

ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE IN WEST ASIA

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CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that the M. Phil dissertation entitled, "**ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE IN WEST ASIA**" submitted by **Mr. Khurshid Imam** of the Centre for West Asian and African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. This is his original work carried out under my supervision and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University.

This dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**.

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PREFACE

Pilgrimage is an important institution found in all major religions of the world. It is an act of religious devotional journey. Across cultural and spatial boundaries, the general feature of a pilgrim's journey are remarkably similar. In all religions one common thing regarding the institution of pilgrimage is that it is a circulation mechanism.

The pilgrimage is thus not only a religious institution, but it also has many significant social, economic and political dimensions.

The function of pilgrimage is to generate social solidarity, and a sense of *communitas*. Pilgrimages could be seen at the level of great traditions and at the level of little traditions.

West Asia which is the bedrock of three semitic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam each year attracts people from across the world. The region has the sentimental attachment of the largest population of the world. The tussle over *Bait-ul-Aqsa* mosque among Jews, Christians and Muslims is a known fact.

The Hajj is an ancient rite which was well established in Arabia long before Islam. *AL-HAJJ* is one of the five pillars of Islam, rites requiring several days at Mecca and in the immediate environs during a specific month of the Islamic year. *AL-UMRAH* is an abbreviated version of the *Al-Hajj* and can be performed at any time of the year. *AZ-ZIYARAH* is a non-canonical custom of visiting the tomb of the Prophet in Madina. By extension, the word *az-ziyarah* is sometimes applied to the visiting of any holy place.

Against this background, the main focus of this study is to have an understanding of the basic features of Islamic pilgrimage in West Asia.

Pilgrimage as an area of study has mostly been neglected by social scientists. Regarding Islamic pilgrimage, for example, only guide books are available. A few scientific studies of the institution of pilgrimage are there. However, looking at the

magnitude and vastness of the people involved in the phenomenon the number of works look insignificant.

To put it briefly there is no direct literature available on the aspects of Islamic pilgrimage in West Asia which is sociologically informed. What is available is scattered materials which is not systematic and incomprehensive. The religious texts which are mostly in Arabic and only a few of them translated into English may also create problems in writing the dissertation. However, an effort has been to study the phenomenon despite these problems.

CHAPTER 1

ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE: TEXT AND CONTEXT

Beliefs, symbols, and rituals are major components of all religions, and many social scientists have suggested that they are the primary "building blocks" of religious institutions. Beliefs are strongly held ideas. Symbols are ideas and images that stand for or related to other ideas and images. Rituals are more or less fixed sequence of behaviour that assume special importance when performed within a religious context. Social scientists contend that beliefs, symbols and rituals are necessary, world over, for the creation and maintenance of religious institutions.

The belief system of a religion, which is a personal affair of an individual, leads one toward religious groups and helps in the process of religious specialisation. This is the process through which people learn to engage more deeply in the verbalisation, action and institution of a religion which provides them with a sense of meaning and belonging. Anyone who becomes the member of a religious group learns how to utter the religious words, perform the religious actions and acknowledge the accepted pattern for religious life sanctioned by its institution.

Pilgrimage is an important institution of all major religions of the world. It is an act of religious devotion and undertakes a journey to a sacred or holy place. The nature and concept of this institution vary from religion to religion. The variations can be due to the core belief system of the religion or the result of the regional and cultural impact. The expansion of the followers of a particular religion

due to conversion and conquests across different political and geographical boundaries had a deep impact on belief and action. The coming of several ethnic, religious, lingual and other groups with certain rituals, cultures and rites under the umbrella of a particular religion tends to retain many or some of their traditional and ancestral rites make the understanding of the concept of the institution of pilgrimage even more complex. So much so, that it becomes difficult to categorise a particular journey under pilgrimage or under some other heading. Thus, it becomes very important, on the very onset, to understand the meaning and concept of pilgrimage.

The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language defines pilgrimage as a journey to a sacred place or shrine. The other dimension that the dictionary adds is any long journey or search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. The Chambers 20th Century Dictionary gives a similar meaning, making pilgrimage a journey to a shrine or other holy place venerated for its association. Thus, the meaning given by these dictionaries itself presents various shades and dimensions to the concept of pilgrimage.

Starting from a simple journey to a sacred place the dictionaries go on adding criterion to it: a long journey or a search which gives enough space for an interpreter to interpret in his or her own way the meaning of pilgrimage. The dictionaries also put a check to it by connecting this search or journey with a purpose. The Chambers dictionary still widens the scope of holy place by adding place venerated for its association.

The word "pilgrimage" changed and re-changed its connotation to adjust to the changing dimensions of the institution to incorporate to it preview more and

more pilgrims.

In its earliest use, in the 20th century "pilgrim" was simply a word for any kind of traveller or wayfarer, merely a "wonderer" or "sojourner". In its ultimate derivation, the word can be traced from Latin *per ager* meaning through the "field" or through the "country." Wyclif used the word (in a non-religious sense) in his Bible translation of 1382, where he rendered Hebrews 11:13 as: "*for thei ben pilgrymes, and herborid men vpon the erthe,*" and I Peter 2:11 as: "I beseech you, as comelynges and pilgrims." The Authorised version of 1611 keeps this in the respective passage: "I beseech you as stranges and pilgrims." From the 13th century "pilgrim" acquired its religious use, occurring in one of the earliest and best known text in this sense in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1386):

Pilgrimages were they alle
That towards Counterbury woldenryde.

The traveller sense of the word was popular with poets of the 18th century and 19th century and cannot be said to be fully obsolete as such.

Pilgrimage is the deliberate travelling on a route to a sacred place that lies outside one's normal habitat. Thus, the nature of pilgrimage, as distinct from visiting a holy place such as a holy shrine or church, lies as much in the way as in the goal. It is for this reason that pilgrimage used metaphorically for journeys which have no clear goal at their end like the journey of life itself. It is for this reason too that attention has been drawn to the separation of pilgrims from ordinary life. This is defined by Victor Turner, by a term taken from van Gennep as "liminality." It is symbolised by ritual preparations, special clothing and the choice of a prescribed route. This is said to give rise to a special social status experienced by the pilgrims as 'communitas' (Turner 1978). It is the importance of the way

which brings out secondary characteristic of pilgrimage. Thus the way is often difficult, for merit (or atleast value) is attached to completing it. It is difficult and worth completing, however, paradoxically it is being made easier, by development of roads, airports and the provision of special trains.

Thus pilgrimage is a religious custom that is both ancient and widespread and involves three factors: a holy place; attraction of individuals or crowds to this place; a specific aim, that is, to obtain some spiritual or material benefit.

Narrowing the topic to Islamic pilgrimage one has to understand the institution of pilgrimage as defined by the religion. It becomes all the more important because of its claim that the revelations are complete and the present codes are to continue till the doomsday. What matters now is only the interpretation of these codes. A study in its flexibility to incorporate in it the regional and pagan practices needs utmost care so as to avoid any contradiction with the fundamental principles of Islam. At the same time the rites and rituals prescribed by the religion need to be differentiated from the contamination that creep in with the passage of time.

The word used in Arabic for pilgrimage is *Hajj*,¹ the visit or travel to *Ka'ba* for *Hajj* or *Umra* ². *Mahaj* is a word derived from it meaning destination (of a journey). Thus we can see the space in the meaning of the word *Hajj*. The Persian dictionary uses the word '*Ziyarah*' for pilgrimage which in Arabic simply means a visit. The dictionary *Al-Misbahul-Munir* uses a common phrase to specify the

1 Munir Baalbaki, *Al Mawarid: A Modern English -Arabic Dictionary*. Beirut, Dar-el-Ilm Lil-Malayan, 1982 (16th edition)

2 Al-Fayoomy, *Al-Misbahul-munir*, Vols. I&II, Qum, Darul-Hijrah, 1405AH.

meaning of *Hajj*. It says:

"Ma Hajja wa-la-kin dajja --Fal Hajjo Al-Qasdo

lin-Nusuki wa Al-Dajjo Al-Qasado lit-tijarah." (Arabic)

Which explains its meaning by distinguishing the journey on the basis of the motive of the journey. The expression uses two words "*Hajj*" and "*Dajj*." The former with the motive of performing religious rites and rituals and the later with the business motive or for worldly or material gains.

PILGRIMAGE IN OTHER RELIGIONS

The institution of pilgrimage occurs in all major religions of the world. There is no religious group or community that may not have its own shrine or holy places of pilgrimage. Excavators and archaeologists have unearthed incontrovertible evidence in support of this contention. History also tells us that the institution of pilgrimage has always been present among the various peoples and communities of the world. Ancient monuments and other sacred places in Jerusalem and other parts of the world are still the objects of veneration and people have been making a pilgrimage to that eternal city from ancient times. In ancient Egypt pilgrimage was made to the tomb of Osiris at Abydos. Jews made pilgrimage to Jerusalem Temple until its destruction in 70 CE; the "Wailing Wall" a portion of the substructure of the Temple area later became a place of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage was often imposed as penance in medieval Christianity. Places of pilgrimage are various: tombs of holy personage (eg., Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, tomb of Saint Thomas Becket, Canterbury), location of a holy object or relic (eg., *Ka'ba* at Mecca, relics of Cosme, Egg at Hermopolis, tooth of Buddha at Kandy); places connected with miraculous healing (eg., Epidauros, Lourdes). Besides hopes

of spiritual benefits or healing, pilgrimage often held social attractions, as is evident from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, they generally brought material advantages to places concerned. Pilgrimage shrines become rich with offerings of pilgrims and economic benefits extend to many persons, like makers of silver shrine for Artemis of Ephesus.

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi a prominent Islamic scholar pointing at the root cause says "In every faith there are some sacred places to which its follower travel at a certain time as an act of religious devotion. This is so because it fulfils a great human need and satisfies a basic spiritual urge. Man is always in the quest of an object through he can gratify his inborn feelings of love and fidelity. He needs a profound event, a prolonged ceremony through which he can mend amends for his serious transgression and obtain release from the stinging reflections of his conscience and the reproach of society...."³ Thus, he points at the natural instinct of human being cutting across regional, cultural or even religious influence. In the words of the Quran:

And for every nation We have appointed a ritual that they mention the name of Allah over the beast of cattle that He hath given them for food: and your God is one God, so surrender unto Him. And give good tidings (O Mohammed) to the humble.⁴

Unto each nation We have given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not disrupt with thee of the matter, but summon those unto thy Lord. Lo! Thou indeed followest right guidance.⁵

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which was called *Reiyah* (meaning the appearance) used to take place on one of the three festivals of Passover, *Shabn'ot*

3 Abul Hasan Ali, Nadvi, *The Four Pillars of Islam*, Trans. Mohammed Asif Kidwai, Islamabad, Da'wa Academy, 1991.

4 *The Quran, Surah Al Hajj*, verse 34.

5 *Ibid.*, Verse 67

and *Sukkot*. The *Misnah* says that all were under obligation to appear, except minors, women, the blind, the aged and the sick. A minor in this case was defined as one who was too young to be taken by his father to Jerusalem. While the appearance of women and infant males was not mandatory, they usually accompanied their husbands and fathers in all public gatherings.

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem did not cease with the destruction of the Temple. The Turkish conquest under Salahuddin in 1187CE secured to the Oriental Jews the privilege of visiting Jerusalem and other sacred places. Among the eastern Jews, especially those from Babylon and Kurdistan it has been the custom from the 14th century onwards to go on pilgrimage at least once in a year. Many of them actually walking the whole distance. The era of the Crusades evidently encouraged pilgrimage of Jews from Europe.

As for the institution of pilgrimage among the Christians according to the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics "A Pilgrimage is a journey undertaken to visit sacred places, such as, the scenes of our Lord's earthly life in Palestine, the threshold of the apostle's at Rome or the shrines of saints and martyrs."⁶

Journey to visit sacred places and engage in religious ceremonies antedates Islam, as is evidenced by echoes of the practice which resound in the old Testament. Early Hebrews were repeatedly commanded to go three times a year "before the Lord God."⁷ The early Christian urge "to tread the path trodden by the saviour" received special impetus when Helena, mother of Constantine the Great

6 James Hasting Ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1967. p.

7 *Exodus* 23:14, 17; 34:22

visited Jerusalem about 325CE, discovered the "true cross" and found the church of the Holy Sepulchre and the church of Nativity.

HAJJ -- AN ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE

The Arabic word '*Hajj*' means to set out for a definite purpose. Specifically, it refers to the pilgrimage to the city of Mecca. The *Hajj* is an ancient rite that was well established in Arabia long before Islam. It is one of the few traditions of the monotheistic religion of Arabia that survived the onslaught of pagan practices.

Hajj is an obligation on every able Muslim once in a life time. It was instituted by the Quranic verse:

"And proclaim the *Hajj* to all mankind, they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on lean camels emerging from deep and distant mountain highways, so that they may witness the benefits (provided) for them and celebrate the name of Allah during the appointed days."⁸

The benefits to which the verse refers are material and spiritual. The pilgrim derives material benefits through trade and social interactions and spiritual benefits from the improvement of their religious and worldly knowledge. However the most significant benefit of the *Hajj* is the deep religious experience that profoundly affects the being of the pilgrim.

As a religious duty that is the fifth pillar of Islam, the *Hajj* is an obligation for all Muslims to perform once in their adult lives, provided they be of sound mind and health and financially able at that time. It is a practical application of all the pillars of Islam and some of its major ethical principles. It is a manifestation of the belief in the unity of Allah, for the pilgrims come out of 'devotion to Allah not

8 *The Quran, Surah Al-Hajj.*

associating any partners with Him.' The *Hajj* demonstrates Islam's abhorrence of all forms of social distinctions as all pilgrims wrap themselves in the simplest of white clothes without any regard for their position, wealth or power. It embodies certain characteristics of *Zakat* (another pillar of Islam) as the sacrifice is for the poor. It also contains some aspects of fasting since the pilgrims must refrain from sexual activities and avoid any undesirable act. Finally, like *Salat* (another pillar of Islam) the *Hajj* is a continuous immersion of oneself in the presence of Allah, excluding all other but Him from one's mind and heart.

This makes *Hajj* the heart beat of every Muslim. *Ka'ba* and the Holy city of Mecca become their aspiration, to which their thoughts have turned everyday since in childhood they learned to pray. *Ka'ba* becomes the focal point /pivotal point of Islamic pilgrimage. Mecca, Madina and Jerusalem are all holy places for Muslims. A *Hadith* refers to it "A journey with intention and preparation, is permissible only to three mosques: *Masjid al Haram*, *Masjid al Nabawi*, and *Masjid al Aqsa*."⁹ The Prophet has forbidden his followers to make a journey specifically with the object of visiting a tomb or shrine. This is to check the perverting influence of tombs and shrines which has led many a community into polytheism and idolatry.

Another tradition says: "O Allah: Let my grave not be an idol to which worship may be offered. Allah is severely displeased with those who have made the graves of their Prophets into places of worship."¹⁰

But somehow or the other such practices have filtered in among the

9 Mohammed Bukhari, *Sahi-al-Bukhari*, Delhi, Kitab Mahal, 1354AH. p.

10 *Hadith*

Muslims, making them cover long distances and undergo all sort of difficulties to a tomb or shrine with religious devotions. They look to prostrating themselves before the graves of holymen and making vows and petitions to them and showing reverential respects in many other ways. The conditions of these people have been eloquently depicted by Ibn-i-Tamia in these words, "The Tombs among them are crammed with people while the mosques are empty and deserted"¹¹

Thus *Hajj* and *Umra* have a religious prescription speaking of its means and methods of performance while the concept of *Ziyarat* can be said to be a non-canonical custom. By extension, the word *az-Ziyarat* is sometimes applied to the visiting of any holy place. Such visits are often carried out according to a traditional program, but do not in fact have ritual sanctions.

The adoption of the institution of pilgrimage with certain reforms by Islam, which existed from antiquity, has many critics. These critics see it as a power struggle arising due to the migration of Prophet to Madina. Chief among these causes is said to the victory won by Islam at Badr, which it is opined made the Prophet look forward to the conquest of Mecca and the final rupture with the Jews, whom the Prophet at first, hoped to win over to his cause. Hughes advocates this theory in his 'Dictionary of Islam' under the heading "*Ka'ba*":

"When Mohammed himself established in *al-Madina*, with a very good prospect of his obtaining possessing of Mecca, and its historic association, he seems to have withdrawn his thoughts from Jerusalem and its Sacred Rock and to fix them on the house of Bakkah as the home founded for mankind .. The Jews proving obdurate and there being little chances of his succeeding in establishing his claim as their Prophet, spoken of by Moses, he changes the *qibla*, or direction of prayer, from Jerusalem to Mecca.

11 Ibn-Taimyah, *Minhaj-ul-Sunna*, Vol. I, Delhi, Kitab Mahal, 1401AH. pp.130-131

The house at Mecca is made 'a place of resort unto men and a sanctuary.'¹²

Another writer A.J.Wensink also advances the same theory which is incorporated into the "Encyclopaedia of Islam." Writing under '*Hadjdj*' he says:

"Mohammed's interest in the *Hadjdj* was first aroused in *al-Madina*. Several causes contributed to this, as Snouk Hurgronje has shown in his *Mekkaansche Feest*. The brilliant success of the battle of Badr had aroused in him thoughts of a conquest of Mecca. The preparations for such a step would naturally be more successful if the secular as well as the religious interest of his companions were aroused. Mohammed had been deceived in his expectations regarding the Jewish community in Madina and the disagreements with the Jews had made a religious breach with them inevitable. To this period belongs the origin of the doctrine of the religion of Ibrahim, the alleged original type of Judaism and Islam. The *Ka'ba* now gradually advances into the centre of religious worship; the father of monotheism built it with his son Ismael and it was to be a 'place of assembly for mankind'.... In this period also the *Ka'ba* was made *qibla*.... This is the position of affairs in the year 2 of the *hidjra*."¹³

However, these theories built by Hughes, Wensinck and Hurgronge are in contradiction with historical facts. The battle of Badr was fought in the month of *Ramadhan* in the second year of *Hijrah* and the final rupture with the Jews came in the third year after the battle of Uhud; while the *Ka'ba* was made a *qibla* sixteen months after *Hijrah*¹⁴, that is to say, about three months before the battle of Badr. Thus the idea of formulating a doctrine of the religion of Ibrahim as a prototype of Islam, Judaism and Christianity; of the sacredness of the *Ka'ba* and its connections with the name of Ibrahim and Ismael, of the *Ka'ba* being made a *qibla* and the institution of *Hajj* with prospects of conquering Mecca, all this existed not only long before the battle of Badr but even before Prophets migration to Madina. The religion of Ibrahim as pure monotheism is mentioned in a chapter of the Quran belonging to the middle Meccan period, where Ibrahim is also called Hanif:

12 Thomas Patric Huges, *Dictionary of Islam*, New Delhi. Cosmos Publications, 1978

13 A.J.Wensink, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

14 Bukhari *Op.cit.* 8:31

"Surely Ibrahim was a model of virtue, obedient to Allah, Upright (hanif)...Then we revealed to thee: Follow the faith (milla) of Ibrahim, the upright one (hanif), and he was not of the polytheists"¹⁵. And again in a chapter belonging to the last Meccan period: "My Lord has guided me to the right path,--- a right religion, the faith (milla) of Ibrahim, the upright one (hanif), and he was not of the polytheist"¹⁶.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) is an institution which lends itself to public display, and it is the fifth pillar of Islam. Journey to visit sacred places and engage in religious ceremonies antedates monotheism and is evidenced by echoes of the practices which resound in the religious scriptures.

Pilgrims used to visit *Ka'ba* in Mecca and performed the rituals which of course were different from what is performed today. This pagan practice continued but interestingly, nowhere in Meccan surahs (revelations) can any traces of the *Hajj* be detected. Beginning with the second year of the *Hijrah* the Prophet began to bring the *Ka'ba* the focus of the pilgrimage, towards the centre of his system. Ibrahim, the father of monotheism was also named the founder of *Ka'ba* (2:119; 3:91; 22:27-30). It soon replaced Jerusalem as the *qibla* for prayer (2:138-140). Finally the divine command crystallised, making the *Ka'ba* the object of the major pilgrimage (to be undertaken collectively at a stated time) and of the minor pilgrimage (*Umra*) (whose timing is left to the convenience of the individuals).

The holy Quran relates the story of how 'the father of the Prophets,' Ibrahim, built the *Ka'ba* with the help of his son Ismael and in obedience to Allah

15 *The Quran, Surah Nehal, Verse:120-123*

16 *The Quran, Surah Al An'am, Verse 161*

proclaimed the *Hajj* to all mankind. There are reports which take the *Hajj* to further back in history and associate it with man's first step on this planet. The barren hills and inhospitable valleys of Arafat, Muzdalifa, Mina and Mecca have undoubtedly been held in great awe and reverence from the depths of antiquity.

At the time of the Prophet Mohammed --the *Hajj* had been so completely assimilated into Arabian paganism that it lost its original monotheistic message. Idols punctuated not only significant spots in the holy area but were in the residence in the *Ka'ba* itself. Further more, pagan customs introduced certain undignified and discriminatory practices in the *Hajj*. The tribes of Quraish who inhabited in Mecca and guarded the *Ka'ba* together with certain of their allies were raised into the position of aristocracy. They were allowed to perform the rite of tawaf fully attired in their normal clothing and were excluded from wuquf (Sojourn) on the mount of Arafat on the grounds that they should not leave the sanctuary of Mecca which does not include the mount of Arafat. Others however, were to shed their clothes which were regarded by the pagans as unclean, and either to perform the tawaf completely naked or to obtain 'ritually clean cloth' from a Quraish. The strict pagan code also prohibited those wishing to perform the rite to consume food other than Meccan food. The importing of food for the consumption of *Hajjis* was forbidden.

The sacredness of Mecca and its connection with the names of Ibrahim and Ismael, find clear mention in the early Meccan revelations. In one of the earliest chapters, Mecca is described as "this city made secure." In another equally early revelation, it is referred to simply as the city: "Nay! I call to witness this city and thou will be made free from obligation in this city-- and the begetter and he whom

he begot"¹⁷; wherein the last words referred to Ibrahim and Ismael. The *Ka'ba* is called Bait-al-Ma'mur or the house that is visited, in a revelation of the same period (52:4), while another revelation of the same period speaks of *al-Masjid-al-Haram* or the sacred mosque (17:1). The sacredness of Mecca is spoken of in still clearer words in revelations belonging to the middle Meccan period: "I am commanded only to serve the Lord of the city, who has made it sacred, and His are all things." They names of Ibrahim and Ismael in connection with Mecca, its sacredness and the facts of its being a place of resort for men, also finds mention in the middle Meccan revelations: "And when Ibrahim said : My Lord, Make this city secure and save me and my sons from worshipping idols.....Our Lord, I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy sacred House, Our Lord, that they may keep up prayers, therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits."

These revelations of early Meccan period refute the theory of some European writers pointing at the political motives of Prophet Mohammed. It is true that the various commandments and prohibitions were revealed gradually, and that the command to make *Ka'ba* a *qibla* was revealed in Madina, but even this happened before the battle of Badr. Its interesting to note that it was Prophet Mohammed's own desire that *Ka'ba* should be made his *qibla* (Bu. 2:30; 8:31, 65, Surah 2, Ch.18), but he continued to follow the *qibla* of the last Prophet i.e. Jerusalem and waited the divine direction. The Quran recognises the truth of all Prophets, including the Prophet of Israel, and as Jesus was the last Prophet of those Prophets and his *qibla* was the same as that of the Israeli Prophet, namely the

17 *The Quran, Surah Al Balad., Verse 1-3*

temple of Jerusalem, which place was honoured by the Quran (17:1) as *al-Masjid al Aqsa* (literary -- the remote mosque), he retained it as his *qibla* until he received an expressed revelation to turn towards the sacred mosque. Moreover he did not receive that commandment in Mecca when he was trying to win over the Arabs, but it was in Madina at a time when relations with the Jews were still friendly and the relations with the Quraish of Mecca was at logger head when the revelation to turn to *Ka'ba* as future *qibla* of the Muslim world was revealed. For sixteen months in Madina, the Prophet continued to pray with his back to Mecca, the avowedly sacred territory, because he would not do anything of his own desire. As soon as he came to Madina he felt the difficulty that he could no more, as at Mecca, turn his face to both places, to the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and to the Sacred Mosque in Mecca. He realised that in turning his face to one he must turn his back on the other, and however much he desired that the sacred mosque at Mecca should be his *qibla* still he would not turn his back to the *qibla* of the last Prophet until he received a Divine Commandment to that effect.

KA'BA

The Holy city of Mecca is situated forty five miles inland from the Red sea port of Jeddah and in its midst lies an unusual building called simply *Al-Ka'ba* or 'the Cube'. The flat roofed building rises from a narrow marble base on mortared courses of a local blue-grey stones, and its dimensions are not exactly cubical. It is fifty feet high, and while its north-east wall and its south-western mate are forty feet long, the two "side" walls are five feet shorter. It is the corner rather than the walls that are oriented toward the compass point. The north-eastern face is the facade in the sense that in it is the only door of the building, about seven feet above

ground level. Inside is an empty room with marble floor and three wooden pillars supporting the roof. Built into the eastern corner of the *Ka'ba*, about four feet above the ground, is a blackish stone of either lava or basalt, which is fractured and now held together by a silver band. The building is draped with a black brocade cloth embroidered in gold with Quranic text, the bottom edge can be raised or lowered by a series of cords and rings. This is the house that is stated in the Quran to be "the first house [of divine worship] appointed for men"¹⁸. In one place it is called *Bait Atiq*¹⁹ or the Ancient House. It is also called at *Bait-al-Haram*²⁰ or at *Muharram*²¹ which carries the same significance as *al Haram*, both meaning originally *al mamnu minhu* or that which is forbidden; in other words, a place where of the sanctity must not be violated. There is nothing in the Quran, or the Tradition to show when and by whom the *Ka'ba* was first built, but it is said to have been rebuilt by Ibrahim and Ismael.

And when Ibrahim and Ismael raised the foundations of the house. "Our Lord ! Accept from us..."²². An earlier revelation makes it clear that the *Ka'ba* was already there when Ibrahim left Ismael in the wilderness of Arabia. "Our Lord ! I have settled a part of my off spring in a valley unproductive of fruit near the sacred House"²³. It appears from this that Ismael had been purposefully left near the sacred House, it was in fact under a divine commandment that Ibrahim took this step²⁴. It would seem that the *Ka'ba* was then in a demolished condition. Afterward, when

18 *The Quran, Surah Al-i-Imran, Verse 95*

19 *The Quran, Surah Al Hajj, Verse 29*

20 *The Quran, Surah Al Maidah, Verse 97*

21 *The Quran, Surah Ibrahim Verse 37*

22 *The Quran, Surah Al Baqarah Verse 127*

23 *The Quran, Surah Ibrahim Verse 37*

24 Bukhari. *Op.cit* . 60: 9

Ismael grew into manhood, it was rebuilt by Ibrahim and him as stated in *Al Baqre*:127. In a long tradition of Ibn Abbas speaking of Ibrahim leaving Ismael and his mother near the *Ka'ba*, it is said: " And the House was then rising above the surface of earth like mound, the flood waters passing to its right and to its left"²⁵. The tradition then goes on to narrate how long after this, when Ismael had grown to manhood and was a married man. Ibrahim came to pay a visit to him and told him that Almighty Allah had commanded him to built a house at the place where the mound was, and how the father and the son rebuilt the *Ka'ba*. Besides being in ruined condition it seems to have had idols placed in it and Ibrahim was required to purify it of these. "And We enjoined Ibrahim and Ismael, saying : Purify My House for those who visit it and those who abide in it for devotion and those who bow down and those who prostrate themselves"²⁶ . Nearly the same words occur in an earlier revelation (22:26).

The *Ka'ba* was again rebuilt by the Quraish when the Prophet was a young man, and he personally took part in its building, carrying stones on his shoulders. During the construction a dispute arose as to who should place the black stone in its place. Every tribe was desirous of having this honour accorded to its representative. Finally a settlement was arrived at, namely that the decision of the man who made his appearance first in the *Ka'ba* should be accepted by all. Fortunately, the man who appeared first was Mohammed, and there was an out cry that *al-Amin* (The trustworthy man) had come. The Prophet decided this dispute with his usual sagacity, placing the stone in a cloth with his own hands, and then

25 *ibid.*, 60:9

26 *The Quran, Surah Al Baqarah, Verse*125.

asking a representative of each of the tribes to hold a corner of the cloth and lift the stone to its position, then the Prophet himself fixed it to its place. The *Ka'ba* remained as it was built by Quraish until the time of Abdullah ibn Zubair, when the building having been damaged by the Umayyad Army which had besieged Mecca, Abdullah decided to rebuilt it, instead of repairing it, including open space *Hijr* in the building itself. But after the fall of Abdullah, Hajjaj again rebuilt it on the foundations of the structure erected by the Quraish. The building today rests on the same foundations.

CHAPTER 2

MAPPING OF MAJOR ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE CENTRES IN WEST ASIA

West Asia not only remains in focus due to political or economic reasons. Being the bedrock of three Semitic religions --- Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the region has the sentimental attachment of the world. Islam, which took birth in this region and is the final message and it would be protected by the Almighty Allah. In this situation, to retain the originality it becomes necessary to return to the origin and original sources. This makes the region revered for the entire Muslim population across the world. It remains a life time desire of every Muslims to pay a visit to this holyland. This is ascertained by the fact that thousand of pilgrims undertook the journey in old days when travelling was not comfortable but was full of hardship and risks. Months of travel through uneven passages, difficult climatic conditions, dangerous areas, fearsome people, diseases including epidemics with little or no medical facilities, were undertaken. These hardships were not undertaken by men alone women and children also accompanied them.

A tradition says that more than one lakh twenty-five thousand Prophets came to this world, starting from Adam and ending on Prophet Mohammed. The bulk from this chain of messengers came to this part/region of the world, whose area of operation varied from a particular clan, tribe or region and for a particular period, to the whole world, and till the last day. The last in the series of Prophethood was Prophet Mohammed and after his declaration of Prophethood at the age of forty, the only practices acceptable in Islam were those which were in confirmation with his teachings.

Among the various teachings of Prophet Mohammed was his openness to all the previous Prophets and books sent by the Almighty. The Quran also refers¹ to the names of many of them, the prominent being Ibrahim, Yunus, Yaqub, Isa, Sulaiman. Prophet Mohammed retained many of their practices, while removing wiping out many of the pagan practices that had crept in, with or without any modifications that were necessary. This vastness of approach in terms of time and history expanded the areas concerned that are religiously important and are spread throughout the region.

Apart from this, the attachment of each and every Muslim with Prophet Mohammed is of special reverence. Islam pays very special emphasis on following the ways of Prophet Mohammed even in every mundane activities of life. This keeps the love of the Prophet alive in the hearts of every Muslim. The tradition confirms this by saying that the love for the Prophet is the love for the Almighty and those that followed Prophet, followed the commands of Allah: Thus, the love and attachment with the Prophet ultimately leads to the love and attachment with all that which is associated with him. This makes the region venerated, which attracts people from across the world who come here with a particular feeling and attachment that is originally religious. This visit may be an obligation as demanded by the religion itself, or it may be a visit out of sheer attachment, due to some event important in the history of the religion or some person held in high esteem in the religion. Although the religious texts make a sharp distinction between the two but the social scientists find it difficult

1 The Quran (10:48) says that there is no people to whom a prophet was not sent and Muslim tradition generally set the number at 140,000. Twenty-five are mentioned by name in the Quran, most of them biblical ; but three are definitely non- biblical : Hud, Saleh and Shu'ayb are said to have been sent to the Arabs before Islam.

to differentiate and treat both as pilgrimage. It is very interesting to note the factors governing this mobility. Broadly defined any mobility of any dimension is determined by two major groups of factors-- economic and non-economic. Since the former are more important, the segment representing mobility influenced by non-economic factors is deliberately smaller. The non-economic factors give rise to three major categories of mobility. Religious factors promote pilgrimage; political and ethnic factors are responsible for refugee movements and social factors for mobility associated with personal and group relationship. Each of these categories of mobility has economic implications.²

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Pilgrimage is an important element, not always recognised in total population mobility, though more particularly for those movements, which are motivated by non-economic factors. The circulation inspired by religious zeal in turn promotes secondary flows of trade, cultural exchange, social mixing and political integration as well as certain less desirable flows, such as the spread of epidemic diseases.

Although these holy places may be of economic benefit but what is more important in the eyes of pilgrims who undertake a journey over there is religious in nature which makes the place sacred and venerated. These sacred places at times become so important and popular that an overzealous ruler start to envy it. Such was the case of Abraha at the birth of Prophet Mohammed when he came to demolish *Ka'ba* on elephants.³ Here we try to look into the sacredness of such places that make it

2 Leszek, A. Kosinski and R.Mansell Prothero, ed. *People on the Move: Studies in Internal migration.* in G.T.S. Gould and R. M. Prothero, *Space and Time in African population mobility.* London, Methuen & Co., 1975. pp.45-47

3 *The Quran, Surah Al-Feel, Verse 1-5*

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venerated in the eyes of people.

MECCA

Mecca, the city possessing the House of Allah has immense magnetism, attracting people from across all boundaries, which include people from all sections of the society. In spite of this it was with the birth of Prophet Mohammed between 570-580 AD, that Mecca sprang into prominence from the shadows of the past and caught the attention of the historians. We have little information regarding the history of Mecca in the centuries before Mohammed, which is called "*Jahiliya* Period" or the period of ignorance. This period has very little record. Archaeology findings supplements only a little.

Quran which saw its revelation in some twenty two years in Mecca and Madina until the death of Prophet Mohammed in 632 CE is undoubtedly a contemporary and authentic source of information. However, Quran is little interested in Mecca as the Gospels are in Nazareth. Only a brief description is made- which is named only once (48:24). In other revelations, these places are referred to only indirectly. Quran mentions the name of Ibrahim and Ismael, which are the notable figures in the Meccan history and notable chiefly in connection with its shrine. Of the political history of Mecca and of its remote or even its recent past, the Quran tells us nothing.

The northern and southern regions of western Arabia, that is, the Syro-Palestinian frontier and the Yemen have preserved archaeological and even literary traces of their pre-Islamic religious past. The physical remains of shrines inscriptions, the interested observations of Greco-Roman authors, the information

collected by Church historians remembered by Christian missionaries, and the experiences of holy men who fecklessly wandered the frontiers of the holy land, all help in the construction of atleast an outline of the forms and modes and vagaries of pre-Islamic worship and belief in those regions. However, no such resources are available for the central stretch of the western Arabian coast and its hinterland called Hejaz. This was the nomadic terrain, remote, rocky and inhospitable. It supported a meagre settled population in a few scattered upland oases like Yathrib later Madina, and Khayber are occasional stretch of fertile garden land like the Wadi Fatima or Taif, and of course the shrine city of Mecca. The Red Sea coast offered no easy accessible ports, and the steamy coastal plains, the Tihama, invited diseases rather than habitation.

THE SITE OF MECCA: Mecca had little but its own holiness to recommend it as a site for settlement. A poet Al-Hayqatan described it as a place where "winter and summer are equally intolerable. No water flows...not a blade of grass on which to rest the eyes on; no, nor hunting. Only merchants, the most despicable of professions"⁴. The Quran concedes the point. Ibrahim addresses his lord:

O, Our Lord, I have made some of my offspring dwell in a valley without cultivation... they may give thanks.⁵

Ali Bey al-Abbasi a traveller in the opening years of the nineteenth century writes that Mecca "is situated at the bottom of a sandy valley, surrounded on all sides by naked mountains, without brook, river or any running water, without trees, plants or any species of vegetation".⁶

4 Al-Hayqatan Quoted by F.E.Peters, *Lammens* (1924:85), Mecca, 1994. p.24

5 *The Quran: Surah Ibrahim*, Verse 37

6 Badiya Y. Leybich, Domingo Ali Bey, *Travels of Ali Bey to Morocco, Tripoli, Cyprus, Egypt, Y Arabia and Turkey between the years 1803 and 1807*. Vols. 2. London, Gregg, 1970. II:112.

Depicting a wider view Ali Bey writes: The soil refuses to yield even spontaneous production, of which it is so liberal elsewhere. In short there are but three or four trees upon the spot where formerly stood the house of Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet, and six or eight others scattered here or there. ⁷

Mecca, it is often said in an attempt to explain its prosperity or simply why people choose to settle there in the first place, stood at the nexus of natural trade route which actually defies the fact. The natural route between the Yemen and the north lies well east of Mecca, and caravans going there obviously made detour.⁸ There are many places in the near vicinity of Mecca, Taif for example, with better soil, more water and a better climate.⁹ What Mecca possessed and they did not, though we cannot explain how or why, was an intrinsic holiness. The Quran explains it and there is no denial from the Quran.

MECCA THE CITY: The prominence of the region was due to its holiness as it possessed *Ka'ba*. It was apparently an isolated ruined building in an uninhabited area at the time of Prophet Ibrahim. According to the traditional accounts preserved in Tabri and the Meccan chronicler Azraqi, Ibrahim and Ismael and the later family were the first to govern the region around *Ka'ba*. For a peaceful coexistence among the powerful neighbours called Jurhum and the Amaliqa marital relations were made. Prophet Ismael had eventually to marry a woman of Jurhum Sayyida bint Mudad who bore him

7 *Ibid.* II:110

8 N.Groom, *Frankincenes and Myrhh, A Study of the Arabian Incence trade*. London, Longmanns, 1989. P.192

9 Patricia Crone, *Meccan trade and the rise of Islam*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987. p.67

twelve sons.¹⁰

The establishment of Mecca as a permanent settlement particularly in the vicinity of *Ka'ba* was the work of Qusayy ibn Kilab, who was a Qurashite, sometime in about 400 CE. Ibn Ishaq, Tabri and Azraqi agree that a shrine was there from a very early date, but the immediate areas seems not to have been settled; keeping the fact that the earlier tribes camped on the mountain slopes above the valley and that Qusayy took the initiative in clearing the immediate shrine area of trees, normally a forbidden act in a *haram* or *hawta*. He settled his own people, who formerly lived in widely scattered settlements, in the newly cleared area with a defined territory eventually assigned for its domicile to each tribe. Therefore, the Quraish had lived a sedentary life there for over a century before Prophet Mohammed. Close to the *haram* Qusayy built *Dar-al-Nadwa* to serve as his own residence as well as the assembly place for the community in which the Quraish used to decide their affairs which varied from political act to religious rituals. Gradually the Quraish family had a full control over it, and it was forbidden to any one to take part in the affairs of the community until he had attained the age of forty. Finally and significantly Qusayy's house gave direct access to the *Ka'ba*. When the Quraish moved into Mecca, it was perhaps Qusayy himself who allotted them two quite distinct quarters of the new settlement. The principal tribes-- the Hashim, the Umayya, the Nawfal, the Zuhra, the Asad, the Taym, the Makhzum, the Adi, the Jumuh and the Salim lived in a valley bottom in the immediate vicinity of the shrine, while the lesser tribes were settled on the outskirts which were non-Quraishis inhabitant.

10 F.E.Peters, *Mecca*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press., 1994. p.7

KA'BA THE SANCTURY: Though Qusayy is regarded as the founding father of Mecca, he was not so for the shrine. Mecca the haram the holy place appears to antedate Mecca the city. There was a shrine before a settlement in that inhospitable valley is evident from the circumstances of the place. Mecca possessed none of the normal inducements to settlement, none, certainly, that would give the place a history or even a long tradition of contested possession. A holy place on the other hand, requires little beyond the sanctity connected with a spring, a tree or a mountain. Only its sanctity, however obscure the origin of that holiness, explains the existence of Mecca and only a shrine yoked to corollary considerations- social, economic or political-- explains the eventual presence of a city there.

MADINA: THE RADIANT

Al-Madina, a town in Arabia, the residence of Prophet Mohammed after the *hijra*, and capital of the Arab empire under the first caliph. The real Arabic name of the town was *Yathrib*, pronounced *Yathrippa* in Ptolemy and Stephan Byzatinus. It is a descriptive word "the town" and is taken from the Aramaic in which '*medinta*' means strictly "area of jurisdiction" and hence town. In the Meccan sections of the Quran it is found as an appellative with the plural *al-Madain* while in Madina suras *al-Madain* is used as a proper name for the new residence of the Prophet¹¹. The old name Yathrib on the other hand is found only once.¹² It is evident from these references that the usual explanations of the name as "the town" (of the Prophet) is a later one. It is rather supposed that it was a result of the existence of a strong Jewish element in *Yathrib*

11 *The Quran Surah Tauba*, verse 110, 120 & *Surah Al Ahzab*, verse 60 & *Surah Al Munafiquen*, verse 8.

12 *The Quran Surah Al Ahzab*, Verse 13

word loaned from Aramaic loan word became the regular name of the town.¹³ Of the Madenese poets, Qais b. al- khatim uses the name Yathrib exclusively, while Hassan b. Thabit and Ka'b b. Malik uses both names, which is also the case with Mohammed's ordinance of the community.¹⁴ It is said that the Prophet Mohammed forbade it to be called *Yathrib* and several reasons are attached to its meaning commotion or chaos.¹⁵

It is an oasis 275 miles north of Mecca. It was a city of palms and forts unlike Mecca which was grey and dusty valley. Madina lies on an elevated plain covered in most places by rough lava blocks, which on the western side of the town lay right outside the city's medieval wall. On the other three sides, particularly towards the south, the land was arable with intense cultivation. Its noteworthy feature in its richness is water unusual in Arabia. All the water courses come from the south and flow to the north, where they combine at Zaghaba and then take a westward course to the coast in the Wadi Idam. As a rule they contain water only after rain but they keep the level of the subterranean water fairly high so that there are considerable number of wells and springs. The water is in places salty and unpalatable and different rulers had to make arrangements for sweet water. The soil is very fertile. Dates Palms flourish exceedingly, also oranges, lemons, pomegranate, bananas, peaches, apricots, figs and grapes. Travellers say the air is pleasant but not very healthy and freshers are often struck with fever. Richard Francis Burton, a British traveller who was in Madina in August 1853 writes about the climate of the city as rigorous winter without ice.¹⁶

13 Gibb and Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1994, p291

14 Abu Mohammed Abdul Malik bin Hishan, *Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Egypt, 1937, p

15 Mul.Zakariya, *Fazail-e-hajj*, Delhi, Salim Book Depot, 1995, p184

16 Richard F Burton, *A personal narrative of a pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca.*, New York, Dover, 1964, p176.

Chilly and violent wind blow from the Uhud mountain side. Rain begins in October which is received with pleasure. A narration of Aisha -- Prophet Mohammed's wife testifies to the fact that the climate of Madina was conducive of diseases and sickness. "When His apostle came to Madina it was the most fever invested land on earth and his companions suffered severely from it...." and the Prophet prayed to relief the city from the fever.

The way in which Madina is favoured by nature forms a striking contrast Mecca which lies in rocky valley where corn does not grow.¹⁷ From the very beginning it was not a regular town but collection of houses and cottages, which were surrounded by gardens and cultivated fields, the inhabitants of which were devoted to agriculture and therefore contemptuously called "*Nabataeans*" by the Bedouins. These scattered settlements only gradually became consolidated to a town like agglomeration. As in the case of Mecca, Madina also lacks the reliable tradition regarding its origin and earliest history. The historians have endeavoured to fill the gap themselves. Even the exact period of Jewish settlement in the area is not known and the historians connect it sometimes with Musa, sometimes with the deportation of the Jews under *Nebuchadnezzan*, and sometimes with the conquest of Palestine by the Greek or by the Romans.¹⁸ References are found in Talmud of Jews presence in Arabia in the early centuries of Christian era. Gradually the Khazrajis, whose principal family was Najjar emerged as the most powerful tribe, who assumed the leadership and occupied the centre of the town where the modern Madina lies.

17 *The Quran Surah Ibrahim Verse 37*

18 Gibb and Kramer, *op. Cit.* pp1-10

The spiritual influence of the Jews on the Arab inhabitants of Madina became an important factor in the relations between them and Prophet Mohammed for it made them receptive to his religious ideas with which they became acquainted by visits to Mecca and in other ways. This facilitated in a treaty concluded between him and several representatives of the Madanise, by which the later pledged themselves to take him into their community and to defend him as if he were one of themselves and he along with his followers migrated to Madina.¹⁹ After a brief stay in the southern suburb of Quba, he entered the town and took up his abode with Abu ayyub with whom he stayed for some time. Prophet Mohammed stayed in Madina and breathed his last on June 8, 632. CE

Madina continued to be the capital until Ali became the caliph the last of the four caliphs. He realised that the vast empire could not possibly be controlled and governed from the remote corner of the world in which Madina lay. While the early caliphs had remained in the capital and sent out armies of conquests from it, Ali placed himself at the head of the troop and set out from Madina in 656, never to see it again. He made Kufa his capital and after Muawiya's victory Damascus took its place. Madina now sank to the rank of a mere provincial town, unaffected by the current of the world's events.

Madina with its venerable associations and the tomb of the Prophet could not of course become quite important; on the contrary, its sanctity increased in the eyes of the Muslims, the more the figure of Mohammed became important in their conceptions, but the life of the town became more and more remote from the real world in which the

¹⁹ Mul Yusuf, *Hyat-us-sahaba* Delhi, Idara-Isha'at, pp483-490

actual history was being unfolded.

It was in the nineteenth century that radical changes came about in Madina. In 1804 the Wahabis took the town and took very strong positions with regards to the visits to the tomb of the Prophet Mohammed.²⁰ Many customs and rituals that had crept in at the tomb were tightly checked. In 1815, the peace treaty recognised Turkish suzerainty over the holy places in Hejaz; this brought about the building of the Hejaz railways from Damascus to Madina which facilitated the pilgrims. After the peace which ended the world war, the Turkish troops evacuated Madina in 1918. By 1932, both the holy cities came under the control of Saudi Kingdom.

Madina possess no sanctuary venerated from remote times like the *Ka'ba*; on the other hand it possesses compensation for this of inestimable value in Muslim eyes, in the mosque which surrounds Mohammed grave and is the goal of countless pilgrims.²¹ Some teachers even put this sanctuary higher than the Meccan one, but this view is neither correct nor general, and the visiting of this mosque is not obligatory like the pilgrimage to Mecca. The journey to this mosque can be undertaken at anytime. The Prophet lies buried under Aisha's house along with his first two caliphs and companions.

The immediate vicinity of the city of the Prophet is of course very rich in places with which are associated anecdotes and traditions of him. The most important of these is the hill of Uhud with the graves of those who fell for the faith there.²² On the

20 For a detailed study see *Paigham-I-hajj*, Delhi, All-India hajj Seminar Committee, 1988, pp

21 S Asad Ghilani, *Mushhidat-I-haramain*, Delhi, Markazi maktab Islami, 1986, pp69-71

22 *ibid.* pp101-104

southern side of the city runs the road of the funeral precession, Darb- al- Djanaza, which leads to the old general burial places, Baqi- al- Gharkad in the east of the town. Among the thousand buried here are the little son of the Prophet, Ibrahim, his wives, many of his companions al-Abbas, Mohammed al-Bakir, Djaffar al- Sadiq, Malik b. Anas-- the jurist and many others. The village of Kuba falls very near where Prophet Mohammed on his arrival in his new home stayed from Monday till Thursday (24th September 622). The village, which was at that time occupied by Amr b. Auf, is according to Arab geographers two miles from Madina. Tradition marks the spot where the Prophet's camel knelt (al-Mabrak) and here also was the mosque mentioned in the Quran(Sura ix.108) built out of piety, as well as its counterpart, the masjid al-Dirar, destroyed by Mohammed's order.

MASJID AL-NABWI: MOSQUE AS AN OBJECT OF PILGRIMAGE

Having completed his mission Prophet Mohammed left for his heavenly abode in 632CE and was buried in his dwelling on one side of the first mosque of Islam, which he himself built. The memorial mosque associated with the Prophet and other saints became the object of pious visits. Among them three mosques became special objects of pilgrimage. In a hadith the Prophet says: "one should only mount into the saddle to visit three mosques: al-Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Nabwi and Masjid al-Aqsa".²³

This hadith reflects a practice which became established at the end of the Ummayyid period. The pilgrimage to Mecca had been made a duty by the prescription

23 Bukhari, *Fadl al-Salat fi masjid Mecca wal Madina* bab1,6

of the *Hajj* in the Quran. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was a Christian custom which could very easily be continued, on account of the significance of al- Masjid al-Aqsa in the Quran.²⁴ This custom became particularly important when Abdul Malik made it a substitute for the pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁵ Although this competition did not last long, the significance of Jerusalem was thereby greatly increased. Pilgrimage to Madina developed out of the increasing veneration for the Prophet. In the year 140/757-8 Abu Jaffar Mansur on his *Hajj* visited the three sanctuaries and this became a very frequent custom. Mecca and Madina however still held the preference. Although those of Mecca and Jerusalem were recognised as the two oldest, the Prophet however is reputed to have said "A Salat in this mosque of mine is more meritorious than thousand salats (Prayer) in others except al-Masjid al-Haram".²⁶

MASJID AL-NABWI

This is the first mosque in Islam which was built by the Prophet himself. The mosque underwent expansion in the later period. Many travelers have mentioned this in their account. The tenth century geographer Muqaddasi writes about the mosque and the enlargement activity it underwent which he attributes to the later caliphs.²⁷ Ibn Batuta a 14th century traveller gives a more detailed account.

"The mosque remained in the condition it was built during the life of Mohammed and during Abu Bakr's caliphate, Umar, the second caliph, taking the cue from Mohammed's saying "we shall have to enlarge the mosque" enlarged it. He took

24 *The Quran Surah Bani Israel Verse 1*

25 Yakubi, *Haitsma* , ii. 311, quoted in Shorter , op. Cit.,pp389

26 Mul. Zakariya, *op.cit.* p.89

27 *Muqaddasi* 3.80 quoted in Peters, op. Cit., p101

down the wooden columns and set-up in their place columns of bricks, made its lower course of stone up to the height of a man, and raised the number of gateways to six, of which there were two on each side except on the southern side facing the *qibla*. Of these gateways, he said, "It is requisite to leave this one for the women." He also said that if we were to enlarge this mosque until to extended to the burial ground, it would still be the mosque of the Apostle of Allah.²⁸

He continues to write that the mosque was next enlarged by Uthman who built with vigour and himself laboured on it. He whitened it, gave solidity to its location by hewn stones and widened it on all sides except the eastern side (where the huts of the Prophets wives still stood). He had pillars set-up in it, made of stones firmly fixed by pegs of iron and lead, and roofed it with teak. He also constructed a prayer niche (*mihrab*) in it, though other say that it was Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, during the caliphate of al-Walid. Al-Muqaddasi (3.80) writes that the enlargement of Al Walid included from east to west, six columns; towards the north he extended it by fourteen columns ten in the courtyard and four in the covered part of the building -- from the square support which is (the Prophet's) tomb.

Tabri reports that in the year 707CE al-Walid ibn Abdul Malik ordered the demolition of the mosque of the Prophet and the demolition of the apartments of the wives of the Prophet and their incorporation in the mosque. The messenger from al-Walid came to Umar bin Abdul Aziz in first Rabi 88 (Feb-March 707) with a letter bidding him to incorporate the apartments of the wives of the Prophet into the mosque of the Prophet and acquire (the building) behind and around the mosque so that it

28 Ibn Battuta quoted in Peters, *op. Cit.*, p101.

measures two hundred by two hundred cubits. These houses were to be acquired by paying them their fair prices. The work started and Umar bin Abdul Aziz entrusted Sahih ibn Kaisan in the project. The work was joined by the workers sent by al-Walid. Al-Walid also took assistance from the Byzantine ruler who sent him 100,000 mithqals of gold, a hundred artisans and forty loads of tesserae for the mosaic.²⁹

The grave of the Prophet is to the east of the mosque at the end of its roofed portion in the south, adjacent to the courtyard. Between it and the eastern wall is a distance of about ten cubits. It is surrounded by a wall that is nearly three cubits lower than the roof. It has six corners and is cased in a wainscot of marble up to more than a man's height. The surface above this height is plastered.

The apostle of Allah has said: "Between my grave and my pulpit is a garden (*rawdā*) of the gardens of paradise and my pulpit is at the gates of paradise".³⁰ It behoves him who enters the mosque to come to the garden of the gardens of paradise. There he should there perform a prayer of two prostration, then approach the grave of the Prophet from the front. He should not cling to the grave, for that indeed is an act of the ignorant and is looked upon with disapproval.

By one present day calculations, the Prophets original mosque of an estimated 2,475 sq.mts. was enlarged by caliph Umar to 3,575 sq.mts., by Uthman to 4,071 sq.mts. and by Walid to 6,440 sq.mts. Al-Mahdi added 2,450 sq.mts.by extending the courtyard northward. There were modifications of the entries and northern porticoes by the Mamluk sultan Qait Bay (r.1468-1496) and the Ottoman Abd al Majid 1st

29 Tabri Annals 2.1192-1194 quoted in Peters, op. Cit., p103

30 Narrated by Abu Huraira, quoted in Mul. Zakariya op. cit., p.203

(r.1839-1861) so that the entire complex embraced 10,300 sq.mts. On the eve of Saudi take-over of the kingdom of Hejaz in 1926. King Saud extended it by 6,024 sq.mts in 1952-53 and when the additions undertaken by king Fahad are completed, the Prophet's mosque in Madina will cover more than 100,000 sq.mts.

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is unique among the cities of the world in that it possesses deep religious and historical associations to the adherents of Judaism Christianity and Islam. The Arabic name given to it in the later time was *al-Quds*. Earlier it was commonly called *Bait- al Maqdis* or *Bait al Muqaddis* which meant a sacred place, a translation of the Hebrew *Bethammikdash*. The city has a sad story of being destroyed several times which is even evident in the remains of the city.

Nothing precisely can be said about the earliest settlement of Jerusalem, but of course it was carried out with the considerations of defence and access to water. A century of excavations and voluminous studies failed to resolve conclusively the question of exact demarcation of the city and it is safe to assume that atleast part of the present old city was the cite of settlement by Semitic tribes from the third millennium BC

The nativity of the settlement is of the land of Canaan, the southern Syria and later Known as Palestine. These city states were controlled by the Egyptian empire whose hold weakened towards the end of thirteenth century BC. It was at this time that tribes variously described as Hebrews or Israelites penetrated this land. Almost simultaneously the Philistines came by sea and settled on the southern coast between Jaffar

and Gaza.

Jerusalem continued to be governed by Jebusites the indigenous inhabitants until 1010 BC when David captured it and a thrashing floor became the site of Solomon's Temple.³¹ After Solomon rivalries continued and became victims of powerful neighbours. Among the twelve tribes; ten of which formed the Kingdom of Israel in the North and Jerusalem which remained the seat of Judah and Benjamin. The temple was once despoiled by the king of Israel and once by the Philistines and more frequently stripped of its treasures to buy off other invaders. Thus Jerusalem continued a precarious existence between the rivalries of Assyrians Babylonians and Egyptians until 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar dismantled the city, destroyed the temple and carried away to Babylon many thousand captives.³²

The struggle continued until in 614 AD. Persians swept over Syria and captured Jerusalem, actively aided by the Jews. The city was given to sack and massacre. The great churches were wrecked and thousands were butchered. Heraclius recovered the city in 629 and wreaked a terrible vengeance on the Jews. Restoration was still in progress when in 638 the city was surrendered to Umar, the second caliph.³³

Umar is unique among the city's conquerors in that he entered it in the name of Islam, peacefully and in a spirit of humility and reverence. On first seeing Jerusalem from the heights ; the Muslim army greeted it with the cry 'Allah the Most Great'. Hence the mountain is known in Islamic tradition as *Jabal al-Mukabbir*.

31 A.L.A Tabawi, *Arabic and Islamic Themes*, London , Luzac and Co. Ltd. 1974, p.356

32 *ibid* p.356

33 Gibb and Kramers, *op. cit.*, p269

This respect for Jerusalem was not only because it was associated in the Quran with David, Solomon and Jesus three of God's most revered prophets, but also because it was the place towards which the Muslims first turned their faces in prayer, and to which Prophet Mohammed was miraculously carried by night from Mecca, and from which he ascended to heaven (*miraj*): Glory be to Him, who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque (at Mecca) to the Furthest Mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqsa), the precincts of which we have blessed....³⁴

Umar guaranteed to the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem safety of their lives, possession and churches and the free profession of their faith. The stipulation that "no Jews shall live with them in Aelia" was probably made at the insistence of the Christians who suffered at the hands of the Jews during the Persian invasion. However, the ban on the Jews decreed by Hadrian was gradually relaxed in the pre-Islamic period to allow them once a year to mourn the Temple, over the Mount of Olives, against the payment of a tax.³⁵

Caliph Umars next concern was to locate the places hallowed by Prophet Mohammed's nocturnal journey. With a great difficulty the Rock, the traditional spot from which Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven, was discovered concealed under a dunghill on the site of the old temple. Umar lead the Muslims in prayer on a clean spot to the south and caused a small mosque to be built on it. Some fifty years later, under Abd al-Malik, the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque were built on the area

34 *The Quran Surah Bani Israel Verse 1.*

35 Gibb and Kramer *op cit.*, p270 It adds that the terms under which Jerusalem was handed over to caliph Umar were quite mild: the churches were not used as dwellings and not to be torn down or reduced in size.

which with an enclosure became *al-Haram al-Shrif* (the noble sanctuary), the third holy place in Islam. Jerusalem itself ceased to be Aelia and became *al-Quds al-Sharif* (the holy and noble city).

The city became a seat of Islamic learning and an object of pilgrimage. But under the new dispensation it was shared with the adherents of Christianity and Judaism. According to Quran, they were "the people of the book", recipient of divine messages through God's Prophet. Thus far from seeking to eliminate its predecessor, Islam adopted, in an age of intolerance, a policy of co-existence.

Under peaceful conditions which generally endured till the crusades, the Christian churches flourished and the flow of pilgrims continued. The ban on the Jew's under Umar's covenant with the Christians of Jerusalem became in the circumstances obsolete. A trickle of Jews returned to the city, which became and remained through out Islamic rule the city of three faiths in fact as well as in name.

The worst violation of this happy equilibrium was perpetuated by al-Hakim who, ironically enough through his Christian vizier, ordered the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre. That was the age of the disintegration of the Islamic empire and the rise of the Turkish element to power. Anarchy and local wars rendered the pilgrim routes hazardous and contributed to the crusades.

In 1099 the crusaders stormed Jerusalem and they butchered the Muslim population, including women and children including those who took refuge in the sanctuary.³⁶ The Dome of the Rock became a Church but al-Aqsa Mosque was used as

36 *Ibid* p271

barracks and stables.³⁷

Salahuddin recovered the city in 1187. In triumph he showed mercy and chivalry which contrasted sharply with the barbarism of the crusaders. He restored the Muslim holy places as well as the orthodox Patriarchate, and welcomed Jews back. It was about this time that Jewish wailing at the Western Wall, as distinct from that on the Mount of Olives, is mentioned.³⁸

Salahuddin's son al-Afdal commemorated Prophet Mohammed's nocturnal journey to Jerusalem. Tradition associates one spot outside the wall of the sanctuary and another inside it at the south east corner as the places where Mohammed's celestial steed (al-Burraq) was fettered before its riders entered the place. Inside the wall a small mosque was built; outside it the land was dedicated as a religious foundation (waqf) for the benefits of the pilgrims and scholars.

This place is considered by Jews to have the remnants of Herod's temple, in the lower course of the sanctuary wall. As a result the successive Mamluk and Ottoman Muslim rulers allowed the Jews to wail and comment here at the doorstep of the Noble Sanctuary and it came to be known as the Wailing Place or the Wailing Wall.

SHRINES ASSOCIATED WITH SHIA SECT OF ISLAM

MASHHAD: Mashhad the city in Iran is famous for the shrine of Imam Ali ar-Rida/Riza, the eight Imam of the *Ithna' Ashari* each year. The shrine is surrounded by buildings with religious or historical associations.

37 Tibawi, *op. cit* p 359

38 *Ibid*

QUM: A shia centre, it is venerated as having the tomb of Fatima, the sister of Imam ar- Rida/Riza, and those of hundred of saints and kings including Imams Ali b. Jafar, Mohammed Ibrahim, Shah Safi and Shah Abbas II. Following the Iranian Revolution it became the centre favoured by Ayatollah Khomeini.

NAJAF: A place in Iraq. The place is venerated in the eyes of Shii sect Muslims. Mashhad Ali, reputed to be constructed over the place where Ali bin Abi Talib, the fourth Caliph, the cousin and son in law of Prophet Mohammed is buried, is a most venerated shia shrine, drawing many pilgrims.

KARBALA: It is another place in Iraq attracting pilgrims towards it and very few from outside the Shia sect. The shrine of Hussein b. Ali where at Mashhad Hussein, he was slain with most of his family, is today more venerated by Shia than the Mashhad Ali. *A'shoura* Day (the tenth day in the month of *Muharram*) when Hussein was killed is commemorated by passion plays (*tazias*) and religious processions during which the drama of his death is re-enacted with extravagant expressions of emotions.

BAGHDAD: The capital city of Iraq also carries a religious history. the Kazimain/Kadhimain Mosque is a celebrated Shia shrine containing the tomb of Musa al-Kazim, the seventh Imam of *Ithna Asharis*.

Every Middle Eastern country has a multitude of shrines and saints tombs held in veneration, except Wahabi states which considers saint cults to be polytheism (*shirk*). This is a sin, which even Allah has pledged not to forgive in Quran. This is the severest crime before Allah as He is ready to forgive all other sins except this as explained in the same verse. In Turkey, however, the policy of secularisation led to Aya

Soofya Mosque (St.Sophia) being turned into a museum. These places or shrines, which are venerated and attract people who come here undertaking all the troubles become a topic of serious discussion among the religious scholars. Given the Islamic texts and contexts these pilgrimages fall under the category of 'visits' which does not have direct religious sanctions. In spite of this there are a number of such sites and shrines which is motivated by local reasons and local customs and traditions adds to it. Such sites mostly attract local people and people from adjoining areas. To name a few such shrines in the region:

HEBRON: The city falls under West Bank and is popular and well known among the 'people of the book'. The mosque of Ibrahim, called *al-Khalil*, the 'friend of Allah' is built over the tomb of Prophet Ibrahim, the Cave of Machpelah; it also contains the tomb of Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. The shrine is revered by Muslims and Jews and is also important to Christians.

QAIRAWAN: Situated in Tunisia the city is regarded as a holy place for Muslims. To compete with other pilgrimage centres the local cult leaders propagated that seven pilgrimages to the great mosque of Sadi Uqbah b. Nafi (an early Muslim general who founded Qairwan as a base for the Muslim invaders of north Africa) is considered the equivalent to one pilgrimage to Mecca.

MULEY IDRIS: Morocco : The shrine at the burial place of the founder of the Idrisid dynasty in the year 687, at Walili, near Fez.

The pilgrimage to Mecca was beyond the means of the majority of the shii residents of Iran and Iraq. The reasons are varied. It was expensive and often hazardous

journey. Therefore, the custom of visiting the shrines of the Imams was built up as an alternative parallel activity given an importance which in the eyes of the ordinary believer often appeared to exceed that of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Visiting the shrines of Ali at Najaf, Hussein at Karbala, the seventh and ninth Imams at Kazimayn, of Imam Rida at Mashhad and of Fatima Ma'suma, the sister of the Imam Rida, at Qum, became an important activity in shii religious life and one in which comparatively humble persons could participate. In the nineteenth century, it became customary to designate persons who had visited the shrines at Karbala and Mashhad by such prefixed titles as '*Karbalai*' and '*Mashhadi*', in parallel to the designation of Hajji given to those who had performed *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. The conferring of these designations appear to vary from area to area depending on the distance to the shrines. Among the shiis of the southern Iraq, for example, there is no particular designation for visiting the shrines at Karbala and Najaf but a visit to distant Mashhad confers upon the pilgrims the designation *Za'ir* (visitor). Similarly, in Khurasan and Afghanistan, visiting Mashhad does not confer a title, but the visitors to Karbala become *Karbalai*.

Elaborate rituals were drawn up for the performance of the visitors of the shrines, again in parallel to the ritual of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Part of the ritual includes recitation of the prayer of the visitation popularly known as *Ziyarat Nama*. Popular manuals, in particular those written by Mohammed Baqir Majlisi, helped to spread this practice among the people.

Visiting the shrines of minor shii saints and in particular, the descendants of the Imams, also became an important activity with each shrine having its own prayers of

visitation. These shrines called *Imamzadas* are to be found in large numbers in Iran, especially in the areas around Qum, Tehran, Kashan and Mazandaran which have been shii from the earliest times and therefore tended to be a refuge for Alids who were often being prosecuted in other parts for political and religious reasons. Visiting these minor shrines has become an activity for a day out.

MOBILITY: AN INTRINSIC ACT OF PILGRIMAGE

Mobility is a part of life, which ranges from a very small level (small distance and short period), several visits in a day to intra-continental moves over several thousand of miles. There is a need for more sophisticated insight and understanding involving socio-economic and other criteria which are vital factors in the process determining mobility, and some of these can be outlined in a single diagram in which the totality of contemporary mobility is shown as being influenced by two major group of factors -- economic and non-economic. The economic factor is of prior concern and has immediate and direct affect on human activity and is considered important, by social scientist than the segment representing mobility influenced by non-economic factors, which is deliberately smaller. The dimensions of these segments are intended to be indicative rather than absolute. The non-economic factors give rise to three major categories of mobility. Religious factors promote pilgrimage, political and ethnic factors are responsible for refugee movements, and social factors for mobility associated with personal and group relationship.³⁹ Each of these categories of mobility has economic implications.

39 Leszek *op cit.* Pp45-47

Pilgrimage is an important element, not always recognised, in total population mobility, though more particularly for those movements, which are motivated by non-economic factors. The circulation inspired by religious zeal in turn promotes '...secondary flows of trade, cultural exchange, social mixing, and political integration as well as certain less desirable flows, such as the spread of epidemic diseases'.⁴⁰

Pilgrim movements are at a variety of scales from local to intercontinental and global. In India there is '...an informal hierarchy of districts, regions and pan-India pilgrim circulation'.⁴¹ The literature on pilgrimage is vast but inevitably diverse and much of it difficult to access. That which concerns itself specifically with numbers involved and their characteristics, with source regions, frequency of visits, routes followed and other spatial aspects is slight. The pilgrim journey has received literary and artistic treatment but has been given little attention by the social scientists in general.

One of the pillars of Islam is the duty of the faithful to make the pilgrimage to the holy places in Mecca land and to a lesser extent to Madina in Saudi Arabia atleast once in their life time. The annual pilgrimage represents, both in the past and at the present, one of the major movements motivated by religious adherence. It is notable for its regularity (though the month of pilgrimage varies with the Muslim lunar calendar), for its global attraction (though the source area of pilgrims are concentrated mainly within the zone extending from west Africa to south-east Asia), and for the growing

40 Birks J. S., *Overland pilgrimage in Savana lands of Africa*, 1975, p297

41 S M Bhardwaj, *Hindu places of pilgrimage in India*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973,

numbers of pilgrims associated with increasing numbers of Muslims, increasing affluence and improving means of transport.

The pilgrimage to Mecca has been reviewed recently in its general geographical and historical aspects and references is made in broad terms to many of the features of pilgrim mobility. Many pilgrims to Saudi Arabia nowadays journey by air or sea, but traditional overland movements remain locally important--- from the Middle East in general and within the Arabian Peninsula. Though transcontinental travel overland now involves a minority only. In historical and contemporary terms, it is of additional interest with reference to social and economic interaction between different ethnic groups. Pilgrimage to the great mosque of Mecca and the movement there which forms the ritual part is no less important as these acts are well defined.

Hajj Rituals: The pilgrimage is a complex ritual. A pilgrim begins by wearing the right cloth for *ihram*, having performed a ritual bath. He must be in the right cloth, *ihru*, before passing one of the other prescribed points. these points were specified by the Prophet for the travellers from various directions. Thus those coming from the direction of Madina have their point of *ihram* or *miqat* in a place called Dhu-al-Hulufa while for those coming from the direction of Syria the *miqat* is Qura-al-Mannzil. The *miqat* for those coming from the direction of the Yemen is Yalamlum. Having started his *ihram*, the pilgrim should proceed to Mecca, calling on the way, "O Lord here am I in answer to Your call. Here I come, You who is without any partner. Praise and Grace are Yours alone and the dominion. You have no partner." Once he arrives in Mecca he performs the *Tawaf al-Qudum*. Circumambulation of arrival. He goes around the

Ka'ba seven times anticlockwise with his right shoulder bared to demonstrate his humility. His starting point is the Black Stone which he should touch, if possible, otherwise he should point out towards it every time he passes it. During the *Tawaf* he should pray to Allah with sincerity and fervour. After the seventh round the pilgrim should perform two rak'ats of prayer behind *Maqam Ibrahim* which is the stone on which Ibrahim stood while building the *Ka'ba*. He should then proceed towards the *Zamzam* well and drink water there. Having done that he is required to proceed to the hill of Safa and start walking between the hill of Safa and the hill of Marwa. He covers this distance seven times starting from Safa each time and ending at Marwa. Then on eighth of *Zul Hijja* (the lunar month) he should go to Mina on his way to Arafat. He may sleep on the night in Mina and then on the ninth he proceeds to Arafat. At the mosque of al-Namira, just before the mount Arafat, he should pray *Zuhr* and *Asr* (two of the fivetimes daily prayer) together at the time of *Zuhr*.

Umra, the little pilgrimage, also involves movements that is very much the same as that of *hajj*. The *Umra*, like the *hajj* can only be performed in a state of ritual purity - *ihram*. On assuming the *ihram*, the pilgrim (*mu'tamir*) must make up his mind whether he is going to perform the *Umra* by itself or in combination with the *hajj* and express his intention appropriately. If he combines the *Umra* with the *hajj* he can assume the *ihram* for both pilgrimages at once; in the other case the *ihram* must be specially assumed for the *Umra* in the unconsecrated area outside the harem of Mecca. This holds for native Meccans as well, who when intending to perform *hajj* can assume the *ihram* within Mecca. Three places are preferred for the assumption of *ihram* for the *Umra*: *Dji'rana*, *Hudaibiya* and specially *Tan'im*. the latter place therefore was also

known as *al-Umra*. With the utterances of the *Talabiya*, (the prayer) the actual ceremony of the pilgrimage begins. The *mu'tamir* goes to Mecca in order first of all to go around *Ka'ba* (*tawaf*). He enters the mosque through the north from the door of the north-east side called *Bab al-Salam*, goes under the portal of the Banu Shaiba to the Black Stone fixed into the wall of the *Ka'ba* and turning right, begins the seven fold circumambulation of the *Ka'ba*, saying prayers all the while. The first three *tawaf* are performed at a rapid pace (*ramal*), the four last at an ordinary rate. After this is finished, in order to acquire a special blessing he presses himself against the wall of the *Ka'ba* which lies between the Black Stone and the door of the *Ka'ba*. In conclusion he prays two rak'ats behind *Maqam Ibrahim*, drinks a draught of the holy Zamzam water and touches once again in farewell the Black Stone. The *mu'tamir* now leaves the mosque through the great al-Safa door to perform the second essential part of the *Umra*, the running between the al-Safa and al-Marwa hills called *Sa'ye*. He goes to the hill al-Safa and utters a few prayers there. He then goes to the hill al-Marwa, over four hundred yards farther north, passing the north east side of the mosque. A short low lying stretch at the east corner of the mosque is covered at a more rapid pace known as *Harwal* or *Khabab*. Reaching al-Marwa, the *mu'tamir* again utters a prayer. He then returns the same way in the reverse direction and so on until he has covered the distance seven times and end at al-Marwa. thus the ceremony of *Umra* is complete and has only to have the hair cut or shaven. If he is making the *Umra* in combination with the *haji*, he only has his hair trimmed and has the proper cutting done on the tenth of Zul-Hijja at the end of the *haji*.

PILGRIM ROUTES

Mecca, the city possessing the House of Allah has immense magnetism, attracting people from across all boundaries which of course included simple pilgrims who are mute and plain, people who are rich and powerful and literary men who penned down their journey into books. The Abbasid period saw a number of rich and powerful men making pilgrimage including Harun al- Rashid and his wife Zubaida. Among the professional travellers who wrote their account of the pilgrimage included, just to mention a few, Nasir-i-Khusraw (*hajj* of 1050), Ibn Jubair (*hajj* of 1184) and Ibn Battuta (*hajj* of 1326).

Apart from these travellers whose works are personal statement, there are other works which is not limited to personal experience but committed to the more general purpose of describing the entirety of the Abode of Islam, with a particular emphasis on its roads and their stations. To mention a few Ibn Khurdadbih (d.893-894) is in fact called "The Book of Routes and Provinces", apart from Istakhri (ca.951) and Ibn Hawkal (ca.977). "The Book of Countries" by Yaqubi (d.891-892) and the "Finest Structure" in the "Knowledge of Climes" by al-Muqaddasi (d.988-989) are filled with social, historical and architectural informations.

Ibn Hawkal for example, lays out the routes and distances between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and other centres in the Abode of Islam.

These then are the distances in the interior (of Arabia). From Kufa to Madina is about twenty stages by the main road. From Kufa (directly to Mecca) is a route which is about three stages shorter (than if you go by way of Madina): at the entry to the native place of the Nagra this road turns from the direction of Madina to end up at the native place of the Banu sulaym, then to Dhat Irq and then to Mecca. The road from Basra to

Madina is eighteen stages and crosses the Kufa road from Bahrayn to Madina is about fifteen stages; that from Riqqa is about twenty stages....and the distance is the same from Damascus to Madina and from Palestine to Madina. From Egypt to Madina, following the coast, is twenty stages. Travellers (from Egypt) meet those coming from Syria at Aila. Pilgrims from the Maghrib join the Egyptians. but at times their respective caravans travel separately, though with common way-stations.⁴²

"Stages is of course, a rather imprecise measure of distance. It is, presumably, the distance covered by a caravan in one day. That this distance is generally reckoned at twenty-four or twenty-five miles, where a mile is counted at a thousand paces". Ibn Hawkal continues:

The pilgrimage from Egypt and Palestine when they have passed Midian [the north western Hejaz], have a choice of two routes to arrive at Madina. The first is by Bada and Shaghb, a fortress in the desert which the Umayyads had granted to Zuhri and where his tomb is located, and from there you reach Madina by way of Marwa. The other route goes along the coast and comes to Juhfa, where they meet the pilgrims from Iraq, Damascus, Palestine and Egypt. The route from Raqqa is no longer used in our days, and there are only very small groups of Arab pilgrims who accomplish the pilgrimage in small units.⁴³

From Aden to Mecca takes nearly a month of travel. There are two routes: one along the coast, which is the longer. This is the Great Road of the Tihama. Whoever takes it passes through Sa'na, Sa'da, Jurash, Bisha, Tabala and so arrives at Mecca. The other route goes by way of the flatlands and it is called Sudur. It follows the edge of the mountains for about twenty stages; it is thus the shorter. It passes through the tribes and settlements of the Yemen and is the way taken by notables.

The inhabitants of the Hadramout and Mahra cross their land to reach the main route between Aden and Mecca, and this traverse takes twenty-two stages with the

42 Ibn Hawkal, 1964:1:39

43 Ibn Hawkal, 1964:1:39-40

result that their entire trip (to Mecca) lasts more than fifty days.

The route from Oman crosses the desert and is a difficult one by reason of the desolation of the region and the lack of inhabitants. Their only way (of getting to Mecca) is going by sea to Jeddah because if you go across the flatlands of the coast of Mahra and Hadramoutas far as Aden or the Aden route, the trip is too long. So it is only rarely used. The same is true of the way from Oman to Bahrain: it is a bad road and is little practical because of the internal quarrels among the Arabs (along the way).⁴⁴

44 Ibn Hawkal, 1964:I:49

CHAPTER 3

CHANGING POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE

The Tradition puts Mecca at the centre of the evolution of this world. Here it was in its embryonic stage and gradually it spread and took the present shape. This made Mecca the pivotal point around which rotates all human activities. This includes both religious as well as non-religious activities. The region in and around Mecca received its mention in the earlier revelations before Islam. All the major revealed books touch upon this region. Apart from this all the major religions of the world saw its origin in this region. This made the region the focal point of the world population and people directed their movement towards it. These movements even from very remote areas, as pilgrims, migrants, local traders, caravan traders, travellers, and scholars necessarily had their impact on the region. The culture, the polity and the economy cannot remain untouched. Mecca which was unarable and had no incentives to attract habitation, however, it grew to be a major trade centre with famous markets in the city or on the periphery.¹ The region became the meeting place for the traders of the East and the West.

With the coming of Islam the region got its added prominence. Islam had a very hard time in its initial days particularly in Mecca and in particular from the Meccans, which was the cradle of the first revelation of Allah.

Read: In the name of thy Lord who created,
created man of a blood clot

Read: and thy Lord is Most Generous,
who taught by the pen

¹ S. Al-Afghani, *Aswaqal Arab Fil-Jahiliyya wal'Islam*, 2ed Edition, Damascus, 1960. p.

taught man that he knew not...²

It was Mecca again where the last revelation came down: This day I have perfected your religion ...³. It took some twenty-three years for the last verse to be revealed. However within thirty years of this last revelation Islam spread far and wide. Everyday an increasing section was directed towards Ka'ba and Mecca, which was the spiritual centre. The wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, all were stirred by the fifth pillar of Islam -- the pilgrimage, at least once in life time, if one can afford the necessary provision.

For the Arab, this was not only a command, but a tradition, and right up to the present, year after year, families would set out for *Hajj* as part of their annual migration. For the merchants of Arabia this was the great hub of their slow cycle: east and west on monsoon winds or in long trains of camels north and south. For the merchants this was the time and place to learn of the practical economics of Islam and the great trade network of the Muslim world.

As the message of Islam began to reach the four corners of the world, Mecca began to fill up not only with the returnees but also with pilgrims who came and stayed. As a place of refuge for the Muslims in which no blood could be spilled came the dispossessed as well as the scholars and pious men. While the political centre of Islam moved from Madina to Damascus, to Baghdad, then became diffused through out the Muslim world, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic circle to the equator,⁴ the spiritual centre continued to be Mecca. Here in Mecca, the care takers of the holy place had to deal at three fronts that of its visitors, and the immigrants and

2 *The Quran Surah At-Tin*, Verse,1-5

3 *The Quran Surah Al-Maidah*, Verse,3)

4 Francis Feancis Robinson, ed.,*Islamic World*,1996, pp.47, 66, 126

the concerns for all for livelihood in the barren valley. During the early years of the Muslim era, the empire under the rule of Caliphs and Amirs was rich and great donations were set aside for Mecca and Madina, for public works, for stipends and social welfare to the families living there and for the guardians of the haram. Although this inflow of wealth from the donations has continued upto the present time it has never been as steady and abundant as during the early years.⁵

Over the ages one can find several factors which play vital role in influencing the political economy of the sacred place. The rise and fall of income from government welfare payments as well as public works capitalisation has caused a fluctuating economic structure. This is one of the factors. Another factor was the change in trade patterns, which for many reasons bypassed the old *Hajj* caravan routes, and resulted in the decline of Mecca as a commercial centre.⁶ Another factor which necessarily influenced the market was steep variant in demand graph during the pilgrimage season and otherwise. Another but very important factor is related with population. The rapid population growth naturally as well as on account of immigrants led to ethnic diversity and an increasingly complex social structure.⁷ The political developments in the Muslim world did not influence the least. The local politics too had its impact on the caravan routes.

These factors have slowly unfolded in their complex interactions for centuries down to the Ottoman Turkish rule from 1522 till the rise of Arab nationalism, and

5 See Appendix

6 Patrica Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Bracil, Blackwell, 1987. pp.168-199. She has deicated a chapter "The Sanctuary and the Meccan Trade" dicussing the location of Mecca vis-a-vis trade. She points out that it was Jeddah and not Mecca that was at the cross-roads of trade routes having a good sea port.

7 See Appendix

ending of the caliphate in 1911.

At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Hijaz was governed by a sharif who controlled Mecca and Madina, and their ports of Jeddah and Yambo. He was however nominally subject to the Mamluks in Cairo. The position of the sharif as Guardian of the holy places was a prestigious one. The Alid line which ruled the Hejaz from 1960s to the nineteenth century claimed descent from Ali via his son Hasan.⁸ On the other hand, the Mamluk rulers claimed the title of *Khalif* in succession to the Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad. The sharif's position vis-à-vis the Mamluks was not totally autonomous. The Mamluks at times took seriously their position as *Khalif* and were concerned to foster the pilgrimage. They were also very concerned about security in the Red sea and events in the Hejaz for a much more utilitarian reason, which was that the very lucrative spice trade from the Arabian sea to the Middle East and on to the Mediterranean passed through this closed waterway, and so overland from the Suez to Cairo to Alexandria.⁹ The Mamluks were concerned both in the broader sense of continuing the spice trade and protecting the Holy Places, and in the narrower one of protecting, for both religious and political reasons, the pilgrimage.

The arrival of the Portuguese soon put at risk both these aspects for they were keen both to oppose Islam and to monopolise the spice trade. Right from the start they tried to patrol the Red sea entrance and thus block the pilgrimage route as well. Several accounts of confrontations have been recorded. Accounts of battle between the Portuguese and a Calicut fleet in 1504-5 mentions a ship loaded with alms of gold and silver, sent every seven years by Indian Muslims to the sharifs of Mecca. Such

8 F.E.Peters, *Jerusalem and Mecca: the Typology of the holy city in the Near East*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986. p.46

9 Patricia, *op.cit.* p.

contributions now had to reach Mecca by other routes. This increased the animosity between the Muslims and the Portuguese resulting in an attack in 1508-9 by Amir Hussein, an Egyptian admiral, who combined with Indian forces in an attempt to expel the Portuguese from India. He acted on behalf of Mamluks, and they in turn were motivated by both economic and religious hostility to the Portuguese. His defeat in Diu in 1509 was decisive for the survival of the Portuguese in India. Malik Ayaz, however did not give up easily. In 1518 he was still so concerned with the Portuguese threat to the *Hajj* that he wrote to the Ottomans.¹⁰ Thus the mixture of profit and piety have determined the actions of Mamluks and sharifs.

On the other hand the Ottoman sponsorship fostered the *Hajj*, and its number grew impressively which owe largely to the state patronage and protection.¹¹ It is argued that the Ottomans legitimised their rule, and integrate their empire by spending money on Mecca and on the pilgrimage.¹² In both Ottoman Egypt and Syria important nobles particularly after 1708, the governor of Damascus, were also designated *Amir-al-Hajj*, and took personal command of the pilgrimage caravan each year. A traveller in 1763 noted that the sultan sent pension each year to the sharifs of Mecca and his family,¹³ and "with these pensions, and the freight of four or five vessels, which he sends every year to Jeddah, laden with provisions, he supports almost all the inhabitants of Mecca and Madina. During the pilgrimage period, as much water as two thousand camels can bear is daily distributed gratis; not to speak of the vast number of presents with which he adorns the Ka'ba, and gratifies the descendants of

10 Naimur Rehman Farooqhi, *Mugal- Ottoman Relations*, Delhi, , 1989. pp.12-13

11 See Appendix

12 Suraiya Farooqhi, Quoted in M.N.Pearson, *Pious Passengers*. New Delhi, Sterling Publisher, 1994, p.91

13 See Appendix

Muhammad."¹⁴

THE MUGHALS AND THE *HAJJ*

The Mughal period saw a number of emperors each having a different attitude towards Islam and *Hajj*. All of them for reasons of either piety or policy found it valuable to have reputation of being staunch defenders of Islam, and patrons of the holy places. Copying the holy Quran in ones own hand, and sending the copy to Mecca was a popular practice. Sultan Muzaffar II of Gujrat (r.1511-1526) transcribed the Quran every year, and sent copies to Mecca and Madina.¹⁵ According to another account, he sent to Mecca and Madina two copies of the Quran transcribed by his own hand in gold water, and made a special annual grant to provide for the upkeep of these books, and maintenance of those who use copies for recitation. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb is also reputed for doing the same.¹⁶ Muzaffar also constructed a hospice in Mecca, consisting of a school, a place for the distribution of water to pilgrims and other buildings and set aside endowments for the maintenance of teachers and students. He provided a vessel to carry poor pilgrims to Mecca free of charge and covered all their expenses on the voyage. He had the provision of granting land to pious people and religious specialists which also had political implications, like to avoid attacks. Sultan Mahmud II of Gujrat (r.1537-54) had reserved the revenues of some villages near Cambay as *waqf*, to be distributed in the holy cities, and in Mecca built various religious buildings.¹⁷

14 Carsten Neibur, *Travels Through Arabia and other Countries in the East*, 2vols., Edinburgh, 1792,II,27; Karl K.Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus*, 1708-1758, Princeton,1980 pp.108-177, deals in detail with Ottoman concern with the *Hajj*.

15 S.A.I.Tirmizi, *Some Aspects of Medieval Gujrat*, Delhi,1968, p.11; *The Delhi Sultanat*, Delhi,1970, pp.887-888.

16 Jadunath Sarkar,*History of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, 1973-4, 5vols.,V,363.

17 Tirmizi, *op.cit.*,p.11.

The centrality of Islam for Muslim rulers in India during the medieval period is explicit. It can be seen also in the way in which the main port through which the pilgrim passed, was commonly known. The great Gujrati port of Surat, was bestowed with various epithets which signalled the symbolic importance of this port to Indian Muslims. It was *Bab al-Mecca*; the gateway of Mecca, or the *Bandr-i-Mubarak*; the blessed port, or the most significantly, *Bab-o Bait al-Allah*; the door to the House of God. Apart from this the other exits for the pilgrims were from Bengal and various other Deccan ports on both east and west coasts.

The majority of Indians performing *Hajj* during the Mughal period were men. Although a number of elite women undertaking the journey are on record. Among the elite, the pilgrimage was undertaken for a variety of reasons. Piety was no doubt often a motive, or atleast one of several. Many Indian Muslim rulers found that sending nobles and others off on *Hajj* was an acceptable way to get rid of people whose presence was no longer desired at court, and to punish those who had failed.¹⁸ It was difficult for a noble to refuse the "opportunity" to make such a pilgrimage; alternatively a request to be allowed to go on *Hajj* was that a ruler would normally not want to refuse. In these very personalised courts, access to the centre, to the emperor, was crucial. Indeed, how close one got physically was important, a very public affirmation of one's standing or lack of it. And to be denied access to court was a humiliation. To go off to Mecca, on a journey lasting atleast a year and often longer, was in political terms a grave punishment and was very difficult to recover.

Apart from this, going off on *Hajj* was often the choice offered to the

18 Akbarnama,II, pp.534-5.

vanquished. For a new ruler, it was much more acceptable merely to exile to Mecca one's defeated opponents, rather than run the risk of public criticism by killing them. Humayun had constant trouble with his relations, and as he consolidated his power they were sent off to Mecca. Askari, after a final display of disloyalty, was allowed to go to Mecca, but he died on way. Akbar asked his teacher Bairam Khan to make a visit to Mecca. There are infact, numerous examples of both religious and political figures at court losing favour and then voluntarily or otherwise, going off on *Hajj*.

The Hejaz was also a popular place of refuge for defeated nobles and aspirants to the throne. In 1659 Shah Shuja had lost the struggle for the succession to Aurangzeb, and decided to try and escape from Arakan and take refuge in Mecca; but he was killed before he could leave. In 1535 the ruler of Gujrat, Bahadur Shah, was hard pressed by Humayun, and so he sent off a noble called Asaf Khan with his treasury and harem to Mecca. They stayed there till Bahadur Shah's death in 1537, and Asaf Khan returned home only in 1548.¹⁹

By 1911, the Wahabi movement was simply another of the periodic threats to urban Arabian life from the Bedouins, and yet with a new added dimension of religious purism.

With the coming of the Sharif of Mecca, a new era of pilgrimage began under a new dynasty and Arab kingdom in the form of safety of the pilgrims and curb on their exploitations. However, the early years of this kingdom were ones of poverty and generosity and even the American oil prospectors shared the rough life of the Bedouins and at that time since the oil supply exceeded the demand, market conditions kept the

19 *Cambridge History of India*, vol.IV, *The Mughal Period*, Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1963, pp.331,341.

prices, and hence the profit for the Saudis, low. This compelled the Saudis to tax the pilgrims to help cover the costs of administrating the *Hajj* affairs, and at the same time the *Hajjis* (pilgrims) and the Meccans were expected to be economically self reliant.

The post first world war era, and the end of the Ottoman empire saw the sweeping rise of nationalism. It manifested itself in the form of Pan-Islam, Pan-Arab and Pan-Turk etc in this region. The *Hajj* which is the congregation of Muslims from world over, at a place in a time provide an excellent place to meet, discuss and spread ✓ideas -- the Islamic principle of *Shura* and *Ijma* (council and consensus) in action. Thus Mecca became a great political centre for the spread of ideas not only concerning Muslims but the whole of mankind as Islam is the religion of all mankind.

The Saudi government under the influence of the Wahabi also improved the life of the pilgrims in many other ways. The old practices of leading the gullible and devout pilgrims to the shrines of dubious authenticity and prescribing various ideas and processes, all for a price, was cut to the quick by scrupulousness of the Wahabi religious officials under the Saudi rule.

From an economic point of view, the process of supply and demand may bring about excesses in cost given a seasonal market -- peak demand and limited resources with no economic activity through out the year. This led to economic exploitation of various kinds.

Since the second world war, two factors have played major parts not just in ✓(shaping the economic and social structures of Meccans)but of the population of the entire kingdom of Saudi Arabia. First, the oil prices have increased the revenues enormously, making Saudi Arabia the heartland of the Muslim world, one of the richest

areas on the planet. This has given rise to tremendous impact on public work revenues in the kingdom including Mecca and Madina. The money is invested in development and growth; and Jeddah has become the centre point for a tremendous demand in consumption imports to the kingdom. Saudi Arabia imports everything from food stuffs to building materials to industrial factories and all these imports come through the port of Jeddah. Such vast wealth, public expenditure, imports, demand for skilled labour, goods and services have brought about enormous rates of inflation. Those who suffer the most from this inflation are government employees on fixed salaries, farmers, traditional craftsmen etc.

The second factor was the overall development and advancement throughout the world. The technological advancement added with welfare schemes with modern transportation facilities has brought about a great increase in the number of pilgrims. This resulted in a great demand of skilled labour and technicians to meet the expanding work of modernisation. This added to the already rising population of the pilgrims.²⁰ Thus it manifested itself in multifaceted issues of concern like environment and pollution control, management and administration, preservation of the traditional character of the holy cities and the like.

THE *HAJJ* AND ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP

An important challenge to Saudi Arabia's claim to Islamic leadership is the *Hajj*. By 1991 both Iran and Saudi Arabia had interests in improving relations and resolving differences over Iran's participation in the annual pilgrimage. They agreed on the number of Iranian pilgrims allowed 110,000 as well as their right to hold a

20 See Appendix.

'gathering' outside Mecca. Diplomatic ties were restored in March 1991 and both states hailed a 'new page' in relations.

The next two years *Hajj* were relatively calm. Iranian pilgrims were restrained and held their gatherings at some distance from the main body of pilgrims as agreed and Iranian leaders eschewed the inflammatory rhetoric of the past. Neither side could resist a certain amount of minor point scoring, but there were also conciliatory gesture by both.²¹

However, in May 1993 the *Hajj* agreement suddenly unravelled, with a renewed ban on demonstrations during the pilgrimage. In early May, the Committee for the Defence of Sharia Rights made its appearance in Saudi Arabia. The emergence of this Saudi Islamist opposition group, headed by a number of establishments, Sunni academics and lawyers from Nejd and Hejaz, alarmed the Saudi government which rapidly cracked down on the group- dismissing the government employees who joined the committee and banning the lawyers from practising. In addition in late May there were reports of about 400 people being arrested in connection with the committee.²²

The Saudi strictures on demonstrations during the *Hajj*, which infuriated the Iranians, were in part a reaction to these developments. Not only were they afraid there might be an adverse reaction to the arrests of the Islamists associated with the committee during this emotional time, but they were also anxious to avoid the charge that in turning a blind eye to Iranian demonstrations, they were being lenient to the shia but tougher on the orthodox sunni. Both for reasons of general public image in Saudi Arabia and politics within the ruling family, King Fahad wanted to avoid this charge,

21 Joshua Teitelbaum, "*Saudi Arabia*", *ecs*, vol.16, 1992, p.683.

22 *The Guardian*, 8 May 1993; 10 May 1993; *The Independent*, 14 May 1993.

particularly as he was preparing to introduce political and administrative reforms.

There are also more general reasons for this deterioration in Saudi-Iran relations. First the agreement of 1991 was unclear, it had not clearly differentiated 'gathering' from 'demonstrations'. It may be that Riyadh believed Iran was seeking to alter the definition. Second, good bilateral relations could not survive regional competition, especially the divergence on the Arab -Israeli peace process. Third, increasing animosity between the US and Iran was bound to ferment into greater suspicion of Iran. Forth , for purpose of GCC solidarity, Saudi Arabia could hardly embrace Tehran when it had a serious territorial issue with the United Arab Emirates. A combination of these elements led to the break down of the *Hajj* agreement in May 1993.

Nevertheless, the Saudi authorities continued to turn a blind eye to the demonstrations staged by Iranian pilgrims since the latter, rather than holding a public demonstration in Mecca, turned the memorial service for Khomeini, held at their camps in the desert. Despite this restraints the Iranian media and others used the occasion to denounce the Saudi regime as well as enemies close at home. In responding to this, the Saudi authorities charged the Iranians with heresy for advocating a ceremony that totally contravenes the teachings of the Islam religion and in fully outside the rules of the *Hajj* that had been laid down and explained by the messenger of God . The Saudis claimed that some Iranians were insistent on disturbing the atmosphere and spreading confusion and disfiguring the great image of the faith by their provocative behaviour that did not serve any thing except their political plans and ideological aims. This revealed the true intentions of the Iranian extremists and consequently undermined all

peaceful efforts to soften the atmosphere.²³ Thus the situation with regards to the *Hajj* started deteriorating correspondingly.

In 1994, Saudi Arabia again reintroduced the quota system, allowing only some 55,000 Iranian pilgrims into the kingdom. Prince Nayef was adamant not to allow the Iranians to carry out the demonstrations and the Iranian authorities had also been informed of this decision. Under Saudi pressure and in order to avoid a bloody confrontation, Iran cancelled the scheduled demonstrations. But they still asserted their right to demonstrate and said it to be a symbol of activists Islam and resistance against oppressor. A cleric expressed his opinion in these words "the Saudi Army, Saudi oil the Saudi state programme, even the religious speeches of Saudi speakers and management of holy sanctuaries are all under the supervision of America.

With the *Hajj* approaching in 1995, Iran again sought to increase the number of its pilgrims Saudi Arabia now accepted 69,000 based on a quota system reflecting population since (versus the 110,000 it had accepted the 1991 agreement). Iran sought to lift the ban on public gatherings imposed by the Saudi authorities, arguing that the *Hajj* was a total event with political, social and religious experience which could not be separated. As to the 1980s, Iran argued that Saudi resistance stemmed from its embarrassment that its allies, Zionism and the US, would be denounced. Unlike the 1980s though, Iran gave way again to avoid clashes and cancelled its disavowal ceremonies.

The *Hajj* question, in which there is little intrinsically at stake, reflects the state of Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia. When relations deteriorate, Iran can use this issue

23 Saudi Arabia News Agency, 2 June 1993 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service-NES -93 -105, 3 June 1993, p.15.

to apply pressure and reach a broader audience. Iran's attitude towards the *Hajj* also reflects its domestic situation and the competition to define its foreign policy. These pushing a revolutionary line also seek a leadership role in Islam. In contrast, those seeking better relations with neighbours are, more concerned about the costs of pursuing policies that might delay this. Since 1993, a tougher Saudi line rather than greater Iranian activism has once again brought the issue to the fore. This reflects concern about Iran's other activities in the region, but also indicates the general Saudi sensitivity on resurgence of public Islamist dissent in Saudi Arabia itself.

This trend is reflected by two developments associated with the 1996 *Hajj*. The first was Saudi insistence on censoring and issuing any literature, books, printed materials or pictures from the incoming pilgrims of all nationalities which the Saudi authorities disliked. Many of these seized materials were of no relevance to either the political or the moral sensibilities of the kingdom. It reflects an anxiety about the *Hajj* which went much further than fear of subversion. Second, it was Iran which officially took a conciliatory stance towards Saudi Arabia on the question of the *Hajj*. In the 1996 *Hajj*, despite Iran's repeated assertions of its right to hold demonstrations none were held.

The structural factors influencing Iran-Saudi relations include geopolitical differences, such as disparities in demography and geography, and consequent differing perspectives on regional issues. Questions about their respective influence in and leadership of Gulf affairs, oil issues and the role of outside power compose the traditional 'national interest' agenda. National, cultural, ethnic and sectarian divisions in the region, such as between Persian and Arab, Shia and Sunni, aggravate the situation. The natural constituency and the relative weakness of the Arab Gulf states tend to

'Arabise' bilateral disputes, thus magnifying issues and polarising the region. For Iran, a dispute with any Arab neighbours, risks becoming a dispute with all its Arab neighbours infusing the situation with dramatic symbolism redolent of historical animosities.²⁴

To these structural factors have been added the particular challenges posed by the revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran. As the only Shi'i state (the Shia constitute less than 15% of the Muslim world, and most live in Iran), its religious leaders claimed a broad Islamic sanctions for their revolution. In offering it as a model for others and proclaiming a mission to extend true Islam to other states. Iran poses a direct threat to others in the Gulf and elsewhere. These accusations have produced a political tug of war that sets Shia Iran at odd with the Arab particularly Saudi Arabia. Iran has also questioned the compatibility of monarchy with true Islam. The Iranian government claim to speak for a putative universal Islamic authority has en a clear challenge to the Saudi government which sees it's legitimacy as tied to its role of protector of the Holy Places of Mecca and Madina.

Further more, Iran denounces Saudi Arabia as a client of the United States which Iran's revolutionary leaders have assigned a demonic role, claiming that the Saudi government takes instructions from Washington on a host of issues ranging from oil prices to the 'sell out of Muslim interest in Palestine'. It charges Saudi Arabia with practising a passive, accommodating Islam at odds with Iran's militant support for Muslim's right everywhere. These accusations have produced a political tug of war that sets Shii Iran at odds with Wahabi Saudi Arabia. Iran has also questioned the

24 Shahrar Chubin & Charles Tripp, *Iran-Saudi Relations*, ADELPHI PAPER, UK., 304, 1996, p.4.

compatibility of monarchy with true Islam.

Saudi Arabia has its own internal critics who accuses its rulers of being too accommodating to the west and insufficiently mindful of their Islamic obligations. Such criticism has been evident since the kingdom was founded in the 1920s, and the June 1996 bombing of the US military housing at al-Khobar demonstrated that this strand of dissent is still very much alive. The emergence in 1979 of an Iranian regime dedicated to a populist, radical interpretation of those obligations and explicitly advocating a dramatic revision of the status quo alarmed the Saudi authorities. Not only were they being challenged regionally but the nature of that challenge, seemed likely to exacerbate internal divisions, both among the Shia of the Eastern Province and among Islamic radicals elsewhere in the kingdom. By defining domestic and regional issues, alignments and leadership questions in Islamic terms, Iran served notice that it is a major regional player.

There is substantial consensus within Iran that the country should play a leading role in Persian Gulf, but there is much less on how it should play that role - whether in co-operation with or in opposition to the other littoral states. These diversions make it difficult for Tehran to formulate, let alone implement, a consistent policy and complicate Saudi Arabia's assessment of Iran's intention.

THE ISLAMIC DIMENSION : THE *HAJJ* AND THE SHIA

Revolutionary Iran's aspiration to play a leading role in Islam has brought it into direct conflict with Saudi Arabia.²⁵ This rivalry embraces sectarian questions as well as political issues such as alignment with the United States. Iran's challenge, even

25 *A conversation with Ambassador Hermann F. Eilts: The Dilemma in the Persian Gulf*, Studies in Foreign Policy, (Washington, May, 1980), pp.10-11.

if presented in Islamic guise, was a political one. Ayatollah Khomeini's activist Islam was anti-monarchical, anti-western and pitted Iran against the House of Saud in the Gulf and in the Islamic world as a whole. Iran's activism in the Muslim world -among the Palestinians and in Lebanon and Afghanistan - became part of a broader rivalry for influence.²⁶ Whereas Saudi Arabia had the resources and control of Islamic institutions like the ICO, Iran in the 1980s offered a dynamic policy agenda and potential support for the foot soldiers of Islam.

However, Iran was unable to transcend the 'Shii ghetto', the sectarian divide in the Islamic world. In Lebanon it supported the Shia through Hizbollah; in Afghanistan it supported the Shii group, Hizb-e-Wahdat. Iran found it difficult to make headway with secular Palestinian groups like the PLO, even where the Shia were numerous, or a majority as in Iraq and Bahrain, the 'tenacity of ethnicity, nationalism, sectarianism in the Middle East...was a serious blow to Iran's Islamic universalism'.²⁷ Indeed, Khomeini's discourse and emphasis had within five years, 'widened the gap between the predominantly Shii population of Iran and Sunni majorities elsewhere... and exacerbated sectarian feeling throughout the Muslim world'.²⁸

Khomeini's revolution presented a potential threat to all Arab Gulf states with Shii populations in that it could inspire similar militancy against what might be seen as oppressive governments; however it did not want to limit its potential constituency to the Shii world, a minority in Islam. Rather, it preached a highly politically charged

26 Shireen Hunter, *Iran and Syria: From Hostality to Limited Alliance*, in Amirahmadi and Entessar, ed., *Iran and the Arab World: Continuity in a Revolutionary Decade*, Bloomington, I.N.Indiana University Press, p.210.

27 *ibid.* p.123

28 Fred Halliday, *Iranian Foreign Policy Since 1979: Internationalism and Nationalism in the Islamic Revolution*, in R.I.Cole and Nikki R.Keddie, ed., *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986, pp.106-107.

Islamic universalism, pitting a populist Islam of the 'oppressed' (mustazefin) against the 'oppressors' (mustakbarin), namely conservative, establishment Islam, represented by Saudi Arabia.²⁹ Iran's style of Islam was revolutionary, militantly anti-western and activist, and was to clash repeatedly with Saudi Islam which pragmatically sought to use religion to bolster the status quo. A key problem for Iran's neighbours was that however much it sought to depict its intentions as strictly religious, behind its denial of any intent to export the revolution were the realities of Iranian state power, and even more of Iranian national interest. Iran regarded Saudi Arabia as the 'arch agent of the Great Satan' whose Gulf policy is condemned in every respect.³⁰ This was a political judgement based on Iran's national interest, notwithstanding Tehran's attempt to depict the United States as the enemy of Islam.

If Iran initially relied on the forces of its model to inspire other Muslims and especially Shia, it soon moved to direct intervention.³¹ Shortly after Iran's revolution, some Shia of Saudi Arabia's eastern province set up *Munazama al-Thawra al-Islamia lil Tahrir al-Jaria al-Arabiyya* (the Islamic Revolution Organisation for the Liberation of the Arabian Peninsula) which became involved, often in association with secular dissidents, in various anti-regime activities in Saudi Arabia and in the Middle East. These activities never amounted to much occasional attacks on Saudi's diplomats or buildings abroad and limited acts of sabotage within Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless the nature of these activities and the mood of the times were seen as symptomatic of something much more dangerous and as an indication of a concerted Iranian strategy of

29 Rouhollah Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p.92.

30 Rouhollah Ramazani, *Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy*, in Aaded Dawisha, ed., *Islam in Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.26.

31 Joshep Kostiner, *Shi'i Unrest in the Gulf*, in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shiism, Resistance and Revolution*, Boulder, London: Wesrview Press, 1987, pp.177-183.

subversion.

Partly in response to Iran's activity, and partly in response to forces at work within Saudi society itself, king Fahad, since his accession in 1982, had cultivated his own image as a pious Islamic monarch, determined to enforce the Sharia, to advance the Wahabi 'call' and to protect the Holy Places. He instituted a weekly meeting with the Ulema (Islamic Jurists), reorganised and reactivated the mutawwin, re-emphasised the role of the Islamic authorities in the educational system and re-invigorated the Directorate for Islamic Propagation. In 1986 he officially declared that he should henceforth be referred to not as *Jallalatu* (His Majesty) (the term in Arabic has close and some would say, impious association with one of the attributes of God), but rather as *Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharafayn* (servant of the two Holy Places). There were sound domestic reasons for these moves, but they were also a clear sign that the Saudi ruling family felt it necessary to reassert its own Islamic credentials in the face of the constant public challenge from Iran. Foremost among these has been Iran's sponsored activities in relation to the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage.

Indeed, the *Hajj* issue between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been a constant source of tension for almost two decades since the revolution. In the early years, when the Iranian revolution still had momentum and widespread attraction as a model, Saudi Arabia found it difficult to resist Iran's demand to hold demonstrations during the course of pilgrimage. It felt too vulnerable politically vis-à-vis Iran and possibly its own Shii community to block these rallies. Over time, having sided with Iraq during the war with Iran, and having invested more resources in its neglected Shii areas, Saudi Arabia became more confident and willing to resist Iran.

In 1987, a major incident turned into tragedy when some 450 pilgrims,

principally Iranians, were killed by Saudi Arabia's security forces in confused circumstances. Understandably, this incident led to a spate of accusations between the two governments as each tried to place the blame for the tragedy on the other. Saudi Arabia thereafter sought to limit the number of Iranian pilgrims to 45,000 (hitherto the Iranian pilgrims had numbered over 150,000). It also placed an absolute ban on further demonstrations, which Iran resisted. Negotiations on these topics came to nought and possibly to provoke an Iranian boycott of the *Hajj*, Saudi Arabia simply severed diplomatic relations with Tehran in April 1988. Ties remained cut for three years, and during this period the Iranians did indeed boycott the *Hajj*, but there were still problems. In 1989, two explosions near the Grand Mosque in Mecca were attributed to a group of Kuwaiti Shia, mostly of Iranian origin, 16 of whom were executed for their part in the bombing.

The recurrence and continuing centrality of this issue in Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia can be appreciated best by recognising its symbolic, as well as religious and political, dimensions. For Iran the *Hajj* remains an ideal stage for demonstrating its continued political vitality and a potent instrument for undermining Saudi Arabia by denouncing its allies and underscoring its passivity. For Saudi Arabia although the appeal of Iran may have diminished, the risk of political upheaval and instability has not, and the kingdom still fears Iran's capacity for subversion. Thus, although the issue is phrased in religious terms, the underlying tensions and recriminations are political.

HAJJ: THE FACILITATOR OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

The genesis of Meccan trade is conventionally explained with reference to the fact that Mecca was a haram or sanctuary area. On the one hand, it was the object of an annual pilgrimage. It thus became a pilgrim fair, "a typicalcombination of pilgrim

centre and market place", as F.M.Donner puts it.³² On the other hand it was inviolable, no bloodshed being permitted within it. It was thus apt to attract settlers and visitors all the year round, and according to Watt it became a commercial centre because it was a place "to which men could come without fear of molestation."³³ It was not always clear in the secondary literature whether it was the annual pilgrimage or the permanent inviolability, or both, that stimulated the growth of trade; nor is it clear when the sanctuary began to have its stimulating effect: according to some, Mecca was a cultic and commercial centre even in antiquity, though it is more commonly said only to have developed into one on its occupation by Quraish.³⁴ There is not, however, any disagreement on the basic point: one way or the other, Meccan haram and Meccan trade were intimately linked.

The *hajj* was not merely a religious obligation; it was from the earliest times an annual fair, a merchandising opportunity of the first magnitude, and not only at Jeddah and Mecca but even upon roads to these places. One of the first account of its commercial functions under the Ottomans comes from the anonymous pilgrim who travelled to Mecca in 1575.

The caravan carries with it six pieces of ordinance drawn by twelve camels, which serve to terrify the Arabians, as also to make triumph at Mecca and other places. The merchants who follow the caravan, some carry for merchandise cloth of silk, some coral, some tin, others wheat, rye and all sorts of grain. Some sell by the way, some at Mecca, so that everyone brings something to gain by, because all merchandise that goes

32 F.M.Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.51.

33 W.M.Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford, OUP, 1953, p.3.

34 P.K.Hitti, *Capital Cities of Arab Islam*, Minneapolis, 1973, p.4.

by land pays no custom, but that which goes by sea is bound to pay ten in hundred.³⁵

The avoidance of maritime custom dues was doubtless a powerful incentive to use the *hajj* caravan for the transport of goods from Mecca, or to be more precise, Jeddah. But it would not have availed merchants much unless the caravan offered a secure way of transporting such goods.

Two types of merchandising are dealt here. The small merchants were the sellers: they carried their goods with them, and their market consisted of the pilgrims enroute. The great merchants were the buyers: they went to Jeddah to meet the ships filled with Indian and other Eastern goods like spices, textiles, precious stones and coffee which they carried to markets in Damascus and Cairo for sale there.

THE PILGRIMS AS TRADERS

One fairly common way for a pilgrim to finance his *hajj* expenses was to become a trader, whether he made his normal livelihood in that fashion or not. There were always things to be bought and sold along the route and no shortage of buyers or sellers:

“Few pilgrims, except the mendicants, arrive without bringing some production of their respective countries for sale; and this remark is applicable as well to the merchants with whom commercial pursuits are the main object as to those who are actuated by religious zeal; for to the latter the profits derived from selling a few native articles at Mecca diminish in some degree the heavy expenses of the journey. The Maghribis, for example, bring red bonnets and woollen cloaks; the European Turks shoes and slippers, hardware, embroidered stuffs, sweat meats, amber, trinkets of European manufacture, knit silk purses etc.; the Turks of Anatolia bring carpets, silks and Angora shawls; the Persian cashmere shawls and large silk handkerchiefs; the Afghans tooth brushes...made of spongy boughs of a tree growing in Bukhara, beads of yellow soap stones, and plain coarse

35 Anon. Hackluyt 1927:178, in F.E.Peters, *The Hajji*, p. 180.

shawls manufactured in their own countries; the Indians, the numerous productions of their rich and extensive regions; the poor of Yemen snakes for Persian pipes, sandals and various other works in leather; and the Africans bring various articles adapted to the slave trade.

The *hajjis* are often disappointed in their expectations of gains; want of money makes them sell them their little adventures at the public auctions, and often obliges them to accept very low prices.³⁶

Another insight into the mercantile quality of the *hajj* is provided by the Ottoman *terke defteri* (estate settlements) of those who had died during the pilgrimage and whose possessions had thus to be catalogued and evaluated for testamentary purposes. These inventories list what has been called the "trousseau of the pilgrims", the collection of "clothing and primary necessities the pilgrims took with him, as well as the objects of piety and other merchandise he carried in the expectation of making an offering or equally likely of doing some business.

Apart from this the merchants particularly of Damascus and Egypt used the relative security of the annual *hajj* caravan not simply to sell to pilgrims along the way but also to transport goods and funds to Mecca to conduct business, either directly or through agents in Hejaz. On the way out, they carried with them chiefly European textiles, foodstuffs, and a notable amount of coinage. On the return from Mecca they had, as we might expect, spices, drugs, coffee and Indian textile³⁷

The caravan was not the only transport between Cairo and Mecca. Sea routes were also in use and particularly towards the end of the eighteenth century, repeated and serious problems with the Bedouins along the land route, the balance seems to have begun tipping in favour of the maritime passage.

36 John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, New York: Frank Cass, 1968, pp.256-7.

37 Jacques Jomier, *Le Mahmal et la Caravane Egyptienne Despelerins de la Makka*, Cairo: Institute Francais d'archeologie orientale, 1953, in F.E.Peters, *The Hajj*, p.182.

Burckhardt says that all classes of pilgrims often become merchants for the occasion, buying at home and selling enroute, or buying at Mecca and selling at home. thus all do not go to Mecca out of devotion, and there are a number of people who make the pilgrimage only for a hope of gain. The bey who leads these caravans derives a considerable profit since he is the one who determines the time the caravan will enroute and remain at Mecca. Since the latter is very brief, when the merchants cannot windup their business, they request the bey to defer their departure a few days, which he grants them in return for a sum they pay by the day and to which they all the more easily assent since the profits they make are so great.³⁸

THE ECONOMY OF MECCA

At all times, the pilgrimage was located at the intersection of several far flung networks, primarily social and religious, but political and religious as well. When we look at the economic activities in Mecca in early modern period we find substantial trade, especially at the time of the pilgrimage, in provisions and other goods connected with the *hajj* and the needs of the pilgrims. Most people on the *hajj* caravan did not trade, except in souvenirs and provisions. The so called *hajj* market was a market to meet the needs of the pilgrims, and in sum was of much less economic importance than more routine markets in such port cities as Jeddah.

But, the fact that Jeddah and Mecca were so inter-linked that many a writer have taken one for the other. Part of Jeddah's trade was related to the *hajj*. Those pilgrims who came by sea passed through the port, and a proportion of the products sold during the *hajj* obviously was imported through Jeddah. Thus we could say that Mecca was to

38 Burckhardt *op. cit.*, pp.183-88.

a considerable extent dependent on Jeddah, but the reverse does not apply for, except for its venerated attraction. Jeddah had a large trade from its role as hinge or nodal point in the Red Sea and for Jeddah, trade with Mecca was only one of its many links.

Mecca, on the other hand was unable to feed itself, an unarable land as mentioned by Prophet Abraham, and at the same it was not located so as to be a natural trade centre. Ali Bey, an early nineteenth century pilgrim noted, Mecca "is not placed in any direct line of passageIt's centre, therefore, cannot be in any direct line of communication with the neighbouring countries to which access may be by land or by sea. Its ports at most will only serve as sea port town to trading vessels, as is the case with Jeddah....Mecca not being situated in the route to any country of consequence, nature has not designed it as a place of commerce, placed as it is in the middle of an extremely barren desert, which prevents its inhabitants from being either husbandment or shepherds." ³⁹

Mecca, the town was almost totally dependent on imported food, which were mostly brought by pilgrims. It was infact a pious and meritorious act to sent food to Mecca and Madina. Several travellers noticed how lavishly the act was carried out. Ovington found each year 20 or 25 ships coming from Egypt, financed by the government and laden by provisions and money.⁴⁰ Such inflow was from several quarters as a result the towns were usually well supplied with provisions. Ali Bey, wrote to the extent that "Mecca is so poor by nature that if the House of the God ceased to exist, it would be inevitably deserted in two years, or atleast reduced to a simple douar or hamlet; for the inhabitants in general subsist for the rest of the year upon what

39 Badiya Y. Leybich, Domingo Ali Bey, *Travels of Ali Bey to Morocco, Tripoli, Cyprus, Egypt, Y Arabia and Turkey between the years 1803 and 1807*. Vols. 2. London, Gregg, 1970. II:112

40 John Ovington, *A voyage to Surat: in the 1689*, ed., H.G.Rawinson, London, 1929. p.

they accumulate during the time of the pilgrimage, at which period the place puts on a lively appearance, commerce is animated and half of the people are transformed into hosts, merchants, porters, servants etc., and the other, attached entirely to the service of the temple (Ka'ba), live upon alms and gifts of the pilgrims.⁴¹ It was very much evident in the popular Meccan saying "we sow no wheat or sorghum, the pilgrims are our crops,"⁴² and another said that the *hajj* was "the bread of the Hejaz. The economy in fact was purely an exchange one. Nothing was produced, except small factories oriented to the pilgrimage."⁴³ This is applied even to this period. An account of the *hajj* of 1991 noted that "Saudi Merchants do more business in a few days than in the entire year outside the *hajj*."⁴⁴

The *hajj*, and generally the esteemed position of Mecca in the Muslim world, had another economic significance also. As noted, many Indian Muslim rulers saw it as a pious obligation to send charity, and built hospices, in the holy city. Some sent charitable supplies of food. Apart from rulers, there are evidences of charity and alms being sent from Muslims in India via the merchant fleets trading in the period before the Portuguese disrupted this movement from Calicut.⁴⁵

The *hajj* also produced economic benefits to local rulers and bandits. These local rulers made large sums from taxing all the pilgrim caravans. At times the pilgrims also complained about this. To add to this were the Bedouins and bandits, who specialised in robbing the pilgrim caravans. As a result, a safe route whenever

41 Ali Bey, *op.cit.* p.

42 Robert Lacy, *The Kingdom*, London, 1981, p.88.

43 Peters, *op.cit.* p.

44 The Independent [London] quoted in The Sydney Morning Herald, June 20, 1991

45 J.F.Richards ed. *Precious Metals in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World*, Durham, N.C., 1983 p.202-3

provided resulted in an increase in the numbers of the pilgrims.

The increased inflow of pilgrims manifested itself in the markets of Mecca. The marketplace of Mecca, particularly at the time of *hajj* increased and obviously, also the number of people involved. Vast variety of items can be seen in the market place. Ibn Jubayr writes:

"From all parts produce is brought to it, and it is the most prosperous of countries in its fruits, useful requisites, commodities and commerce. And although there is no commerce save in the pilgrim period, nevertheless, since people gather in it from east and west, there will be sold in one day, apart from those that follow, precious objects such as pearls, sapphires, and these stones, various kinds of perfumes such as musk, camphor, amber and aloes, Indian drugs and other articles brought from India and Ethiopia, the products of the industries of Iraq and Yemen.....All this is within the eight days that follows the pilgrimage....."⁴⁶

Mecca lived from pilgrims, and subsidies from the Ottomans.⁴⁷ There were few artisans and no mention of guilds, nor of local agriculture or manufacturers. The main time for trade was after the restraints were lifted following the end of the rites at Mina. In the late seventeenth century it was claimed that pilgrims stayed at Mecca for ten to twelve days after their return from Arafat and Mina, and that this was the great fair time, and was permissible because now the rites were completed and the newly titled *hajjis* could engage in making purchases. In the late eighteenth century Wahabi influence was important in Mecca. The cleaning up drive of *hajj* rituals had its direct impact on the commerce of the town. Today commerce again is given free reign, but apparently more often now before the pilgrimage starts. An account of the 1991 *hajj* noted that "although Islamic teaching disapproves, the pre *hajj* period is also a time of

46 Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayer, 1183-1185*, Trans. R.J.C. Broadhurst, London, 1952. p.116-7.

47 Suraiya Faruqi *op.cit.* pp.216-9.

non-stop shopping.⁴⁸ This negative evidence should not be given much weight as the fact remains of a relaxed attitude in Islam to a mix of commerce and piety. The fact again cannot be ignored that a section of pilgrims whose number is considerable, is offended by trading activities during the *hajj* period atleast. It is complained that they have no time for devotion and that with the view of protecting their goods, they remain in their shops and omit to perform the rites.⁴⁹

Commerce in Mecca was all oriented to the *hajj*. Bedouins sold sheep and goats for sacrifice. Barbers plied their trade, camel brokers provided transport to Arafat, others flourished as loan sharks, pawnbrokers. Nearly everyone rented out rooms during the season. F.E.Peters notes that one of the many specialist functions to serve pilgrims were the guides, dalils or mutawwif. They were "Mecca's largest and most important guild industry". They arranged everything, and were indispensable as guides to the complicated rituals, and acted as agents and facilitators for the pilgrims.

HAJJ AND THE CREATION OF COIN AND CURRENCY

The creation of a system of coinage and paper currency is one of the government's outstanding achievements. For hundreds of years numerous coins, minted in many parts of the world, circulated side by side in Arabia. Introduced by *hajjis*, British pounds, Dutch guilders, Indian rupees, and Maria Theresa Thalers served as the medium of exchange. The circulation of paper money was limited to the areas around the major ports and coastal trading centres.

The establishment of a modern system of coinage was complicated by the

48 The Independent [London], quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald, June 20, 1991

49 Jafar Sharif, *Islam in India, or the Qanun-i-Islam*, in ed. G.A.Herklots and William Crooke, London, 1975, pp.121.

government's adherence to the Quranic injunctions that "things exchanged shall be of equal value". It led to several attempts to issue full bodied silver coins that, soon disappeared from circulation. That is, the coin's silver content became more valuable than its value as a coin. As a result, money changers and other holders of coin collected them, melted them down, and sold them on the international silver market.

The currency system in Saudi Arabia, felt by the responsible officials of Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency (SAMA) had long recognised that the system had to be improved to meet the needs of the growing economy. Unfortunately, the agency's charter prevented it from issuing paper currency. A solution to the growing shortage of cash had to be found despite the laws injunction against paper money. The problem was solved by the issue of "pilgrim receipts".

To meet the seasonal demand for cash associated with annual influx of pilgrims, SAMA proposed the circulation of a pseudo-currency to be issued to the pilgrims in exchange for their currency. The notes were to be backed hundred percent by silver riyals. The government approved the scheme in 1953, and SAMA immediately issued a small amount of the notes in ten riyal denomination. The following year more pilgrim receipts were issued in ten and five riyal denominations. The notes found immediate acceptance throughout the country because they were more convenient in large transactions than the bulky, heavy silver riyals. Thus, the issue of pilgrim receipts increased the efficiency of the nation's monetary system.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE

There is nothing as all encompassing, all pervasive as the sacred city of Mecca in the Islamic world. The very sound of the word 'Mecca' symbolises a pinnacle of attraction, even to those who do not know the meaning of Mecca. The word due to its peculiar and intrinsic connotations attached to it, has taken a variety of uses. Any large gathering which acquires a regular feature, in a span of time gets for itself a nick name: "The Mecca of". The Cricket ground of Eden Garden in Calcutta is referred to as the Mecca of Cricketers¹. For the Muslims; not only does the word connote a superlative place to which he or she is attracted, but far greater than that, it denotes the sacred valley in which rests the House of Allah on this earth.

As Islam spread from Arab to Ajmi, to Persian, Roman, Turkish, Indian and Ethiopian empires; the spiritual centre of Islam was opened to the great world of Muslims rapidly increasing throughout the world. The prayers of thousands of Muslims --then millions -- were directed towards Mecca. The pious of every direction and continent moving and directing towards it. Every one cutting across the social strata, rich or poor, wise or ignorant; rural or urban; or male female are stirred by the fifth pillar of Islam -- the pilgrimage, atleast once in their lifetime, if one can afford the necessary provisions.

Mecca is the hub and centre of all activities. Mecca was the most beloved city and thus was the concern of all and Mecca on its part was concerned for all; accommodating all who came to it. For the merchants, it was the cross road for east and west monsoon trade based on sea route or north and south trade by land route round the year. For the soldiers fighting on the frontiers of Islam this was the physical

¹ See *the Statesman*, Delhi, 14 January 1998.

symbol of the centre of the cause for which he fought. For the students this was the place to find the teachers and to learn about the great schools and scholars of the present and past. For the merchants this was the time and place of the practical economics of Islam and the great trade network of the Muslim world.

So from all corners of the world men alone, in groups and with families, set out for Mecca to cross whatever lay in their path or die on the way, a guarantee of paradise.

For the pious this was an inner as well as outer journey, a process of purification. A great Muslim scholar has said: 'On my first journey to Mecca, I saw only the House, on my second pilgrimage, I saw the House of Allah; and the third time, I saw only Allah'.²

Being the centre of all activities, people mostly ambitious either or both materially or spiritually started flowing in to Mecca. This migration towards Mecca was temporary with the intention of returning back as well as those who came to stay there. It was mostly a voluntary mobility, but at times circumstances also contributed in this mobility. It also provided a good refuge place for many criminals as well as political rivals. Some great men came for a period of study and contemplation in this holy place, although the caliph Umar forbade any pilgrim from staying too long as they might then lose their awe of the place when it became too familiar.

Since the first World War, the heterogeneous social structure of Mecca has had to absorb many waves of immigrants. The first wave of immigrants into Saudi Arabia came after the Bolshevik Revolution: large number of Bhukharis from Soviet Central Asia and other refugees fled from all parts of Soviet Union, fled communist Russian rule and settled in Mecca and its environs. The Russian refugees were closely followed by refugees from Ata Turk's introduction of secularism in Turkey. These refugees firmly established themselves in the Hejaz. This area was the only urban cosmopolitan

2 M.N.Pearsons, *The Socio-Economic Dynamics of the Sacred City*, 1994, p.118.

place in Arabia which was at the same time heaven for the pious refugees as well as for the most for the most business oriented Muslims. For the Turks there was a further emotional link to the area: the Hejaz was ruled for over four centuries by the Ottomans (1522 - 1911) and during this period many scholars and government officials had retired to Mecca.

second wave of immigrants came to Mecca during the upheavals of independence in Indian subcontinent. many Muslims, not wishing either India or Pakistan nationality, came and settled in Mecca.³ These were absorbed in the initially small but acculturated Indian community. The Indian community of Mecca is now quite large and has taken new additions and turns with the emergence of Bangladesh and the crisis in Afghanistan.

Of late, the Indonesians, for domestic reasons and due to the strong desire for religious education has brought into Mecca their sizeable influx. Many of them came initially to perform *Hajj* but later decide to stay. They acculturated rapidly, assimilating easily and contributing well to the development of Mecca, for many of them are industrious and skilful. However the Indonesian migrants maintain strong ties with their relatives in Indonesia.

The most dominating immigrant element in Hejaz, yet the most blended, are the Hadaramis and Yemenis. From many historical accounts it is evident that they have played an important role in the Hejaz from pre-Islamic times. Their influx in Mecca has increased tremendously over the past hundred years, in particular during the anti colonial struggles when the flow of Hadaramis and Yemenis, into Mecca was very high. The Hadaramis from Aden and south Yemen, are primarily merchants and are the most expansionist immigrants of all Arab peoples. It is probably their strong ties with

3 M.N.Pearsons, *op.ci*, p.125.

south east Asia which accounts for such an influx of Indonesians and Malays into the Hejaz.

The Yemenis are and have been labourer, craftsmen agriculturists, merchants and Islamic scholars. Although from a very strong class and tribal stricture, they have assimilated well and form the largest non-Saudi resident group in the kingdom. Many Hejazi citizens of Saudi Arabia are of Yemeni and Hadarami origin and background. This is best illustrated by so many names of Yemeni and Hadarami origin among prominent families and government officials.

The latest wave of immigrants to Mecca is from African countries particularly from Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. With the prosecution of Muslims in Ethiopia and Eritrea, struggles for power in Somalia and Sudan, as well as the employment opportunities in Saudi Arabia, these have resulted in a big flow of immigrants from east Africa. There is an even larger flow of Muslims from west Africa. However, while the relatively Arabised east Africans integrate well with the host community, west Africans tend to stand aside from the Meccan population.

These immigrants created a heterogeneous society which was miniature of the world society. People of different background, who even had different languages lived in peace, each trying to give comforts to others; very accommodative as Mecca itself. Apart from this, this population played host to the pilgrims coming from their own region or country in particular which made the task of the pilgrims much easier. These locals also facilitated the interaction and socialisation with the locals. The Arabisation of these immigrants while retaining their several cultural and traditional things which they had brought along with them and the amalgamation of the two influences these pilgrims very much. This is exposed in their behaviour back in their native places.

As a result of these immigrations large slums have and shanty town towns are

mushrooming around Mecca to accommodate them. Many of immigrants, particularly those coming from a nearby country are poor. The tukrunis, the local name for west Africans are mostly without citizenship or residence permits and are forced to work as labourers. Their children are not able to attend schools and as such, their separation into second class status is perpetuated. Practically, Muslims are not racially biased. However, lack of opportunities often reduces the talents of social group. The tukrunis are a potential source of local manpower: it is necessary to ensure that they are integrated into the Meccan community, educated and trained to make a healthy contribution to the development of the country. As the tukrunis live in crowded, unsanitary shanties and cannot take advantage of a free medical care, they pose a health hazard, particularly during the *Hajj* season, when many African pilgrims stay in or near these shanty towns, simply because they are cheaper to rent.

One of the very important sociological aspect of *Hajj* is the role that it plays in fostering, purifying and spreading *Islam*. The *Hajj* generally was central in breaking down particularism, and so integrating the Islamic world. A modern visual impression of this can be guided from the fine documentary: *Mecca, the Forbidden City*, or other similar films. They show clearly the mix of people, and the remarkable solidarity of the faithful as they go about their common rituals.

There are several methods with in Islam which fulfil these functions and create a sense of community, of solidarity, within the very diverse and scattered Muslim world. At a more local level two of the other five other pillars of the faith are important. The first during the month of Ramdhan, and the five daily prayers. In Muslim localities during the fasting month no believer take food openly during the daylight hours. Even those who are permitted to take food due to illness or other reasons by the canon, do not take food openly. All the faithful are united and bounded in the observance of this pious

obligation. Similarly with the prayers: at five times each day all Muslims pray, all at the same time and facing the same direction of the Ka'ba in the holy city of Mecca. This process is even more manifested in the case of Friday prayers.

Many scholars have particularly highlighted this aspect of Islam which gives a very systematic set-up in which all the believers are required to interact with each other at different levels and different point of time. Shah Waliullah Dehlawi makes a very descriptive note of this. It is pointed out that at local level every Muslim is required to offer five the times prayer in the mosque of his locality where one interacts with local people with whom he spent most of his time. This is on daily basis. Then he is required to interact at a more broader level. This is provide by the Friday prayer where the people from several localities and several local mosques collect together in the mosque called Jama mosque. This is done every Friday, expanding the time space to a week. The space is still widened by a still larger gathering in the form of Eid prayers. This is a much larger gathering where people from several Jama mosques come together for the prayer. People from different villages come together on these two occasions of Eid al-Adhha and Eid al-Fitr. *Hajj* provides a still larger platform where people from all corners collect atleast once in their life time.⁴

The *Hajj* has been recognised as absolute central for the faith. Cragg describes how "by this annual 'congregation' Islam is bound together in a visible sacrament of unity, geographically realised from the ends of the earth. In history the pilgrimage has profoundly served the solidarity of Islam and helped to a strong cosmopolitanism in architecture, tradition and society, through the contacts it afforded. Each recurring year it mediates through the body of the faithful a vicarious experience of the symbol of Mecca, in that pilgrims share with their neighbours the thrill and emotions of their

4 See Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, *Hujjat allal al-Balighah*.

venture both in respect and prospect. In the actuality of the ceremonies themselves in and about Mecca there resides a powerful realisation of the incorporate community of Islam, in time and place⁵

The *Hajj* and the other four tenets of Islam constitute its great traditions. As a great tradition it imparts some primary contributions. The fostering of the feeling of brotherhood by providing a platform and motivating different strata's of the society is a major role of *Hajj*. "The pilgrimage helped to produce a mingling among the elite of the Muslim world; scholars on the way to Mecca would stay temporarily at places on the way, forming friendship with colleagues or themselves teaching in the local mosques". More generally, 'The wandering scholars is a familiar feature of the medieval society; the pilgrimage ensured that the wanderers met at a determined time and place. It provided the Islamic world as whole with a centre and forum, which contributed greatly to the formation and maintenance of an Islamic consensus -- almost, one might say, an Islamic public opinion". The *Hajj* infact, creates "a heightened awareness of belonging to a larger whole. This awareness is reinforced by participation in the common ritual and ceremonies of the pilgrimage in Mecca and Madina, and the communion with the fellow Muslims of other lands and people. The physical mobility of important groups of people entails a measures of social and cultural mobility, and a corresponding evolution of institutions. It is instructive to compare the stratified, rigidly hierarchic society and intense local traditions with in the comparatively small area of western Christendom with the situation in medieval Islam. The Islamic world has its local traditions, often very vigorous; but there is a degree of unity in the civilisation of these cities; in values, standard and social customs , that is without

5 Kenneth Cragg, *The House of Islam*, Belmont, Calcutta, 1960, p.69.

parallel in the medieval west".⁶

The Islamic cultural unity and solidarity, a tangible sense of being umma, were very largely created by the *Hajj*. K.N. Chaudhuri in his study of the Indian Ocean area, very appropriately describes Mecca as "a primate city, with virtually unlimited spatial domains."⁷ An account from the *Hajj* of 1991, described how "every year during *Hajj*, the holy city of Mecca becomes the most cosmopolitan of all Islamic cities, with an international choice of cuisine, a variety of shopping and a night of life where Muslims from all over the world meet each other, often for the first time. At an Indonesian takeaway, an Indonesian pilgrim introduces his new Senegalese friend to 'hot soup with meatballs'. the Senegalese had never eaten anything but his local food before. Both are farmers and they discuss, in Arabic, the cost of living at home, their farming techniques, and their experiences over *Hajj*."⁸

Another very important sociological impact of *Hajj* on the pilgrim himself has been well highlighted by the anthropologists. Commenting on the rise of the number of pilgrims over years to Indonesia Greentz says that this "created a new clan of spiritual adepts: men who had been to the holy land and (so they thought) seen Islam through an undarkened glass."⁹ Turner talks of pilgrimages in general, and says they "represented a higher level of freedom, choice, volition, structurelessness than did, say, the world of the manor, village or medieval town. it was Yin to its yang, cosmopolitanism to its local particularism, *communitas* to its numerous structures"¹⁰

Thus these pilgrims who had the privilege of going on to *Hajj* and visiting the

6 The Encyclopaedia of Islam under Hadjdj.

7 K.N.Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge,1990.p.353.

8 The Independent,London,quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald,June 20,1991

9 Clifford R. Geertz, *Islam Observed, Religion Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, Chicago,1968,p.67.

10 Vitor Turner, "*the centre out there: Pilgrims Goal*" *History of Religions*. x11,3,1973,p.200.

holy places were held in high esteems by themselves and also by the local folks back in their place. Duckett noted of Persia 1574 that " they have among them certain holy men whom they call Setes, counted holy for that they or any of theirs ancestor had been on pilgrimage to visit the sepulchre of Mohammed, both he holy men, and have no less opinion of themselves ¹¹The significance of *Hajj* in pre Mughal India has been highlighted in these words "The community of Orthodox Indian Islam in the early period, like that of other distant Muslim regions, depended for doctrinal guidance, reinvigorated piety, and communal solidarity upon regular connections with the great shrines of the Muslim world -- especially through the annual pilgrimage to Mecca".¹²

Thus we see the impact of *Hajj*, or an association of a person with Mecca is indispensable. Mecca was seen as the fountainhead, the source of correct Islamic doctrine and conduct.¹³ People from this area arrogated to themselves great religious prestige and authority, and these claims are widely accepted. Mecca controlled the command and many rulers received their legitimisation in return for the gifts and contributions they made. As for inanimate objects, as a religious book or relic from Mecca was treated with veneration. In the mid-eighteenth century the ruler of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula "erected a large imambara [a building where shia Muslims celebrated Muharram] in Murshidabad...its centre, the medina, was filled six feet deep with earth from the sacred soil of Mecca."¹⁴

The impact of *Hajj* on pilgrims is so general that even the ignorant or those who have only a superficial knowledge of their religion could feel and express this impact

11 Geoffrey Duckett in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Glasgow, 1903-5, 12 vols., III 162.

12 J.F.Richards, ed., *Precious Metals in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, Durham, N.C., 1983, p.202.

13 Henry Bigot in his French work mentions about 1600 impacts of Mecca on a pilgrim and only a reference is made in the chapter, *The Centrality of the Hajj*, by M.N.Pearson in the book *Pious Passengers*, p.83.

14 Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, Leiden, 1980, p.164.

both in words and action. the great Dutch savant Snouck Hurgronje noted about the Indonesian and Malays who merely did the *Hajj*, the result was to increase their feelings of Muslim solidarity and also "the politico-religious might of Islam, hitherto known to them only from popular legends....has proclaimed itself as a living reality".¹⁵

Great prestige were attached to these pilgrims called *Hajjis*. Fernao Menedes Pinto met in Mocha "a qasis of theirs, a maulana, whom they regarded as a holy man because he had recently returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca".¹⁶ "Those who have been to Arabia, and have visited the sepulchre of Mohammed in Mecca, [sic], are held in high respect by all the world, whatever be their rank, and whether they be poor or rich; and indeed, a great number of the poor have been there. These have peculiar privileges; they are called Agy [sic for *Hajji*]; and in order to be recognised and remarked among the others, they all wear very white cotton frocks, and on their heads little round bonnets, also white, and carry beads in their hands without crosses; and when they have not the means of maintaining themselves in this attire, the king or the noble supply them, and fail not to do so."¹⁷

At the same time negative impacts on pilgrimage have also been spoken of. Many a writers say it to be an increase in intolerance. Some disagree saying that it was a nature already present and possessed by the pilgrim, but ever since his socialisation increased after performing *Hajj* these aspects became more visible. The physical dimension of *Hajj* which is rigorous and tiresome makes the pilgrim unabsobtive. At the same time he is required to make compromises and show good behaviour with his fellow pilgrims which requires a lit of self restraints. As he was used to a more self centred life style, this sudden socialisation where fellow being was to be preferred, at

15 C.Snouck Hurgronje, *Mecca in the latter Part of the Nineteenth Century*, Leiden, 1931, P.244.

16 F.M.Pinto, *Travels*, p.9.

17 *The voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldivies, the Moluccas and Brazil*; trans.and ed., Albert Gray, London, Hakluyt, 1887-90, 2vols., I,110,165.

times did not give enough time to the pilgrims to adjust himself and thus manifested in short temperament and intolerance.

Among all those who permitted *Hajj*, the effect on those who stayed for some time in the holy cities, who did several *Hajj*, and numerous umeras and who studied in the great centres of Islamic learning in Mecca and Madina are much more powerful. Hurgronje writes "There live in Mekka the choice few who have thrown themselves into the very source of the stream of the international life of Islam to be purified and strengthened in its wave".... many individuals live in Mekka for purely religious motives; they have desired to study the holy lore in the holy place, to live in the neighbourhoods of renowned pious learned men or mystics, to atone for old sins, to purify dirtily acquired property by partly pious spending, or to pass their last days on the holy ground".¹⁸ Mecca had always acted as the centre, and had always been in part populated by those from all over Islamic world who wanted to drink at the source. Ibn Battuta spent more than four years in the area, as did many Indian Muslims. In the twelfth century Ibn Jubayr noted a great number of settled pilgrims and those whose stay had been long.¹⁹

Thus any religious specialist, whether an alim, mufti, or sufi added greatly to his status, prestige and acceptability if he had sojourned in the holy cities, and studied there. In a way this is a circular statement for anyone who was, or hoped to be, a religious authority would of necessity go to the Hejaz; conversely, if this journey had not been made one had little chances of popular acceptance, or of fulfilling one's own religious aspirations . These people from the Hejaz, or more often people who had spent much time there studying and doing *Hajj*, were seen in outer Islamic areas as

18 Hurgronje, pp.243,258,6 and generally also pp.153-242 for late nineteenth century students in Mecca.

19 Muhammad ibn Ahmad, ibn Jubair, *the Travels of Ibn jubair (1183- 1185)*, trans., R.J.C. Broadhurst, London, 1952, pp.119,127.

cynosures of the faith, people whose experience made them uniquely qualified to be listened to and emulated. Many of these people led vigorous campaigns, once they returned home, against what they now considered, as a result of their Meccan experiences, to be un-Islamic behaviour. Many a times this aroma of Meccan sanctity is even exploited by many for their worldly gains.²⁰

Many a pilgrims who went on *Hajj* came back with new emotions and a feeling of responsibility for his fellow brothers. The feeling was so strong that the pilgrims made it their duty to work for the welfare of the people and reforms were made. *Hajji* Ibrahim Muhaddis Qadiri having returned after twenty-four years in holy places settled in Agra and was a prestigious teacher until his death in 1593. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya of Multan having studied in Bukhara and Madina spent his life in Jerusalem and Baghdad.²¹ Another pioneer of this field who was the great master of hadith is Abdul Haq who died in 1642.

Some times these people were so strong in their belief and practice that it was not easy for others to accept it as such. This put the preachers in trouble several times. In sixteenth century India Shaikh Abdun Nabi was at first strongly influenced by sufi practices and ideas, being a member of the Chistiyah silsilah. Then he went to Mecca and Madina several times, and as the chronicler Badaoni tells "he there studied the traditional saying of [prophet Muhammad" and as a result gave up Sufi practices". Subsequently he returned to India and became, as Sadr-us-Sudur, a powerful and conservative force at Akbar's court. His rigidity finally led to his being disgraced in 1580, and ironically he was exiled by being sent off on *Hajj*.²²

Maulana Muhammad Tahir, a Gujrati Bohra, spent some time in Mecca, "and

20 Hurgronje, *op.cit.* p.222

21 S.A.A.Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, N.Delhi, 1978-83, 2vols., I.190.

22 Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, trans., G.Ranking et. al. ,Patna, 1973, 3vols.III, 127; I.H.Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, Karanchi, 1972, p.52.

after his return, imbued with purist zeal, undertook the reform of his fellow Bohras," engaging in a vigorous rectification campaign.²³ Two later examples of this same phenomenon, of Indian scholars going to Mecca to study and perform *Hajj*, and then returning to lead reformist campaigns at home are the very well known reformers, Shah Waliullah in the eighteenth century, and Saiyid Ali of Rae Baraeli in the nineteenth century. Another very important pioneer of the twentieth century is Maulana Ilyas who started his efforts in the most backward region of Mewat near Delhi. This reformist campaign gained popularity after initial difficulties and hurdles, and spread world over attracting all classes.

All these arguments are not absolute. Many a times the Meccan veneration was subject to local requirements and interpretations. There are several evidences which speak of the authority of Mecca not being accepted by locals as such. In 1680, Qazi Mir, an important and scholarly noble at Aurangzeb's court, "composed a new book drawn from the Old Testament and the Evangelists...when it was finished, ...Qazi Mir prayed for leave from Aurangzeb to travel to Mecca, as no one can be refused this, as it is a pilgrimage. There he showed the work to several learned scholars including the sharif to decide whether it was right to lay them before the public. After several months of examination, the verdict was attested to by the principal men: the sharif and other learned men of Mecca with their seals and signatures."²⁴ But on this occasion the strong willed Aurangzeb was not impressed. He still considered the book to be unsound, and Qazi Mir was not allowed to make the book public.

Mecca had often a large population of ordinary Muslims, many of whom had probably simply run out of money and so were stranded. On other occasions people

23 S.C.Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujrat*, London, 1964, p.24.

24 Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, trans., W.Irvine, London, 1905-7, 4vols., IV, 118. quoted by M.N. Pearson in *The Centrality of the Hajj*.

who accompanied elite pilgrims had perforce to stay in Mecca until their patrons decided to go home. This happened to the large numbers who were attached to the large party of Gulbadan Begum in the late 1570's. Indeed, the Ottoman became concerned at the overcrowding and pressure on food supplies that they caused in Mecca and took steps to force them to leave²⁵ This economic or political compulsions which put the ordinary pilgrims at the receiving end, at times had a negative effect. The longer stay in a foreign land not out of option but, compulsion was nothing but a check to their freedom.

Thus we have seen that different strata of people go there. On the one hand we have kings and the rulers who go there with pomp and show and on the other hand we have people who went there even by begging on their way. In between we find people who could just manage and also those who were financed and supported by others. The officials going on *Hajj* made things easier for themselves by procuring official facilities. During the Ottoman period, all concerned authorities, provincial governors and other administrators were instructed not to cause any difficulty to these distinguished guests. The dangerous stretches of the route were specially taken care of. This distinction was possible on the route only, but once the pilgrim was in ihram and performing the ritual all became equal and it was next to impossible to distinguish between them. Women were 'no second' in this regard. They also participate with enthusiasm and devotion in this vigorous act of performing *Hajj*. A surpassingly large number of elite Muslim women made the pilgrimage from India even during the medieval period when the act was still more difficult. In most of these cases they were favourably supported and helped by their male relatives. Bega Begham, wife of Humayun; Gulbadan Begham, daughter of Babur; daughters of Kamran and many

²⁵ Farooqi, *Mughal - Ottoman relations*, pp. 118-9.

others performed *Hajj*.²⁶ Many of these elite women also went to the important Shia shrines of Karbala, Qum, and Mashhad.²⁷ Women of Deccan rulers also undertook this journey.²⁸ These elite women were always accompanied by a fleet of women who accompanied them. In general, inspite of great desires many women could not go on *Hajj*. Their number was always lesser than men. Those lucky ones who went were often accompanied by their male relatives. It remains a topic to be discussed if a women can go on *Hajj* without her male relative

The impact of *Hajj* on women is more profound. They project a higher spiritual upliftment. The women perform the *Hajj* ceremonies with their faces unveiled and this makes them believe that it is not the 'Ulema' but the Almighty God whose command is all powerful. Thus one must veil when asked to and unveil when so demanded. This is in contrast to the common notion that it is the orthodox Ulemas who forced veil on women. Having undertaken a vigorous religious act they feel more confident in participating in activities involving higher physical inputs.

Going out on pilgrimage is always a longed desire. Those who had the chance of performing one *Hajj* always desired for the second and it goes on and on. It is so captivate that one is never satisfied and contended with it. The house of the pilgrim going out on *Hajj* gives a lively look with people and relatives coming from far off places to see him off and request him for prayers. The pilgrim can be seen ladden with garlands of flowers presented by the well-wishers. People go to the furthest extent to see the pilgrim off. Earlier the sea ports and now the railway stations and air ports are places where one find eyes filled with tears of joy of those privileged ones. At the

26 Abul Fazal, *Akbar Nama*, trans., H.Beverilge, Delhi, 1972-3, 3vols., III275-7.

27 Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, trans., G.Ranking et.al., Patna, 1973, 3vols., II216-7.

28 Refer:M.N.Pearsons, *Pious Pasengers*, p.115.

same time many feel and are reminded of their deprivation. A feeling that alas that man would have been me. The sense of deprivation can well be seen in the eyes of these people. Many of them can be heard saying of their intention of performing the *Hajj* the next year. Many accept of carrying this desire in their chests for as long as forty years when their prayer was replied. This longing of going on *Hajj*, leaves a deep impression on the pilgrim once he gets the chance of going there, which is projected in his behaviour. We have already discussed the impacts on different groups of people like the scholars and intellectuals, rulers and administrators, religious leaders and pious people, merchants etc. Thus these impressions effect the behaviour of the pilgrim. The pilgrims feel that they have started a new life which should be distinct from the previous one. They refer to the sayings of the prophet Muhammad which says that the sins are washed off completely as if the pilgrim was a new born baby with no sins. Hence a new start of life which should be pious and free from all ill doings. Many events have been recorded in which robbers and pirates have given up. This ill mode of earning a livelihood was rejected and those means of livelihood were taken than was permitted.²⁹ Many of them became so pious that they had many followers. The pilgrims involved themselves in more pious deeds. Many started avoiding their normal means of livelihood as it may involve some malpractice. Thus *Hajj* brings about a transfer in the behaviour of the pilgrim altogether.

29 M.Zakaria, *Fazael A'mal*, Delhi, 1997, 2vols., II: Stories regarding impact of *Hajj* on the pilgrims.

CONCLUSION

A Pilgrimage involves a journey to a sacred place of religious devotion. The pilgrimage to Mecca --the Hajj, is a major tenet of the religion of Islam, yet little has been written about its history or of the conditions under which thousand of pilgrims from far flung regions of the Islamic world travelled to the heart of the Arabian peninsula. For over fourteen hundred years the Hajj has been one of the great events of the world history. It is central for Muslims, being one of the five pillars of Islam.

Inspite of its unique characteristics, which are found in no other religion or secular event of precisely the same nature. it could not garner the attention of the social scientists or was deliberately ignored. Hence only a few scattered works are available which are either ill reported or lack the required data. Apart from this, misunderstanding and confusing the act with other similar events is common in these works. Islam is unique religion, which retained many of the pre-Islamic practices, but contributed new meanings, dimensions and approaches to these practices. In this background it becomes necessary to highlight the approach of Islam to this pillar of the religion which continued from pre-Islamic times.

An attempt has also been made to understand Hajj, Umra, and Ziyarah distinctively, which are different journeys undertaken with religious devotion. Hajj is a great tradition of Islam and finds mention in the holy scripture with all the accompanying rituals. Great traditions are fountainheads of vertical and horizontal mobility in the society and serve to unite all the believers in a grand brotherhood. This brotherhood encompasses

all the areas of human existence. This is why this great tradition is at the nerve centre of the Muslim world.

The first two i.e. Hajj and Umra, have religious prescriptions in the holy Quran: each distinguished by attaching certain criterion to them. Hajj becomes obligatory on the attainment of certain conditions including economic, social and security. Another remarkable feature of Hajj is that it is performed on a fixed date in a particular month based on lunar calendar. Thus it keeps shifting by ten days from year to year, attracting people in scorching summer and chilling winter; leaving little options with the pilgrims. This time bound journey makes the pilgrim submissive before the divine Command incorporating in him obedience.

Umra on the other hand can be performed at any time of the year. Thus it gives more room to the pilgrim to time his journey which suits him best. What is important in both Hajj and Umra is that they have religious sanctions. Ziyarat on the other hand is a non-canonical practice and doesn't have any religious prescription. It is part of the little traditions which change from place to place and have different local variations. For the purists, this practise is forbidden and is un-Islamic. This is reason that they campaign against such practices and at times even remove such objects that can become important for its veneration. This they consider as anti-monotheistic; and against the very foundations of Islam. For a better understanding extensive use of religious texts have been made.

The rites of visitation are also quite different from those practised by Christian churches. The Muslim pilgrims does not necessarily enter the Ka'ba, even though this is possible at certain times of the year. The pilgrimage is valid even if the Ka'ba was beheld from the outside. While in most Christian places of pilgrimage, pious visitors are expected

to enter the church or shrine. A visit to the grave of the prophet Mohammed in Madina is by no means an obligation, even though many pilgrims will combine a stay in the second holy city of the Hejaz with their pilgrim to Mecca, and some even affirm that they had a more profound religious experience in Medina.

Another very important aspect touched upon is the concept and understanding of the term 'pilgrimage' itself across different boundaries and even different periods of time. The word pilgrimage saw its origin from a simple wayfarer sense to its more restrict sense of a ritual attached with certain sets of activities. The impact of the belief system, local customs and traditions on this word can be seen in the use of different terms for pilgrimage. This is elaborated by the word Hajj in Arabic and Ziyarat in Persian, which have different connotation in religious text and context.

Moreover, the pilgrimage in Islam is fundamentally different from the experience with which Christians are familiar. The Ka'ba with its Black Stone, which the pilgrims kiss whenever they happen to cross it, is by no means a relic. Ka'ba which was built by Ibrahim, possesses a religious significance unequalled even by the most venerated holy place in other religion. When devoting oneself to the rites of the pilgrimage, Muslim meditates the might and mercy of Allah and also forswears the devil and all his works.

The present study has a fairly modest aim. In the first place, it is meant to deal with pilgrimage as a political, social and economic rather than a religious phenomenon. These different aspects are fairly linked with each other in real life. The centrality of Ka'ba, on the one hand ties the Muslim community the world over in one cord while on the other hand, the seekers of political power, a say in the affairs of the holy shrine is equated as a say in the affairs of the Muslim world.

Even in pre-Islamic times, this building had a far reaching significance so much so that the powerful Abraha became jealous of it and came to demolish it. Among the Arabs of Mecca, even during prophet Mohammed's time it was customary to hang on the walls of Ka'ba any important document that was to be made known to different tribes. Thus documents pertaining to peace negotiations or boycotts were a common hangings on the walls of Ka'ba. At the same time when Arabic literature, particularly Arabic poetry was at its zenith, any literary masterpiece was hung on the walls of Ka'ba.

Considering the extreme importance of Ka'ba and Mecca to Muslims the world over, having a say in the affairs of the holy shrine imparts a political leverage and this has attracted many powers to increase their influence. At a point of time Egypt was increasing its influence in the city by more and more participation in the affairs of the city. It was Egypt that used to supply the kiswa. Likewise, the Turks were also interested in the same way. Of late it is Iran, after the Islamic revolution, is all the more interested in monopolising the control of the holy cities. Iran had its own internal compulsions that forced it to take an approach that questioned the legitimacy of Saudi Arabia over the holy cities, and calling for the formation of an international body to look after its affairs. The Iranians alleging the Saudis of mistreating the Iranian pilgrims disrupted the 1981 pilgrimage. This raised the security the security issue to the fore. The GCC countries polarised against Iran.

The year 1987 again witnessed Iranians provoking Saudi Arabia. This time the incident turned into a bloody riot in Mecca killing more than four hundred pilgrims. The incident was followed by the seeking of the Saudi and Kuwaiti embassies in Tehran to protest at Saudi behaviour in suppressing the protesters. Of all the responsibilities, the

Saudi's take most seriously the guardianship of the holy places and the responsibility of holding the annual pilgrimage.

Even in earlier times the Muslim rulers, from different parts of the world, drew their legitimacy by patronising to these holy places constant contacts were kept by these kingdoms through subsidies, grants, pensions, construction works and patronising pilgrims. Indian rulers, Mughal or Deccan were no exceptions to this. This seeking of legitimacy, through assisting things which were favoured by the masses signified the presence of a nascent democratic process. Even Akbar, who started Din-e-Ilahi and was serious about its expansion had to resort to this technique by arranging pilgrimages to Mecca . This aspect of Hajj required a further detailed study . Apart from this Hajj was also used to send those courtiers on Hajj whose presence was not solicited, likewise many individuals made it a pretext to relieve themselves .

On the economic front Hajj had its impact on the individual and on the country as a whole. Many people save all the earnings of their lives to accumulate the required minimum to embark on the great journey to the holy places and some even dispose of their capital and the source of their livelihood to find the necessary fund. The holy cities on the other hand were earlier, almost totally dependent on these pilgrims for their sustenance. Hajj provided safe routes which promoted trade. Gift, grants and patronages gradually got institutionalised and there was an established system of its transfer. The Muslim rulers sent gifts to the sharifs as well as to the pious peoples in the area . Items of trade thus were in a continuous flow to these cities, which rose to peak during the Hajj season.

The pilgrim, if wealthy, may be accompanied by a number of people attending him. If he is a merchant, he may combine his pilgrimage with a business trip, buying and selling

commodities is the places through which he travels, and thus learning the products, markets, customs and practices of many lands .If he is a scholar, he may take the opportunity to attend lectures, meet colleagues, and acquire books. thus participating in the diffusion and exchange of knowledge and ideas. The pilgrimage helps to maintain an adequate network of communications between the far flung Muslim lands. The experience of the pilgrimage gives rise to a rich literature of travel. bringing information about distant places and a heightened awareness of belonging to a larger whole. This awareness is reinforced by participation in the common rituals and ceremonies of the pilgrimage in Mecca an Madina and the communion with the fellow Muslims of other lands

The pilgrims are instructed to refrain from lewdness, abuse, or hostile argument. The Muslim should not commit any of these at any time but they are more sinful during the Hajj. One must refrain from sexual activity or from contracting a marriage. One must not use perfume or cut his hair or clip his nails. The male must keep his hair uncovered and the female must keep her face unveiled. The whole being of the pilgrim must be completely devoted to One God --Allah, without attention to appearance; and his aggression towards man, animal or plant must be blunted or completely annihilated, and the sex urge fully sublimated. These inculcate a sense of discipline and ultimately leads to forming a society where people are aware of their duties and obligations and forming a just and equal society. These aspects of Hajj represent only the tip of an iceberg. There are many more aspects that need detailed study. The changes brought about by modern technology have dramatically complicated the Hajj in atlas two ways. Firstly, travel has become easier, faster and in the reach of a large portion of the ever growing population. Muslims, now , from every corner of the earth. converge on the holy places, thus straining the available

facilities and more importantly, causing intolerable congestion in Mecca and its environs. Secondly, the use of new modes of transportation, the aeroplane and specially the motorcars, have made the congestion even more unimaginable in addition to the radical environmental devastation they bring in the sacred area.

A re-evaluation of the whole system is required. The interdependence among the functions and elements of the Hajj, including transportation, requires integrated or system solution. For example, local congestion, which at times led to stampede, is not necessarily reduced by building more roads but by providing needed information to the users and operators of the system, by providing alternative to transportation such as good communication system, by reducing the need for movement through optimum land use and distribution of services.

Having mentioned this, a student on the subject needs to be very cautious. Hajj is very delicate subject and Mecca is unique city. The social structure of Mecca is highly complex. It does not submit to simple analysis. A contemporary understanding of the socio-economic structure of Mecca must, of necessity, take into account the rich historical background of the city and its inhabitants. The problems of Mecca can have only unique solutions and have to be tailored for it. These solutions can only be generated if these problems are viewed from the value system of Islam and studied in the proper cultural context.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Pilgrim Flow Trend.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PILGRIMS	RISE/FALL	PERCENTAGE
1974	918777	311022 +	51%
1975	894573	24204 -	3%
1976	719040	175533 -	20%
1977	739319	20779 -	3%
1978	730236	90917 -	12%
1979	762520	32284 +	4%
1980	812892	49628 -	6%
1981	879368	66476 +	8%
1982	853555	25813 -	35%
1983	1003911	150356 +	18%
1984	851761	152150 -	
1985	856718	4957 +	
1986	960386	103668 +	
1987	762755	197631 -	
1988	774560	11805 +	
1989	827236	52676 +	
1990	720102	107134 -	
1991	1015664	295562 +	
1992	992813	22851 -	

Table 2. Payments To Bedouins From Egyptian Provincial Budgets, To Facilitate Hajj Travel.

YEAR	RECIPIENTS	PAYMENTS IN PARA	PAYMENTS IN GOLD
1596-7	Bedouins unspecified	211451	5286
1600	Bedouins unspecified	206170	5154
1601-2	Bedouins unspecified (only payments not in compensation for specific services.	208455	5211
1611-12	Bedouins unspecified	222945	5574
1614-15	As in 1611-12	222945	5574

Table 3. Yearly inflow of pilgrims from outside

Years In AD	Hijra Year (Lunar Calendar)	Number Of Pilgrims Coming From Outside Saudi Arabia	Saudi Monarch Who Led The Pilgrim
1925	1345	90662	King Abdul Aziz
1926	1346	96312	-do-
1927	1347	60764	-do-
1928	1348	81166	-do-
1929	1349	39045	-do-
1930	1350	29065	-do-
1931	1351	20181	-do-
1932	1352	25291	-do-
1933	1353	33898	-do-
1934	1354	33830	-do-
1935	1355	19517	-do-
1936	1356	76334	-do-
1937	1357	59577	-do-
1938	1358	32153	-do-
1939	1359	7024	-do-
1940	1360	23863	Faisal for king Abdul Aziz
1941	1361	24743	King Abdul Aziz
1942	1362	63590	-do-
1943	1363	27857	Faisal for Abdul Aziz
1944	1364	27630	Abdul Aziz
1945	1365	61286	-do-
1946	1366	55344	Saud for Abdul Aziz
1947	1367	75614	Abdul Aziz
1948	1368	99069	-do-
1949	1369	107653	Saud for Abdul Aziz
1950	1370	100578	Abdul Aziz
1951	1371	148515	Saud for Abdul Aziz
1952	1372	149841	Abdul Aziz
1953	1373	146072	Saud

Years In AD	Hijra Year (Lunar Calendar)	Number Of Pilgrims Coming From Outside Saudi Arabia	Saudi Monarch Who Led The Pilgrim
1954	1374	232971	Saud
1955	1375	220733	-do-
1956	1376	215575	-do-
1957	1377	209197	-do-
1958	1378	207171	-do-
1959	1379	203369	-do-
1960	1380	285948	-do-
1961	1381	216455	-do-
1962	1382	199038	Faisal for Saud
1963	1383	266555	-do-
1964	1384	283319	Faisal
1965	1385	294118	-do-
1966	1386	316226	-do-
1967	1387	318507	-do-
1968	1388	374782	-do-
1969	1389	406295	-do-
1970	1390	431270	-do-
1971	1391	479399	-do-
1972	1392	645183	-do-
1973	1393	607755	-do-
1974	1394	918777	Fwaz/Faisal
1975	1395	894573	Khalid
1976	1396	719040	-do-
1977	1397	739319	-do-
1978	1398	830236	Fahad/Khalid
1979	1399	862520	-do-
1980	1400	812892	Khalid
1981	1401	879368	-do-
1982	1402	853555	-do-
1983	1403	1003911	Fahad

Years In AD	Hijra Year (Lunar Calendar)	Number Of Pilgrims Coming From Outside Saudi Arabia	Saudi Monarch Who Led The Pilgrim
1984	1404	969671	Fahad
1985	1405	846079	-do-
1986	1406	856718	-do-
1987	1407	960386	-do-
1988	1408	762755	-do-
1989	1409	774560	-do-
1990	1410	827236	-do-
1991	1411	720102	-do-
1992	1412	1012140	-do-
1993	1413	992813	-do-
1994	1414	995611	-do-
1995	1415	1042374	-do-
1996	1416	1080465	-do-
1997	1417	1168591	-do-

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