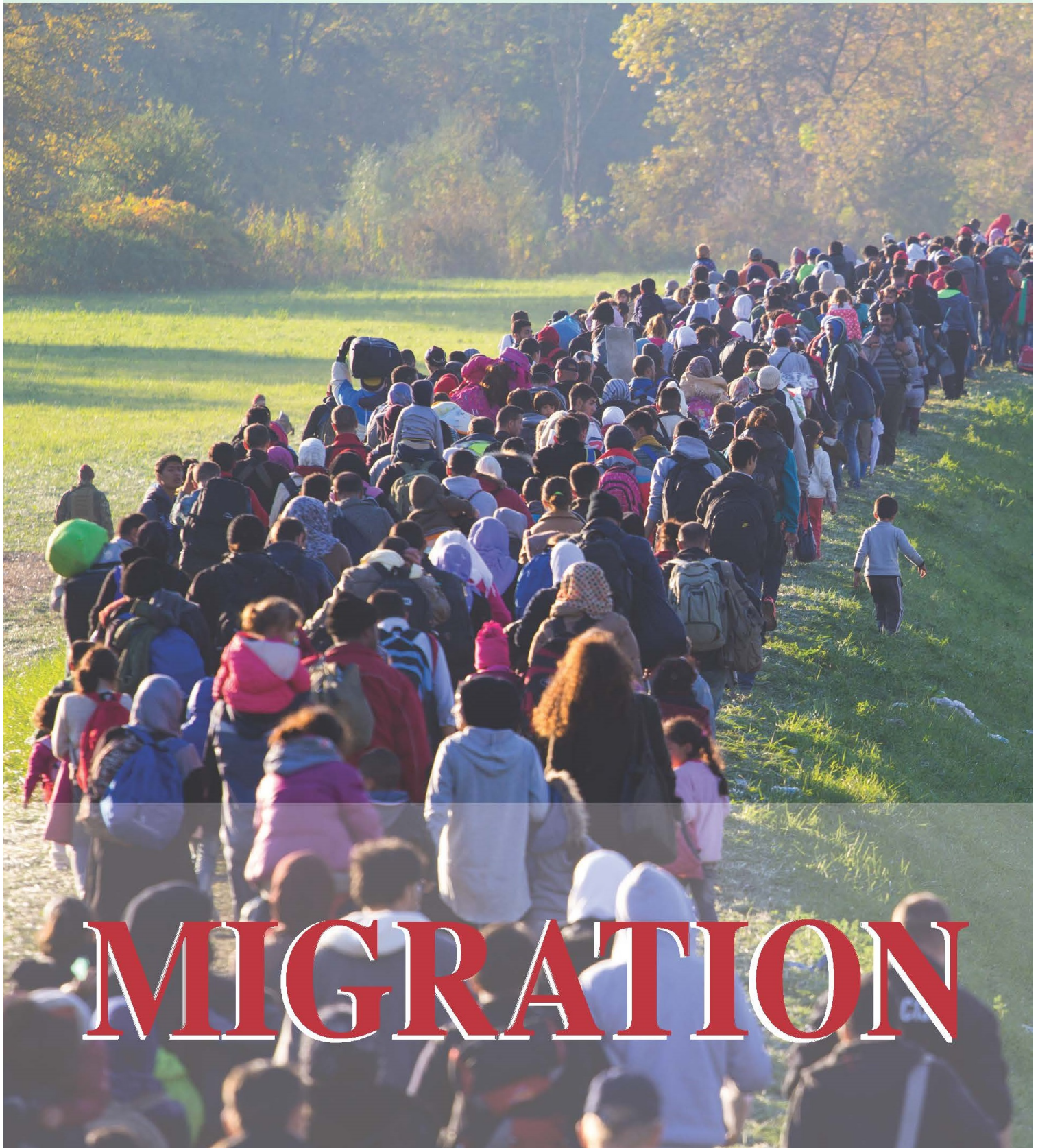


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# Religions

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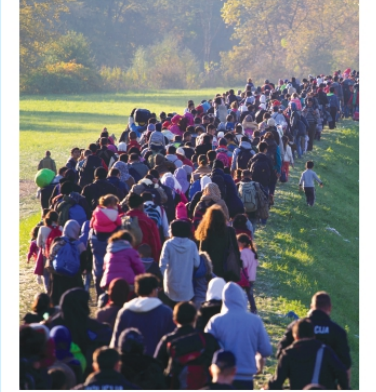
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*Religions/Adyan* is an annual and bi-lingual ( English and Arabic) publication in interfaith studies published by Doha international Center for Interfaith dialogue with an emphasis on interreligious dialogue and the relations between Islam and other faiths.

In a world of religious misunderstandings, violence, and hijacking of religious faiths by political ideologies, *Religions/ Adyan* intends to provide a welcome space of encounters and reflection upon the commonalities and shared goals of the great religions of the world. The title of the Journal suggests religious diversity while suggesting the need to explore this diversity in order to develop keys to both a deepening on one's own faith and meaningful opening to other creeds. The Qur'an suggests a commonality of faiths and a striving for the Truth within the context of religious diversity:

“To each among you have we prescribed a law and open way. If God had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to God; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute” (Surat the Table spread, 5: 48, version of Yusuf Ali).

As a referred international publication published by the Doha International Center for Interfaith dialogue, *Religions/Adyan* finds its inspiration in the universal message of monotheism broadly understood, while engaging the various religious faiths that share common principles and values within this broadly defined context.

*Religions/ Adyan* encourages comparative studies and interreligious exchanges in a spirit of dialogue and mutual enrichment. Its aim is to promote understanding between religious faithful of various traditions by exploring and studying the rich field of their theological and spiritual common grounds., their mutual and constructive relationships, past, present, and the current challenges of their encounter with atheism, agnosticism and secular societies.

In addition, *Religion/Adyan* wishes to highlight and revive the universal horizon of Islam by fostering studies in the relationships between Islam and other religions and civilizations in history, the art and religious studies. This is also a way to revitalize intellectual discourse in Islam, within the context of an interactive and cross-fertilizing engagement with other faiths.

The essays published in *Religions/ Adyan* exclusively engage the intellectual responsibility of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the DICID. They are published as part of an ongoing dialogue on religions, and should not be construed as the expression of the positions of any sponsoring organization.







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# Editorial

Our contemporary world is characterized by unprecedented displacements, voluntary, and forced migrations. The twin forces of globalization and transnationalism have also contributed to the process of people moving all over the globe. No doubt, migration has contributed to new paradigms in our religious imagination. Migrations, understood as movements, relocations, and dislocations, whether temporary or permanent, have offered a novel impetus in a new space for religious ferment. This volume of *Adyan/Religions* is dedicated to grappling with the various ways migration has provided new meanings and models in different religious traditions.

It is a known fact that immigration, globalization, and transnationalism have radically altered the religious demographics all over the globe. Religious traditions have shifted from their countries of origin and as they proliferate and interpenetrate geographically, they have added new dimensions to the global configuration of religion in the twenty-first century. Religious traditions are not static; rather, they are dynamic, ever-changing, diverging, drying up in one area, and watering other regions, and in a state of constant flux and flow.

The essays in this volume provide new narratives about the connections between migration and

religion. It is a cross-cultural exploration of religious creativity and imagination in the midst of change. The papers examine the various ways migration has provided new religious meanings and models in different contexts.

Our global landscape has been radically altered by the plight of refugees and displaced people. The images of vulnerable, rejected, and displaced children remain surreal and haunting. In spite of these sullen realities, the vision and hope of a new world where diversity is celebrated cannot be expunged. The task of building bridges of understanding is a necessary condition for mending our fragile and sometimes confusing world. I submit that religious traditions still contain enduring hope, faith, and insights to confront some of the challenges of living together in our fragile world. Through a process of constructive and creative dialogue, human beings can move beyond what Gandhi described as “the madness of violence,” and start contemplating new programs and policies that will contribute to human wholeness and transformation. This thought is integral to the mission and vision of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID).

**Akintunde E. Akinade**  
Editor-in-Chief



# Interview with Mr . Ayman Mufleh

Secretary General of the Jordanian Hashemite  
charitable organization



**Adyan -As the role of charities and relief agencies is increasing both nationally and internationally due to the exacerbation of the global refugee crisis, what is the role played by the Jordanian Hashemite charitable organization?**

**A.Mufleh.-** The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) for relief, development, and Arab/ Islamic cooperation was established in 1990 as Jordan's first national charitable agency. It has multiple activities that put into practice the feelings and desires of benefactors who support charitable projects and programs. Through these programs, the JHCO aims to deepen and strengthen the values of justice and equality. It also coordinates and implements many activities with non-profit organizations and organizations that are providing their

assistance in the affected areas and refugees camps worldwide. The institution also strives to meet the needs of citizens as far as possible, as well as providing regional relief, such as in Palestine and the Gaza Strip. It also has the capacity to establish and manage refugee camps, schools, and health centers in coordination with donors.

**Adyan - Obviously, the Syrian refugees' case became the main Arab concern when Syrians fleeing the conflict in their country reached unprecedented numbers. What is the role of the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization in supporting Syrian refugees, and what are the challenges they face in that matter?**

**A.Mufleh -**The role of charities is to provide in-kind, cash, medical, and other assistance to Syrian refugees

in their camps and beyond, as well as sustainable development programs and integration of refugees into the local host community. We also coordinated development of new camps in collaboration with UN organizations and local authorities, and work to meet the needs of the refugees, such as schools, hospitals, food, housing, and purchase vouchers. Challenges include:

- Difficulty obtaining funding.
- Difficulty following-up with refugees who move outside camps without updating their residence status.
- Registration of Syrian refugees in multiple associations and organizations, thus causing unnecessary duplication of aid.
- The absence of a unified and updated database of Syrian refugees.
- Lack of coordination to distribute tasks between the relief organizations and charities.

**Adyan** - How did Jordanian charities and local authorities deal with the flow of refugees fleeing conflict in Syria? Is there a specific strategy in raising the resources required to meet the many needs of the refugees?

**A. Mufleh** - The influx of refugees was handled in cooperation with the Jordanian Armed Forces: the Arab Army helped by providing border guards; and the Jordanian Ministry of Interior helped by working

on the fingerprint system through with the Refugee and Registration Department of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as locating their places of residence and setting up camps. As for the collection of resources, it is done through several methods, the most important of which are:

- 1- By attending periodic meetings of international organizations working in Jordan, where the needs are announced.
- 2- Through the follow-up of the web of international and international organizations and donors.
- 3- Conduct field surveys to identify the needs of Syrian refugees and raise project proposals for donors.

**Adyan** - Undoubtedly, children are the most affected group among refugees, in particular with respect to health and education. How does the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization deal with such cases? What efforts are being made in this area for refugees in general?

**A. Mufleh** - Charitable institutions cooperate with the Ministries of Health and Education to identify needs, as well as receiving proposals for health and education projects from donors. We balance the health and educational needs of the Syrian refugees on one hand, and the need for infrastructure in the construction of schools and hospi-



tals for the benefit of refugees on the other hand, under the supervision of the Ministries of Health and Education. A needs assessment by the Ministry of Education led JHCO to submit a proposal to construct a school for Syrian refugees and the local community in Irbid. It would be built with the funding of the Royal Institution of Bahrain, in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, and would be named the Syrian Refugees School.

**Adyan - What kind of cooperation exists between the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization and the UN institutions specializing in refugees?**

**A. Mufleh** - We have a high-level cooperation between the two sides, particularly through the UNHCR for the statistics and needs of the Syrian refugees. We meet regularly to study Syrian refugees' needs via the different service sectors and relevant relief organizations and charities operating on the ground. We also provide available information to facilitate the implementation of those services.

**Adyan - Are there any criteria for charities to classify, organize, and distribute aid to refugee groups?**

Yes, these standards must be met to organize the distribution of aid:

1. Obtain a UNHCR card.
2. Obtain the magnetic card provided by the Ministry of the Interior.

3. Coordinate with the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization regarding beneficiary lists.
4. Distribute only through local charities which are accredited and registered with the Ministry of Social Development.
5. Beneficiaries should be selected through the system of pre-booking of Syrian refugees to prevent repetition of aid through the Rice system.
6. Sample questionnaire forms are sometimes adopted depending on the nature of the service assistance provided.

**Adyan - The work of charities is certainly not dependent on the provision of assistance, but there are alternatives or other means to provide assistance to the refugees, the most important of which is job creation for them. We would like to get to know the strategy of the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization to create job opportunities for refugees.**

**A. Mufleh** - The strategy adopted in this area is based on the following points:

1. Coordination with the Jordanian Ministry of Labor to identify work areas open to Syrian refugees.
2. Support small-scale income-generating projects.
3. Develop voluntary contracts, especially within the camps where they are not subject to labor laws and permits.



Adyan - Do charities have special programs for recruiting volunteers to support charitable activities? What role can volunteering play in the development and enrichment of charitable work?

*A. Mufleh* - There are many programs that depend on the participation of volunteers due a number of criteria:

1. There are many closed positions for Syrian refugees and therefore the employee is replaced by a volunteer.
2. Due to poor funding and low funding, volunteers, especially Syrian refugees, are used to fill vacant positions to avoid high salaries.
3. In many programs, especially those serving the Syrians, volunteers are used for their similarities in customs, traditions and culture.

Adyan - What challenges did you face in receiving such large numbers of refugees and how did you deal with this situation? What are the challenges facing the refugees, in particular the vulnerable groups among them, such women and children, on the other hand?

*A. Mufleh* - The biggest challenge for Syrian refugees is timely funding, especially as there is poor funding due to donor fatigue in sustaining funding and providing relief projects. The other challenge is that a large proportion of Syrians in Jordan are on UNHCR waiting lists to

register as refugees. In addition to that, some of them did not register with UNHCR voluntarily, which deprives them of receiving assistance as they do not have refugee cards with UNHCR.

Adyan - Is there a strategy in international charitable organizations for rehabilitating refugees, in psychological support, for instance, particularly children and women?

*A. Mufleh* - There are several projects with the Commission, in partnership with a number of international organizations, including projects such as the "Interconnection Project" in partnership with the Danish Council for Refugee Affairs (DRC), which includes referrals to the relevant organizations. Those projects are implemented in partnership with the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization, which deals with the treatment and rehabilitation of Syrian refugees, in order to alleviate the suffering of refugees who were traumatized as a result of the conflict or the loss of their loved ones. We also provide lectures related to the various support delivered, in order to facilitate the refugees' integration into society and overcome the social problems that affect them as a result of asylum.

Adyan - Of all Arab countries, Jordan is undoubtedly among those receiving the highest number of refugees, and is of course a border country

with Syria, which has produced the most refugees. Do you have statistics on the number of immigrants before and after the war in Iraq and Syria? What are the changes that have taken place in your handling of this issue, especially after the dramatic situation in Syria has worsened, and is there a program for the return of migrants who decide to return to their countries? What are your expectations for this?

**A.Mufleh** -According to the latest statistics issued by the Department of Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, the number of Syrians present in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is 1,377,614, noting that half of the mentioned number were present in the Kingdom before the outbreak of the Syrian crisis due to neighborhood, language, customs and traditions. With regard to the repatriation, the Jordanian authorities have no objection to the departure of any refugees to their countries at any time, and there are individual cases of voluntary repatriation and return by refugees.

**Adyan** - Having mentioned the challenges that your organization is facing due to these large numbers of refugees and how to confront them, we would like to know what challenges the refugees are facing, in particular women and children.

**A.Mufleh** -The biggest challenge for Syrian refugees is to get the right funding at the right time, especially

as there is poor funding due to donor fatigue in sustaining funding and providing relief projects. The other challenge is that a large part of the Syrians in Jordan are still on UNHCR's waiting lists to register as refugees and some of them have not registered with UNHCR voluntarily and this prevents them from receiving aid as they do not have refugee cards with UNHCR.

**Adyan** - We now see many refugees controlled by the hope of resorting to Europe rather than the Arab countries despite the risks. In your view, what is the main reason for this trend? Can we say that Arab charities have not been able to provide refugees with what the West offers them?

**A.Mufleh** -I believe that the Syrian refugees are primarily concerned with obtaining protection and security in the first place, and therefore seeking to obtain the daily living requirements. Unfortunately, Syria's neighboring countries except Jordan are experiencing security problems at the national level from time to time. Syria is very large and unfortunately most of this number is based in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq. There are restrictions imposed by some Arab countries to limit the entry of Syrian refugees. This prompted some Syrian refugees to seek asylum in European countries. Unfortunately, these countries are experiencing stagna-



tion and a slowdown in economic growth, which means that Syrian refugees are not the refugees they seek to reach.

**Adyan - Finally, you know that this journal (Religions) is concerned first and foremost with achieving interfaith dialogue and understanding between religious believers in order to deepen human unity. We seek to confront the crises of intellectual, religious, and racial persecution. What is the impact of religious and sectarian differences among the refugees? How does the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization tackle this issue? What are its efforts in raising awareness to counter intolerance, which may be moved with some of the country's conflict to the refugee camps?**

**A. Mufleh** -The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization is a non-governmental non-profit organization that aims to provide relief aid from the humanitarian point of view, regardless of any other factor, whether religion, language, race or the belief of the beneficiary. These factors are not referred to in any document, leaving full freedom for the beneficiary refugees to perform their religious rites according to their beliefs without impediment to others. The Commission has implemented projects in partnership with many Islamic and Christian organizations, such as The International Christian Orthodox Association (IOCC) and

the Lutheran World Federation Association (LWF). It's important to note that in the distribution of aid, the religious affiliation of the beneficiary was never considered. There is no sign of religious affiliation, or any religious criteria to give aid to beneficiaries. Another example that we would like to mention here, is that when Iraqi Christian families came to Jordan and were housed at the Caritas, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and the Islamic Center Society were the first organizations to provide them food aid and relief, as well as prefabricated houses for these refugees. This has been the best example of human solidarity and the role that the charities and relief organizations can play to alleviate the suffering of refugees, by strengthening ties of brotherhood, and promoting religious coexistence, regardless of beliefs or race.

*Dialogue conducted by*  
**Dr . MAHAMADE ALLI MAHAMADE**



## Migration, Diaspora and Memory

By Grace Ji-Sun Kim

### Introduction

My Korean family immigrated to Canada in 1975. At that time, the world felt so big and it seemed that only a few families like ourselves were migrating from Korea. Now, 40 years later, we recognize that we live in an interconnected world in which people are freely moving about, at near-sound breaking speeds, relocating all over the globe. They are leaving their homes of origin for economic, family, political, social or religious reasons. Some flee because climate change is making it hard to

live off the land. Climate refugees are unable to survive on their homeland due to deep droughts, flooding, and extreme heat leading to habitats that are increasingly unsuitable for living.

As people migrate, we see religions, customs, and cultures beginning to collide, making new lives interesting and exciting. It calls us to reexamine the role of religion and spirituality in a time of perplexity and instability. How are we to live peacefully with people so different from ourselves? As the world popu-



lations draw us closer together, the question of living with each other is becoming increasingly important.

The Bible is filled with stories of migration, exile and the Jewish Diaspora. We see it in the Hebrew Scriptures as Abraham's family and descendants seek fertile land to settle, and with Moses and other Jewish families in search of better places to live and prosper.

First and Second Chronicles give some insight into the meaning of exile, and what it means to return home. The life and ministry of Jesus, too, is that of an itinerant. Jesus moved from one city or village to the next, not fully settling in one place but moving from place to place to teach, heal and share the good news.

Biblical stories can provide a fresh light to see our present world of migration, movement and diaspora in a world bound so tightly together with modern communication and transportation. What happens in India affects people in Brazil and vice versa. Actions all over the world have a global impact. It is much harder to live in isolation from those who are different. As the travel times become shorter, we can travel more easily and frequently than ever before. What does this time of globalization and transnationalism mean for Christians living in the United States? How does it affect their culture, faith, and religious practices? What happens to the world's religions as more and

more people leave their homelands and move next to us? These themes will be discussed in this article.

### **Movement in First and Second Chronicles**

The Hebrew Scriptures are full of movement. Chronicles records some of the struggles, conflicts, and difficulties that migrants and returning exiles face as they move away from and return home. These stories give some insight into people's experience of movement its results in their lives. They remind us that movement has always been part of our history, culture and formation. A closer look at the Book of Chronicles will help us gain deeper understanding of the implications of migration and exile.

The Book of Chronicles itself does not indicate when it was written. Its last recorded event is the decision of Cyrus, King of Persia, to permit some Jewish exiles in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Originally built by Solomon, the Temple was destroyed in 587 B.C.E. when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, the capital of the Kingdom of Judah and deported all the royal family, priests, scribes, nobles and military personnel to Babylon.<sup>1</sup> The Babylonian conquerors took the local elites back to Babylon to indoctrinate them.

Chronicles was written in the latter part of the Persian period, at the earliest toward the middle of the fourth century B.C.E., before the

arrival of Alexander the Great.<sup>2</sup> The Chronicler used the existing Pentateuch and Deuteronomic history as sources. Consequently, there is a lively discussion today regarding whether the primary purpose of this work was to refute the Samaritans, to substantiate the claim of the Davidic house to rule over Israel, or to establish the exclusive legitimacy of the Jerusalem cultic institution. The Chronicler emphasized the importance of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the worship of YHWH centering on the Temple; the divine choice of the Davidic dynasty; all of Israel as the people of God; immediate retribution, guilt and atonement; and God's miraculous help in times of crises.<sup>3</sup> This book offers the goodness of God for an exiled people trying to rebuild their lives. God is merciful and will help God's people if they reach out.

The lists of those who returned from the Babylonian exile also serve to create continuity between the communities before and after exile. They show that the community living in the land of Judah under Persian rule still has an ongoing connection with the Israel of the monarchical period. They are not a different group of people, but from the same ancestry – a very important connection for a people who want to emphasize their historical connection to Adam. Furthermore, at a time when all the territorial ties which would have supported tribal identities had lapsed into an-

cient history, and the people of Israel were scattered throughout the Persian Empire, the genealogies in Chronicles are reminders that their unity is not territorial but the product of their descent from a common ancestor.<sup>4</sup> Since the core of their identity is not territorial, it is not dependent on land, on where they have lived or moved to or been exiled to. Rather, their unity is based on lineage, and it does not matter where one actually resides; the ability to trace one's ancestry to Adam was the essential factor.

### **Exile**

In First and Second Chronicles, we see the exiles returning home. Along with change in people's lives comes fear, hopelessness, sadness and anxiety. When this occurs, God is there to provide hope. This is the story that we find in the Chronicles: a people returning home after exile. Exilic life is a life of tragedy and this book assures the returnees that there is still hope in God. Hope is the ultimate provider that needs to be shared.

The exiles' priorities and sense of identity are not necessarily the same as those of their parents and the earlier generation. For the returning Israelites, the initial excitement and desire to rebuild the Temple had worn off. The hope for the emergence of a new king, perhaps Zerubbabel, had also worn off. What remained was the grim reality of re-establishing a daily life in Persian



Judah. It is in this context that the Chronicler<sup>5</sup> rewrote Israel's history, to show the displaced people that there is hope for them and YHWH is still with them. They are not a forgotten people, but one whom YHWH has chosen and loves.

Chronicles becomes a compassionate book, offering a solid direction in which to proceed with their life as they return to their homeland dispossessed, lost, and damaged by the exile. The chronicler retells this history to remind the people where they have come from and how God has been with them throughout their history. They are a people on the move and always will be. They will be the ones who are migrating and moving back home. Even in their own time it was understood that one was never in one place forever.

Jerusalem fell to Babylon in 587 BC. In Judah key aspects of Israel's past were suppressed and co-opted to fit the ideological requirements of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. As with any event in which people are displaced, the exile had the consequence of effacing some of the crucial particularities of Israelite identity and silencing the subjects who constituted it, such as the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, the Davidic dynasty, the Levites, the Jerusalem Temple, the priesthood, and the Judean cult.

This experience of exile is still common to Jews today. Some have experiences of exile during WWII in Europe and in other parts of the

world such as Asia, where armed conflict caused many peoples to be exiled from their home, country, and culture. When the Korean War broke out, many people in the North had to flee south to survive. Many thought they would be able to return home in a few years but are still not able to do so: they were forcibly exiled from their home. My mother spoke of the Japanese occupation of Korea and told stories of her childhood living on the run, fearful of being shot or being killed by land-mines buried in the ground, planted to kill civilians. One such land-mine exploded as my grandmother was fleeing. She was injured but survived the explosion. My mother as a child was terrified and never fully overcame this terrible event. She lived a life of exile from her own city, not knowing when it would be safe to return home. The consequences of such experiences have had grave effects on the lives of many Koreans and still haunt many who have lived through similar horrific ordeals. The difficulty of rebuilding lives after such trauma can have lasting effects on the generations who follow, who are themselves displaced and without a strong identity of home, place, religion and country. It is important to recognize that in the midst of horror, God travels into exile and returns with us. God was in the gas chambers with the Jewish victims... and walking with the survivors into a new life that is far more important than whether the new life replicat-

ed the old. Life cannot be reenacted, but the presence of God can be experienced in the new land or when one returns to their land.

### **Diaspora**

Diaspora is another concept which helps us expand our understanding of migration and displacement. As people move, their religions move with them. As religions collide, new ways of understanding religion and religious beliefs begin to form. This is a natural syncretistic process, but some fear such new ideas. The orthodox may want a pristine form of religion which will remain the same as the 'original form'. But others recognize that religions have always been syncretistic. This is evident in the Hebrew scriptures: as people migrated, they brought their gods with them and their ways of understanding God was changed and formulated by the ideas of other religions. The Israelites were considered henotheistic as they worshiped one god while accepting the existence of many neighboring gods.

Clashing cultures and religions come together as places of growth, experiments and goodness. Diasporic thought finds its apotheosis in the ambivalent, transitory, culturally contaminated borderline figure of the exile, caught in a historical limbo between home and the world. The notion of diaspora is least problematic when it illustrates the necessary mobility of thought and con-

sciousness produced by the cultural adhesions of colonialism. Rey Chow suggests that postcolonialism needs to focus upon such concepts as 'diaspora' and 'migrancy' to produce dislocated and deterritorialized forms of knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Post-colonialism is important today as we recognize the negative consequences of colonialism for nations and societies—a negativity felt throughout the world leaving many still trying to recover from this grave history. We also recognize that the Israelites were a colonized people.

The notion of 'diaspora' tends to lose some of its historical and material edge within postcolonial theory. Although 'diaspora' tends to evoke the specific traumas of human displacement, postcolonialism is generally concerned particularly with the idea of cultural dislocation contained within this term. While is sometimes used interchangeably with 'migration,' 'diaspora' is generally invoked as a theoretical device to interrogate ethnic identity and cultural nationalism. In certain ways, there is a cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse.<sup>7</sup> Diaspora becomes a forced displacement in many ways as people move their belongings, their sense of identity, culture, history and religion becomes modified, changed and displaced.

People today live in the diaspora due to displacement, exile, slavery and migration. Feelings towards living in the diaspora vary depend-



ing on whether the choice was a personal or a forced one. However, whether or not the choice was personal, there is often a sense of displacement, dislocation and homelessness which drives into the inner core of being and brings doubt to identity, cultural heritage and religious being.

People in the diaspora have a need to develop a “usable past” that neither idealizes their history nor devalues it in the face of the dominant culture’s attempts to devalue and negate it. How do the post-exilic Israelites do this? The need is met by writing the books of Chronicles as a “sanitized” version of the books of Samuel and Kings. They rewrite their stories to give purpose and reason to their existence.

Once the provinces are subject to the capital, the destiny of the whole empire is placed in the hands not only of an upper class of the nation, which is unfair, but also the dangerous hands of that class acting unilaterally. The supremacy of capital cities represents a great threat to a representative system. It submits modern republics to the same defects as those of ancient times that perished from their ignorance of this system of government.<sup>8</sup> Renita J. Weems posits the notion that as the United States has become the largest empire in the West, we need to resist the Christian meta-narrative, and its complicity with its imperialistic ambitions.<sup>9</sup> It is quite easy to fall into the trap of

being complicit and benefiting from these living conditions. We need to be awakened to the disastrous consequences of living in this manner. Some countries are suffering by American imperialistic desires and greed. Families were divided and separated in North and South Korea as Americans and Russians decided the fate of this small East Asian country. It was certainly an East versus West conflict. As horrific events are allowed to occur through complicity, we need to rethink/reimagine how we read, interpret and approach the Bible, especially First and Second Chronicles. One must know one’s past to start rebuilding for a good future.

The diaspora can also be a creative space to think outside the box. The cross-cultural understanding illustrates the complexity and multiplicity of our present context. In these hybrid spaces, it becomes important to reimagine our faith and religion. It is necessary to rebuild our Christianity. In hybridity, we can the differences that clash in the diaspora giving birth to new concepts, ideas and ways of being. The creative forces encourage us to grow and be challenged.

### **Memory**

It is difficult to remove these biblical texts from their context and treat them in isolation, because they appear inconsistent and lacking in historical value. When the collective memory of displaced people is in

fragments, they often resort to creative forms of re-establishing this necessary part of life.<sup>10</sup> It is through recollection and memory that they recreate their past so that they can move to the future. Without a shared memory, it is difficult for a people to rebuild their lives.

Memory is redemption. All too often history is told from the perspective of those in power and this process serves to justify their position by controlling the degree of authenticity with which the story is told. Memory is redemption for the powerless when they too get to tell history from their own perspective and put the two versions side by side. In this way they too control the degree of authenticity. In light of the lack of women's presence in the Bible, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza advocates "an alternative feminist biblical vision of the historical-cultural-religious interaction between women and men within the Christian community and history."<sup>11</sup> The lack of a certain presence of a group of people should alert us to question or seek ways of rebuilding it. Memory reconstructs a narrative from broken fragments of people's lives. Through this process, it is memory which will save us and heal us. Out of brokenness, people's lives can be rebuilt. It should be cautioned that in many circumstances, memory also becomes "selective."

Memory is emancipation; because this residue can be used to reconstruct and correct the misun-

derstandings of the Church's mission which was to liberate the oppressed, not create more oppression. Schüssler Fiorenza supports her claim that women held leadership roles in the church by pointing out that Phoebe, a wealthy and well-educated woman, joined the Christian movement not to be oppressed but to claim a status that she might not have been able to maintain within the Greco-Roman world.<sup>12</sup> In the same manner, the Israelites' retrieval of their ancestral memory can help and liberate them from the difficulties of the life of exile and diaspora.

As people deal with loss, change, and recovering memory, it becomes clear that a sense of belonging is essential to one's spiritual and religious identity. When the exiles returned, they shared a communal sense of rebuilding and urgency to identify as a community. This process is often helpful to people separated from loved ones through diaspora, exile, migration and immigration.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Today's world is characterized by migration and diaspora, which lead to pain when so many move because of economic insecurity, job loss, and religious persecutions. As people move and separate, the readings in First and Second Chronicles give us insight that memory directed toward building community is a good strategy to help those who are scattered.

People long to live in communi-



ty and near family and friends. But they become separated physically, emotionally and psychologically. As people move we recognize that religion is something which holds us together: it binds us and helps us overcome difficulties; it keeps humanity stronger and closer; through it we begin to recognize that we need each other to grow, prosper and flourish. Religion becomes a key to sustained relationship in times of exile, diaspora and immigration.

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## Notes

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2. Ralph W. Klein, 1 Chronicles, edited by Thomas Kruger (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2006), 16.
3. Fook-Kong Wong, "1, 2 Chronicles" in Global Bible Commentary, Daniel Patte General Editor, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 121.
4. Nupanga Weanzana, "1 and 2 Chronicles," Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 475.
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10. Gregory Lee Cueller, The Peoples' Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha Edited by Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Wilda C. Gafney, Leticia A. Guardiola-Saenzk, George "Tink" Tinker and Frank M. Yamada (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 554.
11. Schussler-Fiorenza. In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 30-31. Fiorenza discusses the "dangerous memory," which emerges when the history of an enslaved or colonized people is destroyed because solidarity with the faith and suffering of the dead is made impossible. The way I interpreted this idea of the dangerous memory is that any articulation of history from a feminist perspective would indeed rewrite the text and serve to upset the status quo, which is the patriarchal hierarchy within which the Christian tradition is constructed. This perspective calls for a universal sisterhood that spans past, present and moves towards future goals of transformation that is the ethos of feminist biblical reconstruction.
12. Schussler-Fiorenza. In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 30,31,90?????





## **‘The Numbers Game’ – A Muslim Perspective on Immigration and Integration in Britain and Its Impact on Interfaith Relations**

*Jabal M. Buaben*

### **Abstract**

These days, it is fashionable for political pundits to trade statistical figures about immigration from outside the EU. The exchange often reaches a fever pitch level and once it enters into the arena of the ubiquitous media, phobia sets in and the whole issue gets to the point of mass hysteria. With some writers on both sides of the Atlantic warning of Europe becoming EURABIA due to what they see as an ‘unacceptable level of influx of Muslims’, one sees the debate raging on for some time

to come. In the case of the Britain, the General Elections of May 2010, exacerbated the problem further. With the onset of BREXIT, one can foresee the case becoming worse before it gets better, if at all. What this paper seeks to do is to examine the case from the Muslim point of view asking critical questions as to the main rationale behind Muslim immigration, the activities of the vast majority of Muslims in Britain, and whether they make a net contribution to this society not merely in economic terms but also morally



and spiritually. As a student of Religious Studies, and with profound interest in Interfaith Relations, the author's main concern will be whether immigration of people of other faiths per se, and Muslims for that matter, to a 'Christian country' should be seen as a problem. Should Diversity per se always be seen as 'tricky'? or seriously challenging? Is it not possible to see these 'others' as fellow human beings who at least believe in God and might probably help keep in check the incessant rise of Secularization and anti-religious values in the public square?

### Introduction

In my abstract, I refer to the new terminology *Eurabia* that is gaining some form of respectability. I encountered the term in an article by Matt Carr entitled: 'You are now entering Eurabia' published in *Race and Class*<sup>1</sup>. A publication of the Institute of Race Relations, *Race and Class* is a fairly respectable journal. Perhaps, Matt Carr's abstract would be helpful here to kick-start our discussion. He writes:

In recent years, an increasingly influential intellectual consensus on both sides of the Atlantic has presented Europe as a doomed decadent continent that is being transformed into an Islamic colony called 'Eurabia'. The term was originally coined by the British-Swiss historian Bat Ye'or to describe what she identified as a secret project between European politicians and the Arab world for the 'Islamicisa-

tion' of Europe. What began as an outlandish conspiracy theory has become a dangerous Islamophobic fantasy that has moved ever closer towards mainstream respectability, as conservative historians and newspaper columnists, right-wing Zionists and European neo-fascists find common cause in the threat to 'Judeo-Christian civilization from Muslim immigrants with supposedly incompatible cultural values.

Bat Ye'or, had, in 1985, published the much cited work *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*<sup>2</sup>. She argued at length in this earlier work that the accepted view held in academic circles that Jews and Christians living as minorities in Islamic lands were treated with tolerance, leniency, humanely and hospitably was a myth. In this work on 'Eurabia', she seems to have revisited some of those theories implicitly warning Europeans about the 'danger' of Islam and Muslims in their midst.

Without being overly dismissive of what some might consider a truthful rendering of what Muslim presence in Europe could lead to, one cannot but question these kinds of projections, 'prophecies' and conclusions that have now become fashionable. The rationale behind this trend is difficult to pin down unless one goes down the lane of power politics, and probably even religious - cum- secular extremism, bigotry, xenophobia, and paranoia.

Johannes J. G. Jansen of Utrecht University reviewed Bat Ye'or's

book and published in *the Middle East Quarterly* of Spring 2005. He ends the review saying:

“God blinds those whom He wants to destroy; Bat Ye’or’s Eurabia offers a powerful tool for those who wish to see.”<sup>3</sup>

Matt Carr argues in his article that an emerging new trend of conservative opinion on both sides of the Atlantic seems to hype on a so-called “...relentless and coordinated campaign of Islamicisation.”<sup>4</sup> The argument is no longer the usual one of the European far right and fascist groups but is gaining grounds in some fairly mainstream groups. There is a conventional wisdom that if a lie is told repeatedly, it has a high probability of becoming an ‘acceptable truth’. Carr refers to Oriana Fallaci, an experienced Italian journalist, who has become well known for her diatribes on Islam and Muslims. To Fallaci, the legal challenges to some of her anti-Islamic opinions in Italy, France and Switzerland actually prove her point. Mark Steyn, a Canadian columnist who once wrote for the *Independent* has been peddling virulent views and gloomy pictures of Europe with what he sees to be unacceptable fertility rates among Muslims in Europe vis-à-vis the host communities.<sup>5</sup>

Some have also concentrated on the ‘Spiritual and Moral Challenges’ the Muslims bring to bear in their presence in Europe. The American writer and Catholic theologian George Weigel is scathing in his attacks on the West, and Europe in

particular, for literally allowing the sore of Islam to fester to the point that the Judeo-Christian seams are due to burst to ‘handover’ the realm to Islam and Muslims<sup>6</sup>.

The scary scenes of the future depicted by interest groups and individuals often reminds one of some medieval oriental images of Islam and Muslims even though some of these had not had actual personal encounters with any Muslims. Carr, trying to sum up some of these prophecies of doom, says:

“In the nightmare world of Eurabia, the future will become the past once again and Christians and Jews will become oppressed minorities in a Sea of Islam; churches and cathedrals will be replaced by mosques and minarets, the call to prayer will echo from Paris to Rotterdam and London and the remnants of Judaeo-Christian Europe will have been reduced to small enclaves in a world of bearded Arabic speakers and *burka*-clad women”.<sup>7</sup>

If you are a white European, Christian or not or even a non-white immigrant of any shape, hue or persuasion, such images are bound to be extremely frightening. There is often no room in such circumstances to stop and reason asking a series of questions like: how many Muslims actually speak Arabic? How many wear the *burka* in Europe? How would all these happen in places like France, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany? Even in Britain, where one might argue that the system is a bit less restrictive,



how can we arrive at such a scenario? The problem with 'phobias' is that, they are meta-rational.

In such situations every bit of activity within the Muslim community is put under a microscope, experts pop out of the woodwork all of a sudden and theories, projections and conclusions are arrived at. In many cases, such activities might not necessarily be out of the ordinary compared with everyday occurrence either criminal or civil.

To a reasoned account, the virulent loathing of a whole religion with universal appeal and all its transnational adherents is very counter-productive. Apart from the fact that it always raises doubts about the motives of the perpetrators, there is also a large body of evidence from Europe itself and other parts of the world that Muslims are generally very calm, nice, hardworking and friendly people just going about their normal business to help with the development of the community as a whole. The practice of developing one's career solely on the hatred of others cannot be a healthy option for an advanced, civilized and developed community.

Both Melani Phillips and Anthony Browne, writing in the Spectator see Islam and Muslims on war footing to conquer the West and dominate the world. Phillips wrote on 11 May 2002 thus:

"Muslims not only despise Western secular values as decadent, materialistic, corrupt and immoral. They do not accept the dis-

inction between the *spiritual* and the temporal, the division which in Christian societies confines religion to the margins of everyday life. Instead, for Muslims the whole of human life must represent a submission to God. This means that they feel a duty to islamise the values of the surrounding culture."<sup>8</sup>

Without going off a tangent, I would like to believe that most Christians I know would share some of these ideas about religion, society and the individual's role in it. Even though Britain, like many European nations, often trumpets the idea of religion being a completely private affair and should not have any public role, I am sure we would agree to disagree that, that is not exactly the case on the ground. What about the opinions of other faiths in Britain for example Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. Do they also share the idea that religion has no place in the public square? What about white Europeans who have become Muslims? Does the internal Muslim critique of such ideas make any sense to anyone? Do the host of self critical comments by Muslims of various persuasions receive any hearing at all? No; because that will be against the whole agenda of such people described above. Even though we have been consistently referring to Europe as a whole, the arguments fully apply to Britain as well and hence are relevant to our discussion.

## Migration/Immigration

“In recent years, international migration has ignited a large debate in the so called receiving countries where it is assumed migrants benefit materially at the expense of receiver communities. Because this debate is largely taking place in the more affluent industrialized Western democracies, it has focused on the economic problems that migrants from the economically depressed parts of the world are said to cause. In the circumstances, little attention is paid to the more traditional benefits that cross-cultural migration brings to the receiving communities”<sup>9</sup>

Malwal, in setting the tone for Stalker’s book points out that the author has

“...authoritatively removed the issue of international migration away from the hysteria of the Western media.” Continuing, pointing out the economic, cultural and other types of mutual enrichment to both sides of the immigration episode, Stalker’s book is seen as “...a welcome antidote, separating the facts from the myths.”<sup>10</sup>

Peter Stalker was formerly a co-editor of the *New Internationalist* magazine and was working as a consultant to a host of UN agencies. He also worked for and published works on behalf of the International Labour Organization. The point is that he knows what he is talking about. Stalker points out that, migrants often

“...generate controversy and debate out of all proportion to their

modest numbers, largely because as they travel, migrants expose many of the social and political fault lines of race, gender, social class, culture and religion that underline the seemingly settled terrain of modern nation states”.<sup>11</sup>

Stalker goes on to posit one of the problematic with the typical jobs that migrants often do. These are tagged as 3D – Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult. He refers to a In a TV documentary looking closely at the issue of immigration and impact on local jobs, and this 3D came out very clearly. Without trying to pontificate too much as to the outcome and relevance of the documentary, it became clear that the local jobless population (in Cambridgeshire, UK) were not particularly keen in taking up these 3D jobs.

There have been other investigations where most of the entrepreneurs interviewed commented that without the immigrant communities, some of these farms would have had to close. O yes, we hear the cynical argument that most of these immigrant workers are from other parts of Europe and hence acceptable. That is exactly where one has difficulty in understanding the source of the immigration debate. The whole debate is skewed against a particular group of people – Muslims! Does that not create concerns within the pious Christian communities? To Stalker, instead of the selective targeting of immigrants with discrimination and accusations, society should understand that:



“...immigrants often create more jobs that they take, are likely to pay more in taxes than they use in welfare, and far from undermining settled nations, these new arrivals constantly enrich and fortify the multicultural societies they enter.”<sup>12</sup>

In the current scenario of migrants mainly from war ravaged places, especially from the Muslim world to Europe and the general reaction particularly from the Eastern European nations, Stalker seems to have made a powerful prescient statement.

The current debate on Brexit with UK seeking to leave the Euro-zone (Schengen agreement zone) and the concern with European migrants coming to the UK and taking advantage of its generous welfare system, presents an interesting setting. Just recently, the House of Lords in its review of the Brexit process expressed great concern about some of the provisions and demanded that EU citizens in the UK should be protected.

In effect, the net result of the immigration process is often beneficial. Migrants are often classed into five main categories:

- Settlers
- Contract Workers
- Professionals
- Refugees and Asylum seekers
- Undocumented workers

For category 1 (Settlers), the criteria differs from one country to another but very often skilled workers and those with financial clout are given a ready welcome. For example,

the investment capability weighs heavily on the scale in the Canadian context while the U.S organizes an annual visa lottery. In Britain, the lottery does not exist but family affiliations sometimes count. However, these days, this factor is increasingly becoming a liability for many people looking to enter the country. With the increasing tightening of the visa regulations, demand for proven investment capability and special skills in shortage areas would, we believe, count heavily.

Contract workers (category 2) often have a well-defined and regulated form of immigration. The system seems to guarantee their departure from the country once the specified job is completed.

Professionals (category 3) are likely to be employees of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) but the companies need work permits to bring such people into the country.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers (category 4) usually fleeing racial, political, religious, and personal danger in their own states are treated under UN directives even though the interpretation of these directives often differ from state to state. The ongoing debate on those from this category seems to suggest that even the UN directives are totally set aside. With far right movements gaining extensive acceptance across Europe, the prognosis is close to dire. The current position taken by mainly Eastern European nations (especially Hungary, Croatia, Macedonia and the Czech Republic)

to block their entry through their states is very telling. It is primarily because most of these asylum seekers and refugees are Muslim. The Catholic/Orthodox roots of these states appear totally forgotten.

Perhaps, the most problematic are the fifth category – undocumented workers. The popular term is ‘illegal worker’. Due to their very nature, most of the figures are speculative. Especially in Britain where exit statistical figures are no more kept at the various ports, it is impossible to know exactly how many there are.

Due to this, the critics, prophets of doom, and others with their own agenda have a field day when citing figures. Stalker states that:

“Newspaper headlines about floods of asylum seekers and economic migrants might suggest that international migration is escalating rapidly and veering out of control. But a close look at the facts reveals a less dramatic picture. ...though there are often dramatic pictures of refugees arriving, there is very little media coverage when they return home.”<sup>13</sup>

Even though Stalker is talking globally and hence one needs to take cognizant of the relative sizes of Britain vis-à-vis the United States for example, to prevent perceived dread of overcrowding, the general principles he expresses are valid for Britain as well. Providing some helpful figures for Britain, he says:

“In most countries the proportion of immigration is still fairly

modest – 3.8 percent in the United Kingdom. It is also worth noting that for all the hysteria about asylum seekers they in turn represent a tiny proportion of the immigrant population. In mid 2000 in the U.K there were around 90,000 asylum seekers awaiting decisions. Not many succeed: between 1988 and 1998 only 58000 people were given the right to settle. These numbers are very small compared with a total foreign population of 2.2 million.”<sup>14</sup>

He continues by accusing the rich nations of lack of sensible political leadership leaving the situation to those whipping up mass hysteria. He writes:

“Much of the abuse directed at immigrants results from a failure of government leadership. Few politicians are prepared to acknowledge the contribution of immigrants. Faced with a contradiction of real demand for workers on the one hand, and the political unpopularity of admitting more people on the other, they prefer to stand back and let the market decide, leaving immigrants to pay the price, if necessary with their lives.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Britain and Immigration**

As pointed out earlier, immigration is a natural phenomenon and there is hardly any group of people in history that has not migrated from one place to where it now lays absolute claims to. V. G. Kiernan reminds us of this saying:

“Wherever homo sapiens made his first and on the whole regret-



table appearance, it was not in Britain: all our ancestral stocks came from somewhere else.”<sup>16</sup>

Even though this seems to be an ‘uncomfortable truth’, British society shows itself as the most ethnically composite of all societies in Europe. The immediate question that pops up is whether this diversity could be nurtured to its advantage. Colin Holmes carefully traces the history of immigration into Britain by invaders, traders and other peaceful settlers ranging from the Roman period until the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

The main attractions outside the period of tumult were the benefits of the industrial revolution that spurred on economic expansion. The dramatic improvement in global communication and transportation in particular underpinned by the ‘commonwealth factor’ led to Muslims especially from the Indian sub-continent arriving in Britain. The arrival of the Muslims brought to the fore new challenges to the host society. As it has been intimated earlier, the fault lines within the system became ominously exposed. Issues having to do with places of Religious Worship, food, dress, festivals, language and even music became relevant for public debate. One can throw in burial, slaughter and faith schools and the debate gets into a fever pitch level. Of course, the Jews, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Sikhs etc have all generated debates on new ways of thinking.

However, the Muslims are of a

different breed. The alleged historical enmity between Christianity and Islam informed the way the debate was crafted and has been conducted. Viggo Mortensen cites the American scholar Robert Wuthnow saying:

“Diversity and pluralism raise fundamental questions about what is true or not true, about how to go about deciding what is true or not true, and about living with the uncertainty that is always present whenever competing truth claims and lifestyle vie for attention.”<sup>18</sup>

To many, the worldview of the Muslims and the West are so far apart that there is bound to be constant friction. Since the West cannot lose the argument, and to some, the Muslims are beyond the pale of redemption, the only way out is to keep Muslims out or at least in rigorous check.

According to Hugh Fitzgerald the deputy director of Spencer’s Dhimmwatch website,

“Europeans are now coming out of a deep dream of peace. There is no peace.

They have done something tremendously stupid, and more than stupid, by allowing in people who bear in their mental luggage something inimical to Western ways, who are hostile to Western political and social understandings, and who – save for a few who will leave Islam altogether – cannot be integrated.”<sup>19</sup>

This phobia of competing truth claims, the potential for the clash of civilizations a la Samuel Huntington, and general disturbance of the

peaceful socio-religious atmosphere is, what often leads people to seem to be saying : 'well we need to keep this society pure, uncontaminated by others'. In the case of the current debate in Britain, we might replace 'others' with Muslims. The problem is whether it is possible at all and even beneficial or sane for one society to keep itself insulated from the outside in the contemporary age. Especially in this case where that society concerned, that is Britain to be specific, has throughout its history been rampaging around the world entering any place and literally grabbing whatever it could lay its hands on.

I. Deutscher puts it succinctly thus:

"Those who are shut in within one society, one nation, or one religion, tend to imagine that their way of life and their way of thought have absolute and unchangeable validity and that all that contradicts their standards is somehow 'unnatural', inferior or evil. Those, on the other hand, who live on the borderlines of various civilizations comprehend more clearly the great movement and the great contradictoriness of nature and society."<sup>20</sup>

We believe the point being made here is that diversity has great benefits to offer to any society. One has to acknowledge the enormous stresses and strains, the challenges diversity brings onto the system but on the whole, that particular community, and Britain in this case, ends up being better.

The language of ignorance, prejudice and panic overflows with richly suggestive imageries often seen when it comes to debate of immigrant Muslims. With the current state of affairs about Muslims, they have become cheap scapegoats and the *bête noire* of society. These days, every Muslim is a potential trouble maker to put it diplomatically. He or she is often seen as a foreigner not supposed to be here in the first place.

### **Muslims and Secular Britain**

Writing on Muslims in Birmingham, Daniele Joly explains that:

"The immigrants themselves initially intended to live in Britain only temporarily and thereafter return home. But as immigrant population became settled, the Muslims rebuilt their religious institutions and increasingly felt that their religious status and rights ought to be recognized, in order to preserve their religion and culture in a minority situation. It is not simply the predominance of another religion which caused concern to Muslims; they wanted to safeguard Islam from the growing secularization of British society."<sup>21</sup>

The points being made here could be categorized into three main issues:

Intention to remain temporarily in Britain  
Recognition of religious status and rights  
Defence of their faith from secularization.

As at now, some of the early sub-continental immigrants still be-



lieve that their presence in the UK is only transitory and they are on their way out, so to say. It is perhaps apt to point out here that this thinking is not a preserve of only Muslims. It is a general perception among many African immigrants for example, that they are only in the UK to work their 'hearts out', make some money and return home to establish themselves. In fact there is a joke among Ghanaian immigrants that when they are leaving home, they tell their relatives:

*Meekɔbɔ no taw taw beye afe na masan aba* (ie: I am going to work hard and quickly for a year or so and return).

It is only when they arrive, that they realise that the image they have had of Britain is not that rosy. They literally get stuck. One could find evidence of this in the now growing film industry among Africans especially Nigerians. A film like 'Koofofi in London' is a typical example.

On the second issue, in accordance with the laws of the country, Muslim immigrants seek recognition due to what they perceive to be a distinctive identity. Even though this is a very difficult path to tread even within the principles of Islamic Thought, attempts have been made trying to project Muslims as one monolithic group perhaps similar to Jews or Sikhs as the law here recognizes. Yes, the argument using the concept of 'Ummah', 'a nation', is loud and clear but our understanding of the system here is that Ummah has such a religious overtone

that it will take a monumental shift in the psyche of the political masterminds for this to happen. Having said that, there have been a lot of improvements with regard to recognition of Muslims and their values.

The third issue about secularization is a bit sensitive because it is often seen as a challenge to what exactly makes the West what it is. In one's reflection on Islam and Muslims in Africa for example, what the Muslims are seriously concerned with is perhaps not the crucified Christ on the cross, but the attempts by the forces of secularization to erode all traces of religion from society. To Muslims, scripture is a means of guidance that God, the Creator, gave His creatures so that they will be able to lead their lives aright. The Qur'an sees its message as leading human beings from darkness into light (Qur'an 14:1). Therefore, anything, any force that seems to suggest that society should grow away from religion; that religion has had its day and is no more relevant to modern public life or religion is a sort of neurosis, is very worrying.

This does not mean that Islam and Muslims, for that matter, reject modernity in stricto sensu. Islam, like any other revealed religion, as Muslims believe, can adapt to modern technological society. The Qur'an and Sunnah continuously stress the importance of seeking knowledge and advancement and the desirability of individual and social progress. However, not all 'fruits' of modernity are edible.

When there is an imbalance in the emphases where moral values for example, are unceasingly being eroded and materialism becomes the main and only object in life, then these so-called fruits of modernity are not healthy for the future of society. One would like to think that the general principle here is valid in Christianity as well. How then, does this threaten Christian Britain?

### **Hijrah – Meaning and Significance**

The concept Hijrah carries a deep-seated socio-religious meaning for Muslims and is very relevant to the issue of migration/immigration. The concept is defined broadly as: ‘to abandon’, ‘to break ties with someone’, ‘to migrate’, ‘departure’, ‘exit’, or ‘exodus’.

The historical context of the main Hijrah could be seen in 622 CE when the Prophet Muhammad led his people out of Makkah at the invitation of the war – torn city of Yathrib. This was later renamed *Madinat – un – Nabi* (the city of the Prophet) and later Madinah for short. But before 622, there had been two migrations of groups of Muslims from Makkah in 615 CE and 617CE, this time to a Christian kingdom, Abyssinia. According to historians, in the address given by the Prophet Muhammad to the group of emigrants, he stressed that because the king of Abyssinia was Christian, they should have no fears<sup>22</sup>. In the film entitled *The Message*, the depiction of the Muslims in the court of al-Najashi, the King, and the negotiation

that went on makes a powerful impression on viewers. What went on in Abyssinia with the Muslim presence and the positive effects the Muslims had on that society is well documented. Some of our Africanist colleagues often emphasize the African values that made the Muslims welcome. However, we would also like to remind people that we should not forget the Christian values upheld by the host community that perhaps saw the Muslims as following some core values similar to theirs. The seed of Christian – Muslim relations had already been planted in Abyssinia.

About half a decade later in 622, the main Hijrah then took place and the city of Yathrib was changed beyond recognition. Two significant issues that came out of the main Hijrah to Madinah are: the creation of the bond of brotherhood (*Mu’akhat*) and the treaty of Madinah sometimes referred to as the ‘Constitution of Madinah’. We agree that there are many differences between these and Muslim immigration to Britain. However, we discern the following:

Migration has a historical place in the Muslim psyche and where ever Muslims have felt threatened they have migrated to safeguard their physical self and religious faith.

Muslims have historically made a net positive effect in societies they settle in.

Without sounding too general, one can conveniently argue that what happened in Abyssinia and



Madinah have been replicated in many parts of the world. It is important to note also that Hijrah has been used extensively by Sufi *Turuq* (Sufi Orders) often in their fight against invasion or occupation. Examples could be mentioned of: Shehu Usman Dan Fodio in Nigeria; Abd al - Qadr in Algeria; Ma' al-Aynayn al-Qaiqamu in Mauritania; Muhammad Abdullah Hassan in Somalia and Sayyid Ahmed Barelwi in India. The import of Hijrah is often seen in many Qur'anic verses and ahadith (traditions) of the Prophet. In Qur'an 4:97-100, there is encouragement for people to migrate because the whole earth is for God the Creator and hence there would always be provision available somewhere else. This is in the context of people living under oppression. In the Hadith on the subject of *niyyah* (intention) and its place in Islamic Thought, the Prophet explained that people would be rewarded according to the intention by which they migrated from Makkah to Madinah<sup>23</sup>

We have taken the liberty to extrapolate from these the significance of *niyyah* (intention) for Muslim immigrants. The intention is not basically for material wealth alone but also, and possibly essentially to help with the holistic development of the host society for the glory of God. Muhammad Khalid Mas'ud discusses a debate on the legality of migrating to non-Muslim lands especially in Europe and the United States of America. This is held in the context of the pedantic *Dar al-*

*kufir* (realm of unbelief), *Dar al-Harb* (realm of war), and *Dar al-Islam* (realm of Islam) squabble. People often ignore another essential classification i.e. *Dar al-Sulh* (the realm of Peace, Pact).

The general conclusion is that since the main point of the classical prohibition of migrating to non-Islamic lands was for the fear of one losing one's life, property or religion, since in modern times, it is perhaps safer for Muslims to live and practice Islam in many European lands as compared to so-called Islamic lands, it was not just permissible but encouraged<sup>24</sup>.

This then takes us to the question of Christian – Muslim Relations:

### **Muslim Immigration and Christian – Muslim Relations**

There are scriptural, historical and pragmatic imperatives for positive interfaith relations between Muslims and Christians and people of all religious faiths and those of none for that matter.

According to the principle of *Tawhid* which often translates as 'Oneness of God' Muslims understand that there is One Creator, One Word, One Revelation, One Prophethood, One World and One Humanity<sup>25</sup> From this the understanding is that there should be a mutual responsibility for the liberation of humankind, the preservation of this world for world peace, justice and development and for the general elimination of injustice, discrimination, hatred, oppression, religious/

racial bigotry, poverty and immorality (moral decay). In all these, Muslims are highly encouraged by the Qur'an and the Sunnah which is the practical implementation of the Divine Word, to join hands with others to bring about the successes that are demanded.

Diana L. Eck cites a statement where it is said:

"We must not imagine that such global issues as peace and justice can be undertaken or even addressed in a meaningful way by any one religious tradition alone. For, we are not alone in this world. We share our world with people of all cultures, races, and religions and our future is one."<sup>26</sup>

Muslims understand firmly the inter-relatedness and the interdependence of the human family. Throughout its history, they have always teamed up with others in order to bring about values that will encourage moral and spiritual development. This is why interfaith relations and Christian – Muslim relations for that matter is always important to the Muslim agenda. We are aware of the fact that many people have been very critical of interfaith relations in Britain mainly because they assume it has been a useless talking shop. Our own dear friend Fuadh Nahdi once said that, the 'Interfaith Industry' creates a new religion nobody needs. His critique was that a group of middle aged men and women, Muslims and Christians meet over copious cups of tea and coffee and engage in fu-

tile intellectual exercises. We beg to differ with Faudh. Since the 1970s, there have been active groups of Christians and Muslims doing practical things together as equal partners. The establishment of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC) in the then Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham is a prime example of what has been achieved. The CSIC which later became full subsumed into the department of Philosophy, Theology and Religion (PTR) in the University of Birmingham, has been involved in the training both academically and otherwise of a host of Christians and Muslims around the world who have gone on to be active in interfaith relations either as educationists or working in other fields. Even though the centre does not exist in the same format, the argument that was used for its transformation was precisely that it had done enough to create a core of other Centres and institutions both within Britain itself and also around the world. In interfaith dialogue five basic elements are often considered essential. These are:

- There is no dialogue without a personal relationship.
- Dialogue requires common basis.
- Dialogue requires equal footing and a right to be different
- Dialogue takes place between committed persons.
- True dialogue is oriented towards an aim and that differentiates it from a mere talking shop.

We believe that this is what is



happening around various cities and towns in Britain. If we look at the activities involving the Interfaith Network, U.K. and the Christian – Muslim Forum for example, this argument is borne out. At the global level, organisations like the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), and the Jewish Christian Muslim (JCM) Dialogue Partners in Europe have former CSIC staff, students and affiliates as active members.

### **Muslims in Britain: integration, assimilation and polarization**

The question as to how much integration has occurred within the Muslim immigrants in Britain is a very delicate one. Seminars have been held on it, books have been published and numerous recommendations have been made. The works of Seddon, Hussain and Malik, among others are typical examples.<sup>27</sup> In all these, there have been various issues taken on board in the discussion.<sup>28</sup> The Runnymede Trust published a report on this issue that makes an interesting reading. To us the definition of integration is often very confusing. What exactly does it mean? If it involves a Muslim visiting the pub to have a pint and eating pork sausage, ham and things of that sort, then Muslims are always going to have a problem. We are fully aware that many of our non-European Christian friends might also have problems with this. However, if the integration here is meant to enable Muslims see themselves first as British before their country

of origin and imbibe the core values of the society then, we would like to believe that only a few immigrants will have problems with it. After all in Islam, obedience to the law of the realm where one lives is part and parcel of its teachings. The Qur'an emphasizes that Muslims are to be forces of good and not for evil. To join others in creating a better society for all is essentially Islamic. Integration and loyalty to the state leading to this is in itself Islamic.<sup>29</sup>

### **Conclusion**

From all these we can deduce that Muslims are, themselves, in general, not a problem to the British society that they have migrated into. In a recent research carried out for a PhD thesis based on Christian – Muslim relations in the University of Bradford, there were disturbing issues that came out. The study found out that the society was severely polarized. This might not necessarily be the case on the ground but it creates some worrying concerns. The Muslim communities themselves need to work hard to reassure the host community and especially the people of other faiths that they are forces for good and not evil.

It also beholds on the community at large, the media in particular and the political masters to be sensitive in the way they put out information about particular groups within the nation and about Muslims for that matter because it does nobody any good if information is deliberately skewed towards a par-

ticular agenda without recourse to the truth.

On the argument that 'this island is full' perpetrators of this should always recognize the contribution that immigrants make to the society instead of always focusing on the few evil minds who should be treated as they are by the law.

Without veering into the current political debates for the last elections, one needs to mention the surprise that even a serving Prime Minister could say with glee on television in response to a question on immigration that "there will be 40,000 less overseas students next year". Even though the point of 'bogus students' is taken, one needs to understand that it takes two to tango. The 'bogus institutions' are local and hence the evil actually starts from within and any cleaning up should also start from here. We are aware that many of such bogus institutions are now being closed down but the so-called 40,000 less overseas students also means loss of huge revenue to the state. We need to be careful not to cut our noses to spite our faces. These days, even with admission of overseas students into well-established universities, there are severe hold ups, delays or general restrictions and these are seriously having effects on the recruitment of students. With the looming shadow of Brexit, it is not difficult to foresee what the future portends.

We would like to end herewith a statement from a BBC4 report on im-

migration in the USA. A campaigner against the anti-immigration forces trying to force President Obama's hands to expel all immigrants said:

"We did not cross borders, borders crossed us. If we now have free trade around the world why not human beings? Human beings have more worth than trinkets."

While we sympathise with the general principle in the argument, we would also like to point out that immigration without any principle or regulation will actually be a disadvantage not only to those who are legally permitted to be in a country, but also to society at large. Further, there is always a limited capacity to population that any one country can hold. For Britain, an island, this limited capacity is understandably more severe. The only worrying development we find in all the debates is the fact that they are very often skewed against Muslims. This cannot be British.

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### Notes

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## Turkish Migration Laws and the Current Situation of Syrians' Crisis in Turkey: Syrian Refugees or Future Turkish Citizens<sup>1</sup>

*Mohammed Aldujayn*

### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the current situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey and provides an update of the Turkish migration laws and refugee crisis management. Turkey first Settlement Law in 1934 favors Turkish descents to be settled and being one of the states who signed Geneva Convention along with its Protocol of 1967 which entitles to geographical limitation for granting asylums. Turkey must adopt to a new legal form for migration and asylum policies that copes with the

current challenges. The Syrian refugees mostly concentrated in the five southeastern provinces, Kilis, Gaziantep, Hatay, Sanliurfa and Mardin. However, Hatay is a special case because of its Alwaite population and the Turkish government does not locate any Syrian refugees in that province. Turkey still has a minority of Alawaite (mostly in Hatay either Arab, Kurd or Turk backgrounds) who still support the Assad region in Syria.

Keywords: Geneva Convention, Turkish migration laws, Syrian refu-



gees, integration, Alawaite, Sunni, Turkish and international organization, Turkey five southeastern provinces: Kilis, Gaziantep, Hatay, Sanliurfa and Mardin.

### **Introduction**

This research paper discusses the migration policy of Turkey as well as the current situation of the Syrian refugees that currently exceeding 3,000,000 people scattered all over Turkey mostly children and women. In addition, the paper shows the recent history of immigration toward Turkey and how it changed and developed over the years since the 1930s to Geneva Convention in 1951 along its protocol of 1967 until today with the formation of General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM) in late 2014. The most common expression that is used to describe the huge existence of Syrian refugees in Turkey is “guests” and not overtly called “refugees”. However; to any local community that receives outsiders in huge numbers, for any reason, may create some threat feelings towards the newcomers, social tension, xenophobia and so forth. To the complexity of the efforts of the Turkish government toward the crisis of the Syrian refugees, Turkey still developing migration policies and have been accelerated since the Syrian crisis began in mid-2011 and immigrants of the Syrian civil war began to come by thousands. It is

worth to mention the political debate between Turkey and the European Union (EU) over the membership when Turkey asked to join the EU a few years ago. This ultimately has to do with the Syrian refugees’ question and to what extent Turkey could be a hosting place rather than being a transit to the EU countries as Turkey was a crossroad to Europe for many refugees in the past.

### **Literature Review**

The Syrian refugee crisis has been in a lot of reports and research papers. One of the leading scholars in this field is Ahmet Icduygu, a director of migration center at Koc University in Turkey, think of the necessity of redefinition of Syrian refugee in Turkey. Soner Cagaptay, a researcher at The Washington Institute for the Near East Policy, acknowledges the good and well-command of the Turkish government over the Syrian refugees. Nevertheless, he thinks that the future is going to more difficult because the rising number of Syrian refugees. A recent research paper published by German Institute for International and Security Affairs, points out many rapid changing in the Turkish law such as work permit, free access to healthcare centers and freedom to move either inside Turkey or out of the country.

This paper provides the following points: first, an overview of Turkey’s migration policy. Second,

it offers an assessment and more in-depth information about the influence of Syrian refugees in huge masses on the host community in terms of socio-economic, cultural and legislative levels. Finally, this research discusses policy recommendations, some problems to the concept of integration, as well as solutions and the future of migration landscapes.

The case of Syrian refugees in Turkey deserves attentions for several reasons:

1. The growing influence of refugees on host communities:

As of December 2015, Turkey host the biggest number of Syrian refugees in the world with a number reaching 3,100,000.<sup>2</sup>

2. Turkey Migration System:

Since the founding of the republic in the last century, Turkey set some migrations laws that still developing according to the regional events. For example, Turkey since the 1930s, has made some legislations regarding migration laws and favored "Turkish-background and descents". This mainly was for the immigrations that began to come out of the previously Ottoman territories to what is known today Eastern Europe such as the Balkan countries.<sup>3</sup>

3. Implication for the Region:

The huge masses of refugees that comes from war-zone has to influence Turkey and definitely

would implicate all the surrounding countries especially with similar cultural-background such as Arab countries. A good example of this is Jordan that hosts more than 1,000,000 Syrian refugees (in addition to Palestinian refugees), Lebanon 1,500,000, and Egypt 130,000 of Syrian refugees.<sup>4</sup>

4. The Idea of Sharing-burden:

Looking at the never-end Middle East crisis and focusing more on the refugee concept. For example, the Syrian refugees` crisis with over 6,000,000 exited through the border and other 6,000,000 internally displaced people (IDP) within the country.<sup>5</sup> This may trigger the idea of sharing-burden among the influenced countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon.

### **Overview of the Turkish Migration Policy**

The flows of migrants toward the Turkish territories is neither new nor surprising. Being formerly the previous place of the Ottoman Empire which covered huge masses of different ethnicities including Turk, Arab, Kurd and Persian and different religious backgrounds as well. However, the foundation of the modern Turkey or what is officially named, The Republic of Turkey in 1922 has its own vision of its international relations and all internal laws including migration policies.



Since then, the other parts of what previously known as Ottoman territories, which at that time had many people with Turkish backgrounds and of Turkish descent, began to return to the new modern Turkey. In 1934, Turkey First legal document was the Settlement Law that explicitly favors whoever of Turkish descent to be settled and then granted a citizenship. This continues over the years until Turkey become a member of the United Nations in 1945. Since then, Turkey began to sign treaties and legislate laws regarding migration policies. Turkey second document was the Geneva Convention signed in 1951 with its additional Protocol in 1967 regarding refugees<sup>6</sup>. These immigration policies of Geneva Convention were made based on the geographic limitations and European background as a condition to be accepted as refugee. However, arrivals of non-Turkish descent considered to be illegal. For this reason, in 1994 Turkey established the Regulation of Asylum, which was replaced, by Law of Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013 (noticing the terminology difference between the two legislation's names) but still maintained the geographic limitation of Geneva Convention. Therefore, even the non-European background who immigrated to Turkey are entitled to Temporary Protection and not refugee, though, those people registered as refugee with

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Temporary Protection still have no set of length yet. In the 2000s, with Turkey plans to join the EU, one of the necessary things was to improve its migration and asylum system in accordance with the EU regulations<sup>7</sup>. In addition, in 2005, the government of Turkey adopted the Action Plan on Asylum and Migration, which laid out timetable and steps, required Turkey to bring its laws with its counterparts of the EU.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, many thousands and later hundreds of thousands began their immigration journey either to stay in Turkey or move to Europe. Thus, in 2013, Turkey has outlined the LFIP, which more importantly does include the people of non-Turkish descents. In October 2014, Turkey founded the only domain for any migrants or asylum seeker; General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM) along with the new Temporary Protection Regulation.<sup>8</sup> Temporary Protection's creation was a temporary solution response dealing with the huge masses that began to come in early 2014 as the situation became more severe in Syrian. In addition to access to many, social and health care center as well as the biometric identity cards.

## **The Turkish Management of the Refugee Crisis**

Because of the never-ending wars and upheavals in the Middle East and Turkey being bordered with over 1300km (800 miles) with Syria and Iraq that already have been in sever unrest for many years ago. In 2009, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) was founded in Turkey which is now is fully responsible about the 23 refugee camps that all scattered in the southern region of Turkey.<sup>9</sup> Also with the help of two Turkish organizations, Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) as well as Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). Both of AFAD and IHH with some little assistances of some international organizations cooperate to manage refugees' registration and provide medical and social care in the camps in order to meet the urgent needs of the Syrian refugees. Later in 2014, Turkey established GDMM, which became the sole government organization that takes the matters of the asylum seekers. At the beginning of 2016 in January, Turkey has made a legislation requires all Syrians who want to enter the country either through the sea or by the plane must apply for a VISA in order to enter the country legally. However, Syrian refugees who are coming through the Turkish-Syrian borders from the war-zone areas can enter freely (However, sometimes the borders are closed).

## **An Overview of the Syrian Refugees Context**

Since the beginning of the unrest in Syria in mid-2011, 8,000 Syrians by early July were taking sheltered in the bordered city of Hatay in Turkey. As the early of 2012, there were 15,000 registered displaced Syrians in Hatay. As the unrest continued and the cease-fire collapsed in mid-2012, every month Turkey's southern region began to receive 20,000 Syrians escaping the atrocities of the war. By the end of 2012, there were more than 170,000 registered refugees (however; many thousands could be unregistered).<sup>10</sup> This situation continued as the unrest and increased violence began to worsen more and more so throughout 2013 to mid-2014 (as a result of the emergence of the Islamic State and the beginning of the US-led coalition). In 2013, more than 400,000 Syrians arrived, in 2014 more than one million and in 2015, 600,000 total number of entering Syrians.<sup>11</sup> Up to July 2016, according to a recent report, now the total number of Syrians (registered ones) in Turkey exceeds 3 million<sup>20</sup> including 10% who are staying in camps and 90% are living out of the camps.<sup>12</sup> The most intense population of Syrians could be found in the southern part of Turkey especially with the bordered provinces: 1- Hatay, 2- Gaziantep, 3-Kilis, 4-Sanlıurfa and 5- Mardin (the next section will explain more). The camps have a little number of



Syrians compared with the number of out-camps, there are 23 camps till the day of writing this research and could be found in 10 provinces including: Gaziantep, Kilis, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Osmaniye, Mardin, Adana, Adiyaman and Maras.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Demographics and Social Structure of Syrians in Turkey**

The Syrian numbers now accounts for 1% of the whole population in Turkey.<sup>14</sup> However, it is important present some information and demographical number of the Turkish soil before going into the Syrian demographical structure. According to a recent record, the number of the population of Turkey exceeds 76.6 million. The Syrians number comparing it to the total population seemed small. But if we look at the divisions and the various ethnicities within all Turkey's geography, we find the Turk origins represents approximately 75%, followed by 18% of Kurd origins, then followed by 1% of Arab origins and the rest 7% consists of multi minor ethnicities like Armenians, Sorani and Azerbaijan origins (before 2011. See the pie chart below).

### **Pie chart 1: Origin percentage to the whole population of Turkey 76.6 million**

The fact that most Syrians are staying in the southern-bordered provinces, it is significant to point to the demographics of those prov-

inces as well as the socio-economic situation. Beginning with Hatay of which thrives on trade and agriculture, Gaziantep and Kilis mainly depends on small factories and smuggling trade, Sanliurfa, which is a prosperous economic trade, and Mardin, which has many economic ties with Iraq. Those provinces include 7.9% of Turkey's whole population and 5 percent of the Turkish economic output.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the Syrian refugees who fled to Turkey are staying very close to the Turkish-Syrians borders. However, there are huge numbers in big cities such as Istanbul, which has more than 300,000 Syrian refugees residing in the city as well as its suburbs.<sup>16</sup> The number of Syrians in the five Turkish bordered provinces has reached higher numbers in which the number of Syrians exceeded the number of the locals. For example, Kilis province, 59% of its population is to be Syrians. Then followed by Gaziantep of which 10% of its population are Syrians, then Sanliurfa has 9.85%, Hatay 8.87% and lastly in Mardin, which has 6.07% of Syrians compared to its local populations.<sup>17</sup> In comparison, the number of Syrians with the number of the locals, Kilis comes the first, as its local population is relatively small when it compared with the other four southern Turkish provinces; Hatay, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Mardin (please see the following chart).

### **Chart 1: The percentage of the coming Syrian refugees to the local populations in the five southern Provinces.**

The social structure of Syria as a country with its ruling power is relevant to understand the Syrian community who chose stay in Turkey. Most of the Syrians are Sunni Muslims and the ruling power in Syria represented in Assad regime is an Alawaite, which belongs to a Shia Muslim sector. Having said that, the Syrian Alawaites find safe haven in Syria especially in Damascus where most of Assad belonging people reside. Most of the people who flee Syria, go to Turkey. As a result, those groups mainly consist of Syrian Sunni Muslims, which does not get very well neither politically with Assad regime nor religiously with its Alawaite followers. Alawaites do not only exist in Syria but also in Turkey as a minority and most of them reside in the city of Hatay, which has extensive number of the Sunni Syrians refugees who settled in the recent years. As a result, this created many tensions between the locals with the coming Syrians (will explained in the next section).

### **Focus on the Five Southern Provinces of Turkey**

Until the 1938s, some of the southern parts of Turkey especially Hatay did have many Alawaite Arabs and Armenians, however; in the awake of the new Turkish Republic, this area was annexed from Syria by the Turkish military. The French,

who held the mandate in Syria (western and northern regions and the rest was under the British mandate) did not protest.<sup>18</sup> The Arabs (mostly Alawites) existed in the southern regions of Turkey and most of them reside in Hatay. The percentage of Turkish (and Kurdish) and Arab Alawites in Turkey reaches 15%.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, according to a Turkish statistical research center KONDA who did a poll in 2007 about the number of Arabs in Turkey (defined as those whose mother tongue was Arabic) found that the Arabs represent 1.25% of Turkey's population and that Syrian refugees in Turkey definitely has some increasing influence. Now the makeup of southern provinces of Turkey faces some changings in the demographical and social structure, here is an estimate of the number of Arabs before and after the influx of Syrians refugees. According to a recent estimate, the highest Arab representation in Hatay is 34% that may have risen to 38%.<sup>20</sup> Mardin that has 21% of Arabs comes the second after Hatay which may have reached 24%. The third is Sanliurfa with its 13% of Arabs may have reached 21%. In Gaziantep, which the sixth largest province in the country and the highest number of population in the southern region, has 1% of Arabs, now may constitute of 9%. Lastly, Kilis, which has seen the most dramatic change in its demographical structure with the number of Arabs that jumped from 1% to 37%.



## **Chart 2: The estimated percentage of the Arabs after the Syrian refugee crisis.**

The fact that the Syrian influx began to come into these southern provinces, it created some tensions especially in Hatay (which has already some Arabs who are Alawaite). This influx of Sunni Arabs from Syria is shifting the political-religious balance of Hatay. Since most of Hatay including Turk, Kurd and Arab, tend to be Alawaite that have some empathy with Assad regime and overtly supporting him. Not only this, but also Hatay is stronghold of many oppositionists to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and oppose its policies and stances on the Syrian issue. However, Hatay province overwhelmingly support the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP).<sup>21</sup> Because of many incidences happened since the move of Syrians refugees into the five southern provinces especially Hatay. There happened to be many attacks and instabilities that began to worry the Turkish government in Ankara. With Hatay total population exceeds 1.5 million, almost 400,000 up to 700,000 are considered to be Alawaites the coming Syrian number around 133.331 and considerably Sunni which may have created more tension than ever.<sup>22</sup> An instance of such tensions occurred in April 2013 when assailants attempted to break into the home of Ali Yeral, who heads the Ehli Bey Culture and Solidarity

Foundation of Turkey, an Alawaite NOG.<sup>23</sup> Another incidence happened in Antakya, which a city within Hatay, when an Arab Alawaite was verbally assaulted in January 2014. Because of the special case of Hatay, being dominantly an Alawaite place as well as considered a political opponent to Turkish government stances especially regarding Syrian affairs. In addition, it overtly supports Assad regime and suspects the new Sunni activities. This influences Ankara and take different measures. Therefore, Syrians who are granted a residence permit could resettle in all provinces of Turkey other than Hatay and Sirnak (where PKK and related security concern plus poverty, which may decrease inclusion).<sup>24</sup>

## **Syrian Refugees Situation in Turkey vs. Turkish Community Stances**

After presenting the legal historical of migration formalities in Turkey toward the Syrian refugee crisis and the details of demographical and political as well as social changes, it is significant to provide a close look into the complicated existence of Syrian refugees and their livelihood conditions. In addition, it is important to observe the reactions of the Turkish community on the Syrian issue as well as how the existence of Syrians influences the Turkish citizens. As mentioned earlier, 10% of the 3 million Syrians in Turkey chose to stay in camps and the rest 90% chose to be out camps (urban refugees). According

to a recent estimate, more of than 53% of the Syrian refugees are below 18 and estimated 60,000 babies are born in Turkey since the beginning of the crisis.<sup>25</sup> It is rationally expected in any given situation in which a couple of millions entering any other community to have some difficulties for both side, the host and the hosted. In addition, other life necessities such as education, cultural affiliation and future expectations. The existence of Syrians in Turkey could also influence the Turkish family structure as well as its local society in terms of culture, norms and intermarriages.

### **Labor**

Looking at the labor sectors in Turkey, as mentioned earlier, Turkey issued a new regulation in January 2016 about work permits for refugees but further details about the application and functioning of the laws have yet to emerge. The most influenced sectors are the hard labor and low-skilled sectors and the most influenced region is the five southern provinces of Turkey where most Syrian refugee reside. Comparing the Syrian workers with their counterparts of Turkish workers, it became so cheap that business owners may find it so beneficial to hire Syrians instead of local citizens. The Syrian ready for work for 300 TL (97 USD) a month where is a local person will ask for 1000 TL (325 USD). On the other hand, the Turkish workers may find it unpleasable as Syrians began

to take over these types of jobs such as catering, street venders and hard labors. However, the Turkish average wages are not sufficient yet to the Turkish citizen; according to a recent estimate, the average wage in Turkey is 1512 TL (500 USD), and is considered to be a lucky citizen compared with unemployed citizens.<sup>26</sup> The unemployment rate that reaches 9.4% began to cause some problems especially to the young Turkish citizens who found themselves in competition with Syrians people, at lease within low-skilled and hard labor job sectors. The views of Turkish citizens regarding the Syrians clearly negative. According to a recent survey on Turkish perceptions of Syrians within the southeast of Turkey, 69% of the respondents agreed with the statements “Syrians take out jobs”; however; only 44% agreed with statement “Work permit should never be granted”.<sup>27</sup> With the fact that Syrians in Turkey cannot be formerly employed, many just work illegally and a lot under the age of 18. The illegality and bad working condition of Syrian employment certainly heightened the danger of exploitations, more often on women and children.

### **Woman**

The situation of the Syrian woman is not any better. Of the total Syrian population in Turkey, 25% are women and 4% are pregnant/childbearing women in addition to 15% of deliveries require high-risk



emergency interventions.<sup>28</sup> Despite the absence of critical assessment, an AFAD survey of Syrian woman in Turkey including 1,500 camp households and 1,200 non-camp households in the late of 2014 provided the following: 97% of female Syrians living outside have not been able to earn money in month prior to the survey and 78% indicted having no sufficient amount of food for the next seven days. Another problematic issue, in which the Syrian woman in Turkey fell in, is becoming a second wife. Despite the fact that it could be a solution, especially for poor Syrian family who may not find a home to stay in or any food for the next few days, however, this type of marriage is not recognized by the state. So, the Syrian woman will not benefit from getting the Turkish citizenship. On the other hand, this pseudo marriage may harm the Syrian woman because when a problem occurred; she cannot sue or go to court because this marriage is unofficial. Turkey as a secular state does not acknowledge polygamy (actually, it is a crime in Turkish law) but most Turk are Muslim which polygamy considered to be acceptable by Islam adherents. This creates some anti-Syrian feelings among some of the Turkish community's member (including Turk Muslims especially women). According to a NGO Kilis Platform, there were more than 4000 marriage cases in which a Syrian woman becoming a second wife since 2012.<sup>29</sup> However, most of these cases happened in the

southern provinces of Turkey. The spread of the polygamy practice in the Turkish community has created some anti-Syrians sentiments especially among Turkish women who found their husbands taking a needy poor Syrian woman as a second wife.

### **Syrian Ways to Turkish Citizenship**

There are three ways for non-Turkish to gain Turkish citizenship. In the Turkish laws, a non-Turkish citizen may acquire the citizenship either by birth or after living 5 years of legal residency or by marriage to a Turkish citizen. According to the former interior minister Muammer Guler, between 2008 and 2013, the total number of Syrians who got the Turkish citizenships is 2.543.<sup>30</sup> It is another easy way to solve of the problem of being non-Turkish citizen; getting married to a Turkish citizen seemed to be a valid solution for many Syrians. However, there are some critical outcomes to the current laws of citizenship. First, these laws existed in a time where there was not a huge refugee crisis as now in the neighboring countries like Syrian and Iraq. Second, now the Syrian refugee seems to be a long issue as many refugee to come since there is no solution to the war in Syria. Lastly, according to the law of 5 years of legal residency, by the end of 2016, some couple of thousands of Syrians who entered Turkey in 2011 will deserve the citizenship.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

The situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey seem to take longer time than expected. Because of the wars and instabilities of the region of which Turkey has long borders with both Syria and Iraq, the future seems unclear. As of today, official numbered Syrians who entered Turkey exceeds 3.000.000 and this only include the registered ones (the number of unregistered could not be estimated). Turkey is still not done from reviewing its laws and probably many regulatory legislations to come as of recent comment by the Turkish President Erdogan "Syrian refugees could become Turkish citizens".<sup>32</sup> Yet, Turkey main migration laws in which regulate the legality of refugees and asylum seekers are based in two laws: Settlement Law and Geneva Convention along with its 1967 Protocol. The new current laws that came in 2014 shows how Turkey are revising its laws according

On the other hand, most Syrians refugees in Turkey are not registered. Nevertheless, they gain some modest income through working illegally which may cause some harms to both Syrian workers and Turkish economy. The most influence region of Turkey is the southern five provinces, Kilis, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay and Mardin. In terms of demographics, the huge numbers of Syrians in in those provinces could have a big influence. Such as, Arabic is thriving over Turkish and in case of Kilis province now has Syrians more than local. The po-

litical and religious situation in the province of Hatay showing how social integration is harder than other parts of Turkey,

## Policy Recommendation

Since Turkey having negotiations with the EU over its membership, Turkish migration policies began transforming gradually since mid-2000 to be as its counterparts of the EU. However, since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis, Turkey began to review its migration policies seriously and established new government agencies such as GDMM. Nevertheless, here a list of policy recommendations:

- Redefining the status Syrian refugees. Up to today, millions of Syrians have no official status but only temporary biometric cards.
- Registration process of refugees. Preparing for more influx of Syrian refugees is better than late actions.
- Establishing more effective integration plans. Making plans in the long run is important for effective solutions for the Syrian refugees in Turkey.
- Reviewing migration policies. Turkey needs to review Geneva Conventions since it does not respond to the ongoing challenge of Syrian influxes into Turkish territories.
- Sharing the burden. Other countries also can help such as Jordan and Lebanon who received millions of Syrians.

Improving Resettlement. The family bond is important for the survival



of Syrians as many refugees' families scattered in more than one countries.

At the end, it is important to acknowledge the humane attitude of Turkey toward Syrian refugees as well as other primary receiving countries. However, Turkey by itself cannot do the work, therefore, the cooperation of NGOs and other humanitarian interested bodies shall work hand in hand with Turkey with an international support for the case of all refugees.

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### Notes

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## Faith on the Move: Transnationalism and the Immigrants Religiosity across Borders

*Enoch Olujide Gbadegesin*

### **Abstract**

The paper is an analytical study of the role of religious tradition in politics in the contemporary world in which we live. It critically analyzes the ways and manners by which immigrants creatively manipulate some values, norms, beliefs and symbols from their traditional culture in order to impact and influence the host culture. It assesses the way immigrants remake the religious and cultural landscape of their host communities by introducing new faiths that partly change

the way the host communities think, behave and in fact interpret their realities. The paper argues that one of the fascinating things about the globalizing culture is the impetus given to faiths to cross borders. By using socio-anthropological approach, the paper problematizes the connection between religion and immigration in the twenty-first century and argues that immigrants and their religions are not necessarily dangerous as being claimed in some European literature.

Key Words: religious tradition, Transnationalism, immigrants, faith, globalization, culture

### **Introduction**

There are two important motivating factors that informed the writing of this paper. One, it is borne out of the Racio-cultural prejudice, which characterized Trump's political campaigns, which eventually gave him the mandate to become the next American president. Another important motivating factor is that religion is becoming increasingly a major factor in thinking about immigrants and immigrations, when considering any discussions on globalization. In any way we might think about it, the growing rates of immigration, and the increasing reliance on immigrants for a strong workforce and economy highlight the importance of migrants having to change or influence the host cultural landscape in which they find themselves. In her book, *God Needs No Passport*, Peggy Levitt, shows how immigration is also at the heart of many heated conversations (if not all over the world) but at least in America.<sup>1</sup> She even states further that, "immigrants make up one-quarter of the American public along with their American-born children. They are not only transforming cities like Houston and Atlanta, they are remaking suburban and rural America as well."<sup>2</sup> Oscar Handlin's even notes that "immi-

grants are the very soul of the United States of America."<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that in any other parts of the world, immigrants are performing basically the same function.

Immigration is becoming a thorny issue all over the world, especially the West and America, due to the upsurge of religious violence around the globe. This has been a major concern of every meaningful person that continues to ask the question whether religion should be given any consideration when talking about public policy. As a matter of fact, the history of the Western world had been characterized by a great animosity against religion, even though American and Europeans have continued to pride themselves on their enlightened attitudes of religious toleration and understanding.<sup>4</sup> Yet, it is truism to think that globalization, which has helped in bringing together into a global village, diverse cultures presents a challenge on thinking about the interconnectedness that exists between religion, politics, and economic processes in the diasporic study. Globalization, it is said, has changed the worldview that thinks in terms of my religion is right and others are wrong; accommodation and compromise became the order of the day.<sup>5</sup> Given this reality, my argument will be that religion and religious attitudes will continue to play major roles in the academic discourse about immigrants and



migration and the key factor in considering the determinants of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy. What I intend to do is to draw examples from different cultural settings to show how immigrants have continued to use religion not only as a survival instinct but also as a mean of politically participating in the society they find themselves.

### **Religion and Question of Identity**

In social life, human beings in their individual capacity are made up of different identities, some of which are difficult to be lost or detached from. In his/her meaning making adventure individual also incorporates religion into that process. Religion, no doubt, partakes in how people think or cognize and act politically, economically, and in fact, in nation building debates and developmental projects. Diana Eck also echoes this question of identities by arguing that “our identities are also multilayered and multi-voiced.”<sup>6</sup> For example, a Nigerian Akeem Olajuwon, once an important member of the Houston Rocket’s Basketball team, in Houston Texas, and who on many occasions has successfully led Houston Rocket to victories in many of her games could be said to be contributing to the sport development in the USA.<sup>7</sup> Yet, as a Muslim, it would not be expected that he should lose his Muslim identity in order to fit into the American

dominant religious system. Doing so will mean that he is being used as a mean to an (another group’s) end and not an end in himself as an individual having a religious obligation that he must fulfill in order to make himself happy.

Or think about those Asian immigrants who are one of the religious minorities in America, who are contributing immensely to religious diversities (at least they have introduced the practice of yoga and transcendental meditation) in the United States of America, should not be expected to lose their religious identity in order to be at home in another culture. Thus, while they continue to contribute to economic and Informational Technological advancement of America, in return they are supposed to be accorded their religious right and respect, instead of thinking that they should be absorbed into the dominant American religious tradition. I think, it is because people all over the world especially immigrants have fear of losing their identities, especially “lose their home”<sup>8</sup>, that is why they continue to reenact their sacred centers and also manipulate sacred objects to their advantages wherever they find themselves. Immigrants generally do not leave their faith behind; it travels with them and impacts their destinations.

## **Pattern of Migration: A Brief Analysis**

Migratory experience is as old as the human history; people migrate due to many unavoidable reasons. People migrate from their homelands due to ravages of war; some migrate as a result of harsh economic condition in their homeland, some migrate due to political insecurity/persecution in order to seek asylum in another land, some migrate temporarily as a result of education and few others migrate due to their trade or few others due to looking for greener pasture. Coming especially to some African countries, the Hausa/Fulani migrants often take their animals for grazing from one geographical location to another. Hausa, in particular, are known for their trade in kola and cattle and this necessitates that they must continue to be on the move.<sup>9</sup> North American that now plays host to many immigrants from different nations has once had people who were migrants themselves and perhaps that partly explains the reason why the first immigrants named themselves pilgrims. More importantly, and relevant to my discussion here is that, as Levitt rightly claims, “from inception most religious institutions, and the religious movements that grew out of them, knew few boundaries.”<sup>10</sup> Meaning that as immigrants move from one place to another, their religions move with them.

In their research observation, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies note that during the Age of Discovery (15th- 17 th century) many Europeans, with the Portuguese and Spanish leading the way, undertook maritime travels and explored the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania. This transoceanic migration led to their discovery of new lands, the expansion of trade relations and the development of the economies of both the countries of origin and destination. Commercial and strategic factors influenced migration in that period so much that many European countries were competing to colonize strategic regions and territories. At the same time, in order to tackle labour shortages, the slave trade was introduced at various times throughout history, and subsequently abolished in the mid-19th century. A second wave of labour came from Europe, especially England, Spain and Portugal, to what was then called “the new world” (i.e. USA, Canada, Australia, and southern Africa).<sup>11</sup> In recent years, discussions have taken place on the linkage between migration and development in a number of fora and especially since the UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2006. It is even argued that migration is a phenomenon, whose benefits can be maximized when countries of origin form dialogues and partnerships with countries of



destination.<sup>12</sup> Mexico, for example, as the 2010 Chair of the GFMD, focused on improving the collaboration between countries of origin and destination and introduced the concept of shared responsibility, collective benefits and partnerships.<sup>13</sup>

### **Religious Expression across Borders**

While immigrants come from nearly every country in the world, they often settle mainly in a few countries where they could be well situated economically: Northern America, Europe, Australia, and the Gulf Arab states.<sup>14</sup> One thing that characterizes religious expression of the faith groups across borders is that it reflects the lived experience and practices of the immigrants rather than merely reenacting home religious beliefs and practices. Although there are problems connected with immigrants' desires to practice their religions the way they believe these religions ought to be practiced, but host countries' existing legislations might not permit that. There are at least two reasons why this is so: one, the political and cultural values of the host countries, especially the West, might not permit, for example, the Islamic practice of honor killings or African religious practice of female circumcision. Some countries even frown at the use of Islamic penal code called Sharia. And secondly, the fact that some host societies, ac-

tually wanted to proscribe foreign religious practices is a good reason why immigrants would not be able to practice their religion the way it used to be practiced in their homeland. For example, in America, there is a growing hostility towards Islam and Muslims by some Republicans and this continued to be expressed openly by Donald Trump in his migration policy barely two weeks into his becoming the president of America. As at February, 2017 Trump's team has begun to show no sympathy for even genuine Muslims who are law-abiding and who continue to carry on their activities with civility.<sup>15</sup>

In a genuine multicultural society, all diverse religious worshippers should be allowed to express themselves based on their different religious doctrines as long as those doctrinal practices would not undermine the law of the land they have come to dwell as foreigners. There ought to be no undue manifestation of fear of strangers leading to hostility towards their religions; all religions should be accorded equal respect and treated with dignity. There is no doubt that there are quite a number of occasions when certain immigrants have misused and abused the opportunities they have to migrate to other countries by perpetrating criminal acts.

Yet, there are examples of inclination to religious violence by some host peoples based on wrong

interpretations of sacred texts too. For example, there are occasions in America when some radical Christians have taken law into their own hands by bombing Abortion clinics or openly burning other peoples' religious sacred text and even house of worships.<sup>16</sup> To sweepingly criminalize certain people based on their religious beliefs and practices is violence in itself. But instead of trying to reproduce what many scholars have been able to write on the issue of hostile reactions to "strangers" or "foreigners", which we often designate immigrants, I will proceed instead to show how religious experiences and expressions of the immigrants have been contributing and could continue to show how the host societies may alternatively view the world and be changed positively in the process. It has been rightly said that "Immigration gives energy and spirit to a country's culture. Immigrants bring new ideas and new perspectives with them and teach others about the lives of people outside their country and what they do different."<sup>17</sup>

### **Accommodation and Religious Pluralism**

As already hinted above, immigrants with their religious beliefs and practices will want to retain their religious identity, yet they do not always do this mindlessly; they are often aware of the host societies they find themselves and they try to

incorporate some elements of religious practices from the dominant religion in the host country. Take for example, when Orisa worship was introduced into some South American countries such as Brazil, West Indies, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, there was no way to express the beliefs and ritual practices the way they would have wanted due to space-time constraint. What they do instead is to synthesize their own religious beliefs and practices with the dominant religious tradition (especially Roman Catholicism) by incorporating/adapting some elements of beliefs and ritual practices which could help project their religion better.<sup>18</sup> Or think about some African type Christian spirituality that continues to manifest itself in places like America; while changing American religious landscape it is also being changed in the process.<sup>19</sup> Given this concern, it is good that countries where immigrants relocate to be ready to learn something new from immigrants with their religious traditions from other parts of the world. The accommodation and tolerance posture demonstrated by political leaders in Doha Qatar towards religious mosaic that are present there, especially Christian churches in an Arab/Islam region is a good idea, which should be cultivated by other countries as well.<sup>20</sup>

Immigrants all over the world would want to have a sense of belonging and partake in communal



rituals that they have been used to before migrating to new lands. It has been rightly observed that “immigrants use religious institutions to reproduce and reassert important aspects of their home-country cultures – for example, incorporating some ethnic practices in religious ceremonies. In their churches and temples, immigrants “can worship in their own languages, enjoy the rituals, music, and festivals of their native lands, share stories from their homeland, and pass on their religious and cultural heritage to the next generation.”<sup>21</sup> The host communities should be willing to concede these various dimensions of human experience to the immigrants instead of thinking that they have nothing to offer. Host communities’ members could even be invited for such ceremonies, which obviously will bring new perspectives in the way they think about other worldviews.<sup>22</sup> Diana Eck, who has been working on religious pluralism and in fact, started Pluralism Project in Harvard University since 1991, challenges scholars and well-meaning people to show interest in other peoples’ religious worldviews.<sup>23</sup>

In thinking about religious pluralism, Diana Eck suggests that not only scholars but also citizens of increasingly diverse societies should get engaged in critical reflection of “one’s own faith” in relation to the religious other.<sup>24</sup> Religious scholars

in particular are being challenged into providing “‘voice’ in critical and volatile public issues through authoritative sources at their disposals, which are likely to become legal and constitutional.”<sup>25</sup> The embracement and adaptation of some of the religious traditions of Asian, African and other continents into the systems of thought of few European and Americans would go a long way in not only promoting cultural diversity but also religious plurality that Eck is advocating.<sup>26</sup> The aversion to religious pluralism that few Americans (especially Republicans) are showing toward other countries with their diverse religious traditions especially Muslims and Islam then could not be true representative of generality of American people who knows that their long history has been that of history of migration and of religious plurality. In his contribution to migration and religion, Robin Burk quoted Charles Hirschman who pointed out that “According to the often-retold stories of Americas founding, the early colonists were fleeing religious intolerance in the Old World and they wanted freedom to express their deeply felt religious beliefs. Their own experience with religious persecution was thought to have created a social and cultural environment in which freedom of religion would eventually flourish.”<sup>27</sup>

Another important area of emphasis is the issue of willingness to

learn something new from immigrants and their faiths by taking interests in their scriptures. Showing interest in reading other religious groups' scriptures other than one's own is likely to lead to not only understand them but also to sympathize with their worldviews. In this endeavor, the religious, political, and public policy scholars have a lot of work to do in this regard; the need for taking up the responsibility of wanting to know other peoples and their culture of which religion plays a very significant role becomes necessary if the public would be enlightened. Religious scholars in particular owe it as a duty to teach generality of the people all over the world that all religions share important basic tenets in common; loving God (or one's eternal thou) and one's neighbor. That can only happen, if and only if a religious scholar who happens to be a Christian and who teaches Christian Theology avails him/herself in knowing what Koran or Buddhist' text says in the first instance before he or she could inform others. The same attitude must be demonstrated by a Muslim scholar or an indigenous traditional religions' scholar. Examples of such people like Charles Kimball<sup>28</sup> who is an ordained Baptist minister but who devotes his scholarly focus to Islamic and comparative studies and Diana Eck<sup>29</sup>, a Christian by faith (Methodist), yet teaching religious pluralism should serve as encour-

agement to other religious scholars to enlighten not only the political office holders and the general public but to give voices to voiceless majority (especially immigrants) who are being persecuted for their faith claims and beliefs all over the world.

### **Conclusion**

Due to space constraints, this paper has only been able to scratch on the surface the question of faiths across borders and how there is need to further engage the immigrants and migration study in order to get a better understanding of their religions. Dialogic engagement of one faith with other faith is not simply a matter of passive endeavor but a matter of active civil engagement. While, we may agree with Jewish theologian Martin Buber that each person "is a new thing in the world called upon to fulfill his particularity in this world".<sup>30</sup> Still, our aloneness, our uniqueness is tempered by an experience of a common humanity.<sup>31</sup> No matter how unique our experience may look, there is a broader view of human experience that leads to a fraternity with our fellow human beings. What country, which is hostile to immigrants and their religions lack is the ability to conscientize itself to the reality of religious pluralism that characterizes the new millennium and a globalized world. In a religiously plural world we are living now, it is important to come to terms with diversity



of beliefs and hence of apprehending reality. Peter L. Berger puts it this way, “reality is not experienced as one unified whole. Rather, human beings experience reality as containing zones or strata with greatly differing qualities.”<sup>32</sup>

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24. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/abortion-clinic-bombings/>

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## Notes

1. See Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape*. (NY: New Press, 2007), p. 1.
2. Levitt, *God Needs No Passport*, p. 1.
3. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migration that made the American People*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), quoted in Moses O. Biney, *Religion and Adaptation among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York*. (New York: New York University Press, 2011), p. 10.
4. Martha C. Nussbaum, *The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age*. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 1.
5. Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos, Jr, and Peter Kivisto, *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments*, (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), p. 263.
6. Diana Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, December 2007, Vol. 75, No. 4, pp. 743-776, doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfm061, p.745.
7. In recognition of Akeem Olajuwon's feat and importance to sports' development in Houston Area, the NBA cast his image in Bronze and elegantly places it at the entrance of the Toyota Center in Down Town Houston, where Basket Ball games are taking place.
8. The concept of "loss of home" as it is used here is in a metaphoric sense; meaning that certain people always feel that whenever they migrate to another place, they are likely to lose the sense of connectedness with their home, re-



- garded as sacred center, thus when people are separated from their sacred places and holy lands, they can become like persons who have lost their compass and can no longer find their way.
9. Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns*. (Berkeley California: University of California Press: 1969).
  10. See Peggy Levitt, "Between God, Ethnicity, and Country: An Approach to the Study of Transnational Religion." Being a Paper presented at Workshop on "Transnational Migration: Comparative Perspectives", June 30-July 1, 2001, Princeton University.
  11. See the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "The phenomenon of migration its significance or meaning in human societies throughout history". <http://www.ifrc.org>
  12. *Ibid.*, p.3.
  13. *Ibid.*, p.3.
  14. According Theresa Davidson and Carlos Garcia, "the United States has long been a destination for immigrants; the last two decades have seen substantial growth in their number. See their article titled: "Welcome the Stranger: Religion and Attitudes towards Social Justice for Immigrants in US" in *Journal of Religion and Society* Vol. 16 (2014), 1-21.
  15. See *The New York Times* of February 1, 2017 for a detailed new on "Trump Pushes Dark View of Islam to Center of U.S. Policy-Making" by Scott Shane, Matthew Rosenberg and Eric Lipton. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/01/us/politics/donald-trump-islam.html?action=click&contentCollection=Politics&module=Trending&version=Full&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article>
  16. See <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/abortion-clinic-bombings/> for more details on Anti-abortion bombings debate. Or see a brilliantly written article by Anti-Defamation League (ADL) titled: "Anti-abortion Violence: America's Forgotten Terrorism" on <http://www.adl.org/combatting-hate/domestic-extremism-terrorism/c/anti-abortion-violence-americas-forgotten-terrorism-1.html> This contribution has been made since 2012 highlighting domestic violence that has characterized American society since 1980 especially Anti-abortion bombings all over America.
  17. See especially Daniel Griswold contribution online titled: "Immigrants have Enriched American Culture and Enhanced Our Influence in the World", the article was said to first appear in *Insight* on February 18, 2002 but has been reproduced on CATO Institute Website. <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/immigrants-have-enriched-american-culture-enhanced-our-influence-world> downloaded today 2/4/2017 12.48pm.
  18. Rachel E. Harding. *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomblé and Alternatives Spaces for Blackness* (Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003 paperback edn.), see especially pages 57-64 where she discussed extensively about adaptation, which involves "gathering deities into a single ritual space". See also Joseph M. Murphy and Mei Mei Sanford (eds.). *Osun across the Waters: A Yorùbá Goddess in Africa and the Americas.*( Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), in their introductory remarks, the editors tried to show that Osun imagery and its devotion is worldwide and never localized. See also J.K. Olupona and Terry Rey (eds.) *Orisa Devotion as World Religion: The Globalization of Yorùbá Religious Culture* (Wisconsin:



- University of Wisconsin Press, 2008). The edited book which brings together 26 authors from diverse fields of study show the resilience of Orisa and its being incorporated into many cultures of the world especially America.
19. Moses O. Biney. *From Africa to America: Religion and Adaptation among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York*. (NY: New York University Press, 2011). The author shows how Ghanaian Presbyterian Church continues to adapt and also shapes American culture where it is located in New York City.
  20. See Christian Churches in Doha Qatar on the website, <http://www.onlineqatar.com/living/christian-churches-qatar.aspx>.
  21. H. R. Ebaugh and J. S. Chafetz. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptation in Immigrant Congregations*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2000), 141, quoted in Nancy Foner and Richard Alba "Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion" in *IMR Volume 42 Number 2* (Summer 2008):360–392, DOI: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00128.x.
  22. I was privileged to be invited to Muslim's iftar in Boston Massachusetts, in 2008 almost coinciding with the time I was about concluding my Master of Divinity Program in Harvard Divinity School. It was an interesting moment for me; I was able to see how through culture of hospitality strangers are welcome with respect and dignity.
  23. Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, December 2007, Vol. 75, No. 4, pp. 743-776. She claimed that a few years ago, a Minnesota state legislator complained vociferously that the Dalai Lama should not be allowed to address the state legislature because, as he puts it, "Buddhism is incompatible with Christian principles". p. 752; see also Diana Eck, *A New Religious America*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001).
  24. Eck, "Prospect for Religious Pluralism..", p. 743.
  25. Eck, "Prospect for Religious Pluralism..", p. 753.
  26. Quite a number of people from the West, especially Americas and Brazilians, Cubans, etc., are now embracing African Traditional Religions so much that they get initiated as not only members but also undergoing priesthood apprenticeship into Ifa, Osun, Olokun, Yemoja, Ogun and Obàtálá. A very good colleague of mine during my studying for PhD in Rice University, Houston, Texas USA, who claimed to be a Christian, told me that she had been initiated as a novitiate of Osun goddess. This conversation took place why we were taking Methods and Theories in Religion Class in the Fall of 2010.
  27. Quoted in "Immigrants, Religion and Conflicts—the U.S. Experience" written by Robin Burk on March 6, 2005. [www.windsofchange.net/archives/immigrants\\_religion\\_and\\_conflict](http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/immigrants_religion_and_conflict), downloaded December 17, 2016.
  28. See the back page of *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* written by Charles Kimball (NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002).
  29. Eck, "Prospect for Pluralism..." p. 746.
  30. Martin Buber, *The Way of Man* (New York: Citadel Press, 1970), p. 16.
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## Muhammad's Call to Integrate?

*Adeel Khan*

The Islamic religion and its various intellectual traditions are centred on the biography (speech and actions and tacit approvals) of Muhammad, the founder of the religion. In order to appreciate any question of contemporary significance we need to return to the biography of Muhammad for an Islamic approach to address that particular question. Therefore, in reading the earliest narrative of Muhammad's biography from a hundred years after his death by Ibn Ishaq we find the standard account of his 'divine permission' to migrate from Mecca, his home town, to Medina,

the neighbouring town in Southern Arabia. This account is often repeated by biographers of Muhammad writing over the previous fourteen centuries. The intent of this article is to read differently the displacement of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. In order to understand better how migration can be seen as a central theme in understanding the prophetic mission and a significant turning point in Muhammad's biography.

Ibn Ishaq writes that God gave Muhammad 'permission' to leave after he was made aware of a plot against his life hatched by the Mec-

can tribes.<sup>1</sup> He quotes the Qur'an 8:30 as evidence of this divine permission:

*“And mention when plan against thee, those who were ungrateful, to bring thee to a stand still or to kill thee or to expel thee. And they plan and God plans, but God is Best of the ones who plan.”*

God plans better than the plotters against Muhammad's life and saves his life by asking him to leave Mecca secretly, unannounced. Ibn Ishaq fails however to make much of the Qur'anic narrative of <expel thee> from Mecca. What does this Qur'anic reference imply in terms of the reasons for departing from Mecca? We find out from Ibn Ishaq that Muhammad and his companions were subjected to torture, persecution and social and economic ostracism for years before the event of collective displacement.

I suggest that we question whether <divine permission> should be stressed as the explanation for why Muhammad left Mecca by looking closely at verses from the Qur'an itself. Can this <migration> be better framed as a forced displacement?

### **Hijra: Expelled from Mecca**

The Qur'anic narrative provides repeated references to the forced displacement of Muhammad and his followers from their beloved home town of Mecca.

*“They expelled the Messenger*

*and you because you believe in God, your Lord”* (Quran 60:1).

*“And how many a town had there been which was stronger in strength than thy town which expelled thee”* (Quran 47:13).

The verb kh.r.j. (removed or expelled) is used in several Qur'anic verses to describe the experience of leaving Mecca for Muhammad and his followers for example, Yakhrijun (they expelled) in Qur'an 60:1, akhrijukum diyarikum (and expelled you out of your abode) and zaharu alaa akhrajikum (and were behind expelling you) in Qur'an 60:9, and alati akhrajatak (which expelled you out) in Qur'an 47:13.

Moreover, Al-Biruni reminds us that for these early displaced Muslims the year was remembered as the year of hijra (separation, i.e. being expelled). Much later (to be precise seventeen years later) this year of separation took on significance as the starting of the Islamic calendar and the Islamic epoch. This however, seems to be something read back onto the year of separation as the year of <Divinely permitted migration>. Interestingly, only the Divinely permitted migration theme is the one remembered throughout the proceeding fourteen centuries of Islamic history as the canonical account. Al-Biruni explains in his Athâr-ul-Bâkiya (written around 1000 C.E.) how Caliph <Umar in the seventeenth year after the year



of being expelled from Mecca declared the Islamic epoch as starting from that date of being expelled from Mecca, for communal reasons. Since it was an undisputed event in the memory of these early Muslims. While, other significant events such as the birth of Muhammad and the beginning of revelation in him were disputed temporal markers between the companions of Muhammad.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, François de Blois (2017) has suggested that there may have been other more important arithmetic/political reasons for keeping this date as the start of the Islamic calendar. He argues that intercalation was abandoned with the flight to Medina by the nascent Muslim community, which meant that the,

... prophet broke all ties with the temporal and spiritual rulers in Mecca; he would have seen no reason to abide by the calendrical ordinances of the intercalators in Mecca, nor indeed with those of the Jewish religious authorities in his new home. The new state in Medina warranted a new calendar... Later, when Muhammad returned in triumph to the conquered Mecca he would have imposed the new calendar on his native city, announcing it publicly in the farewell sermon (de Blois, p. 17).

This suggestion goes against the grain of the argument made by Islamic historians that intercalation was abandoned much later (10 years after being expelled

from Mecca rather than at the time of displacement from Mecca). De Blois argues convincingly that this is mathematically improbable and hence unlikely. If this account of the relation between the time of the formation of the community of Medina (under the sovereignty of Muhammad and God) and epochal time is taken on board what implications can be drawn for the understanding of the type of community that was formed in Medina? Was there a significance given to the type of community formed in Medina in early Islamic accounts?

### **Umma: Birth of the UberVolk**

*“You were the UberVolk! Because you call to social virtue and speak against social vice”* (Quran, 3:110, Author’s translation).

Umma is one of the nebulous concepts from the biography of Muhammad appearing first in the so-called ‘constitution of Medina’. Whether Muhammad went about setting up a theocracy on the pattern of Mecca or not is a question open to historical interpretation, what is however clear from the historical record is that he may have in the process of presiding over negotiations terminating in a consensus may have had as its object the creation of a sound political structure of unity between the tribes. Hence, umma may be seen as a concept of a confederation of tribes or a ‘Uber-tribe’ (or super-tribe).<sup>3</sup> Accord-

ing to canonical Islamic historical sources like al-Tabari migration led to the replacement of old ties of kinship to new bonds of adopted kinship (muḥakhat) between muhajirs (those expelled from Mecca) and ansars (host supporters of Medina) which even entitled them to inherit from each other (vol. 24, p. 199).

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (Quran 3:110)

Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency (Translation: Marmaduke Pickthall)

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong (Translation: Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

You are the best nation ever brought forth to men, bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour (Translation: Arthur Arberry)

The three possibilities of translating umma can be seen above as community, people and nation depending on one's choice of preferred translation. Whatever, choice of translation we prefer the scholarly consensus is that umma refers to a human collective.<sup>4</sup> I argue that a more suitable translation than the ones offered above may be Uber-Volk, a neologism of sorts. The German term Uber attached to the term Volk invokes a notion of communal or national superiority of a people emblematic of the above Qur'anic

verse. I am not reading umma in this verse as a category of racial superiority the way German National Socialist politicians deployed the notion of the Volk before the Second World War. However, umma is an intensely political concept that is put to use by Muslims of all trajectories throughout Islamic history as well as in the contemporary period. President Erbakan of Turkey, the popular singer Sami Yusuf and the notorious ISIS have all successfully and seductively deployed the category of the umma in convincing their respective followings amongst Muslims around the world with widely differing shades of religious commitment.

"In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition" (Iqbal, p.76).

Prophethood that ends all prophethood and begins an era of inductive reason according to Iqbal is also an epoch that ends all <communities of sentiment> by creating the ultimate or final community of sentiment (Soroush, p. 32). Muslim supremacist (triumphalist) narratives such as the above maybe considered narratives of <Vanity Islam>. Are they helpful for the contemporary situation where Muslims find themselves in the midst of liberal vanity, where liberalism has as sophisticated (if not more) narratives of supremacy as those of Vanity Islam (consider Fukuyama, 1992, The End of History)?



As the life of a seventh century man from Mecca still defines Muslim imagination such that it is the Ur-life in relation to which Muslims may form their own lives, there are limited variations possible to new forms of Muslim living and imagination. While this may be limiting, it may also be seen as liberating for some. However, it is yet to be seen how Muhammad's life may offer inspiration for Muslims in the contemporary period for those who find themselves in migrant contexts to remain true to the perfect model of living - in Muhammad's biography - and adjust to the demands of their social and political contexts that are significantly different to seventh century Arabia or to their Muslim countries of origin.

Whatever we may excavate from Muhammad's life as historians of migration we are left with at least one universally accepted lesson that can be unanimously agreed on across time and space which is that there is always an uncanniness in returning to one's place of origin. Muhammad could have stayed on in Mecca after its conquest and capture but like many migrants today and throughout history he chose to return to his adopted city of Medina and chose to die there where he was buried as well. His tomb is still a pilgrimage site of Muslims from around the world, despite efforts by those who would rather see him as an ordinary mortal bereft of divine

qualities, but only an accidental crucible for the Divine word.

Contemporary Muslim migrant experiences seem to, at times, lead to an objectification of a complex and sophisticated, multi-vocal and pluralist, religious and intellectual tradition. Moreover, generational conflict often leads to religious confusion by drawing the false distinction between culture and «religion», a true «religion» that is possible to be accessed purely and in an unadulterated fashion through de-contextualised texts. Migration created the beginning of the umma, the Muslim «community of sentiment» to end all «communities of sentiment» and this community got formed out of the migration experience. The migrant community is also a community formed out of relations forged with the hosts of the host community «who spent of their own wealth giving shelter and aid, and therefore formed new alliances». (Mona Siddiqui, *Hospitality in Islam*, p.53)

So what does this mean for the terms of integration for new Muslim migrants in contemporary contexts? What would Muhammad say to contemporary migrants? How would Muhammad do contemporary migration? Muhammad's own migration was based on being asked to become the sovereign for his adopted community of Medina. Integration on grounds of becoming sovereign seems to be the lesson learnt from Muhammad's biogra-

phy. Is this tenable for the contemporary migrant situation of Muslims in the world today? Or are there new inspirations needed to find a gentle compromise with host communities and cultures? Perhaps a new definition may be needed for what Islam is and can be? Where can Muslims find these sources of compromise is an unresolved mystery since the Ur-narrative of Muhammad's biography clearly does not offer any precedence for such integration in the view of this author or the many scholars who have assessed closely the historical evidence of the biography of Muhammad.

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### *Notes*

1. Ibn Ishaq, p. 220-223.
2. Al-Biruni, *Chronology*, p.30.
3. Serjeant, 'The Constitution of Medina', p.12
4. Gunther, 'Muhammad the illiterate prophet', p.12.





## Church as the Sacrament of God the Migrant

*Peter C. Phan*

The haunting images of the three-year old Syrian boy Alan Shenu washed up, face down, on a beach in Turkey, in his red shirt, blue shorts and black shoes, and of a one-year old drowned baby cradled in the arms of a German rescuer have drawn world-wide attention to the plight of migrants and refugees. Place these two images side by side with that of Donald Trump, whose family had migrated from Germany to the U.S., and whose two wives are also migrants, sitting comfortably at his desk in the White House and proudly signing an executive order

banning migrants from six mostly Muslim countries, and ask yourself, as an American and a Christian, if shame and sadness should not well up in your heart. More than ever is the oft-misused question, "What would Jesus do?" appropriate, and more pointedly and urgently, comes the moral challenge: "What must I do?"

There are of course lots of practical things we can and must do to resist racism, hatred of immigrants, and Islamophobia. As scholars of religion, however, it is also incumbent upon us to delve into our re-

ligious traditions and retrieve the resources that can inspire us to take up the task of creating a political order that is just, inclusive, and humane for everyone, but especially for the victims of war and violence, persecution and oppression, poverty and destitution. As a member of the Catholic Church, which strongly stresses the importance of community and sacramental celebrations, I will focus on how the church itself, especially the American Catholic Church, is a community constituted by migrants. The church is so not merely as a result of accidental historical circumstances, that is, because its membership happens to be made of migrants, but also, and more profoundly, by its very essence. The church is by nature an institutional migrant because it is a sacrament that is an efficacious sign and instrument of the God who is the Migrant God, the Deus Migrator.

### **The Age of Migration**

According to one statistical report, in 2013, 232 million people 3.2 per cent of the world's population---lived outside their countries of origin. It is predicted that the migration rate will continue to increase over time. A 2012 Gallup survey determined that nearly 640 million adults would want to migrate if they had the opportunity to do so.<sup>1</sup> The recent wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and lately, in Syria, as well as the uprisings in various countries

in the Middle East during the Arab Spring have dramatically increased the number of migrants and refugees and highlighted their tragedy and sufferings. According to a recent report released by the United Nations Refugees Committee, a record 65.3 million people were displaced as of the end of 2015, compared to 59.5 million just 12 months earlier. Measured against the current world population of 7,349 billion, these numbers mean that 1 in every 113 people globally is now either an asylum-seeker, an internally displaced person, or a refugee. Whereas at the end of 2005, there were an average of six persons displaced per minute, today the number is 24 per minute. The three countries that account for more than half of the world refugees are: Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), and Somalia (1.1 million). About half of the world's refugees are children.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond and behind these cold numbers lie human faces struck by tragedies of immense proportions, with loss of land and home, family separation, physical sufferings, rape and sexual violence, psychological damage, lack of opportunities for education, uncertain future, and death itself. Global population movements today are so worldwide, frequent, and immense that our time has been dubbed "The Age of Migration."<sup>3</sup>



### **The Church as an Institutional Migrant**

On September 23, 2015, on the lawn of the White House Pope Francis began his first speech during his visit to the United States with these words, to enthusiastic applause: “As the son of an immigrant family, I am happy to be a guest in this country, which was largely built by such families.” Francis’s statement about the United States as a country built by immigrants is a historical truism, yet it runs the risk of being forgotten or even denied under the presidency of Donald Trump

There is moreover another truth so obvious that it hardly needs elaboration, that is, the American Catholic Church itself, and not only its host country, would not have existed at all without migration and migrants. Though there had been Catholics in America prior to the establishment of the thirteen English colonies, the American Catholic Church as such only came into existence with the arrival of English Catholics to Maryland in 1634. These migrants were eventually joined by waves and waves of Catholic migrants, especially in the nineteenth century, mainly from Ireland, Germany, French Canada, Italy, Poland, and other Eastern European countries.

### **Outside migration there is no Church**

Pre-Vatican II Catholics still remember the Latin phrase: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* [outside

the church there is no salvation]. There is, I suggest, a prior principle, namely, *extra migrationem nulla ecclesia* [outside migration there is no church]. Without migration the church as a whole, and Christianity as such, would not exist as “catholic.”

Part of the difficulty in conceptualizing migrantness, to coin a neologism, as an essential attribute of the church lies in its traditional image as *societas perfecta*, that is, as a fully formed, unchangeable, and immovable institution possessing all the necessary means to achieve its aims. In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), especially in Chapter Seven, which is entitled “The Pilgrim Church,” Vatican II recovers the concept of the church as a pilgrim journeying toward the kingdom of God. However, this eschatological nature of the church is treated in the conciliar text in exclusively theological terms. Not once does it make clear that historically, migration is the main catalyst for the realization of Christianity’s eschatological dimension and catholicity, so that migration is not simply an accident of history in the development of Christianity but constitutes its very nature as an eschatological community.

### **Eight migratory movements**

Christianity became a world religion thanks to eight migratory movements:

1. The first Christian migration,

- one that radically transformed Christianity from a Jewish sect into a world-wide migrant institution, occurred with the Jewish Diaspora after the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70.
2. Following on the heels of this first migration was another, much more extensive, exodus of the Christian community out of Jerusalem and Palestine. The destruction of the Temple and the subsequent suppression of the Jewish revolts of 115-117 and 132-135 caused migrations not only of Jews but also of Christians. Five areas were the destinations of this second Christian migration where eventually Christians built a great number of vibrant and mission-minded communities: Mesopotamia and the Roman province of Syria; Greece and Asia Minor; Western Mediterranean; Egypt; and Asia, especially India.
  3. The third migration, which had an enormous and permanent impact on the shape of Christianity, was occasioned by Constantine's transfer of the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium and the subsequent establishment of the imperial court at Constantinople (the "New/Second Rome").
  4. The fourth major population movement was the migration of the Germanic tribes into Central and Southern Europe where they encountered and converted to Christianity.
  5. The fifth migration, which radically altered the map of Christendom, coincided with the so-called "discovery" of the New World during the "Age of Discovery" under the royal patronage of Spain and Portugal during which Christian missions were carried out on the largest scale ever.
  6. The sixth migration, from about 1650 to the First World War (1914-18) played an increasingly vital role in modernization and industrialization in world economy and presented enormous challenges to the Christian churches.
  7. The seventh worldwide mass movement, which was caused by World War II, afforded opportunities for reconstruction to many churches that had been destroyed by the war.
  8. Finally, the eighth migration is taking place in our own day, the "Age of Migration," in a massive and global scale, thanks to globalization and ease of travel. While Western countries, especially the United States, continue to attract migrants, in Asia, countries that were economically advanced or oil-rich but with small or declining demography import the work force from poorer countries. Elsewhere, war and poverty have caused massive



migrations. In Africa, the wars of anti-colonial liberation, the establishment of dictatorial regimes, the exploitation of mineral riches, the apartheid system, and regional, interregional and tribal conflicts produced a steady stream of refugees and migrants. Recently, in the Middle East, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Syria caused massive migrations. In the current phase of migration, Christianity is emerging as “World Christianity.” Thus, without migration, the church as such, and Christianity as a whole, could not be what they are today. Indeed, there is no church outside of migration.

### **Church: The Sacrament of Deus Migrator**

This new realization of the church as an institutional migrant leads to a new way of understanding who God is and God’s activities in the world through Word and Spirit. It requires a new way of doing theology with migration as the lens or perspective to re-express the Christian faith. In this migration perspective,

1. God in the act of creation becomes Deus Migrator or the Primordial Migrant.
2. The Word/Son of God becomes in the act of incarnation and in his ministry the Paradigmatic Migrant.

3. The Holy Spirit as Divine Power becomes the push-and-pull of migration/
4. The church becomes the community where Deus Migrator gathers the migrants together to form a pilgrim people marching toward the kingdom of God and in this way becomes the sacrament par excellence of Deus Migrator; and
5. Christian ethics becomes a lifelong practice of welcome and hospitality toward the strangers.

Thus, in addition to extra migrationem nulla ecclesia, there is another principle: extra migrationem nulla salus [outside migration there is no salvation].

### **Deus migrator, God the primordial migrant**

From the perspective of migration, God can be described as Deus Migrator [God the Migrant] or “the Primordial Migrant.” Even though the term “migrant” is not explicitly used of God in the Bible, there are hints suggesting that God possesses the characteristics commonly associated with migration and migrants. God’s creative act can be interpreted as God’s migration out of what is divine into what is not, a movement that bears all the marks of human migration. In creating that which is other than Godself, God crosses the border between Absolute Spirit and finite matter, migrating from eternity to temporality, from omnipotence

into weakness, from self-sufficiency to utter dependence, from secure omniscience to fearful ignorance, from the total domination of the divine will over all things to the utter subjection of the same will to the uncontrollability of human freedom, from the life to death. In the creative act, God experiences for the first time the precarious, marginalized, threatened, and endangered condition of the migrant.

Thus, the migrant is not only the *imago Dei*, as any other human being equally is, created in the image and likeness of God, which is the ontological ground of the human rights. As such, the migrant possesses all the human rights which must be respected by all. What is distinctive and unique about the migrant is that he or she is the image and likeness of the *Deus Migrator*, the privileged, visible, and public face of the God who chooses, freely and out of love, to migrate from the safety of God's eternal home to the strange and risky land of the human family, in which God is a foreigner needing embrace, protection, and love. Thus, when the migrant is embraced, protected, and loved, the *Deus Migrator* is embraced, protected, and loved.

### **Jesus the paradigmatic migrant**

The Incarnation of God's Word in Jesus of Nazareth can likewise be regarded as God's migratory movement. It is the *telos* and culmination of God's first migration into

creation. In this migration into history as a Jew in the land of Palestine, God, like a human migrant, entered a far country where God, as part of a colonized nation, encounters people of different racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, with strange languages, unfamiliar customs, and foreign cultures, among whom God, again like a migrant after a life-threatening journey, "pitched the tent" or "tabernacled" (*eskenosev*: John 1:14). As the *Logos/Son-of-God-made-flesh*, Jesus of Nazareth is the perfect *imago Dei Migratoris*, and to paraphrase Hebrews 1:3, the "reflection of the glory" of God the Migrant and the "exact imprint of God's very being" as a migrant. Jesus was a stranger and migrant in his own country: his ancestors were foreigners (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Beersheba); his birth took place far from home (Lk 2:1-7); he and his family escaped to Egypt as refugees (Mt 2:13-14); he performed his ministry as a homeless and itinerant preacher who has nowhere to lay his head (Lk 9:58), he was an unwelcome stranger in his own country (Jn 1:11), and he self-identified with the stranger (Mt 25:35).

Jesus carried out his ministry at the margins of his society. A migrant and border-crosser at the very roots of his being, Jesus performed his ministry of announcing and ushering in the kingdom of God always at the places where borders meet and hence at the margins of



the two worlds separated by their borders. A marginal Jew himself, he crossed these borders back and forth repeatedly and freely, be they geographical, racial, sexual, social, economic, political, cultural, and religious. As a stranger and migrant, Jesus gratefully and gracefully accepted the hospitality others show him. He was the guest at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (Lk 10:38-42); of Andrea and Simon (Mk 1:29); of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), and he did not hesitate to share table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors (Mk 2:15). Paradoxically, though a stranger and a guest, Jesus also played the host. In his many parables he presents the kingdom of God as a banquet to which all are welcomed, especially “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” (Lk 14:21).

A marginal person throughout his life, Jesus also died as such. His violent death on the cross was a direct result of his border-crossing and ministry at the margins which posed a serious threat to the interests of those occupying the economic, political, and religious center. Even the form of his death, that is, by crucifixion, indicates that Jesus was an outcast, and he died, as the Letter to Hebrews says, “outside the city gate and outside the camp” (Hebrews 13:12-13). But even in death Jesus did not remain within the boundaries of what death means: failure, defeat, destruction. By his

resurrection he crossed the borders of death into a new life, thus bringing hope where there was despair, victory where there was defeat, freedom where there was slavery, and life where there was death. In this way, the borders of death become frontiers to life in abundance.

### **The Holy Spirit, the push and pull of migration**

In the Bible the Holy Spirit is depicted with various images such as fire, wind, breath, life, power, energy, spirit, gift, grace, and love. Subsequently, Christian theology of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) highlights the Spirit’s different activities within the Trinity such as Holy Spirit “proceeding” from the Father and/through the Son, or as the bond of love uniting the Father and the Son, or as divine gift. Within the history of salvation the Holy Spirit is presented as the loving and gracious God dwelling in human beings and as the divine power pushing history toward the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. In this sense the Holy Spirit may be said to be the “push” and “pull” of the kingdom of God.

Among the many theories of migration, one traces its origin to the “push” and “pull” of the international labor market. The low wages and the high rate of the unemployment in the sending countries “push” their people to migrate, while the countries—normally the developed

ones—with decreasing work force, low birth rate, high labor demand, and better pay exert the “pull” on the migratory flow. From the Christian perspective, the Holy Spirit can be said on the one hand to “push” the migrants out of their poverty and inhuman living conditions, infusing them courage, trust, and imagination to envision a different life for themselves and their families, one that is consonant with the promise of a world of justice given by the Deus Migrator whose image and likeness they are. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit as the entelecheia [goal] of history can also be said to “pull” the migrants toward its final goal which, though transcending all that humans can ever hope to achieve, requires that all have a minimum of material conditions necessary for living with dignity.

### **Church as the eschatological community of migrants**

The last-mentioned point about the Holy Spirit as the final goal of the migrant’s journey brings up another important aspect of the Catholic theology of migration, and that is, the impact of migration on the church as an eschatological community.<sup>4</sup> To be a migrant is to be on the move, and one of the most fundamental virtues required of people on the move is hope. Movement and hope are precisely the two essential elements of Christian eschatology. A movement or journey entails a goal;

otherwise it is blind and directionless. For Christians, that goal is the kingdom of God, or Godself, as the common destiny of all human beings and human history. Because the kingdom of God is God’s reign of universal justice, perfect peace, total reconciliation, and unbounded happiness it cannot by definition be achieved by human efforts. Essentially a utopia—literally, a good place and no-place—it is the deepest desire of the human heart and yet remains forever an asymptotic goal beyond human reach. It lurks behind all messianic ideologies, driving history forward. Yet this collective dream will never be fully realized in our midst and by our own doing.

This truth is driven home more vividly and bitterly to migrants than to anyone else, as their hopes for a better life are dashed again and again, and that is why, more than anyone else, migrants need to have hope. But hope is not simply a wish that may or may not come true, a velleity for something ephemeral, a desire for something the absence of which leaves one ultimately indifferent, or a passive waiting for some fateful future happening. In contrast, hope is a vigilant standing-on-tiptoe, a longing expectation, a leaning forward into the future, and above all, hope is embodied in actions to bring about, or at least prepare for and anticipate, the coming of the reality that is hoped for.<sup>5</sup>



Because the object of eschatological hope is beyond human power, the person who hopes for it must renew her or his hope again and again by calling to mind the promises that God has fulfilled in history, and for Christians, what God has accomplished in creation and redemption, especially in Israel and Jesus Christ. Thus, eschatological hope is deeply rooted in the past. However, this remembering (anamnesis) is not just a private mental act, a nostalgic hankering after the good old days in the old country. Rather God's past deeds and faithfulness are celebrated here and now in the community of other migrants, by word and sacrament, so that together they can look forward (prolepsis) to the eschatological future that God promises and which is no other than Godself. This future reality is, in the Korean Catholic theologian Anselm Min's precise summary, "the common destiny of all humanity: their common subjection to the sovereignty of the one Creator and the saving providence of the triune God, their fundamental equality a creatures before God, their common redemption through the one mediator, Jesus Christ, their common eschatological call to share in the communion of the triune God as members of the Body of Christ, their social interdependence with one another in sin and grace. All human beings have been created in the likeness of the triune God and

called to become, in the power and movement of the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters of Christ the Son and in him sons and daughters of the Father and therefore also brothers and sisters of one another."<sup>6</sup>

Min goes on to highlight three aspects in which the migrants, especially the undocumented migrant workers, are "the paradigmatic symbol of our eschatological destiny today": (1) The migrant workers, insofar as they are reused universal solidarity, are "the judge of our unworthiness to enter into the eschatological fulfillment in the community of the triune God." (2) The migrants urge us to "return to our most profound eschatological identity as sisters and brothers of one another in Christ the Son, and sons and daughters of the father of the father in the power and movement of the reconciling Spirit." (3) The migrants remind us that "we are all migrants to our eschatological destiny, and the success of that destiny depends on what we do now to the migrant worker, especially the undocumented."<sup>7</sup>

### **An ethics of migration**

Min's last point leads us to a cluster of issues that require consideration in a Catholic theology of migration and can be grouped under the general rubric of "Christian existence." They include the question of who human beings are today (anthropology); how Catholics

should worship in a way that fosters solidarity with migrants (liturgy); and which virtues are especially apposite in the age of migration (ethics). A brief word on each of these by way of conclusion is in order.

Victorino A. Cueto describes human life in general today, and not only that of migrants, as “exilic existence in a hyperglobalized world.”<sup>8</sup> In the globalized world, where persons often belong to more than one social and cultural groupings, existence is necessarily hybrid: it is lived “out of place,” in “exile,” “in-between worlds. We all are migrants, or better, co-migrants now. As such, when we welcome, protect, and love the foreigners, the strangers, and the migrants among us, we not only welcome, protect, and love them as we embrace, protect, and love ourselves, but also welcome, protect, and love ourselves in and through them. Together, natives and migrants - the distinction has now become otiose - we are all pilgrims, not back to where we came from (the countries of origin) nor to the foreign lands (the countries of destination) because neither is our true home. As the celebrated Letter to Diognetus, puts it most eloquently, “[Christians] live in their own countries, but only as aliens [paroikoi]. They have a share in everything as citizens [politai], and endure everything as foreigners [xenoi]. Every foreign land is their

fatherland, and yet every fatherland is a foreign land.”<sup>9</sup>

Christian life is also ecclesial existence. Migration is a permanent feature of the church, and not just a historical phenomenon in its history.<sup>10</sup> Like unity, catholicity, holiness, and apostolicity, “migrantness,” as has been pointed out above, is a mark of the true church because only a church that is conscious of being an institutional migrant on the way to the kingdom of God and cares for all the migrants in this common journey, truly practices faith, hope, and love. Because of its intrinsic migrantness, in its liturgical celebrations the church must worship the Deus Migrator in Jesus the Paradigmatic Migrant and by the power of “push” and “pull” of the Holy Spirit. In this way, not only are the migrants fully integrated into the local churches and can participate as equals in all church activities, but also migration becomes the spirit animating church worship. Daniel Groody has offered insightful reflections on the link between the Eucharist and immigration, highlighting the connection between Jesus’ actions and words at the Last Supper and the migrant’s life: between “He Took the Bread” and the migrant’s decision to migrate; between “He Broke the Bread” and the migrant’s broken body; between “And Gave It to His Disciples” and the migrant’s self-sacrifice for the good of others; between “Do This



in Memory of Me” and the church’s “option for the poor/migrant.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, “welcoming, protecting, and loving” the stranger and the migrant entails an appropriate ethical behavior. Kristin E. Heyer has proposed a Christian ethic of immigration in which “civic kinship” and “subversive hospitality” serve as the guiding principles for our relationship with migrants. “Welcoming” the migrants takes the form of generous hospitality, a virtue to which all Catholic theologians of migration have given pride of place.<sup>12</sup> “Protecting” the migrants takes the form of defending human rights.<sup>13</sup> “Loving” the migrants takes the form of compassion (suffering with) and solidarity. In this compassionate solidarity, not only do I love the migrant as—in the sense of in the way that and as much as—I love myself (as enjoined by the command: “Love thy neighbor like yourself”) but also I love the migrant because the migrant is myself inasmuch as I myself am a migrant (as implied in Dt 24:17-18: “You shall not violate the rights of the alien or of the orphan, nor take the clothing of a widow as a pledge. For, remember, you were once slaves in Egypt”).<sup>14</sup>

The migrant is the person in and through whom I can discover my true identity, that is, who I am: A migrant, better still, a co-migrant with Jesus, the Paradigmatic Migrant, and other fellow migrants, energized by the push-and-pull of the Holy Spirit,

on our migration back to the eternal home of Deus Migrator, God the Migrant, God-on-the-Move.

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### Notes

1. Source: Boundless. “Dimensionalizing Immigration: Numbers of Immigrants around the World.” Boundless Economics. Boundless, 21 Jul. 2015. Retrieved 08 Oct. 2015 from <https://www.boundless.com/economics/textbooks/boundless-economics-textbook/immigration-economics-38/introduction-to-immigration-economics-138/dimensionalizing-immigration-numbers-of-immigrants-around-the-world-544-12641/> There are legions of websites dedicated to the study of migration.
2. See <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/6/5763ace54>. Accessed June 24, 2016.
3. This is the title of the best one-volume study of international migration is Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Fifth Edition (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2014). On migration, the historical, sociological, anthropological, and political studies, in addition to specialized journals and websites, are numberless. The following general works are worth consulting: Paul Collier, *Exodus: How Migration Is Changing Our World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind, *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); Caroline

- B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds., *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines* (New York: Routledge, 2008); David G. Gutiérrez and Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, eds., *Nation and Migration Past and Future* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser, and Eveline Reisenauer, *Transnational Migration* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2013); Joseph H. Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Karen O'Reilly, *International Migration and Social Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani, eds., *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013).
4. For an insightful study of eschatology from the perspective of migration, see Anselm Kyongsuk Min, "Migration and Christian Hope: Historical and Eschatological Reflections on Migration," in Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 177-202.
  5. For reflections on hope as an eschatological virtue, see Peter C. Phan, *Living Into Death, Dying Into Life: A Christian Theology of Death and Life Eternal* (Hobe Sound, FL: Lectio Publishing, 2014), 131-142.
  6. *Ibid.*, 190.
  7. *Ibid.*, 199.
  8. See his "'Out of Place': Exilic Existence in a Hyperglobalized World," in: *Faith on the Move*, 1-19.
  9. Cyril Richardson, ed., *Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 48-49.
  10. On church as a migratory community, see Emmanuel Serafica Guzman, "The Church as 'Imagined Communities' among Differentiated Social Bodies," in: *Faith on the Move*, 118-154.
  11. See his "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," in: *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey*, ed. Daniel D. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 299-315.
  12. See William O'Neill, "Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger," in: *And You Welcome Me: Migration and Catholic Social Thought*, ed. David Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Plymouth, UJ: Lexington Books, 2009), 149-155.
  13. See Graziano Battistella, "The Human Rights of Migrants: A Pastoral Challenge," in: *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, 76-102; Graziano Battistella, "Migration and Human Dignity: From Politics of Exclusion to Politics Based on Human Rights," in: *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey*, 177-191; Donald Kerwin, "Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty of Service," in: *And You Welcome Me*, 93-121; Donald Kerwin, "The Natural Rights of Migrants and Newcomers: A Challenge to U.S. Law and Policy," in: *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey*, 192-209; and Agnes M. Brazal, "Cultural Rights of Migrants: A Philosophical and Theological Exploration," in: *Faith on the Move*, 68-92.
  14. For further reflections on theological ethics, see Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds. *Living With (Out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016).





## **The Arabs: A New Ingredient Added to the Melting Pot of Cuban Culture**

*Enrique Alemán Gutiérrez*

A first stage of the Arab presence in the Antilles largest country began with the Spanish presence in 1492. Such presence –which extended throughout centuries- left tangible traces in the Cuban culture, architecture, language and costumes. Hence, several traits were incorporated to the Cuban nationality. Besides, as a result of almost eight centuries of Arab-Muslim domination in Spain, the Spanish colonizers also introduced legitimate elements in Cuba and other American territories.

During the conquest and coloni-

zation of America, the first Arab cultural components were introduced in Cuba, both directly and indirectly. Throughout history, our country has been the target of different migrations that became another ingredient of the American ethno-genesis which added to the Cuban “melting pot” since they contributed with their culture to the great acculturation process we have experienced.

This Arab presence contributed with names, words, alphabet, architecture, social attitudes and cultural values to all peoples (colonized by Spain) of the American world thus

leaving a sound imprint and whose influence still prevails in the way we name many things, in the Spanish language with its many words derived from Arabic, and in architecture, trades, pharmacopoeia, etc. However, this sometimes goes unnoticed since everything focuses on the contemporary, setting aside the fact that Cuban roots derived not only from the natives but also from a large number of cultures (including the Arab culture) which merged and gave birth to today's Cubans.

Though much has been speculated about the arrival of Arabs in Cuba with Christopher Columbus' expedition, this has not been yet confirmed. However, it is probable that some converted Moorish were enlisted among the crew of the three caravels. In any case, documentary evidence confirms that already in 1593 a man born in Barbary –the current African Maghreb and the then destination of millions of Moorish who escaped from the Inquisition persecution in Spain- was baptized at the Great Parochial in Havana. As was recorded in the Libro de Barajas of the Cathedral in Havana, on «Monday, the first of November of this year, a man was christened Juan de la Cruz by Father Francisco Vázquez Carrión. His godfather was Don Juan Maldonado Barnuevo».

In 1596, the list of slaves brought to Havana on board of the «San Agustín» galley reports the arrival of some slaves coming from North Africa, including Moorish and Berbers, the latter from a non-Ar-

ab practicing Islamic native group of that area. This list was found by the prestigious Cuban historian Dr. César García del Pino, and mentioned 45 persons with their Muslim names and birth cities. The arrival of Moorish in Cuba extended to the middle of the 17th century and to such an extent that civil and religious authorities complained about this «dangerous presence» in Havana. And, despite most Arabs arriving in Cuban coasts were slaves, there were also free men, that is, Moorish converted to Christianity who were known as the «newly converted» in Spain.

They mainly arrived in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Those disembarking in the port of Havana were registered in the Apostadero (Station) and then sent to the Immigrants' Camp in Tricornia (located in Casablanca) where they were subjected to medical examinations, had to provide the name of the claimant (who was generally a compatriot already settled in Cuba) and declare their residence to the customs authorities. As has been estimated, some 33,000 Arabs arrived in Cuba between 1860 and 1930. Between 1931 and 1951, the Muslim population in Cuba doubled and the descendants of those slaves settled their gaze on Africa and the Islam.

Between 1885 and 1890, discreet settlements were already reported in the former Havana neighborhoods of San Nicolás, Chávez, Guadalupe and Jesús María, with the Calzada de Monte as their main



link. The baptismal books of the San Nicolás Parish Church (currently San Judas Tadeo and San Nicolás) reports the residence of Pichara, Selmon, Gabriel, Yaponch families..., most of them coming from Lebanon and fewer from Palestine. Already in 1891, marriages within the same ethnic group of immigrants were celebrated, most of them settled in the Tivoli neighborhood.

Besides the Havana city core, currently Centro Habana and the Historical Center, the Arabs lived in Marianao, Santa Amalia, Juanelo, Regla as well as in Güines, Bejucal, Quivicán, and Bauta. In the eastern provinces, besides Santiago, they preferred the zones of Guantánamo, Cueto, Manzanillo, Holguín, and Las Tunas. In Camagüey, they grouped together in Guáimaro, Minas, Morón, Sola, Esmeralda, Santa Cruz del Sur, and Ciego de Ávila. Settlements were also found in Santa Clara, Cabaiguán, Sagua la Grande, Matanzas, Cárdenas, and Pinar del Río. Most of them settled down in the so-called Havana Arab Neighborhood covering the Monte, San Nicolás, Corrales, Antón Recio, and Figura streets which were initially populated by Peninsular Spaniards though, since the 1870s, became a discreet settlement of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian immigrants.

In the early 20th century, a second wave of Arab immigrants arrived in the Island mainly made up by Christian Maronites from Lebanon who also settled down in Los Sitios and the Rancho Grande neighborhoods in

Santiago de Cuba, the Palma Soriano municipality, as well as in Ciego de Ávila and Camagüey. They were mainly engaged in street sales and, despite their poor Spanish, they managed to communicate with Cubans.

The Arabs brought to Cuba the religious beliefs of the Middle East multi-religious world. Therefore, approximately 58% of the Lebanese group belonged to the Christian Maronite community coming mostly from Mount Lebanon. Other important groups were the practicing Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Syrian Catholic rites and the Druses in small communities. It was not until the 1970s that Sunnite and Shiite Muslims arrived in our country as scholarship students from Islamic countries.

Causes of Arab migration to Cuba and formation of the community (19th and 20th centuries)

Aside from the subjective causes that might have influenced, the migration phenomena resulted from the imbalance between the productive human resources and the profitability level of the countries of origin, interacting with the countries of destination which provided more attractive working conditions for social sectors due to the interest of the country of origin in better salaries, state-of-the-art technical infrastructure and living conditions with greater possibilities for social mobility, among others. All these elements foster migration interests. Likewise, this historical reality adds to forced migration, as was the case of the the inhuman slave trade,

wars, and relocation and sale of hostages, among others.

These elements allow us to illustrate and understand the emigration-immigration dialectic which, since the 19th century and even more in the 20th century, affected Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and other countries of origin; a process in which Cuba became one of the receiving countries for Arabs and for a large number of immigrants from all continents, thus becoming an undeniable cosmopolitan territory in certain periods.

In the case of Arab migration, the specificities which affected the countries of origin of those who later on made up the Cuban Arab Community (CAC) must be taken into consideration.

Several causes led to the migration of Arabs and others since the second half of the 19th century. Despite the prevailing economic motivations, other factors also influenced, namely the repression by the Ottoman Empire under the Sultanate of Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909), as well as the demographic pressure in the Mount Lebanon cities and other Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Artisans and agricultural workers started a sort of nomadism to regional suburbs. Mainly the Maronite and the Greek Orthodox groups moved to different places of the planet, especially the coveted American continent. The Lebanese initiated the American stage of Arab migration to American territories in the 19th century. A significant

reference was the central conflict which took place in the Ottoman territories of Mount Lebanon and the famine period during the First World War (1914-1918), which propelled this Lebanese migration. This, together with the possibilities to improve their status and other important elements reinforced the interest in migrating to this continent with emphasis on Cuba as a country of destination.

The movement of Arab settlers to countries from the American hemisphere, especially Lebanese citizens, increased with the addition of Palestinians, Syrians, Egyptians, and, to a lesser extent, Yemenites just to mention the main nationalities. Besides the United States and Brazil, other countries of destination included Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, and Central America. The cases of Lebanese settlers in Costa Rica and Palestinians in Honduras, El Salvador and Belize are outstanding.

### **The great waves in the 20th century (before and after the First World War)**

Travelers moved with documents currently in force in the administrative power of the moment (Turkey, France or England), as well as those in force in countries of origin after achieving their independence. Some documents from times of the Ottoman domination of the Arab world were in Turkish and French language. Palestinians under British mandate were bearers of the so-called Laissez Passer or traveling permit written in three languages



(English, Arabic, and Hebrew) due to the strong presence of the Hebrew population in Palestine in the 20th century. Most Arabs arriving in Cuba were unmarried and of working age (14-45 years old), though children migration was also significant.

After 1920, Lebanese and Syrian natives were bearers of an identification card written in French which, in the case of natives from Lebanon, should also include the religious belief of the immigrant in accordance with the religious structure of the Lebanese society. These documents included Palestinian nationality certificates, naturalization papers and identity cards of the Great Lebanon State.

During the first neocolonial decades there was certain rejection to Arab immigrants. Articles on such behavior were published in journals like the *Gaceta Económica* in 1914, an example of the xenophobic campaigns orchestrated by some individuals and journalists of the Cuban neocolonial society, though it did not necessarily represent the official position of the government.

The First World War brought several waves of migrants that, in the case of Cuba, contributed to increase the Cuban Arab Community, given the encouraging migration conditions that neocolonial Cuba offered. According to the Immigration and Travel Report, published by the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Finance, travelling data between 1902 and 1936 revealed significant information about immigrants of Arab origin, who were classified

as “Arabs”, “Turkish”, “Syrian”, and “Egyptians” and traveled to Cuba either from the Middle East or from the American Continent, attracted by the migration conditions offered by neocolonial Cuba. Other travelers came from the so-called Asian Turkey (Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria) and European Turkey.

Havana and Santiago de Cuba were the main ports of arrival to Cuba. Between 1906 and 1913, 3,758 Arabs arrived in Cuba, out of which 57% knew how to read and write evidencing the educational level of most of them.

The last wave of Arab migrants to Cuba was in the early 1950s and most of the immigrants were Shiite farmers and merchants from Southern Lebanon, particularly from the cities of Yarun, Bint Jbal, Nabatiye, and Sur, among others.

The figures of the most numerous nationalities within the CAC were made public in 1943. Out of a total of 30,000 immigrants, 22,000 were Lebanese (75%), 4,500 were Palestinian (15%), and 3,000 were Syrian (10%).

Immigrants in the Arab neighborhood began to develop a significant social infrastructure, which included the foundation of charitable and cultural societies, the press, stores and an organized religious activity.

### **Development of Associations within the Arab Communities**

The statutes of the Associations founded by the Arabs in Cuba had different purposes, including charity, recreation, and education. The

objective was to incorporate the Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian and Egyptian Arabs to the Cuban society in order to adapt to the new environment while preserving their own cultural values.

The first two ethnic associations of the Cuban Arab Community were founded in Santiago de Cuba. The first association was already established by 1904 in the Tivoli neighborhood and was called La Unión Oriental (The Eastern Union). The second Arab association was also founded in the Tivoli neighborhood on February 8, 1909 and was called Sociedad Siriana (Syrian Society).

The third known association was the Sociedad de Beneficencia El Monte Líbano (The Mount Lebanon Charitable Society), founded in 1916 at Sagua la Grande city in the central region of the country.

The first Arab society founded in Havana was El Progreso Sirio (Syrian Progress). The exact date of foundation is unknown. The Lebanese merchants Jorge Daly and Gabriel M/ Maluf were its presidents.

The main purpose of these associations was to provide relief and mutual assistance among Arabs. Apart from this, they held different activities of interest (like speaking in their native language, listening to music of their preference, analyzing and discussing among fellow countrymen about the political and social problems in their respective countries of origin.) These early associations did not differentiate among nationalities, since Syria had not been

divided into its current borders.

### **Arab Associations founded in Cuba between 1920 and 1945**

The Sociedad Libanesa de Manzanillo (Manzanillo Lebanese Society) was founded in 1920 with a little bit more than 50 members. On April 3, 1923, the Juventud Libanesa de Holguin (Holguin Lebanese Youth) was founded as a charitable association. Dr. Moises Jacobs Felipe, a medical doctor from Bejucal who arrived in Cuba in 1940, was the president of the first Governing Board of this Association.

As mentioned earlier, the post-war period witnessed a considerable increase of Palestinians migrating to Cuba. This allowed them to found associations of their own rather than becoming members of Lebanese or Syrian associations. This was probably the reason why on September 18, 1929, the Sociedad Palestina Árabe de Cuba (Arab Palestinian Association of Cuba) was founded in the capital of the country. This association was the longest standing association at the time and was initially presided over by Digno Warwar, a garment merchant. The Sociedad Palestina Árabe de Cuba was one of the most important local Arab associations due to its patriotic nature. Eventually, in 1979, its leaders and members merged with the Unión Árabe de Cuba (Arab Union of Cuba). Most of its leaders were Christians and, like in other regional associations, its members were only men in the beginning.



The Sociedad Libanesa de La Habana (Havana Lebanese Society) was established on April 15, 1930 as a charitable association and was initially called «La Sociedad Libanesa» (The Lebanese Society.) Its first provisional registered address was in Dragones letra D entre Zulueta y Agramonte. Its main purpose was to “represent all Lebanese, particularly its members, defend their rights, disseminate progress among them and enhance their social reputation in Cuba.”

The Centro Al-Etehad de Cuba (Al-Etehad Center of Cuba) was founded on April, 1931 in Havana. It was the first Arab association that expressed its desire of uniting the three main Arab nationalities within the CAC. This association was established by the initiative of two Cuban doctors, Miguel Varona Guerrero and Jorge Roa Reyes --a professor at the Havana University and Secretary of the Cuban National Census Commission-- and the Lebanese doctor Juan B. Kouri. It is considered to be the only Arab association led by a Cuban with no family ties with the Arabs. This association was characterized by the wide majority of Creole intellectuals in its governing board.

The Damas Árabes de Cuba (Arab Ladies of Cuba) society was founded in 1932 and was the first association exclusively for women of the CAC. Its purpose was to promote closer cooperation among Arab women in the Island. Most of its members were Palestinian.

The Comité de Damas de la Sociedad Libanesa de La Habana (Committee of Ladies of the Havana Lebanese Society) was one of the most active committees within the CAC. Patriotism and nostalgia for their homeland imbued its activities.

The Masonic Lodge was set up in Havana on December 8, 1932 and its first venue was located at Cadiz 24 in the current Cerro Municipality. Most of its members were Arab immigrants and persons born in Cuba. It was called “Chuada el Arabh” (Arab Martyrs) and was attached to the Gran Oriente Nacional de Egipto (National Great East of Egypt). The Lodge was committed to fraternity, observance of the law, good deeds and love of work.

### **Other societies founded between 1920 and 1945**

The Society for Education and Recreation called El Líbano (Lebanon) located at Zulueta 46, was established in Havana on December, 1923.

The Sociedad Libanesa (Lebanese Society) was established in Ciego de Ávila in 1927. In 1979 it became an affiliate of the current Unión Árabe de Cuba (Arab Union of Cuba.)

The Unión Libanés-Siria de Bejucal (Lebanese-Syrian Union of Bejucal) located at Cespedes 80, was founded in March, 1928. Some of its members came from Gazir, Dar Cmizzine, Alepo and other surrounding cities.

The Club Sirio-Libanés y Palestino (Syrian-Lebanese and Palestinian Club) was an effective way of

uniting Arabs from different countries of origin. On April 8, 1959, this organization changed its name to Club Árabe (Arab Club.)

The Sociedad Sirio-Libanesa (Syrian-Lebanese Society) was founded in 1940.

The Club Unión Arábiga or Unión Arabia (Arabic Union Club or Arabia Union) was established in 1945.

The Comité Pan Árabe de Cuba (Pan-Arab Committee of Cuba) was established in 1947, when the United Nations was discussing the partition of the Palestinian territory in two states, to the detriment of Palestine's inalienable rights to its land. This Committee grouped outstanding Arab personalities and Cubans of Arab descent.

The Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Independencia del Líbano (National Committee for the Independence of Lebanon) was established in Havana on May 28, 1958.

These unifying associations and organizations illustrate the importance of the unity of the Arab Community on issues of their interest and the support and participation of Arab descendants and Cuban official representations on issues associated with the CAC.

### **Arab Associations in Cuba from 1959 to 1979**

The Cuban affiliate of the International Federation of Lebanese Entities was established in Havana on February 2, 1959 by a joint initiative of the Lebanese Embassy in Cuba and the members of the Socie-

dad Libanesa de La Habana (Havana Lebanese Society.)

The affiliate of the Unión de los Libaneses en el Mundo (World Lebanese Union) was established in Havana on November 7, 1901 at the Embassy of Lebanon in Cuba.

The Centro Árabe (Arab Center) was established in 1974, by Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians at the same building where the Unión Árabe de Cuba currently has its headquarters.

The Unión Árabe de Cuba was established on April 4, 1979, with the merging of the Sociedad Palestina Árabe de Cuba, the Sociedad Libanesa de La Habana, and the Centro Árabe. This association is currently led by Cubans of Arab descent. Most of its members are Cubans of Arab descent from several generations. Since its foundation, it works for the unity and development of the community, with a wide and strong structure and well-planned projects to achieve its foundational goals.

The Casa de los Árabes (House of the Arabs) is a museum and cultural institution that was established to promote and enhance knowledge about the culture and background of the Arab peoples.

On November, 2016, the Federación de Entidades Americano-Árabes, "Fearab America", successfully held its congress in Cuba where Engineer Alfredo Deriche Gutiérrez, President of the Unión Árabe de Cuba, was elected Chairman of the new international board. Mr.



Deriche Gutiérrez is a descendant of the important Arab migration that helped to shape the Cuban identity.

### Conclusion

Now that we know the different components that have shaped the Cuban culture and the dates in which they arrived to our lands, it is important to highlight the influence of each of these groups on the characteristics of the Cuban identity. Much has been said about the Arab influence since Christopher Columbus times up to the most recent studies about the areas they influenced the most. The Arab influence is most strongly seen in the language, the architecture, the music, the cuisine, and medicine. The main influence of the Arab culture was passed on through language. Terms such as zaguán (hallway), azotea (roof top), sofá (sofa), alcoba (bedroom), alacena (pantry), anaquel (shelf), tarima (dais), tabique (partition wall), alfombra (carpet), almacén (warehouse), almohada (pillow), which refer to household equipment and furniture, are of Arabic origin.

From the kitchen we got terms such as berenjena (eggplant), acelga (Swiss chard), aceite (oil), almíbar (syrup), azafrán (saffron), paella, arroz (rice), azúcar (sugar). For construction materials and tools we inherited terms such as alicate (pliers), azoque (mercury), albañil (builder), azulejo (tile), avería (damage), adoquín (paving stone), atalaya (sentinel, watchtower), acequia (irrigation ditch), alberca

(reservoir), aljibe (well, cistern), alcantarilla (sewer, drain), alféizar (windowsill), alcanfor (camphor), andamio (scaffolding), and alquitrán (tar).

For garments we find terms such as bata, (robe) gabán (overcoat), alpargata (espadrille), ajuar (trousseau), toldo (canopy), alfiler (pin), and alhaja (piece of jewelry.) Regarding terms used in administration we have aduana (customs), arancel (tariff), aldea (hamlet, small village), alcalde (Mayor), alguacil (bailiff), tarifa (rates), sultan (Sultan) and alquiler (rent). From the universe of plants we have árbol (tree), flores (flowers), adelfa (oleander), azucena (Madonna Lily), jazmín (jasmine), algarrobo (carob tree), algodón (cotton), tamarindo (tamarind). This last term comes from Tamal Hindi, which means date from India. Among animal names, we also have terms such as jabalí (wild boar), lobo (wolf), and alacrán (scorpion). All this illustrates the influence of the Arab culture that has enriched the Cuban culture.

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## The Impact of Immigration on the Age of Globalization

*Hussien Soliman*

There are more than 250 Million people living outside their countries of origin as migrants for different reasons. Every day people are leaving their homes seeking for a better life in other country, but unfortunately most probably, they are also forced to leave because it is their only chance to survive. There are many reasons determining why people decide to migrate, like the lack of prospects in their countries of origin. In order to solve such problems we have to tackle the causing roots for displacement in the countries of origin, and to create

a new hope and prospects in those countries.

My aim in this article is to show the impact and influences of migration both in the countries of origin and the host countries, and the working of migration in the era of globalization. To achieve this goal, I will consider the context of migration in the age of globalization, then the impacts of migration on the contemporary world, and I will end with a recommendation.

Let us begin by saying that migration is a social practice that links societies, with migrants who create



this linkage. So if we like to know the results of the immigration that happening right now on a massive scale in Europe, we have to study the phenomena in its general picture.

Basically what leads migration from the poor countries to the rich ones is simply the income gap. But surveys reveal that migration from poor to rich countries doesn't really drive down the income of the rich, also it doesn't drive up the income of the poor. However the income gap between the two will narrow on the long run. Migration accelerates over the past decades because of the incomes in poor countries are rising, and the poorest peoples in those countries cannot afford it, as a result they tend to migrate to other countries searching for a new career.

All regions receive migrants, but if we look at the balance of migrations, we can observe that the locations are extremely different. Some of them like Europe seem to be immigrant location, while other regions like Eastern and South Eastern Europe had become an out migrant region, the higher countries have more than a million of migrants in Europe. In other words, there are countries that are not just receiving migrants, but also sending a big amount of them such as: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Turkey, UK and others. The result of losing population for those

countries is that they suffer from a big loss of jobs during the last two decades. Also they lose the young generations, and among them the better educated citizens, also losing taxes and services.

But what about the benefits of the European countries receiving out of this large number of immigrants, specifically in Western and Northern Europe?

Some trends in European countries argue that their countries have a demographic gap and they don't have enough young population. In the Middle East and Africa there are too many young people, so they could compensate Europe's deficit. Europe (according to their point of view) has to open its doors for the poor people to come, in order to push the employment wheels.

More than forty percent of all the migrants to Europe go to Germany, because it applies the previous policy, thinking that it is the great opportunity to benefit from that huge exodus. Actually some questions are auto imposed like:

- Have they recounted the replacement of that massive number to the indigenous population? because Between 800 to one million migrants expected in Germany during this year"
- Are those migrants really the solution for the widening gap between the young and old people in Germany?
- What will be their effects on the

German society till they will be used for the intended purpose?

In my opinion, the first impact of the migrants on most of the European countries will be negative, because they are poor, and great countries need to collect taxes to pay for the affairs of the country, so they will form a burden in territory they dwell in, and they will cost those countries a lot. That will end to the reduction of the economic growth.

The distinct situation of Muslim immigrants is that even after years or decades in Europe, they remain largely unintegrated. Some say that Muslim immigrants do not want to integrate into a modern, different state. Others claim that Muslims' aim is to dominate and subjugate the western societies, and while there are such things as moderate and liberal Christianity, there is no such thing as moderate or liberal Islam. But I think that represents a very biased opinion, because it puts all Muslims as one group, using immigration as a tool to control and subjugate the Europeans.

Furthermore, building on those false premises some suggested as a solution to that to get rid of all Muslim migrants from the European countries, and stop immigrations from Muslim countries, and those who are in the west to send them back. Other solution was to get rid of Islam itself, because it is the source of all those problems. While some intellectuals suggested to get rid of

the bad parts of Islam. But the solution that dominates the debate was to reinterpret Islam, and to develop a perception or a particular interpretation of Islam to allow them to live with pluralism and to live in countries that have diverse cultures, and to get used to that. Some tended to get a different type of jurisprudence in order to deal with Muslims who live in other countries as minorities, to push them to think differently.

I think that the error of all these suggested solutions are that they all look to everything in the present time, and has no historical perspective. Also they revert all issues related to Muslims to Islam itself, disregarding the rest of the factors at work.

Muslim immigrants have a very difficult time to integrate into the western societies. And there is something distinctive about Muslims and Muslim immigrants, but it is not the kind of religious beliefs, and the impact of those religious convictions on their behaviors are the problem, and I think it is in the area of the socio-economic profile of Muslims in their recent history.

Syria has been the source of the latest refugee crisis in the region, which has triggered the largest humanitarian challenge since World War II. After the Arab spring spread all over the Arab countries, civil wars erupted in several countries, which resulted in a massive migra-



tion crisis, and various tragedies we had witnessed in the last years.

Arab migration to western countries has increased tremendously, as developed as well as developing countries opened their door to each other culturally, economically and socially, as one of the great features of Globalization. This fact is very disturbing for the Arab countries which now suffer from what is, essentially, called a "Brain drain". Migration has deprived national development plans and projects of highly trained scientists, experts, technicians and administrators in various fields.

Regarding the real effects of the global migrations, we could speak about various features of impacts, political, economical, social and educational.

Migration has a great effect on political reform of the countries that people migrate from. We observe that students who migrate to Russia have no impact on their countries after they return to it. While students or people who migrate to democratic countries are influencing greatly the process of democratization in their countries. So ideas flow back even if migrants themselves don't flow back.

Europe needs immigrants, particularly the high skilled ones, those who can achieve a lot in the labor arena. On the impact of migration on economy, undoubtedly migrants develop their skills a lot in

the more advanced countries than their countries of origin. Economically migrations act like a motivation both to the migrants and to the indigenous inhabitants. They will compete together, and the more skillful you will get the job. And usually the migrated are the more motivated one, because they are leaving their countries behind to earn the living, and the job sometimes mean life for them. Also a big economic impact from migration concerned with remittances, a big amount of money remitted from migrants in rich countries to their poor countries.

The vast majority of migrants don't take any capitals with them to the countries they seek, but it is possible to envisage, and it happened in the past, that immigrants contribute in gross domestic products in the received countries, like British immigrants did in Pakistan. Also Europeans migrated to Australia carried all they have, machines, animals, and money, resulted in GDP increasing. The same happened in Israel as well.

When considering the consequences for countries of origin, early literature supports the view that skilled migrants is unambiguously detrimental for those left behind. This is the case if the migrants' contribution to the economy is greater than their marginal product or if the education of skilled emigrants was partly funded by taxes on residents.

The negative effects of the brain drain for source countries have been reformulated in an endogenous growth framework. More recently, the effects of migration prospects on human capital formation have been the focus of several studies, which suggest that such prospects may in fact foster human capital formation and growth in sending countries.

The authors argue that if the return to education is higher abroad than at home, the possibility of migration increases the expected return of human capital, thereby enhancing domestic enrollment in education. More people, therefore, invest in human capital as a result of increased migration opportunities. This acquisition can positively contribute in growth and economic performance. Along with the incentive to acquire education, other channels through which the brain drain may positively affect the sending economy have also been proposed. These include a range of “feedback effects” such as remittances, return migration after additional knowledge and skills have been acquired abroad, and the creation of business and trade networks.<sup>1</sup>

Massive migration also has a big impact on the social level. It is really a fact that a lot of social behaviors in poor countries are dysfunctional, one aspect of that is the fertility decisions, and there is a good evidence that migrants coming to lower fertility environment, if they adopt

the culture of the host society, they themselves feed back to their relatives who they left behind, and the relatives themselves adjust and adapt their fertility behaviors.

What immigration clearly does is that it increases social diversity, and some social diversity is better than no social diversity, and the gain of diversity is that there are evidences that diversity stimulates innovation, and the other effect of diversity is variety. The more diversity, the more variety on consumption. Both those aspects of diversity are subject to diminishing residents, because increasing diversity increases the gains of the society.

But on the other hand the cost of rising diversity is that the more of different people get together, the less of cooperation exists between them. A lot of migrants find it difficult to coexist with the other who is different. Also it is very likely that the wider the cultural difference between the countries of origin and the host country, the slower will be the rate of absorption of the migrants.

If migration left to itself uncontrolled, it would eventually take diversity to a very excessive level. It weakens trust, cooperation and generosity. So the more controlled the migrants, the better for the values of the host country. Mass immigrations cannot avoid undermining the rule of law, because it requires that most of the people want to obey the law of



the land because they used to it.

And one of the most important points of the effects of migration is that cultural differences reduce and threaten political stability. Immigrants from the Middle East and Africa differ explicitly from most of the European cultures; most immigrants are Muslims, from various sects, in addition to Arab Christians, who also have a multi factions. Some of them have rivalries and even hostility. The impacts of all that will no doubt appear in any destination they will meet together, all that makes civil war more likely. So the migrants bring with them the problems of their societies in the new abode, and that will change a lot of the features of the new destination.

The remaining heritage of the western worlds, including the United States values, like democracy, personal, political, religious and economic freedom. All depends on the prosperous economy, which in turn depends on the tax payers. If the economy of any country shaken, it will absolutely influence the values of the community. And the result is that opening borders freely to the new comers, will not avail luxury in the country.

Regarding the impact of immigration on education, we could say that the survey and analysis of data reveal that the skills of migrants from 20 to 30 percent are highly educated people. Such a ratio is not far from the educational level of the

original citizens of Europe. Actually some of the immigrants have higher education than the Europeans. But the question is, are they will work on their fields, or will their circumstances force them to work in whatever makes them a live? Have the Europeans or Americans conscious to the issue, and have they had a clear plan for the immigrants?

Some say that ethnic diversity has a negative effect on education, and diversity has more detrimental impact on both natives and immigrants, but is more negative on immigrants. Also diversity decreases trust, which is very negative for economy and society.

But we have to say that plurality and interreligious conflict are two sides of the same coin. As soon as a plurality of opinions, values, interests or beliefs arises, disputes about who is right and who is wrong are also likely to surface. And this particularly applies to religious plurality, one might be led to believe, because religion is a matter of ultimate meaning and ultimate truth, which is incompatible with religious plurality. Consequently, due to recent process of migration and the influx of Muslims, the potential for interreligious conflict and disputes has increased significantly in Western European countries. But does it result in overt hostilities and in hatred among adherents of different faiths? It is argued that in the context of a modern society, the likelihood of re-

ligious plurality to result in overt or latent interreligious conflict is significantly reduced.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the big critics refuse to contain the immigrants claiming that majority of them are criminals. But the formal data tell us that it is not true. There are no actual evidences that immigration will increase the crime rate, the criminals infiltrating to Europe have no relation with immigration, and governments and intelligent agencies have to be asked about the wrong doings of those delinquents. The crimes specifically, property crimes that occur from the normal immigrants and refugees happen as a result of the lack of labor market integration.

Arab thinkers are divided on the immigration issue. Some of them see it as both uncontrollable and unstoppable, while others see the phenomenon as temporary and expect it to recede. It doesn't have to be inevitable if Arab governments fulfill some basic requirements to encourage scientists to remain in their countries. However there must be a proper approach to developing sciences in public universities, research centers, and industrial establishments.

Priority for employment in the universities, higher technical institutions, and research centers must be given to Arab scientists instead of foreigners. Unemployment and very low income among the young must be addressed so that they

don't feel the need to migrate. However, unless Arab governments fulfill these requirements, all indications reveal that Arab migration especially among outstanding scientists and rare specialists will continue. Higher earnings, better laboratory facilities and outstanding research resources, social and health benefits, and excellent pension provisions will undoubtedly attract these scientists to emigrate to richer and more prosperous countries<sup>3</sup>.

I am ending by saying that Arab societies undoubtedly will be affected by immigration in all areas socially, economically, politically, educationally and in others fields. Also immigration and Globalization have a common feature; both have major influences on contemporary nations. As a consequence the nations have to intense their efforts in unifying the human behavior and the way of thinking according to the economic trends reflecting the needs of people. The most important representation of the impact of immigration is the rapid socio-economic reform which is happening in the Middle East on the last decades.

My recommendation for Arab and Muslim societies is that they have to take care of preserving their own identity and values amid all the above stated cofactors. The total melting down of the fragile and poor nations in the context of the strong, pushed greatly by the immigration and Globalization, will lead



towards the obliteration of the poor societies' values. Therefore Muslim countries have to benefit from both immigration and Globalization, without surrendering their cultural doctrines.

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### ***Notes***

1. Ç. Özden, M. Schiff, *International Migration, Remittances, and the Brain Drain*, A copublication of the World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan, Washington, 2006: 151-152.
2. P. Vermeer, *Plurality and the Future of Interreligious Conflict in the Netherlands: a Sociological Exploration*, in C. Sterkens, P. Vermeer, *Religion, migration and conflict*, LIT Verlag Münster, Zurich, 2015: 14.
3. M. El-Shibiny, *The Threat of Globalization to Arab Islamic Culture: The Dynamics of World Peace*, Dorrance Publishing, Pennsylvania, 2005: 99-100.



## Some Reflections on Muslim Migration to the West

*Senad Mrahorović*

*My dear children have gone, they have crossed the sea,  
I lament for my children are gone, and for my country by the sea.*

*Khaled*

In recent years we are witnessing an intensifying flow of refugees from various places in the world trying to settle in wherever place that is more secured and peaceful than areas from where they are fleeing. There are numerous causes that provoke people to embark on their migrations' journeys. For some it is simply economy or the poor and mismanaged economic conditions of life that force people to leave their homeland and try to make a living somewhere else. For others it is incited by various degrees of conflict, such as politi-

cal oppression, war, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and in some places even genocide. Regardless of the nature of migrations, it is clear that the forces behind it have endangered peoples' existence and made life conditions extreme and almost impossible to bear, pressurizing them to look for another home either temporary or permanently. Although the phenomenon of migration has always been part of human civilization from the earliest times of human history, its significance and implications today however, appear to be one of the most



important issues to be addressed globally in order to minimize at least already its cataclysmic results reflected in hundreds of thousands loss of life in the past few years. Despite all the claimed economic and social advantages of modern world, especially in the Western democracies including the United States, the handling of less than a million and a half migrants seems to be unfeasible task to overcome. Some countries demonstrated not only anti-migrant policy but went further by building the walls in order to stop immigrants from entering their territories. In this article we will examine the current state of migrations with the emphasis on the Middle East and its predominantly Muslim peoples trying to seek refuge in Europe and America.

### **The causes of human migration and defining a migrant**

There are numerous reasons why people decide to migrate individually or collectively. The forces which drive human movement from one place to another either internally within one's country or externally from one's country to another are known as push and pull factors. The push factors refer to the negative factors which cause people to leave their countries, while the pull factors refer to the elements that attract migration to another place or country.<sup>1</sup> An individual migration is usually prompted by political, religious or economic reasons that

not necessarily impact the whole community of a given emigrant. In recent times such migrations are widespread. Several names from various professions including TV personalities, business moguls, many sportsmen and women or others who were forcefully or willingly decided to emigrate come to mind when discussing the individual type of immigration.

As for the collective or mass migration, it is usually driven by unexpected events such as wars, different kinds of oppression and conflict, and more increasingly by environmental crisis.<sup>2</sup> Due to the variety of factors that cause migrations regardless of its kind, a number of technical terms emerged to distinguish between different classes of migrants, namely, immigrant, emigrant, refugee, foreign worker and expatriate. Given the terms involved however, some analysts have already expressed their concerns, pointing out possible motivations behind the said terminology.<sup>3</sup> While certain groups of people are being called immigrants, foreign workers or refugees, others are simply considered expatriates although the purpose of migration in either case amounts to the same reason, namely, looking for better conditions of life.

### **The current state of Muslim migration to Europe and United States**

Since the colonial era when almost all Muslim lands were occupied by various Western emerging

empires such as France, Spain and Great Britain, the relationship between Muslim world and the West has never disintegrated. It continued through various means even after independents of most of the Islamic states. Beside political and economic cooperation especially in those countries that were occupied by British and French colonialist, a number of other projects were founded for the continuation of the relations between colonialist regimes and its subjects. Among these are the Commonwealth<sup>4</sup> and La Francophonie<sup>5</sup> organizations initiated by the British and French respectively. On the academic level, Orientalism remained as a special Western discipline designed to study and represent the Orient, and more particularly Islam and Muslims in all possible aspects from ethnicity, culture and religion to politics, sciences and philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Many have questioned the intention of these post-colonial relations, asking whether or not colonialism have ever ended or continued till this day through economic, political, academic or other forms. The large presence of Muslims in their colonialists' home countries such as France and Great Britain, which were initially invited to rebuild their countries after the World War II or by other reasons have settled therein is the most significant indicator that the Western powers after a long period of exploiting the invaded territories in Africa and Asia

continued to exploit its people for their own benefits. Western Europe became "a multiethnic society in a fit of absence of mind. Mass immigration began – with little public debate... Industries and government in Britain, France, Germany, The Low Countries, and Scandinavia set up programs to recruit manpower to their booming postwar economies. They invited immigrants. Some of the newcomers took positions, particularly in heavy industry, that now look enviably secure and well-paid. But others worked in the hardest, most thankless, and most dangerous occupations that European industry had to offer. Many had been loyal colonial subjects, and had even borne arms for European powers."<sup>7</sup>

This was the beginning of a relatively free and mass migration of African and Asian people including Muslims into Europe and United State. As suggested further by Caldwell, European governing elites did not expect that these migrants would permanently settle in the West let alone bring their families, culture and religion along. However, by the time, a growing number of migrants were slowly accepting a new way of life, merging into the European society and culture and became fully integrated citizens of the Western world. According to Pew Research Center, the Muslim share of Europe's total population has been increasing steadily. In 2010, the Center released the figure that overall European population com-



prise 44 million Muslims of which the largest number are in Russia (14 million), followed by Germany (4.8 million) and France (4.7 million).<sup>8</sup> The center also revealed that Muslims in Europe are the fastest growing population, amounting 1 percentage point a decade. Thus a prediction is made that the same growth will continue in decades to come.

Despite the fact that the main part of Orientalist projections of Muslims as well as other Asian and African people including their culture and religion were all but fairly and accurately presented before Western readers, the sensitivity for Muslims' presence in Europe after the World War II, was relatively low. In fact a growing number of Muslims in various domains from academia, politics and business to art and sport has proven their full integration and active participation in life within the Western societies. These circumstances more or less however lasted up until the last decade of 20th century when Bosnian war took place. During the four years of bloody and devastated conflict, involving both Serbian and Croatian direct aggression against Bosnia which consequently lead to genocide in Srebrenica as confirmed by International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and backed by International Court of Justice (ICJ).<sup>9</sup> As a result of Bosnian war, later on followed by similar events in Kosovo, a large number of

refugees from Balkan countries, especially Bosnia and Kosovo fled to Europe and United States. This was the second largest mass migration of Muslims into the Western world since WWII and the last in twentieth century. However, most of these immigrants were eventually well settled in their newly adopted homeland where they continue to live.

Compared to the above Balkan crisis, the current wave of refugees and immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries which was dubbed as European migrant crisis or European refugee crisis back in 2015 carries along a number of political, economic and religious concerns for the already internally divided European Union (EU) and US. The Brexit and the controversial policies about migration in US are only small indicators of serious political and economic problem with a global impact on the world. It seems that all those noble values such as human dignity, justice, freedom of expression and security among other democratic principles not to mention the law against discrimination on grounds of sex, ethnicity and religious belief which EU adopted and claimed for its internal and foreign policies, have suddenly disappeared. Whatever the real causes for such an alarming change at least on the ground within EU policies with regards to immigration and refugee status are, it is hard to believe that Europe, a leading economic and political power along with US,

are not capable to deal more sufficiently with current refugee crisis in the world. The building of walls and military engagements against terrified and traumatized refugees most of which have survived bitter years of anguish and misery in their own war-torn countries will certainly not solve the problem, especially knowing the fact that some of EU countries are directly or indirectly involved in the current war in Syria and other Muslim states inflicted with similar crisis.

Nevertheless, as statistics show, the number of refugees topped by Syrians from Q3 2015 to Q3 2016 from more than thirty countries including Europe, Africa and Asia that were recently moved to the EU does not exceed one and a half million,<sup>10</sup> which is 2.3 % of more than 65 million people forcibly displaced in recent years due to all sorts of violent conflicts and natural disasters.<sup>11</sup> With regards to predominantly Muslim refugees from Syria as the most effected countries among North African and Middle Eastern regions inflicted by wars and other disasters the Syrianrefugees.eu website has stated the following: "An estimated 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since the outbreak of the civil war in March 2011. Now, in the sixth year of war, 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance within the country. Among those escaping the conflict, the majority have sought refuge in neighbouring countries or

within Syria itself. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 4.8 million have fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, and 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria. Meanwhile about one million have requested asylum to Europe. Germany, with more than 300,000 cumulated applications, and Sweden with 100,000, are the EU's top receiving countries."<sup>12</sup> The similar conditions are also to be found in other Muslim countries such as Iraq, Libya and Yemen to name but a few with slightly lesser numbers of refugees but the same existential problems and challenges faced by the citizens of these countries on daily bases.

As for the US, a country that is almost entirely comprised by immigrants and refugees from all over the world,<sup>13</sup> its recent and reinstated travel ban for six Muslim nations, namely, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Sudan and Somalia, in the name of protecting its citizens from terrorism for many came as an ironic move in as much as its involvement in almost all six countries is still very much active and alive. The fact that the US has been leading the so called 'war on terror' both diplomatically and militarily since its initiation by the US administration back in 2001, there is no doubt that its actions in these six countries and others including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq largely contributed to the crisis still very much alive in



these countries. Therefore, the US policy with regards to immigration involving currently affected areas by war and terrorism should be much more effective and proactive in order to facilitate solving the latest crisis in the Middle East and its surrounding regions.

Nevertheless, as the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) shows, the recent immigrant population (2016) in the US number approximately 84.3 million, that is 27 % of its total 321.4 million (2015) population.<sup>14</sup> With regards to figures concerning migration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), it is stated that 1.02 million immigrants mainly from Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon settled in the US in 2013.<sup>15</sup> However as the recent statistics suggest, that number has slightly increased in 2016 due to a new wave of immigrants and refugees from countries such as D.R. Congo, Syria, Myanmar and Iraq. The number of Muslim refugees who reached the US in 2016 was 38,901 or 46 % of the nearly 85 thousand. The Muslim refugees came mostly for Syria (12,486), followed by Somalia, Iraq and Myanmar.<sup>16</sup>

### **The major problems for Muslim immigrants in the West**

Unlike in previous times when all migrants' worries were concentrated on the way how to get to their destination countries and begin with a new life and work, today these concerns are multiplied and impregnated with additional

problems developed over the past two-three decades. These problems are particularly oriented towards Muslims or Islam in general and further felt by Muslim migrants and refugees. Since the September 11, 2001, or with the start of a new millennium, all sorts of negative campaigns against Islam and Muslims from various Western agencies, organizations and numerous political and economic bodies have 'officially' started. Needless to say, most of these negative allegations and perceptions that were publicized in all possible ways happened as a reaction to the tragic and heinous attacks in New York City carried out by criminals and terrorists whoever they might be. Without going into that tragedy which was since then examined and reported by thousands of the official and unofficial studies and reports all over the world, we might only say that it was mostly innocent Muslims who paid the highest price for it and all that was to follow. A number of Muslim countries were later occupied with the pretext to fight an 'Islamic terrorism', a term that in itself stands for nothing but is still increasingly used in most Western and other media despite countless objections to it by leading religious figures including Dalai Lama and Pope Francis, not to mention numerous Muslims clergy and scholars. After Iraq and Afghanistan where thousands of innocent civilians lost their lives as a result of years long foreign oc-

cupation of those countries in the name of the 'war on terror', an 'Arab spring' arrived. For some it came as a refreshment and hope for democracy and new beginning in some Muslim countries. For others, it was yet another series of destruction and suffering effecting again mostly innocent civilians. All these events created a complete chaos in most of the Middle East where life became almost impossible, forcing thousands of people into exile first in the neighboring countries and then later into further exodus to the European continent and beyond.

This time however, the migration of refugees has brought the shame to our humanity. Not only that their migration routes were devastating, and tragic for many who did not make into the other side, but for those who have managed to reach into the European shores, the life became a misery due to the harsh treatment that they received from local authorities. The reason for such circumstances is to be found in years of negative presentations of Islam and Muslims by the major media establishments in the Western world, creating all sorts of negative prejudices against Muslim people in general and Muslims living in Europe and the US in addition to the least accountable for the current crisis in the world, Muslim refugees. The phrases such as 'war on terrorism', Islamic extremism, Islamic state (isis, isil, daesh), Islamic fundamentalism and others are ex-

clusively used for Islam and Muslims, despite the fact that Muslims have suffered far more than others from the challenges and fatal consequences caused by these irrational and irreligious ideologies whose origin by any means can't be traced back to the principles of Islamic religion and civilization. As this subject has been repeatedly discussed in the past several years by countless Muslim scholars and other analyst, there is no need here to once again excuse Islamic religion from the foregoing foreign or alien dogmas to the mainstream of Islamic thought and philosophy. In fact, the main reason why millions of Muslims have been displaced within or without their counties lies precisely in the sudden appearance of these radical or rather fanatic ideologies in some parts of Islamic world. It is therefore ironic to accuse those refugees who have lost many of their family members, their human pride and dignity from being normal citizens in their countries to becoming harshly treated refugees in foreign lands, of all the mentioned fanaticism and extremism belonging to those whom were the most responsible for the current crisis in Muslims world and the exodus of millions of Muslims across the globe.

Here the double standards are clearly applied on behalf of Western political leadership and the international media backing it step by step in relation to Islam and Muslims. None of these 'terrorism-extremism'



attributes were used two decades ago when thousands of Bosnian Muslims were wildly massacred by the extremist and, one may rightly say, using the language applied only to Muslims, terrorist driven Serbs and Croats. The same might be applied regarding the current crisis in Myanmar where thousands of ethnically Rohingya Muslims are being persecuted by the extremist and radical Buddhist monks and their followers in almost complete silence by the Western media or the condemnations by the freedom loving Western democracies. In addition to that, a number of mass murders have happened recently on behalf of Western extremist groups or individuals, all of which were eventually described as incidents committed by mentally ill or unstable individuals. All these and other similar viewpoints that reflect unequal treatment of certain phenomena which in this case is terrorism for instance regardless of its perpetrator show that the foreign policy of Western countries has gone astray, raising series of questions concerning the fundamental tenets of democracy, freedom of expression, equality, racism, religious freedom and many more for which the West has highly praised itself in the past.

It is a shame on our humanity as mentioned earlier that people who managed to flee the war zones and all its calamities, trying to save their only souls have to endure all these complex and psychological

pressure echoed by notions of Islamic terrorism, extremism, radicalism and recently coined term islamophobia, which are initiated and commonly used by media and more increasingly far-right politicians in the majority of the EU countries and the US. To this, one may also add a constant tightening of the law in certain Western countries on the fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, human dignity, equality and religious beliefs on the one hand, and closing the borders and building walls in the face of tired and miserable refugees - a practice that explicitly targets Muslim population.<sup>17</sup> The results of such a negative campaign are more increased assaults and abuses not only of Muslim immigrants in the West, but also of the local Muslim population in Europe and the US, not to mention more frequent attacks and devastations of Islamic religious monuments by hordes of vandalism and destruction.

However, in all the turmoil surrounding the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe and elsewhere, there are notable exceptions from political core down to journalists who do right and call for justice for all human beings. One of those remarkable voices is Johnatan Loxmoore, a freelance writer who covers religious news, especially those related to Christianity. In his article published in Anglican Journal, 2011, he wrote the following: "Two decades ago, most Europeans would

never have believed people would be dying on Europe's borders simply trying to get in," said Torsten Moritz, executive secretary of the ecumenical Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). "Yet thousands have died doing just that, especially in the Mediterranean, this year alone. This is really undermining our core values and having a de-humanizing effect on European society."<sup>18</sup>

These and similar voices, especially from religious organizations certainly bring hope for better future and relationships between different people regardless of their religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds that in recent years have been greatly affected. In this context the Pope Francis has remarkably said: "*With regard to migrants, displaced persons and refugees, a common commitment is needed, one focused on offering them a dignified welcome. This would involve respecting the right of 'every human being... to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there,' [John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, Pacem in Terris (April 11, 1963), 25] while at the same time ensuring that migrants can be integrated into the societies in which they are received without the latter sensing that their security, cultural identity and political-social stability are threatened. On the other hand, immigrants themselves must not forget that they have a duty to respect the laws, culture and traditions of the countries in which they are received.*"<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

The following biblical verse: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew, 22:39) with the similar saying of the Prophet of Islam which goes: "He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct" (Sahih Muslim, 1:74) certainly summarize the solution needed for the current crisis not only in terms of human divergence and conflicts but also on the political and economic planes. As the world in recent times is facing numerous challenges from economic, political and environmental to religious, racial and ethnical, resulting in a number of countries in devastating wars, socio-economic crises, ecological destruction, famine and several other serious problems, most government agencies are focusing on the worldly aspects of the crises and trying tackle it using the likewise means and mechanisms. Spirituality and religion are almost completely neglected as a source for providing useful assistance or perhaps solutions for many issues that need to be resolved. It is only religion that provides the equilibrium between spiritual and material needs of an individual or community. In today migration and refugees crisis it seems that only religious leaders are calling with the sound voice to approach the said crisis with compassion, care and respect as the immigrant communities are the ones who need it more than anyone else. Therefore, it



would be more beneficial to all political establishments to listen to the voices of religious leaders instead of using religion only to highlight the darkest side of human nature or to accuse a specific religious group of terrorism and similar vices affecting our humanity.

### Notes

1. Eurostat and Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), *Push and Pull Factors in International Migration: A Comparative Report* (Luxemburg: European Communities, 2000), pp. 3.
2. *Migration, Environment and Climate Change.*
3. See for instance the following articles: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration>; <http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20170119-who-should-be-called-an-expat>.
4. <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/>
5. <http://www.francophonie.org/English.html>
6. See for instance Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) and *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997[Revised Edition]), respectively.
7. Christopher Caldwell, *Reflection on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 3.
8. [\[muslim-population-in-europe/\]\(http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/\).](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-</a></li>
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9. <http://www.icty.org/specials/srebrenica20/?q=srebrenica20/>.
10. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_quarterly\\_report](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report).
11. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en).
12. <http://syrianrefugees.eu/>.
13. The notions of migrants and refugees here do not include an estimated ten million Africans who were forcefully brought to Americas in between 1519-1867. For detailed study on this subject see: R. Capps, K. McCabe and M. Fix, *Diverse Streams: Black African Migration to the United State* (Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 2012).
14. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>.
15. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/middle-eastern-and-north-african-immigrants-united-states>.
16. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/u-s-admits-record-number-of-muslim-refugees-in-2016/>.
17. A detailed study of these issues was published by Amnesty International (London: Amnesty International Ltd., 2014) under the title "The Human Cost of Fortress Europe: Human Rights Violation against Migrants and Refugees at Europe Borders".
18. <http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/europe-needs-more-humane-treatment-of-refugees-says-expert-9877>.
19. <http://aleteia.org/2017/01/31/pope-francis-on-welcoming-migrants-and-refugees-with-both-generosity-and-prudence/>.



## Review of **Abdelwahab Meddeb, 2005,**

*l'exil occidental, Albin Michel.*

*Adeel Khan*

This is not a review, it cannot be, the text I am writing about eludes any inherited categorization. This is merely an attempt to account for the impact of viewing the text under consideration that escapes review, because of its categorical slipperiness, escapes fixity of description, it has to be experienced as a stream of consciousness narrative. A brave translator dare approach it to bring the beautiful intonations and resonances of the original french into the destination language.

The narrative of the set of essays shifts constantly and seamlessly between memoir, travelogue and wisdom writing. It is an account of the migrant condition between the European and Islamic civilizations with consequences for the human condition in the world of nation-states that we live in now. It is also simultaneously a historical excavation of the migrant condition throughout Muslim and pre-Islamic Arab memory and history. Telling the story of Islam through the trope



of migration Meddeb attempts to reflect on the relationship between poetic language and the ecology of Islam's emergence. In the case of Islam the ever shifting, leaving no trace behind, desert landscape. The taken-for-granted gendered assumptions of Arabic poetry are also challenged by Meddeb, he argues that male poets depend upon the same order of attention to things as do women bodies in order to write the «poetry of absence» such that the world appears as *maison abandonnée* (abandoned house).

«Westward exile» the name of Meddeb's book is inspired from Sohrawardi's arabic text (*al-ghorba al-gharbiyya*) from the 12th century. This westward movement while being considered a *grand désastre*, the great disaster, whether Sohrawardian, or Muhammad's migration to Medina, or looked at through the imaginary novel of Ibn Tufayl (1000 C.E.), this great disaster is also seen as a great opportunity.

The migration to this «new» gharb (West) for Meddeb is part of a constantly western voyage of Muslims and Arabic speakers from before the dawn of Islam. Therefore, the current migration to the European West is only one part of that long Diasporic movement.

Meddeb began his literary career as a fiction writer but later delved into interfaith history with the pub-

lication of the *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations* (2013, Princeton University Press). He also hosted a radio show on France Culture called «Cultures d'Islam» which worked fruitfully to explore the various facets of the Arabo-Islamic experience throughout history and in the contemporary period.

What is this text's contribution to the migrant experience of Arabic speakers to Europe? Well quite simply it brings the best of Arabic poetics and fills them in the crucible of literary french expression. Could there be a stronger testament to «integration» than this text I dare ask? At once poetry, prose and essay this book draws us into the migrant experience, a perpetually in-between experience. Where the migrant subject finds themselves a guest in both lands, the land of their origin and the land of their adopted destination.

Writing about the writing of «poetry of absence» is a double failure, this book is an account of this double failure and its multifarious wanderings, errant has both these connotations in french, that is both failing and wandering simultaneously. Meddeb presents himself as a scribe of the poetry of absence in the first essay on the polygraph. In another essay on Arab poetics of the desert he presents an aesthetic geography of the desert. He shifts between

the desert that informs the Arabic language to the interior desert of Tarkovsky's films to the desert of the apartment of the city that is Meddeb's very own desert in his location of writing the memory of the traces left behind by the movement of the deserts of the world. This essay is as much about language and context as it is about the transience of the trace of writing.

In the essay on «the ends of the strangeness» there is a discussion about language and familiarity. He claims in this essay that the book experiments with the idea that being estranged to oneself (oneself as another), alienated from the world, the subject is at home wherever it finds itself.

In «Illicit voyages» Meddeb argues a discovery of difference as part of the migrant condition, we are all guests of our dwellings he argues and interrogating the foreigner gives access to difference, a difference that should be celebrated. His fear for the future of European Muslims is clearly visible in his ending poem essay on Auschwitz, while placing it in his mental landscape, he considers it worth speaking out about and never to forget.

One wonders who is the audience of such writing? Other than himself. It is perhaps a homage to past ghosts, it is also for the future European Muslim reader who may bring their

self to appreciating their dislocation as opportunity, as a means to regenerate a sense of being in the world "The best place is that which holds you" Meddeb quoting Imam Ali, and then Ibn Arabi «How many beloved saints in synagogues and churches. How many enemies hated in the ranks who fill the mosques?"





## L'Arbre et la Pirogue, les migrations, dynamiques paradoxales d'homogénéisation et de diversification culturelles et religieuses

*Eric Vinson*

« *Tout homme est tiraillé entre deux besoins. Le besoin de la Pirogue, c'est-à-dire du voyage, de l'arrachement à soi-même, et le besoin de l'Arbre, c'est-à-dire de l'enracinement, de l'identité. Les hommes errent constamment entre ces deux besoins en cédant tantôt à l'un, tantôt à l'autre jusqu'au jour où ils comprennent que c'est avec l'Arbre qu'on fabrique la Pirogue.* » Présentée comme un « mythe mélanésien » (originaire de Vanuatu) et aujourd'hui largement diffusée par les réseaux sociaux, cette allégorie souligne la profonde ambivalence qui caractérise l'être humain. D'après cette

parabole, l'homme serait pris – et même parfois déchiré – entre deux désirs fondamentaux contradictoires : celui de s'enraciner dans un territoire et celui de partir au loin... Tension douloureuse qui durerait jusqu'à ce qu'il réalise que la stabilité et la mobilité ne s'opposent pas, mais doivent être vécues dans une complémentarité synonyme d'équilibre existentiel et socio-culturel, d'harmonie personnelle et collective. « Tout bien considéré, il n'y a que deux sortes d'hommes dans ce monde : ceux qui restent chez eux et les autres », affirme

quant à lui le célèbre écrivain britannique Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), lui-même témoin et acteur de la mondialisation impérialiste victorienne ; comme si la conciliation de ces deux orientations – enracinement et mouvement – n’était pas si facile à concrétiser, voire que ces dernières diviseraient radicalement le genre humain... Sur le long cours de l’Histoire, elles se traduisent au fond dans deux types-idéaux civilisationnels, celui du sédentaire (du côté de l’Arbre) et celui du nomade (du côté de la Pirogue). Les peuples nomades paraissant hélas avoir presque disparus au cours du dernier siècle, sous les coups de la modernisation, cette figure de « l’homme itinérant » ne tendrait-elle pas cependant, ces dernières années, à prendre un nouveau visage : celui du migrant et du réfugié ? De fait, ces derniers mobilisent depuis quelques temps une attention croissante en Occident (majoritairement chrétien, au moins culturellement), où se cristallisent politiquement d’intenses problématiques identitaires parallèlement à la destabilisation de nombreux pays africains ainsi que proche- et moyen-orientaux (majoritairement musulmans), laquelle entraîne justement ces mouvements de populations du sud et de l’est vers le nord et vers l’ouest. Une évolution globale qui paraît bien réactiver non seulement cette dualité anthropologique de l’Arbre et de la Pirogue, de « l’autochtone » et du « sans domicile fixe », ou encore – sur un plan connexe – de

l’identité et de l’ouverture. De quoi réactiver simultanément de vieilles problématiques géo-culturelles et géo-politiques mettant en présence – si ce n’est en conflit – des ensembles civilisationnels territorialisés religieusement déterminés, selon le modèle du si fameux « choc des civilisations » théorisé par Samuel Huntington (1927-2008).

En quoi le facteur religieux est-il ici impliqué, voire central ? Comment se trouve-t-il interrogé à nouveaux frais par l’émergence (ou la résurgence) de ces phénomènes migratoires ?

Bien loin de prétendre apporter une réponse exhaustive à une question aussi vaste dans le cadre restreint de cet article, nous voudrions simplement l’éclairer par quelques remarques.

### **Un phénomène cyclique**

La première de ces remarques revient à contester, sur le temps long, la nouveauté radicale de ces déplacements de population ; et ce pour mieux souligner – au contraire – la relative nouveauté de l’influence qu’ils produisent sur les esprits en Occident. En effet, l’histoire de l’humanité est parsemée de vagues migratoires, qui reviennent à échéances plus ou moins régulières concerner telle ou telle zone géographique. Des réalités pour l’essentiel cycliques, qui paraissent bien déterminées par les rythmes – entrecroisés et interdépendants – de la prospérité et de la pauvreté, par ceux de la guerre et de la paix, et enfin par ceux des variations environnementales (notam-



ment climatiques), pour aller des plus courts aux plus longs. Certes, de considérables flux de personnes proviennent actuellement d'Afrique subsaharienne, de Libye ou de l'est du continent (Soudan, Érythrée, Ethiopie, Somalie...), dans l'espoir d'atteindre l'Europe au prix d'une dangereuse traversée de la Méditerranée ; en affrontant des périls comparables, d'autres quittent bien sûr par millions la Syrie et l'Irak, ou encore l'Afghanistan. Et si la plupart des personnes concernées restent – de gré ou de force – dans les pays voisins de leur patrie inhabitable (qu'on pense aux Syriens accueillis au Liban ou en Turquie, par exemple), une minorité (qui se compte néanmoins en millions depuis 2010) atteint l'Europe ; ce qui ne lui était pas arrivé avec une telle ampleur et vitesse depuis des décennies... Nouveauté relative, donc, de cette indéniable crise migratoire. Mais, pour s'en tenir au seul XXe siècle, a-t-on oublié les grands déplacements de populations liés aux deux guerres mondiales (entre Grèce et Turquie, puis entre Allemagne et Pologne, par exemple), ou encore à la décolonisation (environ un million de personnes quittant l'Algérie pour la France, à la fin de la guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962) ? Et si l'on remonte encore un peu plus dans le passé, les vastes flux migratoires impliqués par les colonisations elles-mêmes, tant avec les départs depuis l'Europe que les traites négrières ? A-t-on oublié que la « mondialisation » en cours n'est

pas la première de l'Histoire, même si l'ampleur et l'intensité des actuelles interconnexions économiques et informationnelles (cf. internet), c'est-à-dire politiques et culturelles (et par là, religieuses) peuvent sembler sans précédent ? Présenté ainsi par son éditeur, le livre de l'essayiste indien Nayan Chanda nous rafraîchit la mémoire : « C'est avec l'homme qu'a commencé la mondialisation. Entre le commerce du coton au Moyen Âge et l'industrie des microprocesseurs aujourd'hui. Entre les icônes byzantines et la télévision. Entre la marine à voile et le shopping sur Internet. Entre Christophe Colomb et Bill Gates. Hommes, produits, pratiques, croyances, inventions ou savoir-faire, tous sont, ou ont été, les acteurs de la plus fascinante aventure : l'expansion des liens d'interdépendance à l'échelle du globe, la multiplication des connexions. » Et des migrations...

**L'inversion relative des flux migratoires et la cristallisation politique de leur rejet dans les démocraties, sur fond d'embrasement du « monde musulman »**

Dans le cadre de cette vaste intégration progressive de certains aspects de la vie internationale connue sous le nom de « globalisation », ce qui paraît nouveau, ce n'est donc pas tant l'existence ou l'intensité des flux migratoires que l'inversion de leur direction, naguère de l'Occident vers le reste du monde, aujourd'hui dans l'autre sens. Autre facteur émergent encore plus frappant : le

niveau atteint par la politisation du rejet des « nouveaux venus » dans les pays européens, mais aussi aux Etats-Unis (à travers les projets du Président récemment élu, concernant le Mexique, la Chine ou les ressortissants de certains pays majoritairement musulmans). On le sait, la critique de l'immigré constitue le ressort principal des mouvements d'extrême-droite, qui progressent dans la plupart des pays occidentaux et atteignent une popularité sans précédent dans plusieurs d'entre eux (Autriche, Belgique, Pays-Bas... Front National en France et UKIP au Royaume-Uni, ayant contribué fortement à la victoire du Brexit).

En la matière, deux points retiennent l'attention. Tout d'abord, l'affirmation de la thématique « identitaire » non seulement dans la partie de l'opinion directement touchée par ces mouvements populistes », mais en fait bien au-delà, et de plus en plus au centre même de l'échiquier politique dans nombre de démocraties. Et, deuxième point : au sein de cette thématique identitaire, l'évocation croissante de la religion, en l'occurrence dans une logique de conflit islam/Occident. Laquelle renvoie bien sûr aux inquiétudes suscitées par la progression, depuis plusieurs décennies, de l'islamisme puis du djihadisme et du terrorisme correspondant, sur fond des multiples conflits passés ou en cours aux Proche- et Moyen-Orient : conflits israélo-arabes et israélo-palestinien ; guerre du Liban ; trois « Guerres du Golfe » ; guerres

d'Afghanistan ; guerres de Tchétchénie ; printemps arabes et guerres civiles libyenne, syrienne, yéménite ; conflits africains impliquant Boko Haram ou AQMI. En un mot, c'est tout le monde musulman ou presque qui semble embrasé, de l'Afrique subsaharienne à ses minorités en Birmanie et aux Philippines... De plus en plus régulièrement et gravement atteints par des attaques terroristes invoquant l'islam, les pays occidentaux – par ailleurs largement impliqués dans ces différents conflits lointains – connaissent un accroissement et une transformation de la classique xénophobie en islamophobie, non sans rapport avec le caractère islamique de la plupart des migrants accueillis par eux depuis une cinquantaine d'années, et aujourd'hui même.

Lastbutnotleast, la prise de conscience de l'ampleur et des conséquences (économiques et politiques) des troubles environnementaux en général, climatiques en particulier, contribue à noircir ce tableau, en y ajoutant la menace de nombreux « réfugiés (plus ou moins directement) climatiques ».

### **De la libérale « mondialisation heureuse » au repli « identitaire », religieusement connoté**

Au vu de ces vastes et multiples et bouleversements, ce qui paraît nouveau, c'est que l'Occident – assez préservé depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale – est désormais plus directement atteint par leurs effets. Ce qui conduit une part croissante de ses habitants à vivre sur un



mode inquiet, voire hostile, une globalisation d'abord envisagée positivement, comme une conséquence et même un synonyme de la modernité et de la démocratie, avec leurs fruits « positifs » en termes de brassage des peuples et des cultures, de libre circulation des biens, des capitaux, des personnes et des idées (notamment religieuses). Après la péremption de l'internationalisme d'inspiration marxiste ou tiers-mondiste, on assiste ainsi à une certaine crise des dynamiques transnationales, dont témoigne la remise en question des accords de libre-échange et surtout les difficultés actuelles de l'Union Européenne, sans parler des limites structurelles rencontrées par l'action des Nations Unies. Partout dans le monde ou presque se réaffirment les nationalismes et protectionnismes, qui manquent rarement de mobiliser à leur profit les particularismes culturels et religieux (généralement sur un mode plus ou moins fondamentaliste) ; là encore, les exemples abondent, qu'il s'agisse de forces politiques déjà au pouvoir (Turquie, Inde, Israël, Hongrie, Russie, Etats-Unis, Chine, Birmanie, etc.) ou cherchant à le conquérir (cf. les mouvements « identitaires » cités plus haut).

Beaucoup trop schématique, cette mise au point générale est néanmoins indispensable pour envisager au mieux la problématique actuelle migrations/religions. En particulier, ce trop rapide panorama nous permet de voir en quoi, l'imaginaire de l'Arbre (et de l'enracinement ter-

ritorial identitaire) paraît en voie de prendre le dessus, ces derniers temps, sur celui de la Pirogue (et de l'ouverture et la mobilité), qui dominait semble-t-il depuis la fin du Second Conflit Mondial à travers diverses incarnations successives : l'internationalisme, le sans-frontiérisme (« droit d'ingérence », etc.), le libre-échange généralisé, l'intégration européenne, le tourisme de masse, et enfin la « mondialisation (supposée) heureuse » (expression de l'essayiste français Alain Minc). Pour le moins, un ré-équilibre entre ces deux grandes orientations existentielles et civilisationnelles semble en cours, surtout si l'on garde en tête que la plupart des migrations actuelles sont subies et non choisies (ou alors « choisies sous contrainte ») ; et que les « personnes déplacées » n'aspirent qu'à une chose : redevenir sédentaires, soit en rentrant dès que possible dans leur terre d'origine (pour peu qu'elle redevienne habitable), soit – à défaut – en s'intégrant à long terme dans leur territoire d'accueil, synonyme d'une vie meilleure quand ce n'est pas de simple survie. De ce point de vue, la mobilité pour eux est toujours une souffrance et un mal, mais sans doute un « moindre mal » par rapport au danger de rester dans leur patrie ravagée, et par là un espoir et une opportunité ; d'où l'intensité du désir de partir, surtout chez des millions de jeunes auxquels leur sol natal n'a rien à offrir ou presque. Malgré cette mise au point, demeure la grande division actu-

elle des populations – et la grande dialectique – entre ceux qui « circulent » et ceux qui sont stabilisés sur, voire enracinés dans, un territoire donné ; qu'il s'agisse du pays de départ abandonné par les premiers, ou bien des nombreux pays traversés par ceux-ci, ou encore du pays d'arrivée où ils souhaitent se fixer à leur tour. Soit autant d'occasions de rencontres et d'échanges divers, mais aussi de tensions et de conflits potentiels, où le religieux peut se trouver impliqué en tant que trait spécifique individuel et communautaire le plus évident.

### **Les principaux nœuds de la dialectique autochtones »/« migrants », entre politique, culture et religion**

Le premier de ces nœuds nous semble la tension entre, d'une part, l'éthique et l'hospitalité (qu'elles se réclament soit d'une religion, soit de la logique des droits humains) poussant à accueillir et aider les migrants, personnes en souffrance et en précarité ; et, d'autre part, le réalisme politique et civilisationnel, qui oblige à tenir compte de la potentielle destabilisation multidimensionnelle des Etats-nations (souvent déjà en crise) impliquée par l'arrivée en masse de nouveaux venus appauvris. Une destabilisation non seulement intrinsèque mais surtout liée à l'instrumentalisation politique – par les forces nationalistes et identitaires susnommées – de cette situation et des peurs qu'elle engendre de fait parmi certaines populations

des pays d'accueil. Cette tension peut se résumer à l'articulation de deux tendances opposées tant de la politique moderne démocratique que des principales religions du monde ; à savoir l'opposition entre leur face universaliste et « cosmopolite », d'une part ; et, d'autre part, leur face « identitaire » et territorialisée. En politique, cet aspect correspond bien sûr aux spécificités de l'État-nation, qui n'existe que par ses frontières et ne donne la citoyenneté et les droits afférents qu'à ses « nationaux », en créant de fait une inégalité entre ceux-ci et tous les « non-nationaux » ; l'État-nation étant par ailleurs caractérisé par la focalisation sur (voire la sacralisation d'une) « culture nationale », parfois qualifiée de « roman national » tant elle est le produit de diverses opérations politico-symboliques (re-constructions a posteriori, « invention de la tradition », simplifications et manipulations plus ou moins conscientes, etc.).

Quant au plan religieux, cette dimension particularisante renvoie à l'originalité et à la cohérence spécifique de chaque tradition, en outre associée au cours des siècles à telle ou telle zone géographique où elle est devenue dominante. Ce qui conduit la plupart d'entre-nous à encore parler de « pays catholiques », « protestants », « musulmans », « bouddhistes », etc., voire d'« Occident chrétien », de « Dar al-islam », de « Eretz Israel », comme si identifier une foi, une culture et un territoire allait de soi... Sachant qu'à



ce niveau, une évolution récente de l'Europe tend à la caractériser non plus en tant que « terre chrétienne », mais que « terre sécularisée » (« laïque » diraient bien des Français); autrement dit, en tant que « terre post-chrétienne » où le religieux serait justement marginalisé, par opposition aux autres zones civilisationnelles (islamique, en particulier), où le religieux resterait central. Le paradoxe étant ici d'envisager ce recul du religieux en Occident comme un trait spécifique de son « identité »...

Face à l'ambivalence de ces phénomènes politiques ou religieux (si souvent entremêlés), plus qu'à une opposition binaire entre l'universel et le particulier, on doit remarquer leur inséparabilité au sein de chaque complexe considéré. Ainsi, chacune de grandes religions est universelle par la portée intrinsèque de son message ethico-spirituel, voire par son expansionnisme missionnaire, mais aussi particulière en tant qu'elle n'est qu'une religion parmi d'autres, et irréductible aux autres du fait de sa singularité... Le choc entre différents universalismes, qui sont simultanément autant de particularismes, s'avère ainsi inévitable, comme le souligne Etienne Balibar dans son dernier livre. Un paradoxe qui trouve aussi son pendant si on applique notre problématique Arbre/Pirogue à ces religions, qui sont inséparablement des figures de l'enracinement et de la mobilité. Qu'on pense, pour ne prendre que l'exemple le plus évident, aux aspects

à la fois « migratoire » et hyper-localisé du monothéisme. Dans sa version biblique originelle, ne qualifie-t-il pas ses mythiques patriarches fondateurs – tous nomades... – comme des « Araméens errants » (voire « fugitifs », Deutéronome 26,5), en incitant leurs descendants à ne jamais l'oublier? Puis ne martèle-t-il pas que ces derniers furent une minorité opprimée en terre étrangère (l'Égypte)? Avant qu'un long Exode et une stabilisation finale – mais précaire – sur une « Terre promise » toujours disputée, puis l'Exil séculaire fasse du monothéisme juif un phénomène à la fois diasporique et polarisé sur une « Terre sainte »? Quant au christianisme et à l'islam, ils sont également missionnaires et expansionnistes, c'est-à-dire « migrants », si bien qu'ils ont conquis le monde et rassemblent aujourd'hui plus de la moitié de l'humanité. Ce qui ne les empêche pas de demeurer « centrés » autour de leurs lieux saints respectifs (Rome pour le catholicisme, La Mecque pour l'islam), et des aires culturelles et linguistiques correspondantes. Existe-t-il, d'ailleurs, une religion sans lieux sacrés? Non. Mais existe-t-il une grande religion si liée à territoire qu'elle ne saurait s'en affranchir? Là encore, la réponse semble bien devoir être négative, au vu de l'extraordinaire diffusion géographiques des traditions religieuses, y compris quand elle y semblaient le moins disposées; qu'on pense ainsi à l'hindouisme, condamnant formellement le fait même de quitter son Inde natale, mais qui s'est

pourtant répandu très largement... Prises entre les impératifs (apparemment et superficiellement) inconciliables de l'enracinement et de la diffusion, du particularisme et de l'universalisme, les religions relèvent de ce point de vue de la même ambiguïté fondamentale que les autres réalités culturelles, si bien explicitée par le grand anthropologue français Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) : « Il y a simultanément à l'œuvre, dans les sociétés humaines, des forces travaillant dans des directions opposées : les unes tendant au maintien et même à l'accentuation des particularismes ; les autres agissant dans le sens de la convergence et de l'affinité. (...) Quand on étudie de tels faits – et d'autres domaines de la civilisation, comme les institutions sociales, l'art, la religion, en fourniraient aisément de semblables – on en vient à se demander si les sociétés humaines ne se définissent pas, eu égard à leurs relations mutuelles, par un certain optimum de diversité au-delà duquel elles ne sauraient aller, mais en dessous duquel elles ne peuvent, non plus, descendre sans danger ».

Eu égard à ces mécanismes relatifs aux variations de la diversité interne et externe des sociétés, les migrations apparaissent de ce fait doublement paradoxales. En emportant avec lui une part de sa culture/religion, le migrant devient en effet un agent d'hétérogénéisation des cultures/religions, de la sienne propre comme de celles rencontrées sur sa route ; ce qui contribue

à une augmentation de la diversité locale, mais à une homogénéisation culturelle/religieuse globale, planétaire, par le biais des interactions et « métissages » induits. Alors que le sédentaire, qui demeure chez lui et ne se mélange pas avec d'autres, tend à maintenir la particularité de sa culture/religion et donc à conserver l'homogénéité locale ; mais il renforce, ce faisant, l'hétérogénéité culturelle/religieuse globale de l'humanité. Ce dernier constat devant néanmoins être tempéré par une autre sentence de C. Lévi-Strauss : « L'exclusive fatalité, l'unique tare qui puissent affliger un groupe humain et l'empêcher de réaliser pleinement sa nature, c'est d'être seul. » L'anthropologue poursuit : « Il est difficile de se représenter autrement que comme contradictoire un processus que l'on peut résumer de la manière suivante : pour progresser, il faut que les hommes collaborent ; et au cours de cette collaboration, ils voient graduellement s'identifier les apports dont la diversité initiale était précisément ce qui rendait leur collaboration féconde et nécessaire. Mais même si cette contradiction est insoluble, le devoir sacré de l'humanité est d'en conserver les deux termes également présents à l'esprit, de ne jamais perdre de vue l'un au profit de l'autre ; de se garder, sans doute, d'un particularisme aveugle qui tendrait à réserver le privilège de l'humanité à une race, une culture ou une société ; mais aussi de ne jamais oublier



qu'aucune fraction de l'humanité ne dispose de formules applicables à l'ensemble, et qu'une humanité confondue dans un genre de vie unique est inconcevable, parce que ce serait une humanité ossifiée. »

Tels sont les principaux paramètres – « contradictoires », « insolubles » – à l'aune desquels la problématique religion/migration nous semble devoir être examinée. Mais il faut sans doute les compléter par quelques dernières remarques.

### **La question migratoire et la réactivation du théologico-politique, du culturel au spirituel**

Synonymes de constitution (ou de renforcement) de minorités culturelles et religieuses, temporaires ou permanentes, dans les territoires traversés par elles, les migrations contribuent en tout cas à réactiver contre toute attente le vieil enjeu théologico-politique, passant il y a peu encore pour obsolète aux yeux de la modernité. Au delà des questions relatives à la diversité culturelle/religieuse (et convictionnelle) à l'instant évoquée, se trouve en effet posée celle du degré d'homogénéité culturelle/religieuse – nécessaire ou souhaitable, comme on voudra – pour un fonctionnement optimal des sociétés politiques, notamment démocratiques. Une réactivation qui nous amène forcément à nous interroger sur la nature (et la gestion idéale) du lien entre politique et religion, jusqu'ici éludé et sous-estimé par la plupart des analystes au XXe siècle mais peut-être en cours de

réhabilitation progressive... et problématique. L'étonnante présence des thématiques religieuses et apparentées dans la récente campagne pour l'élection présidentielle française en témoigne, et de manière aussi savoureuse que paradoxale dans un pays qui se pense par excellence comme celui de la séparation du politique et du religieux.

En un mot, la remise en question par la modernité – et, en l'occurrence, par les mouvements de population qu'elle favorise, voire promeut – d'ensembles humains à la fois culturels, politiques et religieux et/ou séculiers stabilisés depuis longtemps conduit à s'interroger sur deux « énigmes » anthropologiques interdépendantes, aussi massives que fondamentales : celle de la différence entre religion et politique et celle de la différence entre religion et culture. Sur leurs rapports si complexes, essentiels et ambivalents, bien des livres ont été écrits, bien d'autres le seront sans doute, interdisant toute analyse trop hâtive et parcellaire... Ce que l'on peut dire, cependant, pour conclure ce court article, c'est que la différence spécifique du religieux tant à l'égard du politique que du culturel consiste selon nous dans le lien intrinsèque existant entre le religieux et le spirituel. A savoir entre le religieux (réalité avant tout socio-politique et culturelle) et la relation intime à l'absolu, à l'infini, à l'universel, à l'éternel, au transcendant... autrement dit, au Divin. En effet, le politique aussi bien que le

culturel sont par nature des réalités formelles, particulière, historiques c'est-à-dire limitées et délimitées, vu qu'il n'y a jamais eu de culture ou de société politique sans limite, sans frontière. Alors que le spirituel se caractérise justement par l'effort, typiquement humain, d'échapper personnellement, intérieurement, à toute limitation ; et ce même si cet effort subit forcément l'influence du contexte socio-culturel dans lequel il s'inscrit, notamment sous une forme religieuse (le plus souvent).

Par sa précarité, son errance et ses souffrances spécifiques d'homme « trans-frontière », dépouillé des illusions (mais confortables) protections matérielles et idéologiques de ceux qui ne se savent pas passants en ce monde, le migrant s'avère ainsi une figure spirituelle. Il paraît comme l'archétype de l'homo viator, « l'homme en chemin » entre ciel et terre. Son visage est celui de l'homme nu, sans qualité, ramené à l'essentiel de son humanité et de sa fragilité. En cela, il interpelle aussi les diverses religions – et chacun d'entre-nous – dans leurs ressorts éthiques et mystiques les plus profonds. « La figure du pèlerin, de l'itinérant est une métaphore plus générale de la condition métaphysique de l'être humain qui est toujours en marche, porté à aller au-delà de lui-même, dans une quête spirituelle infinie, explique à ce propos le sociologue Jean-François Dortier. (...) L'être humain semble ainsi fait : lorsqu'il est enfermé ou assigné à résidence, il rêve de pren-

dre le large. Mais condamné à l'exil ou à l'errance, il aspire à retrouver son port d'attache. » Comme le pauvre, le prisonnier, le malade, parmi d'autres figures de l'exclu, du marginal, le migrant démuné donne à la religion l'occasion de revenir à l'essentiel, en se désencombrant de ce qui l'instrumentalise et souvent la défigure. En cela, il contribue à la rappeler à sa vocation première et irremplaçable : donner un corps, un visage, à l'éthique et au spirituel.

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**Enrique Alemán Gutiérrez** is the Director of cabildoquisi cuba The managing group is made up by 74 persons, including an important number of activists. These specialists interact in accordance with our needs and are highly committed with our religious institution. Interrelation among the different disciplines is an axiom



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