

ON PILGRIMAGE:

Journeys with Judah Halevi, Ignatius Loyola and Malcolm X

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INTRODUCTION

My first pilgrimage took place sixty years ago, in the fall of my freshman year in high school. With my fellow pilgrims I traveled by train from New York City to Auriesville, New York, a village in the Mohawk River Valley. Six decades ago, all the Jesuit institutions in and around New York City hired a full train so that students, staff and other friends of the Jesuits could travel together on pilgrimage to the Shrine of the North American Martyrs at Auriesville on the Sunday in the fall nearest to their feast. That is October 19th now, but September 26th then.

Who were the North American martyrs? Eight French Jesuit missionaries who died violent deaths in the 1640s in what is now Canada and New York State. Needless to say, their martyrdom not only testified to their faith but also, quite realistically, to the forebodings the Iroquois Confederacy harbored about encroaching French presence in the middle of the seventeenth century. Our pilgrimage to Auriesville in 1953 was not all prayer and solemnity, I assure you, although there were both at the mass in the Martyrs' Shrine that Sunday, and along the paths that took us past trees marked with simple crosses and the name of Jesus, imitating a practice once followed in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon by Isaac Jogues, René Goupil and Jean de la Lande in the 1640s. But the train ride on either end of the visit to Auriesville was more

fun, as I recall. In 1953 we were not that different from Chaucer's fourteenth-century pilgrims to Canterbury, or the young people who journey on foot today along the *Camino de Santiago* to Compostela in Spain.

Let me take you on pilgrimage this late afternoon, in fact three pilgrimages—Jewish, Christian and Muslim—each one featuring a unique pilgrim, each of these pilgrims very different from each other and yet each of them very like you and me. PRAYER CHANGES THINGS, I once read many years ago on a sign outside a Holiness Church in Washington, D.C., and I have come to understand what that means over the years. The main thing changed by prayer turns out to be you or me. Pilgrimage is a type of prayer in motion, a geographical prayer, not a variety of tourism or any other secular journey. Pilgrimage as prayer changes things in the one who engages in it. The roads we follow as pilgrims take us to sacred places that have, as it were, been waiting for our arrival all our lives. Those destinations welcome us—they welcome us, but they also change us.

I: JUDAH HALEVI'S ASCENT TO ZION

Judah Halevi, a Spanish Jew of the late eleventh and early twelfth century (ca. 1075 or 1085-1141CE), lived out most of his days at a time of dramatic religious change in Spain. The situation of Jews in Muslim Spain (*al-Andalus*) had been relatively comfortable after the eighth century CE, when Muslims coming from North Africa had wrested much of the Iberian peninsula from its Visigothic Christian rulers. The Visigoths, originally Arian Christians but subsequently orthodox, had made life difficult for the Jews of Spain. Muslim-ruled Spain from the eighth century on continued to have a substantial Jewish population, as well as an even larger Christian underclass until, from the early eleventh century on, the Spanish Muslim principalities

began to fight among themselves. The *Reconquista* of Spain, its retrieval from Muslim hands by the Christian kingdoms that had survived in northern Spain, progressed by fits and starts from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. The Almoravids (*al-Murabitun*), a Berber movement of austere Islamic reform that originated in what is now Morocco, invaded Spain in 1086, originally aiming to assist the beleaguered Muslim princes of Spain. Finally, however, the Almoravids supplanted the Spanish Muslim princes. The Almoravids continued the earlier Spanish Muslim protection of the Jews of Andalus, unlike their successors in the 1140s, the Almohads (*al-Muwahhidun*), who also invaded Spain from Morocco.¹ But Judah Halevi had already left Spain before the Almohad conquest, possibly because he feared their anti-Jewish bias, a reality already manifest in Almohad-ruled Morocco.² Thus Judah Halevi did not witness the later stages of Spanish Muslim collapse and the reassertion of Spanish Christian power, as well as the trouble these events caused for Jews.

In the year 1140 Judah Halevi headed for the Land of Promise bequeathed by God, according to biblical tradition, to Abraham, the forefather of the Jews. Late in the eleventh century, however, that Land of Promise—more or less comprising Israel and the Palestinian territories today—had come under Christian rule as a consequence of the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 by the soldiers of the First Crusade. Even before they arrived in the Holy Land, those Crusaders had begun what they defined as *peregrinatio*, militant ‘pilgrimage’ to the holy places,³ attacking not Muslims but Jews in Western Europe, leading to a wholesale pogrom unleashed on the Jews in the Rhineland in 1096.⁴ On arrival in Jerusalem in 1099 the Crusaders slaughtered many, and possibly most of the Muslims and Jews living there.⁵ The Noble Sanctuary (*Haram al-sharif*), the locale of both the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock—and the place where the Jerusalem Temple had once stood—became the scene of a particularly bloody

massacre.⁶ The Crusaders held the city of Jerusalem for less than a century, converting formerly Jewish and Muslim sacred sites into Christian shrines of various types.⁷ When Judah Halevi left Spain as a pilgrim, then, neither his home country nor his destination were safe places for a Jew. Nevertheless, he still felt the call to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The desire of Jews to make pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem—to ascend to the Land of Israel, to translate the Hebrew expression literally—derives from the Torah. In the regulations enumerated in the Book of Exodus, the people of Israel are commanded to worship God at regular intervals: “Three times a year you shall hold a festival for me” (Ex 23:14).⁸ The times of those three festivals were connected with stages of the agricultural cycle: the Feast of Passover (*Pesach*) or Unleavened Bread, at the time of planting; the Feast of Weeks or First-Fruits (*Shavuoth*), occurring when the first grains sprout; and the Feast of Tents or Ingathering (*Sukkoth*), associated with the completion of the harvest. The Book of Exodus does not specify where these feasts are to be held, saying only that “three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the LORD” (Ex 23:17). The Book of Deuteronomy, however, a document of the seventh century BCE, discovered several centuries after King David’s centering of the united Israelite kingdom and its worship on Jerusalem, insists on the unity of Israelite cultus, implicitly at Jerusalem, referred to anonymously as “the site where the LORD your God will choose amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there” (Deut 12:5). Even if the patriarchs had worshiped God in many sacred places (Shechem, Bethel, Beersheba, etc.), such plurality of shrines was suppressed when it was deemed to imply a certain plurality in God. When Solomon consecrated the Temple in Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE, he insisted that everyone, even Gentiles attracted to the faith of Israel, should forever afterwards utter their

prayers while facing in the direction of the Jerusalem Temple: “They will recognize that Your name is attached to this House that I have built” (1 Kings 8:43).

Galut, the experience of exile, entered into the lives of the people of the Northern Kingdom in the late eighth century BCE and then into the lives of the people in the Southern Kingdom in the early sixth century BCE. The Book of Daniel portrays its eponymous hero as one who refused, even in Persia, to submit to the public cultus of the divinized King. Instead, in the privacy of his room Daniel prayed to the God of Israel alone: “He had had windows made facing Jerusalem, and three times a day he knelt down, prayed, and made confession to his God, as he had always done” (Dan 6:11). Jews after the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE continued the exilic tradition of prayer facing Jerusalem and its one God, especially when the Romans forbade Jewish access to Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 CE). Even if Judah Halevi’s social and educational background had profoundly immersed him in the Muslim culture of Spain, his inner life as a Jew—and especially as a Levite (*ha-Levi*), a Temple officiant—was oriented to the Land of Israel and the hill of Zion in Jerusalem where the Temple had once stood.

Halevi’s most famous prose work in Arabic, *The Kuzari* (*Kitab al-Khazari*, “The Book of the Khazar”) purports to be the record of an extensive conversation between a Jewish scholar and the king of the Khazars, an ethnic group of southwestern Asia who had tented in what is now the Caucasus. Some of the Khazar nobility converted to Judaism in the eighth century CE, but Halevi’s king is a creation of the writer’s imagination in twelfth-century Spain. The full title of *The Kuzari* presents itself as a defense of Jewish faith, often despised, against such intellectual and spiritual competitors as Aristotelian philosophy, Christianity and Islam, and thus it is subtitled as “The Book of Refutation and Proof, concerning the ‘Despised Religion’.” The

influence of the Iranian Muslim intellectual, al-Ghazali, and his rejection of Aristotelian philosophy in an autobiographical memoir he had written a generation earlier, is evident in this work.⁹

In the long run, philosophical knowledge of God in the Aristotelian tradition only leads, at best, to a comprehension of the necessary existence of a First Mover. Halevi's Jewish scholar analyzes the two elements in the biblical name of "the LORD God," claiming that God as *Elohim* "can be grasped by way of speculation, because a Guide and Manager of the world is a postulate of Reason."¹⁰ *Elohim*, then, is pretty much Aristotle's First Mover, at least according to Halevi. But God's name as the LORD—*Adonai*—cannot be understood on the basis of reason alone. *Adonai* as a term substitutes for the unpronounced Tetragrammaton (YHWH), the name God disclosed (or in some sense did not disclose) to Moses in the burning bush when God told the patriarch "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex 3:14). Of that name veiled by the term, *Adonai*, Halevi writes that it "cannot be grasped by speculation, but only by that intuition and prophetic vision which separates man, so to speak, from his kind, and brings him in contact with angelic beings, imbuing him with a new spirit."¹¹ According to Halevi, the superiority of revealed knowledge of God over philosophical knowledge of God corresponded with the superiority of the Jewish religious tradition over other traditions, religious and philosophical, and the superiority as well of the Jews as a people over other peoples. That superiority also attached to the Jewish homeland, which Halevi always referred to as *al-Sham*, the normal Arabic world for the whole area of what is today Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories.¹² In this geographical and theological centeredness (not to say ethnocentrism), Halevi continues the tradition of many other ancient and medieval writers, Hellenistic, Christian and Muslim, who constructed geographies of

various climes proving that one or another homeland provided the world with its true center.¹³ Similar opinions are held today in Boston, New York, Chicago and the whole state of Texas.

At the end of his life Judah Halevi, by that time a man in his mid-fifties, at the very least, decided to act on his theory of the superiority of the Jewish homeland over all other lands, even his beloved *Andalus*. Setting sail for the eastern Mediterranean, he arrived at the port of Alexandria in Egypt in 1140 CE, dividing the next nine months between that cosmopolitan port and the Fatimid capital, Cairo. Egyptian Jewish admirers of Halevi, who knew his work even before he arrived, tried to prevail on him to remain with them in Egypt, but Halevi was determined to continue his ascent to the Holy Land, despite the rigors such a pilgrimage would entail, and he so he set out, at first by land, but eventually by sea.

Halevi's most famous poem is his "Ode to Zion," used in the annual Jewish commemoration of the Ninth of Av, the day in the Jewish calendar that commemorates the destruction of both the First and the Second Temples. It looks forward to what would be Halevi's pilgrimage at the end of his life. I will quote excerpts from Raymond Scheindlin's fine English rendering:¹⁴ "Jerusalem! Have you no greeting/for your captive hearts, your last remaining flocks,/who send you messages of love?/ Here are greetings for you from west and east,/ from north and south, from near and far, from every side--/greetings also from a certain man,/ a captive of your love."¹⁵ The geographical imagery centers the world on the city of Jerusalem, symbolized by the hill of Zion on which the Temple had been built, the focus of all traditional Jewish prayer. Although the poem addresses itself to Zion, the poet cites various places of encounter between God and the patriarch Jacob that are unconnected with Jerusalem: "My heart is aching for Beth-el, Peniel, Mahanayim,/ every place where saints met messengers from God."¹⁶ Halevi's Zion is much larger than Jerusalem and the Temple mount; it encompasses

every place in the Land of Promise where Israelites of old encountered the reality of the LORD God dwelling in their midst, what has been called the *Shekhina*. Halevi describes in an almost folksy manner the goal of his pilgrimage as to arrive at the place “where the *Shekhina* is your neighbor.”¹⁷

We know very little about how Judah Halevi ended his days, except that his death apparently occurred shortly after his arrival in the Holy Land in 1141 CE. Unsubstantiated and much later legend claims that he was trampled to death by an Arab horseman enraged by the sight of him praying, but in Crusader-ruled Jerusalem and its environs, it is doubtful that any Arab horseman would have been able to commit such a crime.¹⁸ What we do know is that Judah Halevi, the descendant of Levites who had once served in the Temple, was finally able to follow in their footsteps. At the end of his life he found it possible to pray not only towards Jerusalem but right there. “God chose to dwell in you [Zion] /,” Halevi wrote, “and happy is the man He chooses to bring near/ to make his home within your courts.”¹⁹

II: IGNATIUS THE PILGRIM

Although Christians have followed paths that led to many places of pilgrimage, the earliest goal of Christian pilgrimage was also Jerusalem and the Holy Land more generally. Let me trace the pilgrim steps of one Christian pilgrim very dear to all of us Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola.

Early in September of the year 1523 a group of Christian pilgrims, recently disembarked at the port of Jaffa, arrived on foot within sight of the Ottoman-ruled city of Jerusalem. One of those pilgrims, Iñigo López de Loyola, was a limping Basque soldier turned penitent pilgrim. More than two years earlier, in May 1521, he had suffered a serious injury in battle. Recovering from that injury in his ancestral home, this hitherto rather careless Catholic found himself forced

to read the only two books available in the noble household of Loyola, a life of Christ and a collection of the lives of the saints. Reading these two books changed Ignatius' own life, implanting in him a desire to exchange a career of knightly derring-do for the life of a penitent pilgrim, "going to Jerusalem barefoot."²⁰

After his recuperation at Loyola, but before he undertook that Jerusalem pilgrimage, Ignatius surrendered himself to God during an all-night "vigil of arms,"²¹ kneeling and standing before the famous image of the Black Madonna at Montserrat. There he stripped off his military array and took on the garb of a penitent pilgrim. But his prayer at Montserrat did not end that night. A year of the most excruciating—and yet the most exquisite—encounters with God followed in a village called Manresa, about sixteen miles from Montserrat; that year was the first experience in his own life of what Ignatius later called 'Spiritual Exercises.' At the conclusion of that year he returned to his plan to go as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, but he wanted to make this pilgrimage in utmost poverty and obscurity: "his whole aim was to have God only as a refuge."²² Shying away from the prestige attached to Jerusalem pilgrimage at the time, Ignatius only admitted to a female benefactor in Barcelona that he was going to Italy and Rome, which was a true but incomplete statement. She had a low opinion of people making the pilgrimage to Rome: "Well," she remarked, "those go there come back in I don't know what state."²³ Forewarned, Ignatius only stayed in Rome long enough to get papal authorization for his journey to the Holy Land.

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem made by Ignatius in 1523 did not last very long. Ignatius and his companion pilgrims finally disembarked at Jaffa (in present-day Tel Aviv) on August 31st of that year. They spent about three weeks in Jerusalem and departed again for Jaffa on September 23rd, eventually sailing to Cyprus on October 3rd. Tensions between the Ottoman Sultanate and

the European Christian powers were mounting in the early sixteenth century. Ignatius alludes to these tensions when he remarks that “although that year many pilgrims for Jerusalem had come [to Venice], the majority of them had returned to their homelands on account of the new situation that had arisen as a result of the capture of Rhodes.”²⁴

The first vista of Jerusalem Ignatius and his pilgrim companions would have seen that September day in 1523 centered on the Noble Sanctuary (*Haram al-sharif*) and especially the Dome of the Rock, the monument first erected by the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik in the year 691.²⁵ But for Christians in the Middle Ages and later, the Dome of the Rock was often mistakenly identified as a remnant of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.²⁶ Ignatius, always speaking of himself in the third person as “the pilgrim,” records that “on seeing the city the pilgrim had great consolation; moreover, from what the others were saying it was something they all had, with a joy that did not seem purely natural.”²⁷ The joy Ignatius experienced on first seeing Jerusalem remained with him throughout the three weeks that followed: “[H]e always felt the same devotion during the visits to the holy places.”²⁸

Ignatius on his sickbed in Loyola had imagined that he would “journey to Jerusalem . . . with all the acts of discipline and all the acts of self-denial that a generous spirit, fired with God, generally wants to do.”²⁹ After he arrived in Jerusalem Ignatius even hoped to stay there, if he could persuade the Franciscan Guardian of the Holy Places to let him do so: “His firm intention was to remain in Jerusalem, forever visiting those holy places. And, as well as this matter of devotion, he also had the intention of helping souls.”³⁰ But Ignatius did not tell the Franciscan Guardian of this second reason he wanted to stay. Why did Ignatius try to hide from the Franciscan Guardian his intention of “helping souls” in Jerusalem? “Helping souls” is a key term in Ignatian vocabulary, indicative of a wide range of apostolic activities.³¹ His desire to help

souls would later cause trouble for Ignatius in the two Spanish universities, Alcalá and Salamanca, where he tried to combine his studies with spiritual direction of male and female devotees. Suspicion of *alumbrados* (Gnostic illuminists) was rife in the Spanish Catholic Church at the time. Cándido de Dalmases in his biography of Ignatius maintains that “helping souls” for the pilgrim Ignatius in 1523 would have been a desire to evangelize the Muslim majority in Jerusalem.³² This may have been the reason why the Franciscans did not want Ignatius, a solitary ascetic with hard-to-define religious motives, to stay there in 1523, but the autobiographical memoir of Ignatius makes no specific mention of any missionary intention of Ignatius.

The Franciscan Guardian of the Holy Places was anxious not to provoke the Ottoman authorities. He informed Ignatius that “the [Franciscan] house was in such great need that it couldn’t support the friars,”³³ and when Ignatius replied that he had not been hoping to move into their house, the Guardian apparently relented, but said that he could not grant the permission until his Provincial Superior returned. When the Provincial did return, he turned down the request of Ignatius based on bad past experiences of such permanent pilgrims: “For many people had had this desire, and then one had been taken prisoner, another had died, and then the [Franciscan] order had been left having to ransom the prisoners.”³⁴ His pious desires frustrated, Ignatius took ‘No’ for an answer with some truculence. The Franciscan Provincial told him of the mandate he had from the Holy See “to excommunicate anyone who was not willing to obey them.”³⁵ Forewarned, Ignatius immediately retreated from the ecclesiastical fray.

Even though it was the eve of his departure, Ignatius gave in to “a great desire to go back and visit the Mount of Olives again before he left, now that it was not the will of Our Lord that he should remain in those holy places.”³⁶ The shrine on the Mount of Olives that Ignatius most wanted to revisit had been a Byzantine Church of the Ascension,³⁷ later transformed into a

Muslim shrine commemorating the escape of Jesus from death on the Cross (Qur'an 4:157, 158). Markings on a stone in the floor of the shrine were said to be the footprints Jesus left behind. Ignatius slipped away from his fellow pilgrims and their Ottoman guides and went off alone to the Mount of Olives. The sentries did not want to let him in, but Ignatius paid the entry fee not once but twice. He gave them his pen knife the first time, and then his scissors the second time, when he wanted revisit the spot shortly afterwards because "he hadn't taken a proper look at where the right foot was or where the left was."³⁸ When the Franciscans discovered that their pilgrim guest had gone missing, they sent one of their servants to retrieve him. That servant marched Ignatius back under arrest to the Franciscan Custody in what would today be called a 'perp walk.' Ignatius endured this humiliation with patience, feeling that "he was seeing Christ always over him."³⁹ So ended the 1523 pilgrimage of Ignatius to Jerusalem; on his return to Spain he began another sort of pilgrimage, pursuing an education, at first in Spain and later (after 1528) in Paris.

Six years after Ignatius went to study in Paris, he and six of his fellow students vowed on August 15, 1534 in a chapel on the hill of Montmartre to dedicate themselves to pilgrimage and to apostolic life. "They were all resolved on what they were to do, namely, to go to Venice and Jerusalem and to spend their lives in what was beneficial to souls."⁴⁰ They gave a limited time to pursue the possibility of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, realizing already in Paris that this might not prove possible. Ignatius and his companions, in any case, had an alternate plan for a different sort of pilgrimage: "If permission was not given to them to remain in Jerusalem, they were to return to Rome and present themselves to Christ's vicar, so that he would employ them wherever he judged to be more for the glory of God and the good of souls."⁴¹ Pierre Favre in the *Memoriale* he composed in the 1540s seems to have thought that they had only been planning a

pilgrimage of limited duration, in any case: “We all went to the chapel of Saint Mary called Montmartre near Paris so that each one of us could make a vow to go to Jerusalem for a specified amount of time, and after the return from there to put oneself under obedience to the Roman Pontiff.”⁴²

What residue of the achieved pilgrimage of 1523 and the unachieved pilgrimage of the 1530s remains in Ignatian spirituality? In the text of *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius several times urges those who engage in these Exercises to use their imaginations to make an interior pilgrimage, as in this example from the Second Contemplation on the Nativity: “[S]ee with the eyes of the imagination the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem, considering the length and breadth of it, whether it is a flat road or goes through valleys and hills; and similarly to look at the place or grotto of the Nativity, to see how big or small it was, how low or high, and what was in it” (*Sp. Ex.* §112). He sometimes even urges those making this and other contemplations to put themselves into the scene along with Mary, Joseph and the Infant Jesus: “Making myself into a poor and unworthy little servant, I watch them and contemplate them, and serve them in their needs as if I were present, with all possible submission and reverence, and afterwards I reflect within myself to derive some profit” (*Sp. Ex.* §114). Such visual contemplation and what might even be called role-playing plunges those who engage in these Exercises into a different experience of God than does abstract meditation on the things of God.

Ignatius carried his pilgrimage on throughout his life, living out in his imagination, wherever he found himself, the living and dying and rising of Jesus in the Holy Land he was never able to revisit. His prayerful pilgrimage changed him, transformed him. The life of every Jesuit—the life of everyone formed in the Ignatian tradition of prayer—can be similarly

transformed, if we allow ourselves to follow imaginatively in the footsteps of Ignatius, the footsteps of Jesus.

III: MALCOLM X BECOMES AL-HAJJ MALIK AL-SHABBAZ

The pilgrimage (*hajj*) to the places in the Arabian Peninsula that Muslims associate with Abraham plays a more central role in the practice of Islam than does pilgrimage in either the post-biblical tradition of Jews or the tradition of Christians at any period. One of the five pillars (*arkan*) of Islam, the *hajj* nevertheless remains not quite as rigorously required of all Muslims as the other four pillars.⁴³ Problems in financing the *hajj*—or performing it at times of civil unrest on the roads to or within Arabia—could excuse a faithful Muslim from undertaking the fulfillment of this pillar of Islam. Every Muslim I have ever known in Africa, at least, wishes to undertake this sacred journey at least once in his or her lifetime. Some undertake it more often.

What purpose does the *hajj* serve? Like many other pilgrimages, there is in the *hajj* not a little of the penitential. Much emphasis is laid on the ritual separation of the pilgrim from his or her ordinary, day-to-day life, including the sinful elements in that life. For many Muslims the *hajj* also serves, even more importantly, as an education in Islam—either a deepening of what is already known, or an introduction to those elements of the Islamic tradition that have never been emphasized or understood in the previous life of the pilgrim.

Several notable African pilgrims in times past have changed their lives and the lives of their neighbors as a result of what they learned in Mecca, as well as what they learned along the route to and from Mecca. The eleventh-century CE Almoravid reform of Islam in northwestern Africa and eventually Spain traced its origins to the experience of a chief of the Juddala (Guddala), a subgroup of the Sanhaja (Zenaga) Berbers who lived on the borders of present-day

Mauritania and Mali. That chief, Yahya ibn Ibrahim, when he made the pilgrimage in the first half of the eleventh century CE, realized that he and his fellow Juddala knew virtually nothing of their faith as Muslims. As a result he hired in a teacher from northern Morocco, ‘Abd Allah ibn Ya’Sin, whom he took “with him to his home, where seventy persons assembled to learn and obey.”⁴⁴ But the Juddala Muslims soon grew tired of their teacher’s rigorism and fired him. Their teacher, however, proved unwilling to accept rejection. With the support and advice of his own teacher in northern Morocco, to whom he had returned for consultations, Ibn Ya’Sin returned to the Juddala area in a bellicose mood and “subdued the whole desert, and many of the local tribes answered his call, joined his movement, and pledged themselves to follow the Sunna under his direction.”⁴⁵ Al-Bakri provides piquant details of the extreme reforms Ibn Ya’Sin introduced into Muslim life in the southwestern Sahara before his death during a battlefield campaign in 1059 CE. “Those who fail to attend the Friday prayers receive twenty lashes,” al-Bakri notes, “and those who omit one genuflection (*rak‘a*) are given five lashes.”⁴⁶ The pilgrimage of Yahya ibn Ibrahim bore unexpected fruit in the birth of the Almoravid tradition of puritanism,⁴⁷ a tradition that would eventually exercise its influence on all of the Muslim West (the *Maghrib*).

Many later Muslim pilgrims, from Africa and elsewhere, have experienced dramatic changes in their lives as a result of their experiences on the *hajj*. In modern times none has more dramatically recounted his experience of the *hajj* and the change it signaled in his life than the African-American Malcolm X (1925-1965). Beginning his life as Malcolm Little, the son of a fiery Baptist Pan-African nationalist lay preacher and a mother born in Grenada, Malcolm spent his earliest years in various poor urban settings in the American Midwest. After the 1931 death of his father, apparently an assassination, as well as his mother’s committal to a mental hospital when their son was 13, his teenage years led him into a life of petty crime in Boston and New

York City. Early in 1946, the year he turned 21, Malcolm went to jail in Boston for larceny and breaking and entering, spending the next seven years behind bars. During those years, after a period of militant atheism, he eventually felt attracted to the doctrine and practice of the Nation of Islam, submitting to the discipline it involved after 1948.

The Nation of Islam, an African-American religious and political movement, originated in Detroit in 1930, the creation of an extremely elusive person named Wallace Fard, later called Wallace Fard Muhammad. Much mystery surrounds the origins and the later history of this founder, with claims that was a New Zealander of East Indian descent, an Oregonian of Spanish descent, a native of Mecca or even an emigrant from the areas of Asia that are now Afghanistan or Pakistan. After some brushes with the law in California, Fard moved to Chicago and joined the Moorish Science Temple, a religious foundation aimed principally at an African-American clientele intent on becoming Muslims. The Moorish Science version of Islam, somewhat Masonic in its imagery and rhetoric, bore only a distant relationship to normative Sunni or Shi‘i interpretation of that faith tradition. Eventually, after internal struggles in that Chicago-based organization in 1929, Fard departed for Detroit. There he founded the Nation of Islam with an African-American, Elijah Poole, later Elijah Muhammad, as his principal disciple and apostle after 1931. Much of the teaching of the Nation of Islam centered on a doctrine of African racial superiority, the mirror image of the ideology of white racism. Fard disappeared from history in 1934, but Elijah Muhammad reconstructed Fard’s past, making him out to be much more than a human being. Malcolm X in his autobiography sums up message of Elijah Muhammad about Fard succinctly, narrating how “Mr. Wallace D. Fard . . . was ‘God in person’ . . . and had given to Elijah Muhammad Allah’s message for the black people who were the ‘Lost-Found Nation of Islam here in the wilderness of North America.’”⁴⁸ Malcolm rejected his surname, Little, around

this time and thereafter was best known as Malcolm X, although he eventually embraced the more obviously Muslim name, Malik al-Shabazz, the name on his passport when he made the Muslim pilgrimage in 1964.

That pilgrimage came about as a result of a spiritual and personal crisis in Malcolm's life. A few weeks after the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22nd, 1963, Malcolm X disobeyed an order from Elijah Muhammad that no member of the Nation of Islam should make any comment about the President's assassination. Replacing Elijah Muhammad at an event held in New York City on December 1st, 1963, nine days after the assassination, Malcolm delivered a fiery lecture on "God's Judgment of White America." It was only in the question-and-answer period after the lecture that Malcolm neglected Elijah Muhammad's prohibition to comment on the Kennedy assassination. Asked his opinion of that event, Malcolm (in his own words) said "that it was, as I saw it, a case of 'the chickens coming home to roost' . . . I said that it was the same thing as had happened with Medgar Evers, with Patrice Lumumba, with Madam Nhu's husband."⁴⁹ On December 2nd, 1963, *The New York Times* headlined its story: "Malcolm X Scores U.S. and Kennedy: Likens Slaying to 'Chickens Coming Home to Roost.'"⁵⁰ Elijah Muhammad, furious with Malcolm's insubordination, suspended him from any public speaking for a period of ninety days, a period in which Malcolm had time to reflect on his continued adherence to the Nation of Islam. In any case, the relationship between Elijah Muhammad and his much more charismatic lieutenant, Malcolm X had begun to sour long before the speech of December 1st, 1963. On March 8th, 1964, Malcolm broke publicly with the Nation of Islam, announcing the founding of the Muslim Mosque, Inc., as well as the foundation of its secular, Pan-Africanist counterpart, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, a society that could appeal for membership also from the ranks of non-Muslim African Americans. Furthermore, with the

encouragement of Sunni Muslims whom he had met on several occasions in the past, Malcolm converted to Sunni Islam and made plans to make the *hajj* in April 1964.

As a member of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm never learned many of the basics of the Islamic tradition of faith. He was, for instance, unfamiliar with the Arabic prayers that all Muslims must employ in the five daily times of worship (*salat*). At the urging of Sunni Muslims he had met in New York, Malcolm made the acquaintance of a scholar of Egyptian origin, Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi, then the director of the Federation of Islamic Associations in the United States and Canada. In a series of private tutorials Shawarbi gradually weaned Malcolm away from the doctrines of the Nation of Islam, and especially its racial theories, eventually interceding with the Saudi embassy to grant Malcolm a visa to make the pilgrimage. Had it not been for connections he had made through Shawarbi and other prominent Arab Muslims in the United States, it is unlikely that Malcolm would have passed muster as a Muslim on arrival in Jeddah. As it turned out, after some initial difficulties, he became an official guest of then Crown Prince Faisal and was accompanied throughout his *hajj* by a *mutawwif*, a guide who accompanies the less instructed on the pilgrimage and shows them how to perform the various rites involved. When Malcolm first saw the Ka'ba within the precincts of the Sacred Mosque of Mecca, the focal point of all Islamic worship throughout the world, he was struck by the diversity of the worshipers who were processing around it, "thousands upon thousands of praying pilgrims, both sexes, and every size, shape, color, and race in the world."⁵¹

Recognition of the multi-racial, multi-ethnic nature of the worldwide Muslim community confirmed what Malcolm had imbibed of genuine Sunni Islam from Dr. Shawarbi. It also allowed him to make some progress into a somewhat deeper and more theocentric appreciation of what life for a Muslim means. The ritual invocation called the *talbiya*—often called *Labbayka*

from its first word in Arabic—is recited in a loud voice by pilgrims when they enter into the consecrated state for the pilgrimage rites; its sums up that theocentrism of Islam and the *hajj* most eloquently: “Here I am, O God, here I am! You have no associate [in Godhead]! To You are due praise, grace and power! Here I am!”⁵² On the day following his visit to the Ka‘ba Malcolm, accompanied by his pilgrimage guide, participated in the highpoint of the *hajj*, the rite of standing (*wuquf*) on the hill of mercy nearly twenty miles east of Mecca, Mount ‘Arafat. “Arriving about noon, we prayed and chanted from noon until sunset,” He later wrote. “Finally, we lifted our hands in prayer and thanksgiving, repeating Allah’s words: ‘There is no God but Allah. He has no partner. His are authority and praise. Good emanates from Him, and He has power over all things.’”⁵³

Ten months after the completion of his *hajj*, al-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz was assassinated on the stage of the Audubon Ballroom in New York City on February 21, 1965, a few months short of his fortieth birthday. Had he lived to 2013, he might have participated in the development of mainstream Sunni Islam among African-Americans, as well as among Americans of other racial origins, a development that has been identified, in the aftermath of the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, with the work of Warith Deen Muhammad (1933-2008), the son of Elijah Muhammad. Suffice it to say that the pilgrimage of al-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz transformed him; his tragic assassination within a year prevents us from ever knowing how he might have evolved in later years.

CONCLUSION

After my initial pilgrimage to Auriesville at the age of 14, there were many other pilgrimages in my life: to Lourdes, for instance, with my widowed mother in 1957, just before I

entered the Society of Jesus. My mother found peace in Lourdes after some months of fear and loneliness as she contemplated my becoming a Jesuit later that summer, as well as the imminent marriage of my sister, my only other sibling. The Lady of Lourdes assured my mother that she would never be utterly alone in her widowhood, any more than the Woman entrusted to the care of the Beloved Disciple was ever really alone after that day on Golgotha. I myself also learned something about prayer those days in Lourdes, catching sight one evening of a French boy scout around my own age kneeling and praying by himself in the Sanctuary. Following the custom of the local people of the Pyrénées at that time, he was praying with his arms outstretched. I sensed that his prayer was an act of total self-surrender to God, and I can still picture him fifty-six years later.

In 1936 the great Anglo-American poet T. S. Eliot visited the ruins of the semi-monastic Anglican community at Little Gidding in Cambridgeshire, the place where the devout Ferrar family and eventually even King Charles I took refuge from the religious hatreds that sundered seventeenth-century England. Eliot in his poem, "Little Gidding," the fourth of his *Four Quartets*, bids us to come to Little Gidding not as tourists but as pilgrims: "You are not here to verify/ Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity/ Or carry report. You are here to kneel/ Where prayer has been valid." That, finally, is what all pilgrimage is about, a geographical prayer that is valid. Such prayer changes us, if we allow it. Judah Halevi experienced prayer that is valid, prayer that changed him, when he finally reached the soil of the Land of Promise. Iñigo López de Loyola experienced prayer that is valid in the Holy Land, and then over and over again revisiting the Holy Land in contemplation, and he was changed by such geographical contemplation. Malcolm X followed the steps of Abraham on the *hajj* and, seeing the diversity of his fellow

pilgrims, found genuine Islam there, prayer that is valid in the submission of one's whole self to God and to God alone. That experience changed him during the last year of all too short a life.

Without traveling anywhere, each of us is still called to be a pilgrim, a woman or man of prayer that is valid. Let that prayer transform you. That is the point of every pilgrimage, including the pilgrimage of life, as John Bunyan wrote in the only hymn he ever authored. I quote his original words, not the bowdlerized version found in hymnals:

Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin, nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.

Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

¹ For a brief summary of the early Islamization of Spain and northwestern Africa, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in World Civilization* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), I: 308-10.

² See Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Song of the Distant Dove: Judah Halevi's Pilgrimage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 53. Further references to this work will be cited as Scheindlin.

³ See Patrick J. Ryan, S.J., "Holy War: A Comparative Study of a Religious and Political Category," *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* 58 (1983), 140.

⁴ See Simon R. Schwarzfuchs, "Crusades," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA/Keter Publishing House, 2007), 5:311.

⁵ See P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 22.

⁶ See the anonymous contemporary chronicle of these events entitled *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* as translated by A. C. Krey in *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), available online at www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gesta-cde.asp

⁷ See Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 160-61.

⁸ All quotations from the Hebrew Bible derive from the translation published as the *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999/5759).

⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Al-munqidh min al-dalal*, included in *Deliverance from Error*, tr. Richard Joseph McCarthy, S.J. (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, n.d.), 53-123.

¹⁰ Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari (Kitab al-Khazari): An Argument for the Faith of Israel*, tr. Hartwig Hirschfield (London: Routledge, 1905, rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 222.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See C. E. Bosworth, “AL-SHAM,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 9: 261. This work will be referred to below as *EI 2* with the volume and the year of its publication specified.

¹³ See S. Maqbul Ahmad, “DJUGHRAFIYA,” in *EI 2* (1965): 2: 575-87, esp. 575.

¹⁴ Scheindlin, 172-77. On the very first word of this ode, I prefer the more literal rendering of the Hebrew in English by the translators of Franz Rosenzweig, *Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehuda Halevi*, tr. Thomas Kovach, Eva Jospe and Gilya Gerda Schmidt, ed. Richard Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 272: “Zion! You do not inquire about those who carry Your yoke . . .” I do not know why the translators into English of Rosenzweig’s translation into German have capitalized “Your,” since it refers not to God but to Zion. Zion, of course, is an example of synecdoche, standing for Jerusalem as a whole, but it is better if the poet engages in synecdoche and the translator does not remove the poet’s synecdoche. There are, however, other problems in the English translation of Rosenzweig’s German translation of Halevi that have motivated me to prefer Scheindlin’s direct translation of the Hebrew into English.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Scheindlin, 249-52, where he dismisses the factuality of this tale first circulated four hundred years after Halevi’s death.

¹⁹ Ibid., 177.

²⁰ “Reminiscences,” in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, trans. and ed. Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 15. The various writings of Ignatius in this useful anthology will be cited henceforth as M&E with the page number.

²¹ Ibid., 20.

²² Ibid., 29.

²³ Ibid., 30.

²⁴ M&E, 33.

²⁵ See Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 118-119.

²⁶ Ibid., 13.

²⁷ Ibid., 34.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 16.

³⁰ Ibid., 34.

³¹ See John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 18-19, 370.

³² Cándido de Dalmases, S.J., *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work*, trans. Jerome Aixala, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), 217.

³³ M&E, 34.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 37.

³⁸ M&E, 35.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 54.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² My translation from Latin. See *Memoriale Fabri (Fragmentum)* in *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola*, eds. Dionysius Fernandez Zapico, S.J. and Candidus de Dalmases, S.J. (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1943), I: 36-37. My translation differs slightly from that of Edmond C. Murphy, S.J., in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), who translates this passage in part as follows: “There each took a vow to set out for Jerusalem at the time decided and, on his return, to place himself under obedience to the Roman pontiff” (68). In either my translation or Murphy’s, Favre seems to mean that the companions only intended to stay for a brief time in Jerusalem.

⁴³ The other four pillars include the dual witnessing to the oneness of God and the message Muhammad brought (the *shahadatani*); the canonical worship performed five-times daily, on Fridays in community at midday (*salat*); the poor-due that purifies legitimate profits (*zakat*); the annual month-long fast usually undertaken in the month of Ramadan (*sawm*). Some Shi‘ite Muslims include a sixth pillar in this company: *jihad*, struggle for the cause of God, not necessarily military.

⁴⁴ Abu ‘Ubayd Allah al-Bakri, *Kitab al-masalik wa’l-masalik* as excerpted in *Corpus of Early Sources for West African History*, tr. J. F. P. Hopkins, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 71. I have made some emendation in Hopkins' translation.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁷ On the origin of the Almoravids, see the brief treatment by Nehemia Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen, 1973), 29-42.

⁴⁸ *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, with the assistance of Alex Haley (New York: Grove Press, 1965, rpt. New York: One World/ Ballantine Books, 1999), 176. Further references to this work will be cited as *Autobiography*.

⁴⁹ *Autobiography*, 329.

⁵⁰ Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011), 274.

⁵¹ *Autobiography*, 367.

⁵² See Toufic Fahd, "TALBIYA," *EI* 2 (2000):10: 160-161.

⁵³ *Autobiography*, 368.