

ON MY ARRIVAL in Jeddah, Arabia, December 23, 1959, it was almost a necessity that I go to Mecca. The next day was Thursday, December 24, 1959, and the authorities made ready a car to take me and my two sons over the little forty mile distance from Jeddah to that ancient city, which is the glory of the Muslim World of Islam.

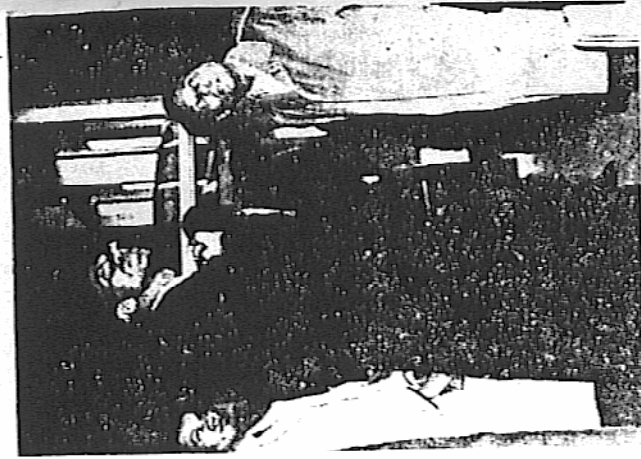
It is the only city on our planet that is divinely protected and made sacred and inviolable — almost surrounded with black hills of stone and sand. We were dress-

'This I'll never forget' says Muhammad of Mecca pilgrimage

ed in what is called the Ihram, which consists of two sheets of flesh towel-like material — one to cover the upper part of the body leaving the right arm exposed, and the other one covered the lower part of the body. We also wore a pair of sandal-like slippers. These were the only clothes that we wore from Jeddah to Mecca.

Washed Hands And Faces

On our arrival, we were taken to a hotel where we washed our faces and hands again, and a guide was brought to us. He was an old man — tall and very



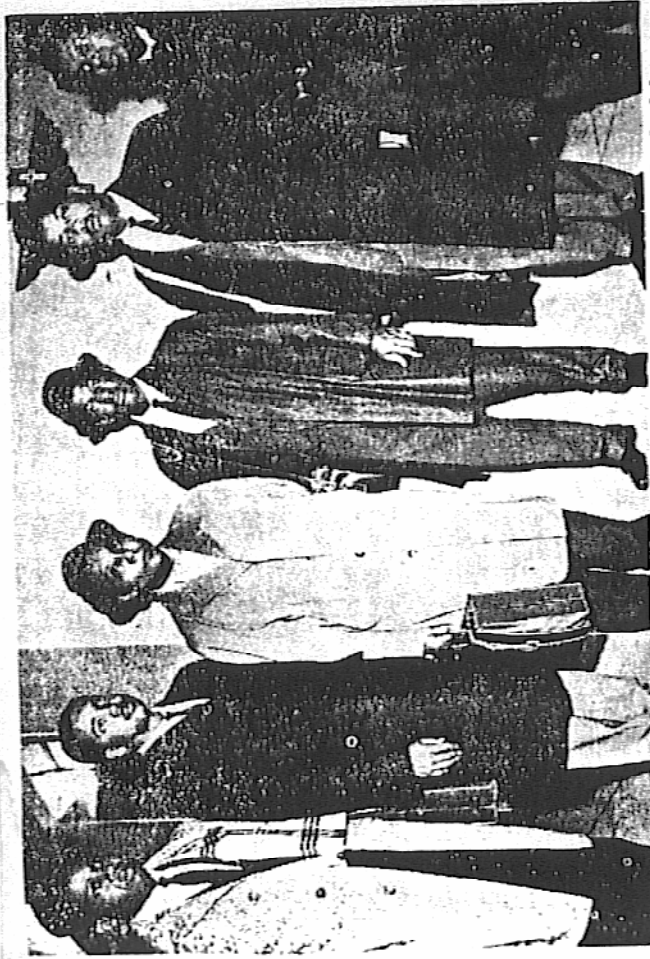
MUHAMMAD (right) and Malcolm X discuss plane flights at airport, before arrival of plane for his trip.

slender. He had been informed of me, and he took me by the hand like a father leading his child.

As we began walking from the hotel to that sacred mosque of Islam, he made us recite after him, in Arabic, the prayers and some verses from the Holy Qur'an every step of the way. On entering that holy and magnificent place, he proceeded with us to the court where stands the Kaaba and that prophetic sign, the Black Stone, that the builders rejected, placed in one corner of that great black veiled monument that stands in a circle.

Seven Circles Around Kaaba

Our guide made us remove our sandals before circling it, and they were left outside with an old Muslim sister. Then we began



THE MESSENGER, and powerful leader of America's Muslims, is flanked by sons (left) and Herbert, An expert photographer, Nathaniel Wallace Akbar, is also present, and the scene is set in Mecca and Medina pilgrimage.

making the seven circles around the Kaaba repeating prayers at every step of the way, and stopping at two of its corners on every trip around, raising our hands toward it while repeating a prayer and then saying, "Allah - u - Akbar," which means "Allah is the greatest."

Thousands of Muslims In Court
There were between five and ten thousand Muslims inside the court of the mosque. Such a prayer service I have never witnessed before — being with these thousands of sincere worshippers of God, His religion, and Muhammad, His prophet.

On encircling it for the last time, the pilgrim makers are asked to kiss the Black Stone. There before my eyes were many hands

of pilgrims trying to reach for that stone.

"This I'll Never Forget"

After circling the Kaaba seven times and saying prayers, our guide then made us go and make the seven runs between the hills of Safa and Marwah. He never let my hand go, except to raise his hand in prayer. I cannot ever forget it. I will not ever forget Allah for blessing me to make the pilgrimage, and for my faithful followers in America. Some of them who may never be fortunate to make such a pilgrimage divided their wealth to make it possible for me and those whom I chose to make this never to be forgotten pilgrimage. May Allah forever bless them.

—Elijah Muhammad