

My *Weltanschauung*¹ through Hajj and some Thoughts on how Islam Promotes Racial Harmony

"We mirror the movement of the heavens, circling the ka'bah seven times. We move in harmony, as if travelling back to the beginning of time. I feel myself becoming one with those around me, with those who have come before, and all who follow"²

When the month of Dhu al-Hijjah approaches majority of the Muslims prepare for the festival of 'Id al-Adha, however a minority – approximately 3 million – ready themselves for the fifth pillar of Islam: Hajj. Here, I intend to focus on Hajj and how I am in awe when pondering over its magnificence and grandeur.

When beginning the journey for Hajj, a Hajji (pilgrim) comes into the state of *ihram*. This state of higher spirituality includes the wearing of two simple white sheets of cloth, which diminish social status, class, race and any other boundary. It's when a king looks, acts and is treated no differently than a pauper. H.A.R Gibb in his '*Whither Islam?: A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World*' wrote:

'No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and endeavour so many and so varied races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small community in Japan, show that Islam still has the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition'.

Allah has emphasised the notion of the *ummah*, '*This community of yours is one single community and I am your Lord, so serve me*' (Qur'an, 21:92), and the Hajj is its practical implementation for the world to witness the sight of unity and equality. For me as a Muslim it gives me a clear *Weltanschauung* (worldview), which forces me to see the world differently; "I see it as one world, our world. The geography of which encompasses the 'so called' paradigms of 'East' and 'West', and breaks through artificial borders." It was this very idea of equality that had Malcolm X rediscovering himself and leaving the 'Nation of Islam' for mainstream traditional Islam. He wrote to his wife stating,

'There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity

¹ My Worldview – How I see the world around me.

² *Journey to Mecca - Story of Ibn-e-Battuta*. Accessed online [22.10.2012]: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcQUuCBgYPc&feature=relmfu>

⁴ For a summary of the 'Prophet's final sermon on Hajj' see: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/muhm-sermon.asp>