

THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA

Historical Background: Travel has been an important part of Islam since its beginning. Mecca was an important area for trade and Muhammad was a merchant. Islam supported and encouraged travel for trade, and the shari'ah set rules for fair trade practices. Islam also encouraged travel through the hajj. Ibn Battuta, who was born in Morocco, traveled as a pilgrim and a scholar. He saw a lot of Dar-al-Islam and the cultural and spiritual unity. His journey helped his own identity as a Muslim and he recognized the cultural differences that existed among Muslims throughout the land. Ibn Battuta traveled about 73,000 miles and visited more than what are fifty modern-day states.



Look for the following references in the following quotations from the travels of Ibn Battuta:

- UNDERLINE References to the Five Pillars
- CIRCLE things Ibn Battuta sees that that were valued in the Islamic community
- SQUARE things that show cultural diffusion between Arab and non-Arab Muslims

1. "The city of Wasit in Iraq is famed for its teachers. Most of them can recite the Holy Qu'ran from memory and are experts. All those who wish to learn com to them, and in the caravan with which we traveled there were a number of students who had come for the purpose of learning."
2. "The people of Basra (Iraq) are of generous nature, hospitality to the stranger and readily doing their duty by him, so that no stranger feels lonely amongst them. They hold the Friday prayers in the mosque...it is one of the finest of mosques."
3. "At the end of each stage of this journey through Persia there was a hospice at which every traveler was supplied with bread, meat and sweetmeats...In each hospice there is a religious leader, a prayer leader, a muezzin (prayer caller), and a servitor of the poor, together with slaves and servants who cook the food."
4. "We sailed on for fifteen nights and came to Mogadishu on the East African coast, which is a town of enormous size. Its inhabitants are merchants possessed of vast resources...their leader knows the Arabic language."
5. "I went one day to the dawn prayer in the mosque. The leader of the area (Kharizm, a kingdom in central Asia) said to me in Turkish, "Blessed is your arrival." ...After I saluted him, he questioned me about Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem, Damascus and Cairo, and the lands of the non-Arabs...when I resolved to proceed on my journey after staying at this leader's camp for fifty-four days, he gave me seven hundred silver dinars and a coat worth one hundred dinars."
6. "In West Africa, I met the qadi of Mali, Abd al-Rahman, who came to see me: he is a black man, and has been on the pilgrimage and is a noble person with good qualities of character. He sent me a cow as his hospitality gift. May God bless and reward him for his good deed!"