

Aziza Tamimi  
Harlem review

In this review I will be writing about Malcom X and his involvement with the Nation of Islam in Harlem. I have chosen this topic because growing up I heard my father talking about how great of a man Malcom X was and he even made me choose him as a topic for a biography assignment I had to do. This was because Malcom X was a muslim, and so is my family, and I guess when he came to America there was no known Muslim activist as famous and as legendary as Malcom X. When I found out that Malcom X attended a Mosque that is still Standing today just a couple blocks away from where I go to school, I had to learn more about it.

Starting off with a little history of Malcom X and how he came to join the Nation of Islam. He found his way to the NOI while serving a prison sentence for burglary. He changed his name from Malcolm Little to Malcom X and when he was released in 1952, he traveled to Chicago to meet Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the NOI. In 1954, Elijah appointed him minister of Temple No.7 which was located in the heart of one of the most culturally and politically dynamic Black communities, Harlem. During this time it was a hotbed for social and political activism and this provided Malcolm X with a wide and receptive audience for his messages of empowerment and resistance. So naturally, under his leadership Temple No.7 flourished. He became renowned for his speeches, which drew large crowds and significantly increased the amount of people joining the temple.

His teachings were essentially polar opposite from other mainstream civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr, who advocated a strictly nonviolence approach for equal rights and encouraged white people to join them in the fight. Although Malcolm X, contrary to popular belief did not preach violence, he, on many occasions used the phrase “by any means necessary” and was very much in favor of self-defense against violent racism, not initiating violence. His impact in Harlem extended way beyond religious teachings. He became a prominent figure in the community, addressing issues such as police brutality, economic disparity, and the need for social reform. He elevated the NOI's profile in Harlem and cemented his reputation as a fearless advocate for Black rights. But despite this, his personal relationship with the organization began to unravel in the early 1960s due to Elijah Muhammads allegations of infidelity and hypocrisy. Malcolm, before this, considered him a mentor and did not take these allegations lightly because it went against everything he was taught through the temple. So in 1964 Malcolm X left the NOI

and found Sunni Islam. He then founded the Muslim Mosque Inc. and continued to fight for black rights but now on a global scale and not exclusive to the people who were part of the NOI and Temple No.7. Unfortunately Temple No.7 was bombed in response to the assassination of Malcolm X because many believed NOI was responsible for his death. But the organization moved to a different location in Harlem and was renamed after him, Masjid Malcom Shabbaz. It is still there today and very much active. Shortly after, the mosque founded by Malcom himself was disbanded but its successor was also moved to a different location in Harlem and is now called The Mosque of the Islamic Brotherhood.

In conclusion, Malcom X's journey with the Nation of Islam significantly impacted Harlem and the civil rights movement, leaving a lasting legacy. His preachership at Temple No.7 and shift to Sunni Islam highlight his enduring influence with the two mosques standing as a testament to his contributions to Black empowerment and Muslim activism in America.