him, solidified his ideas, and became the ultimate weapon to prepare his students for revolution. The obvious connection between his lectures on the hajj and revolution inevitably caught the attention of SAVAK. As Steven Benson concludes about Shariati's lectures and writings on the hajj:

> If the people of Iran experienced the hajj in the way that Shariati wished, then that religious duty would have provided a grist for people to reflect critically on the Shah's regime and its part in new-colonialism as well as its status as the government of an Islamic nation. Even more dangerous, Shariati's experience of the hajj, if shared by thousands of others, could create an 'army' of people who didn't feel constrained by either fear or fidelity to lend any support to a regime they despised (1991, 22).

As if Shariati's emphasis on the pilgrim's duty to fight the idolaters and enemies of Islam was an illustration of his own rebirth as Abraham, his other lectures urged students to take action. On the eve of Ashura, 1972, Shariati gave his revolutionary "insurrection lectures." And as Rahnema recounts, the lectures were "intended as a potent jab to incite and instigate not only intellectuals, but the people to rise and revolt" (1998, 297). As a result of these lectures, along with his hajj lectures and writings, SAVAK could no longer tolerate Shariati's activity and arrested him (Ibid., 330). After he was placed in prison and SAVAK began cracking down on the Islamic opposition, it became apparent that "Shariati's works surfaced as the most influential source of inspiration" (Rahnema 1998, 326). His

imprisonment also seemed to strengthen his message and increased his support among all revolutionary groups, including the clergy (Ibid.).[41] Shariati remained in prison for almost three years, and upon his release he was under house arrest for another two, essentially ending all his activities (Ajami 1986, 2). After moving to England in 1977, Shariati died under mysterious circumstances, which many believe was at the hands of the SAVAK. The Islamic Revolution in Iran would take place two years later.

Although the clerics, under Ayatollah Khomeini, gained the greatest following in the revolution that was to come, Ali Shariati is still believed to be one of the major contributors to the revolution. As Ajami states:

> The large mass that brought down the old order carried side by side portraits of Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. But the new world was to be Khomeini's (Ibid., 2).

Shariati left his mark through his teachings, where he instilled an Islamic awareness and identity, and helped prepare society for revolution. His sacred experiences on the hajj became a representation of these teachings, and of the ultimate revolution against inequality, oppression and secularism. Through his eloquent writings style, and deep knowledge of Islamic history, he was able to bring his students and followers along his hajj, to experience it as he experienced it. And continuing his metaphoric rebirth as the Prophet Abraham, he told his followers to smash the idols of secularism, Westernization and inequality. In doing so, he hoped that they would recreate the true Islamic ummah, the "tauhid," and true Shi'a Islam.

Table 2: Time Line of Ali Shariati's Life

1933: Born near Mashhad, Iran.

[41]For example, shortly after his arrest, Sheikh Hossein Ali Montazeri, a cleric and supporter of Khomeini, took a strong position in support of Shariati.

1941: Allied forces occupy Iran

1950: Entered the Teacher's Training College

1953: Allied backed coup d'etat brings Muhammad Reza Shah back to power

1955: Entered the University of Mashhad

1958: Earns B.A. degree in Persian

1959: Began graduate work in Paris

1964: Returns to Iran and is arrested on the border

1965: Begins teaching at the University of Mashhad

1969: Begins giving lectures at Hosseiniyeh Ershad

1970: First hajj

1971: Second hajj

1972: Hosseiniyeh Ershad shut down, and Shariati is arrested

1975-7: Under house arrest, no longer able to lecture or participate in any political activity

1977: Left for England, and died under mysterious circumstances that same year

1979: Islamic Revolution in Iran

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has taken a unique approach in order to illustrate pilgrimage as an individual and a social process. This was accomplished through the in depth analysis of three Muslim pilgrimage accounts, taking into consideration the unique social, political and religious background of each pilgrim. However, while each pilgrim's sacred experience was the focus and support for disclosing this process, it would not have been possible without a sufficient theoretical foundation. The theoretical foundation was required not so much for illustrating the profound impact of pilgrimage on the pilgrim and the pilgrim's society, this was obvious from the pilgrim's account, but for understanding how the

individual and social process took place and the differences that resulted.

Thus, it was possible to disclose both the why and how: 1) Ibn Battuta entered into a sacred state two years before arriving in Mecca and the role of the hajj in maintaining the Islamic social structure of the time, 2) Malcolm X internalized the white Muslim, Sunni Islam, and the Islamic community and his subsequent return to America with a new solution to America's race problem, and 3) Ali Shariati underwent a metaphorical rebirth as the idol destroying Prophet Abraham and his application of the hajj in Iran as a revolutionary experience. In short, this paper discloses more than other writings on pilgrimage that focus on such aspects as the pilgrim's motivation to embark on pilgrimage, the function of pilgrimage as an "anti-structure" to the modern pilgrim's every day society, or the differences among pilgrims' experiences who come from different backgrounds; it discloses why many pilgrims embark on pilgrimage, how they enter into a sacred state upon leaving their homelands, what kind of sacred symbols and rituals with which they interact and why they do so, the pilgrim's feeling of initiation into larger religious community and its sacred history, and, finally, the individual and social ramifications that result.

Each of the three pilgrims entered the hajj with specific preoccupations and motivations, into a sacred state "neither here nor there" sometime before arriving in Mecca, each interacted with the sacred religious symbols and rituals of the hajj in a unique way, and each returned from the hajj transformed and with a new outlook on society. For Ibn Battuta, the 14th century emphasis on traveling to obtain religious knowledge, along with his own strong religious upbringing, resulted in sacred interactions with, and an internalization of the learned men and the Islamic environment he encountered throughout his long journey to Mecca. This is evident in the "miracles" and "anecdotes" that he described. Furthermore, his hajj was an initiation into the larger Islamic world, and reaffirmed his belief in his

membership within it.

Malcolm X's sour experiences with inequality and racism in America, along with his membership in the schismatic group, the Nation of Islam, resulted in his sacred interactions with the white Muslim and the unconditional brotherhood among all Muslims on the hajj. In addition, these sacred interactions guided him to what he believed to be the ultimate solution to America's race problem; Sunni Islam. And Ali Shariati, experiencing similar oppression and inequality at the hands of the secular Iranian government, went through a metaphorical rebirth as the idol-destroying Prophet Abraham. This resulted in his belief that not only was the hajj the ultimate initiation into Islam's sacred history and the true Islam as practiced by the Prophets of Islam, but that it bestowed upon all Muslims a responsibility to reestablish Islam as a socio-political way of life, regardless of the consequences.

The "historical shift" between Ibn Battuta's hajj and the modern pilgrimages of Malcolm X and Ali Shariati are also evident. This is best explained using Turner's concepts of "structure" and "anti-structure." And while Ibn Battuta did not leave any evidence that the hajj was an "anti-structure" to his every day society, it still definitely had an impact on the Islamic societies through which he traveled, including his own. This is evident in the 14th century emphasis on traveling to obtain knowledge and its close association with the hajj, which acted to maintain the Islamic social structure of the time through the constant movement and exchange of knowledge between Muslims from different lands. Ibn Battuta backed this through his repeated emphasis on his contact with learned men and the obtaining of knowledge throughout his hajj.

Malcolm X and Ali Shariati, on the other hand, made it a point to emphasize their amazement at the new atmosphere in which they were submerged upon arriving in Mecca. In this respect the modern hajj can be viewed as an "anti-structure" that brings pilgrims back

into the time of the Prophets and into the utopian-like society that previously existed. Both of the pilgrim's descriptions of their new environments, along with their development of new solutions to their homeland's problems, fully support this. This explains why Malcolm X returned from the hajj emphasizing Islam as America's only solution to the race problem, and why Ali Shariati attempted to bring his students on the hajj he had just experienced, hoping it would bestow upon them a revolutionary responsibility, the same one that he left the hajj with–to destroy the un-Islamic government of the Shah. In short, these three pilgrims attempted to bring the "anti-structure," the hajj, home, influencing the social and political events surrounding them.

In addition, there is a common theme that can be drawn from all three pilgrimages. As stated previously, all three pilgrims entered the hajj with different preoccupations, interacted with the sacred symbols and rituals very differently, and returned home to apply what they had learned through their experiences to different aspects of society. However, they all found Islam to be the true way of life, experienced a reaffirmation of their Muslim identity, and were initiated into the Islamic community and Islam's sacred history.

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