

# Week 8 m

Literature



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The Pilgrims, the Satraps and the Seal of Interrogation This story is divided into three parts that is the pilgrims, the satraps and the seal of interrogation as the title denotes. It is an interesting story about the celebration of Mecca in the cities of al-Mecca and al-Medina. This paper is going to critically analyze the story.

### Analysis

The main characters in this story are Mirzah Abdulla and the lieutenant of the British army Richard Francis Burton. The lieutenant has become an instant hero thanks to his uncanny behavior that led him to perform a sacrilegious act according to the Hindu faith. Lieutenant Richard disguised himself as a Pathan from India and performed hajji. Hajji is a must for any Muslim and Hindus at least once in their lifetime and for Lieutenant Richard to make child's play out of it is deemed sacrilegious.

Lieutenant Burton's quest to perform this celebration and write a book about it and publish it to magazines is considered as the white man's insatiable nature to know everything there is to know in this world. As stated in the story, the British want to know the events of hajji even though they do not believe nor do they want to travel there themselves. This is proved by the fact that Lieutenant Francis is celebrated. On the other hand, his behavior leads to a lot of distrust among dervish. Dervishes are Indians who live or have lived in the British land.

This point leads straight to the main character in this story, Mirzah Abdullah. He is considered a dervish. Getting a passport is a struggle even though mirzah has everything needed to permit his way into the city. Furthermore, he has already arrived in Egypt but cannot go anywhere unless his passport is stamped and other documents set ready. He struggles since Egypt is a

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more developed country and tricks like bribery do not work, but ironically he gets an officer to take him to the right office after an offer of tobacco and promise of money.

A more astonishing fact is that Egyptians have been portrayed as racist people as mirzah is advised by Hajji Walli to change his name from mirzah Abdullah to sheikh Abdullah to keep off any connections to his real identity of being an Indian. This is unbelievable since Hindus and Egyptians are both Arabic races and are both Caucasians which makes them more of brothers than mere names. Egypt is hailed to be a city that brings opulence as stated by hajji Walli yet he says with the same breath that the living conditions are bad. Conversely, the area where hajji Walli lives is crowded and stinks of poverty and many households do not have any furnishings yet Walli's house is fully furnished.

As portrayed by the huge publicity and commotion caused by the hajji celebration as every Hindu and Muslims rush to the holiest of cities, Mecca, and one can only be wowed by the goodness of it all. The reality of the celebration as observed by Mirzah is perplexing. Deaths of the pilgrims are on the rise, the place stinks of excrement; remains of vegetables and fruits rotting on the ground stink and lack good sleeping areas and fresh food. The event itself is dangerous and painful since to ward off the devil the pilgrims throw stones at the devil. This is tiring.

In conclusion, the officials try to find out about how the British lieutenant sneaked his way into the country and performed hajji. They want to find out the people who housed him, the ones who associated with him and they are to be persecuted yet they were not aware of his identity. They are

persecuting their own people while they know the culprit and where he hails from. This is barbaric and ridiculous of the officials.