

FOUNDED 2010

# Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH  
JANUARY 2019

Ivory plaque depicting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. 10th century CE.



REV. DR. DAVID MARK NEUHAUS SJ  
A personal reflection on dialogue with Muslims



---

**SUPPORT LIVE ENCOUNTERS.  
DONATE NOW AND KEEP THE MAGAZINE LIVE IN 2019!**

Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help spread the free distribution of knowledge with any amount for this just cause.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas  
Publisher/Editor  
[markulyseas@liveencounters.net](mailto:markulyseas@liveencounters.net)

**Donate**

**All articles and photographs are the copyright of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net) and its contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the explicit written permission of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net). Offenders will be criminally prosecuted to the full extent of the law prevailing in their home country and/or elsewhere.**



©Mark Ulyseas Photography



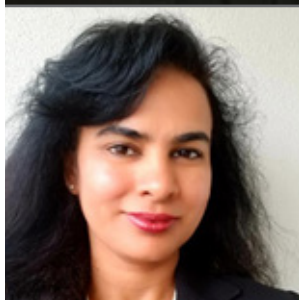
# CONTRIBUTORS



## A personal reflection on dialogue with Muslims...

**Rev. Dr. David Mark Neuhaus SJ**

Rev. Dr. David Mark Neuhaus SJ is a member of the Society of Jesus (Near East Province) and teaches Scripture at the Seminary of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Beit Jala, in the Religious Studies Department at Bethlehem University, at the Salesian Theological Institute in Jerusalem and at Yad Ben Zvi in Jerusalem. He completed a BA, MA and PhD (Political Science) at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He then completed pontifical degrees in theology and Scripture in Paris (Centre Sevrès) and Rome (Pontifical Biblical Institute).



## China's Strategy in the Asia-Pacific

**Dr Namrata Goswami**

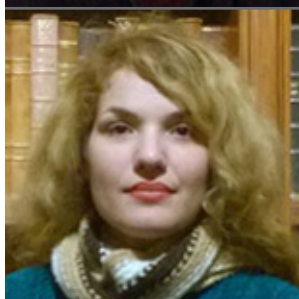
Dr. Namrata Goswami is an author, strategic analyst, and consultant on counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, alternate futures, and great power politics. Earlier, she was Senior Fellow at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and Research Fellow at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA). She is the recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship. Currently, she is working on two book projects, one on the topic of 'Ethnic Narratives', to be published by Oxford University Press, and the other on the topic of 'Great Power Ambitions' to be published by Lexington Press, an imprint of Rowman and Littlefield.



## India Election Year 2019 - Beware of politicians bearing gifts

**Mark Ulyseas**

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing*. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*.



## Can Islamic Fundamentalists be Agents of Change and Emancipation for Iranian Women?

**Nasim Basiri**

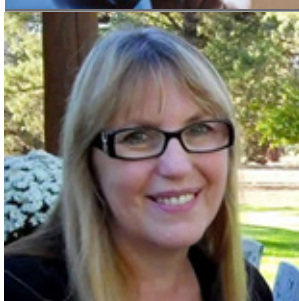
Nasim Basiri is an Iranian poet and activist from Borazjan in the south of Iran. She currently lives in the United States where she works and studies at Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Oregon State University. Nasim's poetry and other literary works depict the suffering of humans, political and gendered violence and address the injustices associated with marginalization and global apartheid experienced by people in the Third World and the Middle East in particular.



## Paul VI and Gandhi - Kindred Maha-Spirits

**Dr Peter Gonsalves**

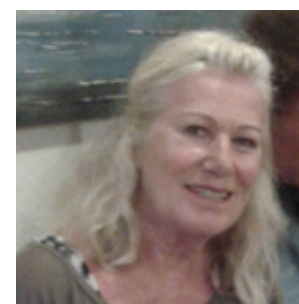
Peter Gonsalves, PhD, teaches the Sciences of Social Communication at Salesian University, Rome. This extract is taken and adapted from the last volume of his Gandhian trilogy, *Gandhi and the Popes: from Pius XI to Francis* (Peter Lang publishers, 2015). He may be visited at [www.petergonsalves.in](http://www.petergonsalves.in).



## Everyone Has 24 Hours in a Day

**Dr Candess M Campbell**

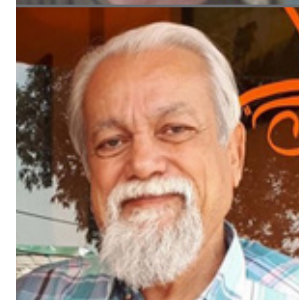
Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the author of the *Live Intuitively: Journal the Wisdom of your Soul* and the #1 Best-selling book *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. She is an internationally known Author, Intuitive Coach and Mentor, Psychic Medium, Speaker and Workshop Facilitator. She specializes in assisting others to regain their own personal power and live a life of abundance, happiness, and joy.



## After Gilgamesh's defeat

**Dr Greta Sykes**

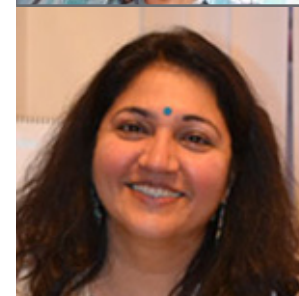
Poet, writer and artist Greta Sykes has published her work in many anthologies. She is a member of London Voices Poetry Group and also produces art work for them. Her new volume of poetry called 'The Shipping News and Other Poems' came out in August 2016. The German translation of her book 'Under charred skies' has now been published in Germany under the title 'Unter verbranntem Himmel' by Eulenspiegel Verlag. She is the chair of the Socialist History Society and has organised joint poetry events for them at the Poetry Café. She is a trained child psychologist and has taught at the Institute of Education, London University, where she is now an associate researcher.



## Between Worlds - Walking with Shamans

**Randhir Khare**

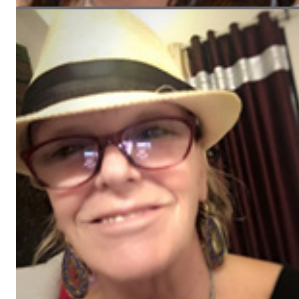
Randhir Khare is an award winning poet, artist, writer, playwright, folklorist and distinguished educationist who has published numerous volumes of poetry, short fiction, essays and novels and educational handbooks and has travelled widely, reading and presenting his work, nationally and internationally. He has presented his work at the Nehru Centre in London, at the Ubud Writers Festival in Bali, the India Festival In Bulgaria, at the Writers Union in the Czech Republic, in Bulgaria, Slovenia and at the Europalia Arts Festival in Belgium.



## An interview with Live Encounters

**Aarti David**

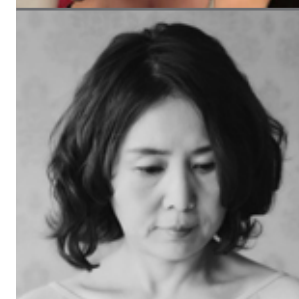
Aarti David is Director, Publishing at SAGE India. She jointly heads books and journals commissioning along with marketing. As head of commissioning, she oversees all the streams SAGE publishes in English. This currently includes SAGE India Journals, SAGE India (Academic Books), SAGE Texts (Textbook publishing programme), SAGE Response (Business and Management Books), SAGE Select (Non-Fiction), SAGE Advantage (educational resources programme), SAGE Vistaar (South Asian Rights Programme).



## Putting it on

**Jill Gocher**

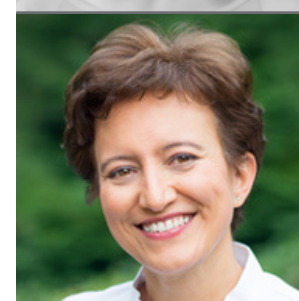
Bali based international photographer has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Kris and many more. Her books - Asia's legendary Hotels, Periplus, Bali- Island of Light -Marshall Cavendish, Indonesia - Islands of the Imagination. Periplus, Australia - the land down under - Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia - the last paradise - Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali.



## Meditation

**Mikyoung Cha**

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography - the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.

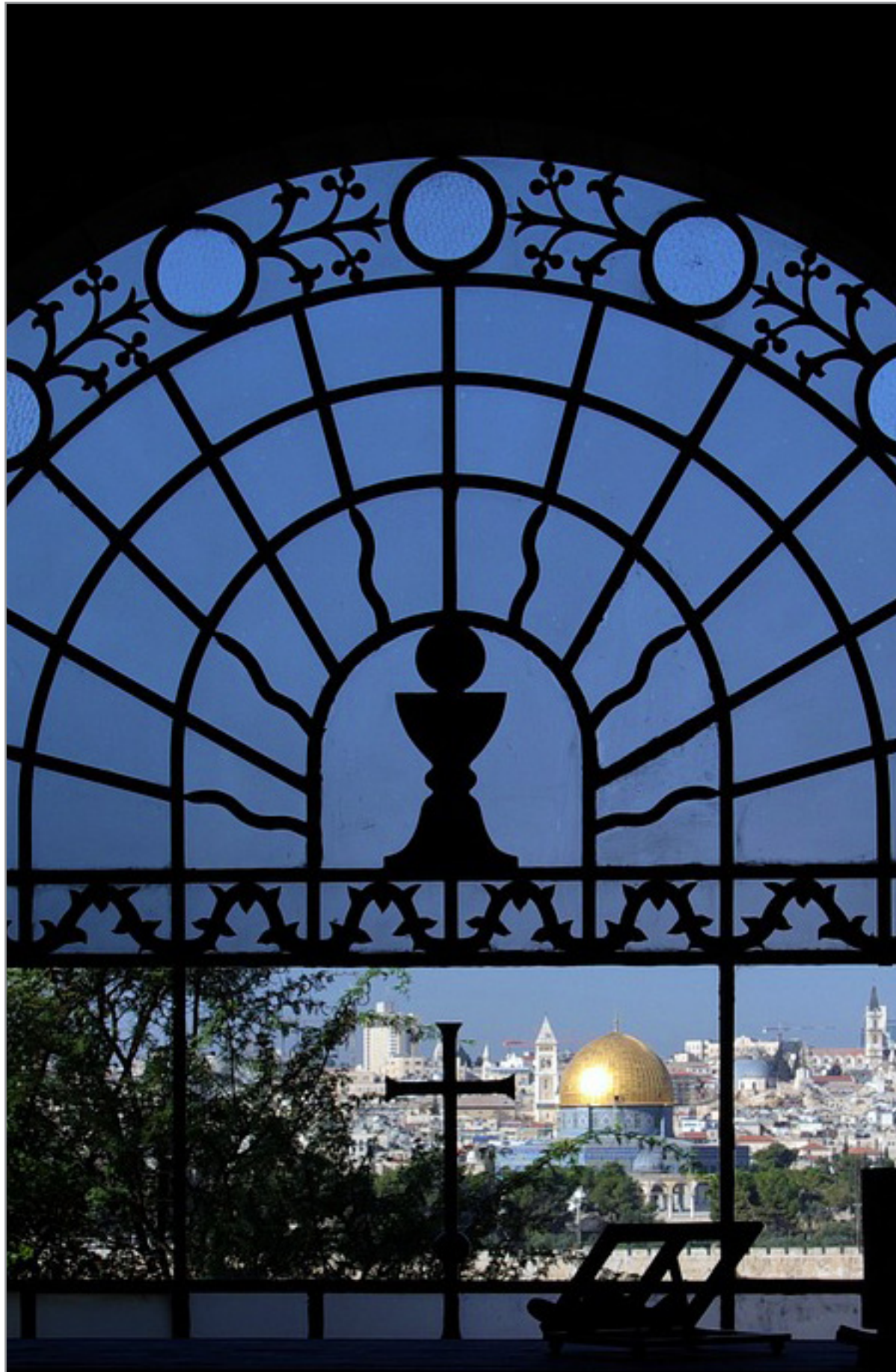


## Fish kebabs with lemon...

**Ozlem Warren**

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the "Turkish Chefs of the World", "Dünyanın Türk Seferleri" TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.





Rev. Dr. David Mark Neuhaus SJ is a member of the Society of Jesus (Near East Province) and teaches Scripture at the Seminary of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Beit Jala, in the Religious Studies Department at Bethlehem University, at the Salesian Theological Institute in Jerusalem and at Yad Ben Zvi in Jerusalem. He completed a BA, MA and PhD (Political Science) at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He then completed pontifical degrees in theology and Scripture in Paris (Centre Sevrès) and Rome (Pontifical Biblical Institute). His publications include *Justice and the Intifada: Palestinians and Israelis speak out* (edited with Kathy Bergen and Ghassan Rubeiz), New York, Friendship Press, 1991; (in collaboration with Alain Marchadour), *The Land that I will show you...Land, Bible and History* has been published in French (2006), English (2007), Italian (2007), German (2011) and Korean (2018); and *Writing from the Holy Land*, has been published in French (2017) in English (2017) and Italian (2018). He served from 2009 to 2017 as Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Israel and as coordinator of the Pastoral Among Migrants within the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



## REV. DR. DAVID MARK NEUHAUS SJ

### A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIMS - AN EXPERIENCE IN JERUSALEM

**Abstract:** Recent events in the Middle East and their resounding echoes throughout the world have sharpened antipathies as Islam has become identified in the minds of many with its most extremist practitioners. How might the view from Jerusalem challenge this perspective on relations with Muslims? In reflecting on dialogue with Muslims from a Christian point of view, the reflections in this article are based upon the the experience of deep friendships with Muslims in Jerusalem. The Holy City can be a unique place for a Christian engagement in dialogue with Muslims focused not only on the Quran as Muslim Scripture but also on the long centuries of history that have forged attitudes and relationships.

In 1965, paragraph 3 of *Nostra aetate* announced the dawning of a new age in the development of the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Muslims. The text of the conciliar document states with limpid clarity: *"The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims"*. The long centuries that had known too much suspicion, antipathy and even violence were now to give way to a new epoch in which Catholics and Muslims were called to recognize how much they had in common and to work together to build a more just and more humane world. Without obscuring the differences, particularly with regard to the identity of *"Jesus as God"*, the document called on one and all to *"forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom"*. From a discourse based upon apologetics and polemics, Catholics were called to develop a discourse based on encounter and collaboration with Muslims.

The Catholic Church's dialogue with Muslims has developed parallel to the Church's dialogue with Jews, rooted in paragraph 4 of the same conciliar document. However, in the post-Vatican II Church, dialogue with Muslims and dialogue with Jews have taken different paths.

<https://pixabay.com/>



This was made explicit by Pope John Paul II when he spoke to Jews in the synagogue in Rome in 1986, *"The Church of Christ discovers her 'bond' with Judaism by 'searching into her own mystery.' The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers, and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."*

According to a dominant Western theological discourse, Christianity has a unique relationship with Judaism, unlike that with any other religion. Due to this uniqueness, the responsibility for dialogue with Jews was assumed by the office that promotes Christian unity in the Catholic Church, whereas responsibility for the dialogue with Muslims was assumed by the office that deals with dialogue with believers of other religions. Jews are sometimes shocked to discover that this separation of responsibilities implies that the Jewish-Christian divide is considered a division internal to Christianity and, consequently, that Judaism is not seen by Catholics as a religion totally separate from Christianity. This was made explicit by Pope John Paul II when he spoke to Jews in the synagogue in Rome in 1986, *"The Church of Christ discovers her 'bond' with Judaism by 'searching into her own mystery.' The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers, and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."*

The strict division of the two dialogues, that with Jews and that with Muslims, is of course a consequence of history, cultural affinities and the theological presuppositions engendered by them. First and foremost, contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue has been forged within the context of European history, often attempting to replace an anti-Judaic or even anti-Jewish perspective<sup>1</sup> with a philo-Judaic and philo-Jewish one. The dual heritage of the Enlightenment, creating a Judeo-Christian culture, and the Holocaust, which sought to destroy that culture, have moulded European cultural attitudes with regard to the Jewish people and the theology that derived from this context. As a result of this history, many refer to a "common Judeo-Christian heritage", founded in shared Scriptures, promoting a heightened awareness of Jesus's Jewish identity and milieu, developing a shared ethical teaching, establishing a common understanding of dialogue and a common program of joint action (in which the struggle against anti-Semitism plays no small part). Muslims are often regarded as newcomers to this friendship if not considered complete outsiders.

This theological understanding is rooted, to some extent, in a Christian tradition which understood Judaism as the ultimate *praeparatio evangelica*<sup>2</sup>. However, the flowering of Catholic positive theologies of Judaism is the fruit of the twentieth century. Most significantly, these theologies reflect a Christian awakening to the tragic and sinister consequences of *"a teaching of contempt"* (see Jules Isaac) that characterized Christian discourse about Jews and Judaism through the centuries.

The Catholic view of the dialogue with Muslims often presupposes that, as compared to Christians and Jews, Christians and Muslims indeed also share a heritage based in Scripture but that this commonality is sharply curtailed by a Quranic text that remains foreign to Christians. Whereas Jews and Christians might be enriched by reading together shared texts (in what Christians call "the Old Testament"), Muslims have their own Scripture and make reference constantly to a prophet unrecognized by Christian tradition, Muhammad. It is striking that *Nostra aetate* mentions neither the Quran nor Muhammad, the two fundamental defining features of Islam and the life of Muslims.

Pope John Paul II, giving expression to the heritage of the Council, stressed over and over again that Jesus was a Jew, that Jews and Christians share common Scripture (defined as the Old Testament) and common values and that the roots of Christianity are in Judaism. Whereas this attitude to Jews and Judaism is evident in Catholic teaching today, it is striking that it hardly ever emerged from the shadows in the hundreds of years of Catholic teaching and preaching about Jews that focused on their presumed responsibility for the death of Christ, their supposed blindness when reading Scripture and their ostensible stiff-necked rejection of the preaching of the Church.

In today's Catholic discourse, whereas dialogue with Jews is often proposed as an existential obligation for Christians seeking to understand themselves, dialogue with Muslims is commonly conceived of as grounded in utility, reflecting a practical and political necessity in a shared world. This necessity is understood to relate to two parallel contexts. One is the context of Christian minorities living in countries with a Muslim majority and the dialogue seeks to guarantee not only their religious and human rights as Christians but also their full and equal citizenship in the state and in society. The other context is that of growing Muslim minorities in countries with a Christian cultural heritage and the dialogue seeks to guarantee that Islamic faith and practice does not clash with Western ideas of democracy, equality and integration. Within the context of the dialogue on the integration of Muslims in Europe and North America, the historical experiences of the Jews, with successes, after the French Revolution, and dismal failures, culminating in the Shoah, should be a constant point of reference.

The Catholic view of the dialogue with Muslims often presupposes that, as compared to Christians and Jews, Christians and Muslims indeed also share a heritage based in Scripture but that this commonality is sharply curtailed by a Quranic text that remains foreign to Christians. Whereas Jews and Christians might be enriched by reading together shared texts (in what Christians call "the Old Testament"), Muslims have their own Scripture and make reference constantly to a prophet unrecognized by Christian tradition, Muhammad. It is striking that *Nostra aetate* mentions neither the Quran nor Muhammad, the two fundamental defining features of Islam and the life of Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

For those located at the Church's centre in Europe and North America, while Christians and Jews are perceived to share a European rooted culture, Christians and Muslims are felt to live in essentially differing cultural worlds.

Christians are faced with two majorities in the Holy City. On the one hand, the politically dominant Jewish majority controls the city with an iron hand, promoting a unique identification of Jerusalem with Jewish identity and history. On the other hand, the majority of Christians are part of an Arab Islamic socio-political and cultural world having increasing difficulty accepting its own cultural and confessional diversity and in which the muscular imposition of Islamic religious, social, cultural and political discourse and mores is marginalizing non-Muslims.



Whereas Judaism, assimilated to the religion of the Old Testament Israelites, is seen as “preparation for the Gospel”, Islam is condemned as “deviation from the Gospel”. Whereas “Judaism”, with its Old Testament patriarchs, kings and prophets opened the way for Christ’s coming; Islam, with its “false” prophet and “false” holy Book deviated from the fully revealed truth in Christ. Judaism is seen as the trunk upon which Christ and his first Jewish disciples sprouted and upon which the Gentiles who were converted to faith in Him in ever increasing numbers were grafted. At least since the Shoah, and more especially since Vatican II, Catholics celebrate that Jesus, his Mother, his disciples and his ancestors were all Jewish. Yet, Mohammed, Islam’s prophet, despite having come into contact with Christians and their claims about Jesus’s divinity, despite venerating his Mother and even referring to Jesus as the Word of God, constructed a religion which ultimately denies Jesus’s divinity and consistently refuses the Good News of the Church.

To all intents and purposes, Islam and Muslims are not perceived to be in the same inter-religious playing field as Judaism and Jews. Recent events in the Middle East and their resounding echoes throughout the world have sharpened antipathies as Islam has become identified in the minds of many with its most extremist practitioners. Some Christians are particularly concerned with what they identify as the “persecution” of Christians by Muslims in parts of the world where Christians live as minorities among Muslims. Some Catholics, congratulating themselves on present day Catholic dialogic openness, intellectualism and pacifism, frown on an Islam characterized (or caricatured) as intolerant, violent and even genocidal. The ongoing skirmishes between the powers that be in this world and the popular image of a supposedly wide spread Islamic fundamentalism and extremism severely restrain enthusiasm for dialogue with Muslims and limit hope for its fruits.

### Friendship in Jerusalem: An experience of dialogue

How does the view from Jerusalem challenge the European perspective on relations with Muslims? Contemporary historiography is more aware than ever that the perspective of the one writing history is largely responsible for the way in which history is written. This is largely true for theology too. In reflecting on dialogue with Muslims from a Christian point of view, I need to state at the outset that my intuitions and thoughts have been forged in the experience of deep friendships with Muslims in Jerusalem... with Oussama, Yahya, Muhammad and others... What is at the root of these reflections are experiences of dialogue with Muslim friends in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

Jerusalem is a unique place for a Christian engagement in dialogue both with Muslims and with Jews and might offer a different perspective due to a number of reasons:

- The first and most obvious fact is that in Jerusalem Christians constitute a small flock, an often politically and socially insignificant minority. Historically divided among themselves, culturally predominantly Palestinian Arab, politically marginalised in the city, and preoccupied with a steady emigration, Christians are struggling for their survival as Christians (and as Palestinians and Arabs too).
- Christians are faced with two majorities in the Holy City. On the one hand, the politically dominant Jewish majority controls the city with an iron hand, promoting a unique identification of Jerusalem with Jewish identity and history. On the other hand, the majority of Christians are part of an Arab Islamic socio-political and cultural world having increasing difficulty accepting its own cultural and confessional diversity and in which the muscular imposition of Islamic religious, social, cultural and political discourse and mores is marginalizing non-Muslims.
- Indigenous Christians in Jerusalem are often ignored by the steady stream of foreign Christian pilgrims, visitors and even by many long term Christian expatriate residents. For many of these foreign Christians, the Church in Jerusalem is synonymous with those structures of stone which shelter holy sites and few encounter the Church of Christ made up of her living stones, the Christian witnesses who have constituted the Church of Jerusalem since her birth until the present day. For the past fourteen centuries, these Christians have lived and had their being within a world defined by Muslim Arab civilization.

### An encounter with the Quran

Shortly after my arrival in Jerusalem as an adolescent, I embarked on another journey of discovery that took me into the world of another text – the Quran. Committed to learning Arabic, I asked my close Muslim friend, Oussama, to read the Quranic text with me each week. There is no doubt that the medium of friendship opened the Quran for me in a way that academic study cannot do.



My own encounter with the Quran in the meetings with Oussama and Yahya opened up perspectives in my reading of the Biblical text that were refreshing and sometimes even liberating. In its terse and yet poetic use of the Arabic language, The Quran conceded a greater depth to certain well-known figures that they had not had before when I read the Bible as a Christian. Some of their humanity and struggle emerged with greater clarity. I understood better the figure of Satan (named Iblis) after meditating the Quranic text that describes him as being *“not among those who bow down”* (Surat al-A’araf, 7:11).

Hearing Oussama’s interpretations of what we read and feeling free to resonate with his readings or challenge them deepened our friendship. We would meet once a week and I would struggle with the letters until they became familiar and I slowly pieced together meaning from the words. This exercise continued for years, first with Oussama and then with Yahya; both friends, teachers and partners in an ongoing dialogue.

A fundamental experience for many Catholics committed to the dialogue with Jews is the dawning recognition of the Scriptural heritage that Jews and Christians share in the Old Testament. In reading the Quran within the context of the deepening of a friendly relationship, it struck me immediately that the text of the Quran is not a stranger to the library constituted by the Scriptures of Israel and those penned by the disciples of Jesus. The ancient Arabic poetry, its vocabulary and rhythm, evoke the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek of the Scriptures held sacred by Jews and Christians. Pope Benedict XVI pointed this out in an interview on the airplane that took him to the Holy Land in 2009: *“Islam was also born in an environment where Judaism and various branches of Christianity, Judeo-Christianity, Antiochian-Byzantine-Christianity were present, and all these circumstances are reflected in the tradition of the Quran. In this way, we have much in common from our origins, in the faith in the one God. For that, it is important on one hand to maintain dialogue with the two parts -- with the Jews and with Islam -- and as well a trilateral dialogue”* (May 8, 2009). The common heritage is not only evident in the shared narratives about the great figures in the Old Testament and the New, but also in the identification of a common language to envision God, humanity and their relationship. Whatever the significant theological differences might be in how the Talmud, the New Testament and the Quran reinterpret the Scriptures of ancient Israel, much of the vocabulary, syntax and rhyme is part of a common heritage that Jews, Christians and Muslims share.

My own encounter with the Quran in the meetings with Oussama and Yahya opened up perspectives in my reading of the Biblical text that were refreshing and sometimes even liberating. In its terse and yet poetic use of the Arabic language, The Quran conceded a greater depth to certain well-known figures that they had not had before when I read the Bible as a Christian. Some of their humanity and struggle emerged with greater clarity. I understood better the figure of Satan (named Iblis) after meditating the Quranic text that describes him as being *“not among those who bow down”* (Surat al-A’araf, 7:11).

In our reading sessions, Yahya introduced me to the text in the Quran that is described as being *“the most beautiful of stories”* (Surat Yusuf, 12:3), the chapter called *Yusuf*, corresponding to Genesis’s dramatic story of Joseph son of Jacob. I had often been troubled by the harsh portrayal of Potiphar’s wife in Genesis, seemingly driven by lust and callously willing to destroy her object of lust when he did not submit to her advances. It was liberating to encounter Potiphar’s wife in the Quran (named in Islamic tradition Zulaykha), inviting her neighbours to gaze upon Joseph’s beauty so that they might understand how she had lost her equilibrium.

It is not to God that Iblis refused to bow down but rather to God’s creature, Adam, proudly held up by God as the crown of creation but rejected by Iblis who haughtily proclaimed: *“I am better than him, You have created me from fire whilst you created him from clay”* (Surat al-A’araf, 7:12). It was an eye-opener to encounter the Quran’s Noah, poignantly experiencing the tragedy of losing one of his own sons in the floodwaters, a son who refused to heed the call of his father: *“and he was one of those who drowned”* (Surat Hud, 11:43).

In our reading sessions, Yahya introduced me to the text in the Quran that is described as being *“the most beautiful of stories”* (Surat Yusuf, 12:3), the chapter called *Yusuf*, corresponding to Genesis’s dramatic story of Joseph son of Jacob. I had often been troubled by the harsh portrayal of Potiphar’s wife in Genesis, seemingly driven by lust and callously willing to destroy her object of lust when he did not submit to her advances. It was liberating to encounter Potiphar’s wife in the Quran (named in Islamic tradition Zulaykha), inviting her neighbours to gaze upon Joseph’s beauty so that they might understand how she had lost her equilibrium. The women, so distracted by Joseph’s beauty, cut their hands with the knives they had been handed to use at the banquet they were served in her house as they exclaimed: *“God be praised! This is no human being. This is naught but a noble angel”* (Surat Yusuf, 12:31).





One day, I had to cancel my Quran lesson with Oussama because I had been invited to the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which falls each year on October 7. “What does that feast signify?” asked Oussama. Of course, I had no difficulty explaining to Oussama the beauty of the rosary prayer as he himself would often pray with a Muslim *masbaha* (stringed beads very similar to the rosary), reciting the ninety-nine names of God. However, how could I explain to him that the date of the feast commemorated the victory won in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, miraculously “saving” Europe from the Muslim hordes that threatened its gates? Even more complex was the fact that these supposed hordes, defeated by the Christians, were none other than the Ottoman Turks, who had provided refuge for Jews fleeing the Catholic Inquisition in Spain and Portugal.



Rather than a story of lust, the Quran tells a story of human love and desire, complicated by issues of trust and ties of fidelity. The story is indeed most beautiful because of its resonances with the complexity of human experience.

Over time, the opening verses of the Quran have become a part of my prayer, poetically echoing the Psalms: *“In the name of God, merciful and compassionate, praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, merciful and compassionate, Sovereign of the day of judgment...”* Likewise, the last chapter of the Quran resounds in my spirit: *“Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of humankind, the Sovereign of humankind, the God of humankind, from the evil of the devious whisperer, who whispers into the hearts of humankind, of unclean spirits and humans”*. The medium of friendship with Oussama and Yahya opened the text not only to my understanding but also to my spirit. Without their friendship and their testimony to the good life lived by them as faithful Muslims, the text would have remained closed, foreign and unknown.

#### A joint history written in blood

One day, I had to cancel my Quran lesson with Oussama because I had been invited to the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which falls each year on October 7. “What does that feast signify?” asked Oussama.

Self-righteous Christians, who might point to Muslim political excesses, have much to learn from such a walk about in Jerusalem, listening to what the ruins (archaeological and human) left by centuries of Byzantine, Crusader and British rule, suggest about Christian ambitions to rule the Holy Land. Self-righteous Muslims have much to learn too from close attention to the ruins left by the sometime disastrous policies of Fatimid, Mameluke and Ottoman rulers. The present socio-political reality of Jerusalem has created and continues to create ruins as a dominant Jewish majority has not proved itself any less oppressive than some of its Christian and Muslim predecessors. Jerusalem should elicit a spirit of humility and profound contriteness of heart in all who have sought to dominate her.

Of course, I had no difficulty explaining to Oussama the beauty of the rosary prayer as he himself would often pray with a Muslim *masbaha* (stringed beads very similar to the rosary), reciting the ninety-nine names of God. However, how could I explain to him that the date of the feast commemorated the victory won in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, miraculously “saving” Europe from the Muslim hordes that threatened its gates? Even more complex was the fact that these supposed hordes, defeated by the Christians, were none other than the Ottoman Turks, who had provided refuge for Jews fleeing the Catholic Inquisition in Spain and Portugal. In fact, as a pupil in the Jewish school I attended in my youth, I had learnt that the Jews in the Ottoman Empire had found not only refuge but also an Islamic milieu in which they could develop and prosper, in a fashion not always true of the Christian milieu in Europe. This was only one of the many times that my conversations with Oussama and Yahya turned to the shared history of Christians and Muslims.

Jerusalem conserves so many sacred stones, almost all of them soaked in blood. Jerusalem through the centuries has too often been a battleground where religion has justified war, violence and hatred. A religiously inspired imagination has led Muslims, Jews and Christians in different periods to lay claim to a monopoly of power in Jerusalem whereas the ongoing reality of Muslim, Jewish and Christian presence in Jerusalem challenges the religious imagination to come to terms with the religious “other”. Walking through the streets of Jerusalem, visiting the Holy Places that still stand and the ruins venerated where others once stood, provides a rich panorama for a *metanoia* oriented dialogue regarding the respective histories of Christians, Muslims and Jews. The Greek *metanoia*, the Arabic *tawba* and the Hebrew *teshuvah* all refer to a basic spiritual intuition that as humans we sin, that we are in deep need of forgiveness of God and neighbour and that we must turn back again and again toward God and neighbour with hearts full of contrition, asking pardon.

Self-righteous Christians, who might point to Muslim political excesses, have much to learn from such a walk about in Jerusalem, listening to what the ruins (archaeological and human) left by centuries of Byzantine, Crusader and British rule, suggest about Christian ambitions to rule the Holy Land. Self-righteous Muslims have much to learn too from close attention to the ruins left by the sometime disastrous policies of Fatimid, Mameluke and Ottoman rulers. The present socio-political reality of Jerusalem has created and continues to create ruins as a dominant Jewish majority has not proved itself any less oppressive than some of its Christian and Muslim predecessors. Jerusalem should elicit a spirit of humility and profound contriteness of heart in all who have sought to dominate her.

© David Mark Neuhaus SJ

2019 january © www.liveencounters.net



The extremism, violence and rejection of some Muslims today might be understood against the backdrop of the extremism, violence and rejection of some of our own Christian antecedents. In addition, the ongoing festering of the wound left in Palestine by the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and its expansion in 1967 have led to much despair and anger among Muslims. Even today, the manipulation of Christian vocabulary and thought by some Christians in order to justify occupation and discrimination in Israel/Palestine serves to perpetuate a situation of ongoing injustice that deeply troubles the Muslim world, the tragic fate of the Palestinian people. This is particularly evident when Christians, calling themselves “evangelical” and being called by others “fundamentalist” draw on Biblical texts to legitimate these same practices of occupation and discrimination. Whatever political options might be espoused, dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters should make us sensitive to the pain inflicted in history.

Dialogue with Muslims in Jerusalem reminds Christians not only of a distant past when Christians as Crusaders waged war for Jerusalem, slaughtering not only Muslims but Jews and non-Latin Christians as well, but also of a more recent past when colonialism legitimated itself under the guise of the protection of “holy places” and Christian missionary activity. Dialogue with Jews in Jerusalem reminds Christians not only of a distant past when the adoption of Christianity as an official religion made the life of Jews increasingly unbearable but also of a more recent past when European persecution of Jews gave birth to the idea that Jews needed a refuge far from Europe, the ideology of Zionism and the dream of a “Jewish national homeland in Palestine”. Yet, let us not forget, dialogue with local Christians reminds us that life as a minority under a double majority, Jewish and Muslim Arab, can be challenging to say the least.

However, Jerusalem, as city of origins, can also teach that despite the centuries of conflict, the three religious traditions rooted in Jerusalem have developed in close relationship with each other. Not only do all three religious traditions emerge from roots in the Scriptures of ancient Israel, but also throughout the centuries, their respective traditions developed in response to, in reaction to or in contradiction of the traditions of the religious others. Jerusalem is a wonderful laboratory where we can experience the inter-relatedness of these three religious traditions. Jerusalem, herself, has been sacralised in similar ways by each community, each one chanting her praises, although only rarely in harmony.

The extremism, violence and rejection of some Muslims today might be understood against the backdrop of the extremism, violence and rejection of some of our own Christian antecedents. In addition, the ongoing festering of the wound left in Palestine by the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and its expansion in 1967 have led to much despair and anger among Muslims. Even today, the manipulation of Christian vocabulary and thought by some Christians in order to justify occupation and discrimination in Israel/Palestine serves to perpetuate a situation of ongoing injustice that deeply troubles the Muslim world, the tragic fate of the Palestinian people. This is particularly evident when Christians, calling themselves “evangelical” and being called by others “fundamentalist” draw on Biblical texts to legitimate these same practices of occupation and discrimination. Whatever political options might be espoused, dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters should make us sensitive to the pain inflicted in history.



The challenge evoked by a shared history, soaked in blood, is to strive to understand one another in the present in order to plot out a future that promises a respectful and responsible engagement with diversity rather than attempts to suppress it.

### Complex cultural affinities

One evening, Yahya called to ask me to accompany him to a concert being offered in one of East Jerusalem’s cultural centres. The evening was a celebration of three great twentieth century Arab divas, Lebanon’s Feirouz and Egypt’s Umm Kalthoum and Leila Mourad. It was a beautiful evening where the three talented, young Palestinian singers were often joined by the audience in belting out the songs as the whole audience knew much of the repertoire by heart. It was only later, researching more about who these well-known singers were, that I discovered that Feirouz was a Christian, Umm Kalthoum a Muslim and Leila Mourad a Jew.

Jewish-Christian dialogue in the West is intimately linked to what has come to be known as the “Judeo-Christian” heritage. This heritage is now clearly perceived by both Christian and Jewish Europeans and North Americans, who share language and thought, providing a rich backdrop for the development of dialogue. Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have cited the writings of Jewish thinkers like Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig and Abraham Joshua Heschel in order to underline this shared heritage. What we should not forget though is that this cultural affinity between Western Jews and Christians emerged from a long history of life together, where too often both Jews and Christians focused on what separated Jews and Christians rather than on what they shared. Formulating a supposed “Judeo-Christian heritage” as a foundation for dialogue is very recent, rooted in the critique of tradition and championing of reason in the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) and in the values of democracy, equality and fraternity proclaimed by the French Revolution. The Western perceived affinity between Jews and Christians is more fragile than many Christians want to believe and for many Jews today it went up in smoke in the gas ovens of Auschwitz and Treblinka. Some years ago, when I was a student of theology in Paris, in a conversation with emeritus French Chief Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat, he commented that the contemporary test for the supposed Western culture of dialogue was no longer in the *face-à-face* with the Jews, but rather in the integration of Muslims in Europe.



I might add that this cultural world is a world in which Jews from the Arab world are not strangers. This kind of heritage blossoms not so much in theology or spirituality but rather in the world of music, cinematography and literature. Among the profound “inter-religious” experiences in Jerusalem today one can count listening to Umm Kalthoum, Feirouz or Leila Mourad, reading the works of poets and authors like Egyptian Muslim Ala al-Aswani, Lebanese Christian Amin Maalouf, Palestinian Arab citizen of Israel Christian Anton Shamas and Israeli of Iraqi origin Jew Shimon Balas or viewing the films of Egypt’s Christian Yousef Shahin and Lebanese Christian Nadine Labaki, who evoke the shared cultural heritage of the Mediterranean confessional communities. The Arab heritage shared by Muslims and Christians (and Jews too) is the rich background upon which an inter-religious dialogue develops.

Would Muslims be allowed to be fully fledged Europeans? The historical experience of the Jews in Europe stands as a warning beacon as Europe deals with the integration of her Muslim minorities. In these reflections from Jerusalem, I am not suggesting *a priori* that there is some kind of Middle Eastern or Arab model for dialogue which is fundamentally different from the European model. Inter-religious dialogue as a project clearly emerges from a specifically Western philosophical and cultural background and it is not yet evident that this culture of dialogue has rooted itself in Middle Eastern soil, especially in the light of the aftermath of the “Arab spring”. However, perceptions about what people of different religions share culturally or where they differ do not constitute universal truths and should not be taken for granted in our theological presuppositions. Jews and Christians who have lived for centuries side by side within one linguistic, cultural and socio-political milieu might indeed have developed a language and a perspective on the world that is largely shared despite their differing religious affiliation, however this can be equally true for Muslims and Christians (as well as Jews) who have side by side for centuries in non-Western countries where Islam has been the dominant religion.

Many Jerusalemite Christians share a cultural world with Muslim Arabs, “an Islamo-Christian heritage”, which facilitates a certain type of dialogue, especially one which fosters collaboration on joint social, cultural and political projects. I might add that this cultural world is a world in which Jews from the Arab world are not strangers. This kind of heritage blossoms not so much in theology or spirituality but rather in the world of music, cinematography and literature. Among the profound “inter-religious” experiences in Jerusalem today one can count listening to Umm Kalthoum, Feirouz or Leila Mourad, reading the works of poets and authors like Egyptian Muslim Ala al-Aswani, Lebanese Christian Amin Maalouf, Palestinian Arab citizen of Israel Christian Anton Shamas and Israeli of Iraqi origin Jew Shimon Balas or viewing the films of Egypt’s Christian Yousef Shahin and Lebanese Christian Nadine Labaki, who evoke the shared cultural heritage of the Mediterranean confessional communities. The Arab heritage shared by Muslims and Christians (and Jews too) is the rich background upon which an inter-religious dialogue develops.

Furthermore, it is particularly striking in Jerusalem that for some Jews the “Judeo-Christian heritage” is no more important than the “Judeo-Muslim heritage”. Listening to certain Jews reflect on Muslims, a very different understanding of cultural affinities could develop. How many times have I heard from Jewish friends that: Jews have been protected under Islam (Spain and Turkey being the two

Inter-religious dialogue can be seen as a Western project that dictates a hierarchy of relationships in which the Jewish-Christian bond is primordial. However, it should be admitted that when one is situated outside of the European experience, perspectives might be different, allowing for the development of other relationships that serve too to bind humanity together. In Jerusalem, this perspective is severely impeded by the political reality of conflict. Muslim partners in dialogue often demand solidarity in the struggle for peace and justice for the Palestinians and for the Middle East and see any contact with Jews as unbearable “normalization”. Jewish partners in dialogue often demand support for the State of Israel as an expression of their national resurrection after the Shoah.

prime examples) whereas they have been persecuted under Christendom; that Muslim dietary laws make them culturally closer to Jews (whereas Christians feed on pigs); that Muslim observance of the law, fasting, regulated prayers, charity made them religiously closer to Jews (whereas Christians worshipping idols are not truly monotheists). Jews can point out that Sa’ad ad’Din al-Fayyumi (Saadyah Gaon) Musa bin Maimoun (Rambam-Maimonides) and the great Jewish Arab grammarians of the Middle Ages are still among the greatest Jewish authorities.

Inter-religious dialogue can be seen as a Western project that dictates a hierarchy of relationships in which the Jewish-Christian bond is primordial. However, it should be admitted that when one is situated outside of the European experience, perspectives might be different, allowing for the development of other relationships that serve too to bind humanity together. In Jerusalem, this perspective is severely impeded by the political reality of conflict. Muslim partners in dialogue often demand solidarity in the struggle for peace and justice for the Palestinians and for the Middle East and see any contact with Jews as unbearable “normalization”. Jewish partners in dialogue often demand support for the State of Israel as an expression of their national resurrection after the Shoah. I would like to point out the unfortunate effect of this political strife on the ability to think out the issue of Catholic dialogue with Jews and Muslims. Our attempts to sort out our relationship with those who are closest (historically, culturally, theologically) to us, Jews and Muslims, is impeded by the fact that going out to meet Muslims often precludes meeting Jews and going out to meet Jews often excludes meeting Muslims.

However, in Jerusalem, a city torn by this strife, an integrated reflection on dialogue might indeed be possible. Not in fleeing from the conflict but in immersing ourselves in the elusive ordinary encounters with Jerusalem’s Jews and Muslims and Christians, there is, I think, great potential for uncovering different perspectives on the project of inter-religious dialogue. I speak here of the real city of Jerusalem, not a metaphysical city of spiritual origins or an eschatological city of Christian finality, but a city which embodies the challenges of engagement with the other. Jerusalem is a city that seems to prevent dialogue – divided by real and imaginary walls, where her residents avoid each other. The Holy City is bleeding, torn and infected with the least holy of diseases, fanaticism, intolerance and hatred. Its uniqueness, I would suggest though, is in its brokenness. It is in fully facing this brokenness that Muslims, Jews and Christians can turn their eyes to heaven to implore the God they all recognize as Creator to renew the face of the earth and draw together all of these, His children.



I am painfully aware that my reflections are being formulated at a time when my Christian brothers and sisters in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere in the Arab and non-Arab Muslim world are experiencing a very different face of Islam. In no way do I seek to minimize their loss, their suffering or their cry for justice. Christians who live in countries with a Muslim majority and have suffered at the hands of indifferent Muslim majorities and/or Muslim extremists have every right and perhaps even the duty to bear a very different witness. However, as Christians, we must remember that our own history, especially where we have been seduced by power and have dominated non-Christian minorities, frighteningly echoes much of what is happening in these countries today.

### Towards a future dialogue

My experience of dialogue with Muslims in Jerusalem is a personal one, lived in the context of individual encounters. With it is born the conviction that we have much to learn from the experience of dialogue with Muslims – about ourselves as Christians, about Muslims and about the God we all seek. The promise of expanding our horizons within this dialogue parallels how Christian horizons have already been expanded in the ongoing dialogue with Jews. I am painfully aware that my reflections are being formulated at a time when my Christian brothers and sisters in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere in the Arab and non-Arab Muslim world are experiencing a very different face of Islam. In no way do I seek to minimize their loss, their suffering or their cry for justice. Christians who live in countries with a Muslim majority and have suffered at the hands of indifferent Muslim majorities and/or Muslim extremists have every right and perhaps even the duty to bear a very different witness. However, as Christians, we must remember that our own history, especially where we have been seduced by power and have dominated non-Christian minorities, frighteningly echoes much of what is happening in these countries today.

A renewed theology of inter-religious dialogue is one of the fruits of Vatican II. Dialogue with Jews and Muslims in Jerusalem reminds us that this theological perspective on relationship with the religious “other” was not always the Church’s view. Although, in the light of the Shoah, Christians are increasingly conscious of the anti-Jewish bias, known as “the teaching of contempt”, only very few remember that this contempt was extended to Muslims and Islam. Only a few decades ago the prayer for the conversion of “perfidious Jews” and “heretical Turks” was uttered in the same breath. Furthermore, when Islam was tackled by medieval Christian thinkers, it was often reduced to a new, powerful form of heretical Christianity mixed with Talmudic Judaism. The Talmud and the Quran were paired as sources of error (cf. the writings of Petrus Alfonsi, the Cluniac Corpus Toletanum, Ricoldus de Montecrucis and others). There is still much to do to replace “the teaching of contempt” about Islam, founded on apologetics and polemics, with a relationship with Muslims established on encounter in a shared world.

Anti-Judaism is the antipathy towards the Jewish religion, based upon theological arguments. Anti-Jewish sentiment, commonly known as anti-Semitism, is the antipathy towards Jews, based upon supposedly historical, social or political arguments.

Engagement in dialogue in Jerusalem tends to raise questions about the Western theological way of presenting the Christian relationship with Jews and Muslims. Lived Judaism and lived Islam, the texts and hermeneutical traditions of Talmud and Quran, are among the real challenges in the dialogue with Jews and Muslims. In fact, Rabbinic Judaism and Islam present very similar challenges to Christianity. Both religions developed, thrived and spread in a world which had been exposed to the message of Jesus Christ. Both religions developed their own apologetics in the face of Christianity and polemics against Christian faith. The Christian tendency to reduce Judaism to *praeparatio evangelica* (thus ignoring the foundation of Rabbinic Judaism in Rabbinic literature, canonized in the Talmud) and Islam to *deviatio ab Evangelio* (thus ignoring the content of the Quran and its shared vocabulary, syntax and rhyme) obscures the need to confront the faith realities that contemporary Judaism and Islam constitute for Jews and Muslims, sharing a world with Christians. Jerusalem might indeed constitute a laboratory in which dialogue can truly confront the living reality of the religious other.

### Foot Notes

1. Anti-Judaism is the antipathy towards the Jewish religion, based upon theological arguments. Anti-Jewish sentiment, commonly known as anti-Semitism, is the antipathy towards Jews, based upon supposedly historical, social or political arguments.
- 2 The name of an apologetic work of Church Father and historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, in which he shows how the best of Greek philosophy is rooted in the ideas of the Old Testament prophets, whose thought prepared for the coming of Christ.
3. Some Jews have suggested that this state of affairs characterizes Judaism too as contemporary Judaism is not defined by the Old Testament but rather by the Talmud and its great teachers, largely foreign to Christians (cf. Jacob Neusner, Adin Steinsaltz and others). Parallel to its discourse on Islam, *Nostra aetate* makes no mention of the Talmud and its Rabbis, who are definitive for Jewish life and practice today.
4. Here I echo the profound insights of the Dutch Jesuit, who lived much of his life in Egypt, Christian van Nispen tot Sevenaer, whose little masterpiece “*Chrétiens et Musulmans: Frères devant Dieu?*” (Paris, Les Editions de l’Atelier, 2004) has inspired me over the years.
- 5 In conceiving of non-Western cultural contexts in which inter-religious dialogue develops, the experience of European Christians engaged in dialogue with Ashkenazi Jews (Jews from Europe) is clearly only one possibility. The danger is that it be presented as the model to which all other dialogues must conform, thus becoming a kind of hegemonic ideology.





Dr. Namrata Goswami is an author, strategic analyst, and consultant on counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, alternate futures, and great power politics. Earlier, she was Senior Fellow at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and Research Fellow at the Institute for Défense Studies and Analyses (IDSA). She is the recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship. Currently, she is working on two book projects, one on the topic of 'Ethnic Narratives', to be published by Oxford University Press, and the other on the topic of 'Great Power Ambitions' to be published by Lexington Press, an imprint of Rowman and Littlefield.

DR NAMRATA GOSWAMI

## CHINA'S STRATEGY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC: ESTABLISH PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE



Photograph South China Morning Post

For China, the Asia-Pacific (in their terminology), Indo-Pacific for the U.S. [a term first coined in 2007 by Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe],<sup>1</sup> is located within their vision of the China dream. This concept of a dream that is packaged as attractive for countries along the Asia-Pacific is that of a China that is willing to invest its resources to share a co-prosperity sphere with countries along this critical strategic sphere. The Chinese dream was boldly articulated by President Xi Jinping in his address to the National Museum of China on November 29, 2012.<sup>2</sup> For Xi, the 'China dream' is his signature concept, similar to Mao Tse Tung's 'Class Struggle', Deng Xiaoping's 'Four Modernizations', Jiang Zemin's 'The Three Represents', and Hu Jintao's 'Harmonious Society'.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, Xi articulated the concept after touring an exhibition titled 'The Road to Revival', in the National Museum. Xi restated his 'China dream' in his inaugural address to the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress in 2017.<sup>4</sup> In his address, Xi specified why China was an attractive option. For one, while the U.S. inflicted the 2008 financial crisis on the world, and created regional instabilities, China stood firm on its own economic prosperity and entered a 'new normal' where the Chinese economic development model was only growing stronger. China enjoyed a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 82.7 trillion yuan (US\$12.86 trillion) in 2017,<sup>5</sup> maintained its position as the second largest economy in the world, and contributed 30 per cent to global economic growth, an achievement the CPC was proud of. For another, as part of that China dream, Xi encouraged projects that improved standards of living, strengthened Chinese democracy based on socialistic characteristics, and built an ecologically conscious civilization.<sup>6</sup> Towards establishing that highly developed Chinese state, the focus was on strengthening its military, to include war preparedness across multi-domains (land, air, sea, space and cyber), especially towards meeting the goal of the CPC: national rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and people. This goal is spearheaded by the CPC in all fields, by maintaining its ability to chart the course of institutions within China by presence, ideological guidance and indoctrination.<sup>7</sup>



China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or more commonly known as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) translated from *"yi dai yi lu"*, is an initiative that aims to develop economic connections between Asia, Africa and Europe. The initiative targets nearly 71 countries with prospects of enjoying China's co-prosperity sphere. China has already expended \$210 billion on this initiative. Most of the construction work is given to China's booming construction industry which is a 'line of credit' offered by China to partner countries. That itself creates a strategic debt and entanglement, for those countries who cannot afford that kind of massive infrastructure. The significance of the OBOR is gauged from the fact that it is now part of the CPC constitution.<sup>8</sup>



The present crop of Chinese leaders (the fifth generation) are not shy about hiding China's ambitions and capabilities. While the Chinese dream emphasizes 'harmony, peace, stability and wealth creation', the CPC is willing and has demonstrated tremendous capacity to shape and influence the regional and international environments to serve the Chinese dream. Interconnected therefore to the China dream is the Asia-Pacific dream where countries can fulfil their goals of prosperity and development for their own people by connecting themselves and investing in a China led international order that promises such peace and stability.

In this endeavor, the fifth generation of leadership led by President Xi has activated the following strategic means to achieve optimal ends for their preferred world order where Western led international institutions are one of the players in the game of international relations, and not the sole dominant players.

### Strategic Means

The strategic means that China has adopted for its Asia-Pacific dominance goal are the following.

First, create initiatives aimed at Asia-Pacific countries. Second, build institutions and norms that support those initiatives. Third, build a military capable of implementing a China preferred international order. Fourth, demonstrate that the U.S. is no longer an attraction option, both societally and internationally to its allies.

### Initiatives Aimed at the Asia-Pacific

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or more commonly known as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) translated from *"yi dai yi lu"*, is an initiative that aims to develop economic connections between Asia, Africa and Europe. The initiative targets nearly 71 countries with prospects of enjoying China's co-prosperity sphere. China has already expended \$210 billion on this initiative. Most of the construction work is given to China's booming construction industry which is a 'line of credit' offered by China to partner countries. That itself creates a strategic debt and entanglement, for those countries who cannot afford that kind of massive infrastructure. The significance of the OBOR is gauged from the fact that it is now part of the CPC constitution.<sup>8</sup>

The OBOR includes a 21st century maritime Silk Road as well as an OBOR space corridor. The grandiose nature and scale of the initiative, and the fact that it is President Xi's pet project, with no Presidential term limits, is that China will gradually create enough incentives for countries along the OBOR to buy into its projects, more so, because it targets countries where infrastructure development is sorely required. And not every country views China from the framework of an adversary as is the case with the U.S. or India, both of whom have thrown their weight behind renaming the 'Asia-Pacific' as the 'Indo-Pacific'. Neither China, nor countries within its sphere of influence have adopted the renaming of the region.<sup>9</sup> China will not accept that reframing of the 'Asia-Pacific' as the 'Indo-Pacific' in the future either given the originator of the idea is Japan, a regional rival. The exact opposite is true with China renaming areas with Chinese names, for instance in the Antarctic<sup>10</sup> to include asserting Chinese names on disputed territory as well as marked projects.<sup>11</sup> To build up legitimacy, support and analysis on the OBOR, China has a dedicated government website on the OBOR initiative that includes information on policy, projects, reach, perspectives from other countries, tax incentives for growth, tourism and international cooperation.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, certain Western analysis on OBOR attempts to dismiss its impact as they suspect the real motivation behind the initiative is to profitably engage the excessive Chinese industrial capacity it built and ensure energy supply lines.<sup>13</sup> However, that attempt to negate the strategic impact of the initiative as a purely self-interested enterprise strikes me as odd because with growing economic engagements and entanglements comes the added incentives of accruing power and influence. It also matters how it has been framed. For instance, President Xi announced the BRI initiative in a 2014 Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measure in Asia, a clever strategic move.

### Building Institutions and Norms

To forward the China dream, President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang has established institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), lent their support to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and has offered economic alternatives to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), from which the U.S. exited, like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). More importantly, on June 29, 2018, China established the first and second international commercial courts in Xi'an and Shenzhen to deal with disputes arising out of its OBOR initiatives under the guidance and regulations of its Supreme People's Court (SPC). As per the stipulations offered by the SPC, the judges of these courts must be Chinese nationals.



Towards ensuring that a preferred international order is established and maintained, the role of the Chinese military must be optimal. The American led international order aimed at free trade is mostly ensured by the presence of the U.S. Navy in the oceans, as well as its ability to dominate the air and space. This is in addition to the West led international institutions that sets norms globally headquartered in Western cities like New York and Geneva. Recently, however, the credibility of that dominance has been questioned by China, especially after it established artificial islands in the South China Sea (SCS), and subsequently turned it into a military base by installing radars, by developing missile shelters for long range surface to air missiles.<sup>19</sup> In response, nothing much could be done then to sail a few U.S. naval warships close to the islands.

#### **Building Institutions and Norms** *contd...*

There will be an International Commercial Expert Committee which will consist of Chinese and international experts from the OBOR countries, who can offer legal advice.<sup>14</sup> The aim of these courts is to be a 'One Stop' dispute resolution mechanism along China's Maritime Silk Road as well as the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt. Interestingly, an official from China's Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), specified that the spirit behind China based courts was the fact that Chinese companies involved in Belt and Road initiatives are not comfortable with international courts that are dominated by American and European common law legal terminologies. Consequently, it is time for China to lead in establishing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are based on its own indigenous legal concepts and ideas.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, China is creating an OBOR Space Investment and Information Corridor,<sup>16</sup> where outer-space is part of the OBOR projects, offered to countries in that sphere. China is thereby taking lead in offering its upcoming permanent space station for science projects and international collaborations in partnership with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), as part of a joint effort announced last year.<sup>17</sup> In May 2017, China hosted the Belt and Road Forum attended by 29 heads of states and delegations from 130 countries.<sup>18</sup> This effort at institution building, and its related norms and standard operating procedures is a successful effort at showcasing Chinese leadership, not only in terms of committing resources to a project, but towards establishing long term institutions that ensures its continuance because it builds stakes not only by China but also partner countries towards ensuring its success.

#### **China's Military under Xi**

Towards ensuring that a preferred international order is established and maintained, the role of the Chinese military must be optimal. The American led international order aimed at free trade is mostly ensured by the presence of the U.S. Navy in the oceans, as well as its ability to dominate the air and space. This is in addition to the West led international institutions that sets norms globally headquartered in Western cities like New York and Geneva. Recently, however, the credibility of that dominance has been questioned by China, especially after it established artificial islands in the South China Sea (SCS), and subsequently turned it into a military base by installing radars, by developing missile shelters for long range surface to air missiles.<sup>19</sup> In response, nothing much could be done then to sail a few U.S. naval warships close to the islands. The PLA's capability to project power

The PLA must secure the leadership of the CPC, first and foremost, and the socialist system that China champions. The series of reforms constituted since 2012 under the 18th Party Congress is aimed at shaping the PLA into the best 'informationized' armed forces. Significantly, military institutional reform has been undertaken, to include the establishment of the PLA Rocket Force, the PLA Strategic Support Force, and the PLA Army General Command Command. The idea, behind these changes, is to ensure domination and maintain access, across the spectrum of conflicts, to include land, air, sea and space. For Xi, China will emerge as the strongest country in the world by 2050, a path that he is destined to shape and lead, given he has appointed himself President for life.<sup>22</sup>

and establish presence has increased in the last few years due to focused reorganization and operational training, coupled with its increasing presence in OBOR countries with the legitimate aim to secure Chinese companies conducting projects there. For instance, the presence of PLA personnel along the Chinese funded \$62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been reported, primarily to offer security for Chinese projects but could be utilized for the dual purpose of conflict.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, China has established its first out of area military base in Djibouti, Africa.<sup>21</sup> Under President Xi, the focus is clear: build a military that is capable of winning wars.

The PLA must secure the leadership of the CPC, first and foremost, and the socialist system that China champions. The series of reforms constituted since 2012 under the 18th Party Congress is aimed at shaping the PLA into the best 'informationized' armed forces. Significantly, military institutional reform has been undertaken, to include the establishment of the PLA Rocket Force, the PLA Strategic Support Force, and the PLA Army General Command Command. The idea, behind these changes, is to ensure domination and maintain access, across the spectrum of conflicts, to include land, air, sea and space. For Xi, China will emerge as the strongest country in the world by 2050, a path that he is destined to shape and lead, given he has appointed himself President for life.<sup>22</sup>





For Chinese scholars, the West's narrative of creating a 'threat scenario' regarding China's rise as a major power is because their overarching aim is to ensure their own dominance in the West led economic order, from which their citizens benefit disproportionately given their head start with colonialism and its consequent exploitation of other societies' resources.<sup>23</sup> This lead is maintained by Western powers, the Chinese narrative goes, by creating global institutions in which they occupy dominant decision making powers, with headquarters of such institutions mostly located in the U.S. or other European countries. Such behavior can be gauged from the fact that the U.S. Congress blocked reform to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2014 to a package that would have handed over more voting powers to countries like China, Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa.<sup>24</sup>

### China is the Attractive Option

China thrust behind its Asia-Pacific strategy is to showcase its initiatives as well as its diplomacy as one of harmony and stability. This directly challenges the Western discourse that China is a threat to the liberal American led international order. While those of us who question China's increasingly assertive behavior about disputed territories with countries like Vietnam, Philippines, India, Bhutan, Chinese policy makers and academics forward the argument that these areas are Chinese territory historically. Consequently, China is simply reclaiming its own 'lost territories'. Consequently, China's behavior cannot be viewed from the prism of revisionism that the West is prone to frame it as. For Chinese scholars, the West's narrative of creating a 'threat scenario' regarding China's rise as a major power is because their overarching aim is to ensure their own dominance in the West led economic order, from which their citizens benefit disproportionately given their head start with colonialism and its consequent exploitation of other societies' resources.<sup>23</sup> This lead is maintained by Western powers, the Chinese narrative goes, by creating global institutions in which they occupy dominant decision making powers, with headquarters of such institutions mostly located in the U.S. or other European countries. Such behavior can be gauged from the fact that the U.S. Congress blocked reform to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2014 to a package that would have handed over more voting powers to countries like China, Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa.<sup>24</sup> This move would have reduced the dominance of Western Europe as well in these international monetary institutions. China argues that these organizations, designed to ensure that the West continues to benefit from its colonial past, as well as from its dominance, is now directly challenged by the alternate institutions China has established based on inclusion, and aimed at social stability and peace. Interwoven into all this is the idea of the 'China dream' that promises wealth and prosperity for those who partake in it. In this, China has taken over leadership by establishing its own rules and norms of investments, instead of waiting for the present international institutions to initiate a new set of rules. The idea is to demonstrate that China has its own agency in not only being a 'norm follower' but also in constituting its own norms. Its has gone about establishing Free Trade Areas (FTA), build institutions, establish military presence and reach, as well as conduct global summits in its territory. Consequently, in the present context, with U.S. President Donald Trump creating tariff barriers, declaring himself a nationalist, with an 'America First' policy, China has quietly stepped in, and offered itself as a viable and responsible alternative.

After all, we have the example of the successful story of Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore, a tightly controlled one party, the People's Action Party (PAP) led political entity, and on whose example, Deng Xiaoping built the edifices of his modern China.<sup>26</sup> To China, Singapore's legitimacy based dictatorship is a model worth emulating given the city state's reputation, to include excellent living standards, boosting the world's second most powerful passport with visa-free entry to 189 countries, just behind Japan's with free access to 190 countries.<sup>27</sup> CPC fifth generation leaders view the Asia-Pacific in their terminology as a zone of proximate influence. Consequently, China will continue to invest in building legitimacy and commit resources to ensure that in the long run, it is China, not the U.S. who emerges as the leader. That's the Chinese strategic end goal towards which we will see little or no compromise.

The concern is, what is that alternate we have. China as a state embodies a totalitarian socialist system led by the CPC, with ever increasing technical mechanisms of controlling dissent and targeting opponents. China's social credit system,<sup>25</sup> its emphasis on ensuring that all the institutions of the state exist to ensure the dominance of the CPC, its emphasis on one party loyalty, and its curtailment of free speech means that a China led order would have little patience for democratic haggling and legitimate dissent, instead constructing legitimacy structure for a unitary perspective as we have encountered in their claims over territory. However, we need to realize that the China option is aimed at making it attractive and successful to the rest of the world. Given its deft diplomacy and long-term commitment capabilities with little change in internal political regime, China has the advantage of offering a long-term vision of stability and economic prosperity to the world. After all, we have the example of the successful story of Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore, a tightly controlled one party, the People's Action Party (PAP) led political entity, and on whose example, Deng Xiaoping built the edifices of his modern China.<sup>26</sup> To China, Singapore's legitimacy based dictatorship is a model worth emulating given the city state's reputation, to include excellent living standards, boosting the world's second most powerful passport with visa-free entry to 189 countries, just behind Japan's with free access to 190 countries.<sup>27</sup> CPC fifth generation leaders view the Asia-Pacific in their terminology as a zone of proximate influence. Consequently, China will continue to invest in building legitimacy and commit resources to ensure that in the long run, it is China, not the U.S. who emerges as the leader. That's the Chinese strategic end goal towards which we will see little or no compromise.

### Foot Notes

1. "What's in a Name? Understanding the 'Indo-Pacific'", *The Japan Times*, June 3, 2018 at [https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2018/06/03/editorials/whats-name-understanding-indo-pacific/#.XA\\_nZ3RKiUk](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2018/06/03/editorials/whats-name-understanding-indo-pacific/#.XA_nZ3RKiUk) (Accessed on December 11, 2018).
2. "Xi Pledges 'Great Renewal of Chinese Nation'", National Museum of China, November 29, 2012 at <http://en.chnmuseum.cn/Default.aspx?TabId=521&InfoID=86595&ftid=500&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1> (Accessed on December 12, 2018).
3. William A. Callahan, "History, Tradition and the China Dream: Socialist Modernization in the World of Great Harmony", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24/96, 2015, pp. 983-1001 at <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormat?doi=10.1080%2F10670564.2015.1030915> (Accessed on December 12, 2018).





## Foot Notes contd...

4. Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 18, 2017 at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi\\_Jinping's\\_report\\_at\\_19th\\_CPC\\_National\\_Congress.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf) (Accessed on December 5, 2018).
5. Frank Tang, "China's Economy Expands by 6.9 p.c. in 2017, ending Six Years of Slowing Growth", *South China Morning Post*, January 19, 2018 at <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/economy/article/2129508/chinas-economy-expands-69pc-2017-ending-six-years-slowing-growth> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).
6. Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", n.4.
7. Zha Daojiong, "China's Economic Diplomacy Focusing on the Asia-Pacific Region", *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, 1/1, 2015, pp. 85-104.
8. Lily Kuo and Niko Kommendo, "What is China's Belt and Road Initiative?", *The Guardian*, July 30, 2018 at <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer> (Accessed on December 5, 2018).
9. Rory Metcalf, "Why China Doesn't Like the Indo-Pacific and Why it Matters", Australian National University, National Security College, June 21, 2017 at <https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/departments-news/12613/why-china-doesnt-indo-pacific-and-why-it-matters> (Accessed on December 12, 2018).
10. Anne-Mary Brady, "China's Rise in Antarctica?", *Asian Survey*, 50/4 (July/August
11. "Arunachal Pradesh: China Renames Districts in Disputed Indian State", BBC, April 19, 2017 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-39638543> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).
12. "The Belt and Road Initiative", The State Council, The People's Republic of China, December 5, 2018 at <http://english.gov.cn/beltAndRoad/> (Accessed on December 5, 2018).
13. Anna Bruce-Lockhart, "China's \$900 Billion New Silk Road. What You Need to Know", World Economic Forum, June 26, 2007 at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/china-new-silk-road-explainer/> (Accessed on December 12, 2018).
14. For more, please see Clyde & Co LLP, "China Establishes International Commercial Courts to Resolve International Commercial Disputes", Lexology, August 24, 2018 at <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=cb279b59-f4d3-44f5-bde5-7f0ac5710dff> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
15. "China to Establish Court for OBOR Disputes", *Asia Times*, January 25, 2018 at <http://www.atimes.com/article/china-establish-court-obor-disputes/> (Accessed on December 6, 2018). Also see
16. Echo Chang, "China is Building its New Silk Road in Space, Too", *Quartz*, June 18, 2018 at <https://qz.com/1276934/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-extends-to-space-too/> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
17. "United Nations and China Invite Applications to Conduct Experiments on-Board China's Space Station", United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, May 28, 2018 at <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/informationfor/media/2018-unis-os-496.html> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).

18. "Belt and Road: 2017 Summit", *South China Morning Post*, at <https://www.scmp.com/topics/belt-and-road-2017-summit> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).
19. "China Builds New Military Facilities on South China Sea Islands: Think Tank", *Reuters*, June 29, 2017 at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-islands/china-builds-new-military-facilities-on-south-china-sea-islands-think-tank-idUSKBN19L02J> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
20. Ayaz Gul, "China Welcomes Saudi Plans to Invest in CPEC Project with Pakistan", *VoA*, October 08, 2018 at <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-welcomes-saudi-plans-invest-cpec-project-with-pakistan/4604946.html> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
21. Tyler Headley, "China's Djibouti Base: One Year Update", *The Diplomat*, December 04, 2018 at <https://thediplomat.com/tag/china-djibouti-base/> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
22. "President Xi Allowed to Remain 'President for Life' as Term Limits Removed", BBC, March 11, 2018 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-43361276> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
23. Jiang Ye, "Will China be a 'Threat' to its Neighbors and the World in the Twenty First Century?", *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies*, 1, 2002, pp. 55-68 at <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/cg/ir/college/bulletin/e-vol1/1-4jiang.pdf> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).
24. Anna Yukhananov, "U.S. Congress Closes Out Year Without Passing IMF Reform", *Reuters*, December 10, 2014 at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-congress-imf/u-s-congress-closes-out-year-without-passing-imf-reforms-idUSKBN0JO1UC20141211> (Accessed on December 13, 2018).
25. "China's Social Credit System", NPR, October 9, 2018 at <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2018/10/09/655921710/chinas-social-credit-system> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
26. Carry Huan, "How Lee Kuan Yew Crafted Singapore into a Role Model for China", *South China Morning Post*, March 24, 2015 at <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1746072/how-lee-kwan-yew-crafted-singapore-role-model-china> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).
27. Henley & Partners Passport Index, "Global Ranking 2018" at <https://www.henleypassportindex.com/passport-index> (Accessed on December 6, 2018).





Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. He has edited, designed and produced all of Live Encounters' 142 publications till date (January 2019). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## Mark Ulyseas

# India Election Year 2019

## Beware of politicians bearing gifts

Come April-May India will be in the throes of general and state elections when over 800 million Indians are eligible to vote, nearly 50% being women voters.

Here is a reality check for voters. I shall begin with news reports that expose the criminality in Indian politics.

**The Times of India, dtd. 12th March 2018. [LINK](#)**

The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that 1,765 MPs and MLAs are facing criminal trial in 3,045 cases. The total strength of lawmakers in Parliament and assemblies is 4,896. The highest number of cases against lawmakers is in Uttar Pradesh followed by Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

**India Today, dtd. 19th April 2018. [LINK](#)**

- In 5 years, recognized parties have given tickets to 26 candidates with rape cases.
- 327 candidates with cases of crime against women were from the Bahugan Samaj Party.
- Among the major parties in the last 5 years, 47 candidates with declared cases of crimes against women were given tickets by the Bhartiya Janata Party.
- The second highest number of candidates, 35, were given tickets by Bahugan Samaj Party followed by 24 candidates from Indian National Congress (INC) who had contested Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and state Assembly elections.
- Even leaders who have heinous crime charges against them were preferred for tickets. The ADR study says that in the last 5 years, recognized parties have given tickets to 26 candidates who had declared cases related to rape. Head of ADR ([Association for Democratic Reforms](#)), Major General Anil Verma (retd) told India Today TV that the winning stroke of a candidate seems to be the sole criteria for political parties and they don't care about credentials of these candidates.



The Election Commission on Wednesday made it compulsory for candidates contesting polls to advertise their criminal antecedents in TV and newspapers at least three times during electioneering. According to directions issued on Wednesday, political parties too will have to give publicity to the criminal records of candidates fielded by them. - NDTV

The Hindustan Times, dtd. 25th September 2018. [LINK](#)

The Supreme Court has declined to ban politicians with criminal cases from contesting elections but underlined that it is time Parliament enacts laws to ensure that people with criminal cases do not enter politics. "The sooner the better, before it becomes fatal to democracy," a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra said

NDTV, dtd. 11th October 2018. [LINK](#)

The Election Commission on Wednesday made it compulsory for candidates contesting polls to advertise their criminal antecedents in TV and newspapers at least three times during electioneering. According to directions issued on Wednesday, political parties too will have to give publicity to the criminal records of candidates fielded by them.

The Hindustan Times, dtd. 28th November 2018. [LINK](#)

There are more than 750 candidates out of the 2,716 nominees from various parties with criminal cases are contesting the assembly election in Madhya Pradesh this year, an analysis of the affidavits filed by them has shown.

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), an NGO that works for electoral and political reforms, and Madhya Pradesh Election Watch have said in a report that 464 candidates or 17% have declared criminal cases against them and 295 or 11% serious criminal cases.

The Economic Times, dtd. 4th December 2018. [LINK](#)

There are 4,122 criminal cases pending, some for over three decades, against sitting and former members of Parliament and legislative assemblies, the Supreme Court was told Tuesday. The apex court was informed that out of the 4,122 cases 2,324 are against sitting MPs and MLAs while 1,675 are against former lawmakers.

Rajasthan State elections:

- Congress has highest number of candidates with criminal or serious criminal cases against them.
- Second, third and fourth highest are candidates from BJP, BSP and AAP respectively
- Out of a total of 2,188 candidates, 597 (27%) are multimillionaires. - India Today

India Today, dtd. 5th December 2018. [LINK](#)

- The Rajasthan Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) have analysed the affidavits of 2,188 out of the 2,294 candidates, who are contesting in the Rajasthan assembly election. Out of a total of 2,188 candidates analysed, 608 are from national parties, 209 are from state parties, 584 are from registered unrecognised parties and 787 candidates are contesting independently.

- Out of all the 2,188 candidates analysed, 320 (15%) candidates have criminal cases against them. In Rajasthan assembly election of 2013, out of 2,030 candidates, 224 (11%) had declared criminal cases against themselves. While 195 (9%) have declared serious criminal cases this time, in 2013 Rajasthan assembly election, the number was 140 (7%).

- Four candidates have cases related to murder, 25 candidates have cases related to attempt to murder, 11 candidates have cases related to kidnapping and 16 candidates have cases related to crime against women.

- Among the parties, 33 (17%) out of 198 candidates analysed from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), 43 (22%) out of 193 candidates analysed from the Indian National Congress (INC), 26 (18%) out of 141 candidates analysed from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and 31 (17%) out of 178 candidates analysed from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have criminal cases against them in their affidavits.

- Congress has highest number of candidates with criminal or serious criminal cases against them.

- Second, third and fourth highest are candidates from BJP, BSP and AAP respectively.

- Out of a total of 2,188 candidates, 597 (27%) are multimillionaires.



When Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected the English speaking brown sahibs and memsahibs in politics, media and society were appalled by the rise of a man with a chaiwalla background, who probably wouldn't have been allowed into any Gymkhana in his kurta pyjama.

It would appear that religion has replaced all other forms of enticement to lure voters. The ostentatious religious rituals being performed by and on politicians who project themselves as being *secular* only confirms the desperation to be elected to power any which way.

Secular being the new mantra for anti-Hindu and anti-Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Hindu bashing is the *in* thing. Anyone with a tilak on the forehead is a right wing Hindu, and anyone with a taqiyah cap praying in public is a Muslim fundamentalist, and any practising Christian is viewed as someone who is out to convert all to Christianity.

The *now* generation, which is caught in the web of anti-social media has been seduced by the nauseating political correctness seeping through the ether from the West. A genuine discourse between faiths is fast becoming – *either you are with me or against me*. A genuine dialogue on contentious issues facing the country is often reduced to shouting matches, threats, sometimes violence and murder.

Certain journalists have become the oracles of 'truth' and 'post-truth', and others the epitome of disinformation. The few that remain true to their profession have become the unwitting pall bearers of democracy on the way to the Shamshan Ghat.

There are hundreds of millions of faithful in this great country who have lived cheek by jowl for centuries through invasions, occupations and the bloody Partition. The politicians at that time were more concerned about the State, its welfare and security rather than the spoils of crime and the misuse of religion for power.

Sadly, those times are in the past. And as L.P. Hartley says *'The Past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.'*

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected the English speaking brown sahibs and memsahibs in politics, media and society were appalled by the rise of a man with a *chaiwalla* background, who probably wouldn't have been allowed into any Gymkhana in his kurta pyjama. The elitist attitude of the vanquished was self-evident in its snobbery.

The massive display of farmers' ire about suicides related to debts totalling around US\$40 billion would appear that it is the present government's fault when actually these debts mounted up during the reign of previous governments, over decades. But those desperate for power have glossed over this fact and one leader has grandly announced that he would waive the farmers' debts in ten days on coming to power. Waiving US\$40 billion debt in 10 days? Has anyone questioned this juvenile orator that when his party was in power why had these debts mounted and why were they were not waived then?

They have done their very best to cut the ground from under his feet, of course with a little bit of help from some of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's own party members with their intemperate remarks.

The massive display of farmers' ire about suicides related to debts totalling around [US\\$40 billion](#) would appear that it is the present government's fault when actually these debts mounted up during the reign of previous governments, over decades. But those desperate for power have glossed over this fact and one leader has grandly announced that he would waive the farmers' debts in ten days on coming to power. Waiving US\$40 billion debt in 10 days? Has anyone questioned this juvenile orator that when his party was in power why had these debts mounted and why were they were not waived then?

Reservations is the key to gaining unparalleled political power.

[The Times of India](#), dtd. 28th November 2018. [LINK](#)

The Supreme Court has ruled that the maximum limit for reservations is 50%. No State can exceed this limit. However, with the Maharashtra Assembly unanimously voting 16% reservation for Marathas, the State has crossed this limit (it had already reached the 50% reservation limit).

The legality of this move will be contested much to the detriment of the ordinary people who have no say in such matters.

The problem created by politicians is the institution of 'reservations in perpetuity'. Such actions have been deviously manipulated by them to divide and rule the country creating deep fissures of suspicion between people of different faiths, castes, states where there once existed little or none.

[The Times of India](#), dtd. 14th October 2018. [LINK](#)

Congress Punjab Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu has said, *"When I go to Tamil Nadu, I don't understand the language. There are just one or two words I understand. Not that I don't like the food, but I cannot have it for a long time. The culture is totally different. But if I go to Pakistan, they speak Punjabi and English and I can relate to them more."*



There is a dangerous new precedent where the courts are becoming battle grounds for those seeking to impose their ‘democratic’ rights on religious institutions, much to the detriment of the ‘rights’ of the faithful. The unseemly theatricals at the sacred temple complex of *Sabrimala* and the growing push to open up *Nizammudin Dargah* to women has its roots in politics of the secular. After these two issues the next on the agenda, perhaps, would be the Catholic Church. Would the *seculars* insist that women conduct the sacred mass, and priests/nuns be allowed to marry, and would the sacred ‘confession’ be banned?

Politicians from the ‘Hindi north’ have always viewed the ‘southern states’ as ‘alien land’. Sidhu’s comment comes as no surprise. Perhaps in this light one can understand the ‘Hindi north’s’ negative reaction to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for he hails from Gujarat, the home state of Mahatma Gandhi where Gujarati is the language of the masses.

The seven sisters - *Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura* – have borne the brunt of massive influx of illegal immigrants post 1947 and post 1971 Indo-Pak War. Many of these aliens have been used by politicians to boost their vote bank. This has resulted in serious social and security consequences for the seven sisters.

The paramount problem is the Indian psyche of political sycophancy based on feudalism in politics. Since independence this great country had been ruled by one family until ‘usurpers’ won the ballot. Then all hell broke loose. Even now there are some ‘first families’ of politicians with their very own train of lackeys attempting to claw back power, which they assume, falsely, is hereditary. We should not be surprised by this. We permitted the Mughals and then British to rule us because we couldn’t agree to be united. So we deserved what was meted out. Now after independence why have we turned to self-destruct mode?

There is a dangerous new precedent where the courts are becoming battle grounds for those seeking to impose their ‘democratic’ rights on religious institutions, much to the detriment of the ‘rights’ of the faithful. The unseemly theatricals at the sacred temple complex of *Sabrimala* and the growing push to open up *Nizammudin Dargah* to women has its roots in *politics of the seculars*. After these two issues the next on the agenda, perhaps, would be the Catholic Church. Would the seculars insist that women conduct the sacred mass, and priests/nuns be allowed to marry, and would the sacred ‘confession’ be banned?

Are those seeking equal rights in democracy have a right to impose their rights on religious places, forms of worship, rituals and traditions?

And would the granting of these rights be in itself an imposition on the rights of the faithful?

So when will the editing or tampering with religious texts begin?

So why blame these elected criminals? Let us blame ourselves. Our social and moral values. Our vibrant ethos, which is riddled with these parasites. Perhaps we can begin helping the country by not voting for those with criminal records or cases against them in the elections. And not voting for people based solely on their religious or family profiles but on what they have done or can do for local communities – the development of infrastructure, toilets, clean drinking water, free primary education, food security and more.

The bloody drama surrounding the ‘cow’ is a deliberate political tool to create a wedge between faiths, communities and even states, for the explicit purpose of garnering votes. One suspects this has very little to do with religious sensitivities.

Indian democracy is at cross roads where religion and state are merging into a fast flowing river with deadly political currents. And we have none other than ourselves to blame for electing politicians with ‘criminal cases’ against them to run the country. Law breakers becoming law makers makes a mockery of the constitution

When a Chinese leader remarked that India could be broken any time, he was not far from the truth. Certain Indian politicians have already begun in earnest *to do the needful* – divide and rule. And we are assisting them, willingly.

*Question: Where do these politicians originate from?*

*Answer: From among us.*

So why blame these elected criminals? Let us blame ourselves. Our social and moral values. Our vibrant ethos, which is riddled with these parasites. Perhaps we can begin helping the country by not voting for those with criminal records or cases against them in the elections. And not voting for people based solely on their religious or family profiles but on what they have done or can do for local communities – the development of infrastructure, toilets, clean drinking water, free primary education, food security and more.

India was never a country. It is a multi-faceted bejewelled civilisation that has stood the test of thousands of years of invasions and occupations.

Are we going to let it be destroyed by electing criminals and those who show scant respect for *all* Indians, to run the country?

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



Nasim Basiri is an Iranian poet and activist from Borazjan in the south of Iran. She currently lives in the United States where she works and studies at Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Oregon State University. Nasim's poetry and other literary works depict the suffering of humans, political and gendered violence and address the injustices associated with marginalization and global apartheid experienced by people in the Third World and the Middle East in particular.



**NASIM BASIRI**, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Oregon State University

## CAN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS BE AGENTS OF CHANGE AND EMANCIPATION FOR IRANIAN WOMEN?



“Every object persists in its state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed on it.”  
(Newton's First Law of Motion)<sup>1</sup>

During the constitutional revolution, Iranian women came out of their homes and began a movement; but after the revolution, they were forced back to their homes.<sup>2</sup> During this period in 19th century, educated Iranian women resisted to remain in the society to educate other women and established women's publications including women's journals in Tehran and other provinces.<sup>3</sup> This is probably the beginning of Iranian women's resistance that ended up to formation of a movement. Later on, Reza Shah Pahlavi, encouraged women to appear in public without hijab or wear a simple scarf instead of a fully covered kind of veil they used to wear and made it official.<sup>4</sup>

According to Haleh Esfandiari, Even though this was a positive move towards women's liberation in Iran but also was a “tragedy” on the other side of the story because the new law could be oppressive and limiting to those Iranian women who believed in veil.<sup>5</sup> These accounts of history and governmental interventions in women's lives and freedom of choice clearly indicate that how Iranian women went through different struggles of liberation and resisted layers of tyranny in various historical eras but their struggles never ended in Pahlavi regime. They continued to resist the discriminatory rules imposed by them in Khomeini's regime in post-revolutionary Iran as well. After the Islamic revolution which was supposed to bring more security and equality for women, once again, Iranian women were betrayed and their image was used by Khomeini and other Shi'ia clergies to win the Islamic revolution.



In early 1990s many of the revolutionary regime's decisions on Iranian women's rights had been re-defined and changed.<sup>8</sup> In response to the Islamic regime's oppression, Iranian women began to oppose and run campaigns against clergies' gender biases in their interpretations of Islam and demanded their equal rights as citizens but they were confronted with more oppressions such as execution, political imprisonment, economic, social and political isolation and exile.

Based on my twenty one years of living as an Iranian feminist in Iran and my experiences of political pressure and violence on me and a generation of women who are constantly silenced through systematic brutalization and fundamentalist politics of silencing women in the Islamic Republic, I would argue that the misogynist policies and teachings of Khomeini, the former supreme leader of Iran and his associates who are ruling the government until the present moment brought the Iranian nation disastrous and destructive consequences as a result of trusting clergies.

Haideh Moghissi describes the Islamic revolution as an "unfortunate legacy" for women political activists who were confronted with an obligation of resisting Khomeini and other religious leaders' immediate "re-Islamization policies" that targeted different aspects of Iranian women's social and private lives such as implementing compulsory veil, banning women from different fields of sciences, forced retirement of women in political positions, women in academia and etc.<sup>6</sup>

As I already mentioned elsewhere, after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the ruling government has implemented discriminatory rules against Iranian women that has affected and changed non-Muslim and Muslim women's lives.<sup>7</sup> In early 1990s many of the revolutionary regime's decisions on Iranian women's rights had been re-defined and changed.<sup>8</sup> In response to the Islamic regime's oppression, Iranian women began to oppose and run campaigns against clergies' gender biases in their interpretations of Islam and demanded their equal rights as citizens but they were confronted with more oppressions such as execution, political imprisonment, economic, social and political isolation and exile.

### Could Islamic Fundamentalists Emancipate Iranian Women through Re-Islamization?

To answer this question, perhaps, we need to look at the recent history of systematic brutalization of women and the utilization of torture and political violence against women by the fundamentalists in power in post-revolutionary Iran. Even Though such accounts of political and religious violence against Iranian women is highly marginalized and overlooked in academic scholarship and literature in Iran and abroad, Iranian women never stopped calling out the fascism through their different ways of resisting the systems of oppression including literary and artistic resistance. The other way of responding to this question is to look at the obstacles to women's movements in post-revolutionary Iran such as the latest arrests and murder of activists, journalists and human rights lawyers.

Based on my twenty one years of living as an Iranian feminist in Iran and my experiences of political pressure and violence on me and a generation of women who are constantly silenced through systematic brutalization and fundamentalist politics of silencing women in the Islamic Republic, I would argue that the misogynist policies and teachings of Khomeini, the former supreme leader of Iran and his associates who are ruling the government until the present moment brought the Iranian nation disastrous and destructive consequences as a result of trusting clergies.

In a country that Islam is used as an excuse for anti-women policies by fundamentalists, Iranian women no longer trust the clergies to advocate gender equality through Islam. Therefore, Iranian women struggle for equality through a more secular approach. They also ignore western interventions for gender equality in Iran and find it disturbing and damaging in terms of giving another excuse to the fundamentalists to silence and dismantle Iranian women's anti-fundamentalist movements by calling the Iranian feminists as pro-western or pro-imperialist feminists who are supported and funded by the west.

Perhaps if Michel Foucault was still alive, he would have definitely taken back his words and would have never praised the so-called "political spirituality"<sup>9</sup> of Iranian revolution in 1978.

### Foot Notes

1. NASA. Accessed December 16, 2018. <https://www.grc.nasa.gov/www/k-12/airplane/newton1g.html>.
2. Esfandiari, Haleh. "Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran's Islamic Revolution." Interview by George Liston Seay. The Woodrow Wilson Center. October 13, 1997. Accessed December 15, 2018. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/reconstructed-lives-women-and-irans-islamic-revolution>.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Moghissi, Haideh. "Islamic cultural nationalism and gender politics in Iran." *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2008): 545-546.
7. Basiri, Nasim "Compulsory Veil in Iran: A Social Justice Problem", *REVISTA UNIVERSITARĂ DE SOCIOLOGIE* NO.1, 2018, pp. 50-58.
8. Kian, Azadeh. "Gendered occupation and women's status in post-revolutionary Iran." *Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 3 (1995): 407-421.
9. Afary, Janet, and Kevin B. Anderson. *Foucault and the Iranian revolution: Gender and the seductions of Islamism*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.





Paul VI, canonized a saint on October 14th, 2018.

Peter Gonsalves, PhD, teaches the Sciences of Social Communication at Salesian University, Rome. This extract is taken and adapted from the last volume of his Gandhian trilogy, *Gandhi and the Popes: from Pius XI to Francis* (Peter Lang publishers, 2015). He may be visited at [www.petergonsalves.in](http://www.petergonsalves.in).



## DR. PETER GONSALVES

### PAUL VI and GANDHI

### Kindred *Maha*-Spirits

Giovanni Battista Montini, later better known as Pope Paul VI, may have never met Mahatma Gandhi in person even though the latter visited Rome in 1931, but there is some striking evidence to prove that he admired, and even drew inspiration from Gandhi's life and teachings.

He was the first pope to set foot on Indian soil with his arrival in Bombay on December 2, 1964, barely seventeen years after India was freed from colonial rule. As pope, it was his responsibility to lead and conclude the Second Vatican Council and to initiate the long, tedious and extremely challenging process of promulgating its vision and directives. Two of the many areas that needed particular attention were interreligious dialogue and matters concerning sexuality and marriage. On both these issues, his teaching bears marked affinity with Gandhian thought.

With *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the Council's Pastoral Constitution, the tone was set for dialogue with all persons of good will. It would seem that the Council Fathers, fully aware of the struggle for India's liberation, had the nonviolent Mahatma in mind when they declared: "All Christians are urgently summoned to do in love what the truth requires, and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about. Motivated by this same spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights."<sup>1</sup> The document, *Nostra Aetate* (1965), goes a step further. As the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, it singles out Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and other faiths as opportunities for dialogue. "The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions... [They] often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people."<sup>2</sup> The document categorically states, "The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against persons or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion."<sup>3</sup>



This painting by Dolores Puthod depicts Pope Paul VI welcoming leaders of Christian churches and various world religions at St. Peter's Square. It reveals the Pope's special esteem for Mahatma Gandhi. The 4x3 meters oil painting commissioned in 1978 adorns the entrance to the office of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Vatican City. The scene depicted is fictitious but the Pope's regard for the Mahatma is not, as the accompanying article reveals.



Pope Paul VI's own encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1967), is a milestone in its focus on holistic development for all peoples, especially those emerging from years of subjugation under colonialism. It was a clarion call for a globalization of progress in which all nations would have a stake. "We cherish this hope: that distrust and selfishness among nations will eventually be overcome by a stronger desire for mutual collaboration and a heightened sense of solidarity."<sup>4</sup>

In 1969, the centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi's birth, Paul VI paid rich tributes to the Father of the Indian Nation in a letter to the President of India, Varahagiri Venkata Giri.

Gandhi had a high appreciation of the value of human dignity, and a keen sense of social justice. With warm zeal and a clear vision of the future welfare of his people, he worked tirelessly to achieve his goals, ever instilling in his followers the admirable principle of non-violence. He strove to make his countrymen conscious of injustices in their social system, and to spread among them a spirit of equality and brotherhood. His efforts and example, even when not entirely successful, have left their mark upon the men of his own and our generation.<sup>5</sup>

In matters concerning sexual morality, Pope Paul VI published his historic encyclical *Humane Vitae*,<sup>6</sup> in which he made the practice of spousal chastity the bedrock of the ideal Christian marriage. He propagated "responsible parenthood" based on an aspect of "paramount importance": the formation of "a right conscience [as] the true interpreter" of God's purpose for a healthy family life. This depended on self-control and the method of Natural Family Planning, rather than the use of artificial contraception. As an example, he pointed to Gandhi's choice for 'conjugal chastity', that provided the inner strength to lead by example in an extremely complex and volatile socio-political context.<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi expressed his own opinion on the matter in his autobiographical series published between 1925 and 1929 in his journal 'Navjivan'. Looking back at the nearly twenty years of keeping the *brahmacharya* vow, he admitted that it filled him with "pleasure and wonderment". The power of celibacy for achieving greater things became self-evident: "The freedom and joy that came to me after taking the vow had never been experienced before 1906"<sup>8</sup> – the year he began *satyagraha* in South Africa. He also observed the same power at work in those who took the vow and, contrarily, in those who did not.

In an interview with Ramachandran, a student of Gandhi's good friend, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, asked him if he was against the institution of marriage since he consistently advocated celibacy, which the Anglican pastor disapproved.

*Gandhi:* Yes, I know [that Andrews disagrees]. That is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy. *Ramachandran:* That was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.

*Gandhi:* But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy. It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green up to the present day.<sup>9</sup>

Yet again, when citing the extraordinary accomplishments that one who practices sexual self-discipline is capable of, Gandhi holds up unmarried Catholic educators (numerous during his time) as models to be imitated. His audience consists of rich Indians ever eager to multiply profits rather than share their wealth by sponsoring the free education of their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Making money is not the object of education. If the Roman Catholic community is foremost in the world in the matter of education, it is so because it has from the beginning decided that those who are to be engaged in teaching should give their services free, accepting only what is necessary for their maintenance. Besides, they are of mature age and unmarried, so that they are able to devote all their time to the single job of teaching. We may or may not be able to reach that level, but there is no doubt that we ought to take a lesson from their example.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Gandhi predicted the sexual revolution that would give rise to all kinds of promiscuities once artificial means of birth control became popular. "Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless.... The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease."<sup>11</sup> At the heart of *Humane Vitae*, however, is the appeal for an education of one's conscience to moral responsibility. And to hear one's conscience, interior silence is necessary. The Pope recalls how Socrates was profoundly attuned to his conscience – that divine voice for which he was accused of having a 'demon'. Then he adds: "Gandhi [too] obeyed a 'still small voice' which in certain moments made itself heard within him."<sup>12</sup>

On January 30, 1978, the thirtieth anniversary of Gandhi’s assassination, Paul VI sent a pertinent message to the Indian people through All India Radio: “No to violence, Yes to Peace!... To reject violence and to accept all the conditions and demands of Peace is an activity of the highest dignity; it is an expression of the truest patriotism. May God give his peace to India. May the love and peace of God abide in your hearts forever!” The message turned out to be his parting gift to India. He breathed his last on August 6, 1978.

Besides the two above-mentioned issues that united Paul VI and Gandhi as kindred spirits, he was also concerned about India’s development. For instance, there is evidence to prove that he did much to alleviate the drought and food shortage that threatened India in 1966. He sent a personal gift of \$ 100,000 to the Government of India; he wrote to the President of the United States to give India special consideration; he appealed to various Catholic relief organizations as well as to UNICEF to increase their aid to India, and requested his own Office for the Propagation of the Faith to dispatch a shipment of food.<sup>13</sup>

India’s national leaders, most of whom were close collaborators of Mahatma Gandhi, were deeply moved by the Pope’s solicitude. In March 1968, a confidential memorandum was sent to the Vatican Secretariat of State to learn whether the Holy Father would be willing to accept the newly created ‘Nehru Award’ set up by the Indian Government to honour the world’s most distinguished promoters of international peace.<sup>14</sup> The 1968 Award, the memorandum said, was “unanimously proposed to be made to the Holy Father.” A few days later, the Vatican’s Secretariat of State replied that “the present Holy Father has established the practice of not accepting awards and prizes of this nature” and that he was, of course, “profoundly grateful” to the Vice President and the Prime Minister of India and the distinguished members of the jury for proposing his name.<sup>15</sup>

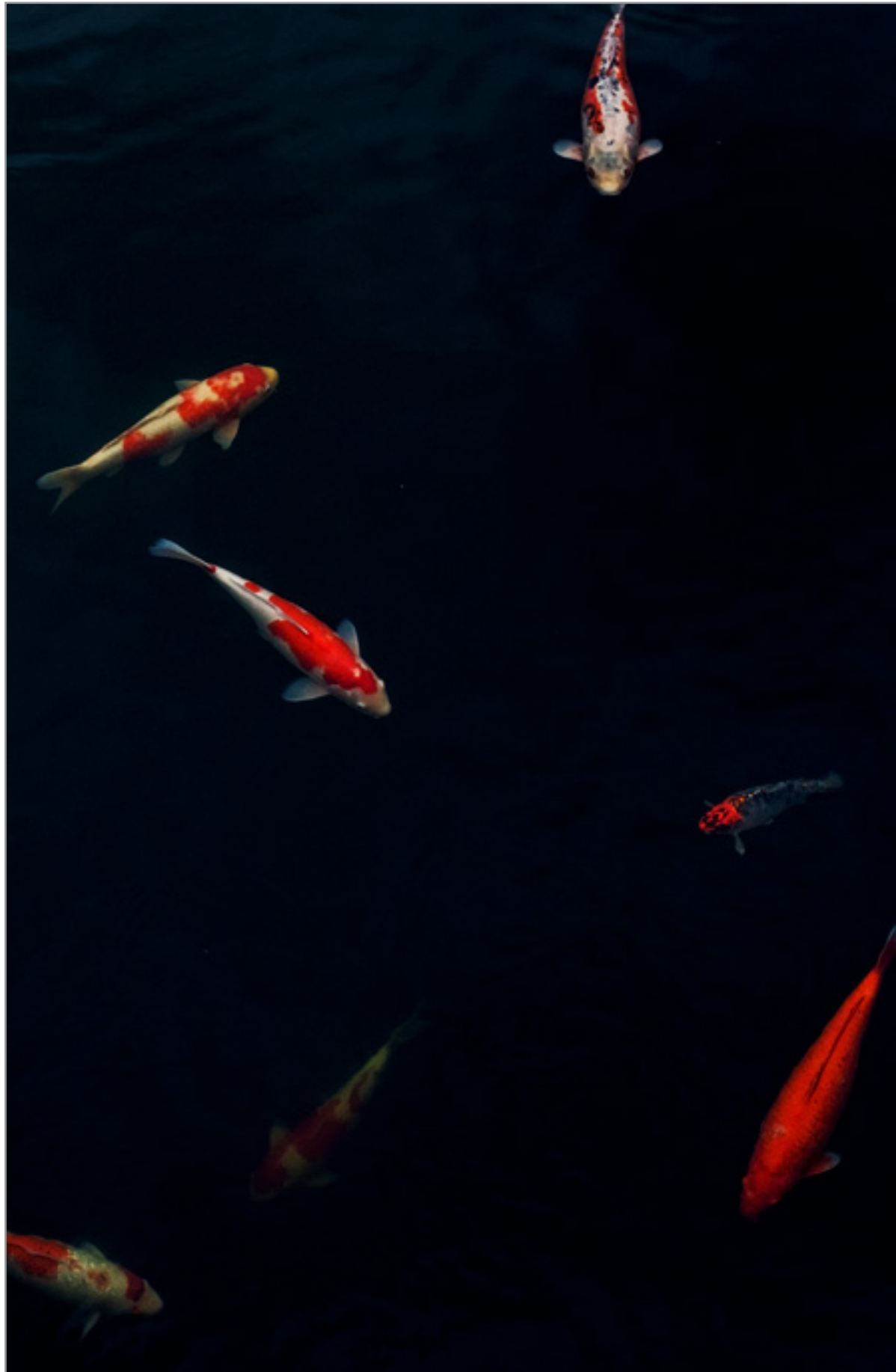
On January 30, 1978, the thirtieth anniversary of Gandhi’s assassination, Paul VI sent a pertinent message to the Indian people through All India Radio: “No to violence, Yes to Peace!... To reject violence and to accept all the conditions and demands of Peace is an activity of the highest dignity; it is an expression of the truest patriotism. May God give his peace to India. May the love and peace of God abide in your hearts forever!”<sup>16</sup> The message turned out to be his parting gift to India. He breathed his last on August 6, 1978.

Today, forty years later, we are happy to acclaim him a *Maha-Atma*, a Great Soul, a Saint of the Catholic Church for all people of good will!

Foot Notes

1. Vatican Council II, “Gaudium et Spes”, AAS, 58, no. 78 (1966) 1025-1115. See official English translation in Vatican.va, 1965, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) (03-02-2013)
2. Lloyd I. Rudolph, “Gandhi in the Mind of America” in Richard L. Johnson (Ed), Gandhi’s Experiments with Truth, Essential Writings by and about Mahatma Gandhi, Oxford, Lexington Books, 2005, 281.
3. Vatican Council II, “Nostra Aetate”, AAS, 58, no. 5 (1966) 743-744.
4. Pope Paul VI, “Populorum Progressio”, March 26, 1967, art. 64 in, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html)
5. Paul VI, “Letter of Paul VI to His Excellency Varahigiri Venkata Giri, President of India”, L’Osservatore Romano, 3-10-1969, 1.
6. Paul VI, “Humanae Vitae”, AAS, 60 (1968) 481-503. See English translation in Vatican.va, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html) (05-06-2013)
7. In an earlier study, I had underscored the argument that “it was primarily this rigorous discipline of subverting his own bodily and worldly instincts that would give him the fearlessness and determination to subvert violent empires and unjust social structures.” Peter Gonsalves, Khadi: Gandhi’s Mega Symbol of Subversion, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2012, 199.
8. Autobiography, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, 2005, 192.
10. CWMG, vol. 25, 252-253.
11. CWMG, vol. 6 (1907) 268.
12. CWMG, vol, 26, 280.
13. Paolo VI, “Udienza Generale, Mercoledì, 17 maggio 1972” in, Vatican.va, (trans. mine), [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/audiences/1972/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_aud\\_19720517\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/audiences/1972/documents/hf_p-vi_aud_19720517_it.html) (02-02-2013).
14. Cf. Letter, protocol no. 62891, marked ‘Confidential’ to Rev. Jerome D’souza S.J. from the Segreteria di Stato di Sua Santità, Vatican, January 25, 1966 in File no. JER. D’S 39/bis, JEMPARC, Shenbaganur, India





Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the author of the *Live Intuitively: Journal the Wisdom of your Soul* and the #1 Best-selling book *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. She is an internationally known Author, Intuitive Coach and Mentor, Psychic Medium, Speaker and Workshop Facilitator. She specializes in assisting others to regain their own personal power and live a life of abundance, happiness, and joy.



I am delighted to be involved in this 10th anniversary year of Live Encounters Magazine. In 2011, on a flight to Osaka, Japan to facilitate an Earth Karma clearing workshop, I wrote the first draft of *Live Simply: Less is More*. Several times I planned to publish, but, if you are an author, you understand the book either writes itself or it rights the author. *Live Simply* has been changing and gifting me. The novel I am writing though, is writing itself. My main character Sus takes me places that scare me. This year I have been moving into Living Simply and I love it. I am aware of how important it is to slow down to be able to connect with your deeper self. Meditation and journaling are fantastic and when you live simply, you connect with yourSelf in a natural way. *Live Simply* reduces stress and promotes relaxation! Enjoy this sample in anticipation of the publication in early 2019!

## DR CANDESS M CAMPBELL

### Everyone Has 24 Hours in a Day

*Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.*  
— Mahatma Gandhi

Have you felt like you had to juggle it all to make your commitments each day? Whether you're scattered or organized, most of us tend to over-schedule ourselves. Even the weekends get planned so tightly that by Monday, you feel tired and ready for a break. Do you have trouble distinguishing between what is important and what becomes habit?

I remember one day when my young daughter Charisma asked me to take her to go play with a friend. My response was that I was too busy and couldn't take her. I didn't have time. She looked at me and said, "Mom, everyone has 24 hours in a day." Interestingly, this statement shocked me! I didn't realize I had wound myself so tight. I wasn't even aware of how much I had over-scheduled and how it affected my children. We all have 24 hours in a day! You *can* choose how you spend your time.

Several years ago in an intuitive session with a client, I saw an image of an open book in his heart chakra. In the book, I saw several countries and several cultures. When I shared this, he said that he and his wife had planned to travel when they retired, but she had become ill with cancer. He said that she wanted him to do some traveling without her. I sensed he was grieving and didn't want to go alone. From the image in his heart, though, I sensed that if he didn't go, he would suffer energetically, having dreamed of his trip for years. Energy stuck in the heart chakra, or any chakra can create stress and possibly illness. If his wife felt guilty because he didn't go, like he suggested, this may affect her health negatively as well. His choices were many. I am not sure what he decided to do, but my hope is he was able to travel with a friend or his children and record some of the trip and share it with his wife. As a friend of mine always says, "Life is short."

<https://pixabay.com/>

In my book *Live Intuitively: Journal the Wisdom of your Soul*, readers are guided to intuitively read their own chakras and journaling with the symbols they receive. I teach how to create a soul stem that takes them even deeper into their own amazing being!



### Opportunity:

#### Soul stems

<http://energymedicinedna.com/journal-process/>

A **Soul Stem** is a writing prompt that takes you deeper within yourself where you will be able to access your own Soul information!

In my book *Live Intuitively: Journal the Wisdom of your Soul*, readers are guided to intuitively read their own chakras and journaling with the symbols they receive. I teach how to create a soul stem that takes them even deeper into their own amazing being!

Here is the writing process. Choose an inexpensive spiral notebook where you can be messy. Use a fast writing pen.

Set a timer for 10 – 20.

- Start with a Soul Stem such as these.
- What takes up too much of my time is . . .
- What I really want to do is . . .
- If I were living my ideal life, I would . . .
- I am energized when . . .
- I am exhausted when . . .
- One small step I can make today to free up time is . . .

Continue writing for 10 - 20 minutes. Don't worry about punctuation or spelling, just keep your pen moving. If you get stuck, just write "I am stuck or I don't know what to write" over and over until something else comes up. You will probably start with something that is on the surface, and then move into resistance (I don't want to do this, my hand hurts, this is boring) and then eventually you move into what is really going on deep within you.

It may take 3 or 4 sessions to get to this point, but don't give up.

This is a commitment to connecting with your SELF!

### Hint:

It takes less time and energy to plan and execute something fun than it does to keep rehashing reasons why you shouldn't do it!

### Meditation:

Sit in an upright position with your spine straight. Take a couple deep breaths. Relax your body. Allow yourself to relax into your sitting position. Listen to the sounds that are close by and then listen to the sounds far away. Focus on your breath for a few minutes and just relax. Bring your attention to between your eyes and a little above your eyes. This is your third eye. Envision a blue triangle that you look through with a gaze. Soften your eyes. When thoughts come up, just let them go by.

Look over the answers to your Soul Stem exercise. Write out what you want to create. As you create in your life what you desire, time expands, and the energy that has been focused on what you do not want will shift. Visualize yourself living your dream. See yourself relaxing and enjoying what you desire. Use your senses to really experience what you desire. Feel it, sense it and live it in the visualization now.

### Message to the Universe:

After you have created the image of what you desire, send the message to the Universe. Let it go and don't take it back. Let it be and know it will unfold. Be sure to be open to it unfolding differently than you might expect. Some people like to create a "God/Goddess Box. This is any box you enjoy, be it simple or ornate. Write out your desires and give it to your God/Goddess/Universe by placing your intension in the box and leaving it. Check back in a few weeks or months and you will be surprised how well you manifest!

Wishing you a blessed year in 2019! Focus in your heart and allow yourself to receive!





*A taster from Dr Greta Sykes' new historical novel*

## **The Defeat of Gilgamesh**

*a reinterpretation of the famous legend/myth from a woman's point of view.*

*Excerpt Three.*

### **AFTER GILGAMESH'S DEFEAT**

'Maybe time does not pass. Maybe we are exactly as we were when we travelled and lay in our reed bed. I feel the sky out there is the same, and I can smell the earth below like we did then. Don't you think?' She kissed Ninatta-ke's mouth as she wanted to speak and her words drowned in their pleasure. They lay like that for hours and only kissed good bye in time before dawn woke everyone up. There was a sense of peace in both women, when they parted, each knowing the path she had to travel on, each in their very different lives. Ninatta-ke was going to build a home for two children, while Inanna had to build the Sumer state and represent the good life and how to lead it wherever she went.

The weeks that followed were occupied with travel preparations. Many visitors called from all over Sumer. Each wished to be given a guided tour to pray at the statue of Inanna, to visit her temple and to consult with her on matters of state, such as protecting the cities and the borders. What sort of army did she have? Could she assist when trouble brewed? Could she sort trade disputes when merchants brought goods and wanted unfair prices for them? Inanna had to find answers for everything. She created sound rules and imparted them to the elders who would be in charge for all daily chores, especially while she travelled. Gisham, her trusted scribe was most helpful. Her memory was excellent. She had supervised the young scribes while learning the skill of cuneiform script. She knew the library inside out. She could find the correct documents. She helped to plan journeys. One of the first was a visit to the Goddess Bau and her women's household. Disputes and invasions were troubling her. Her husband was always far away in wars. She had to manage the whole of her large estate. She begged Inanna for help.

Poet, writer and artist Greta Sykes has published her work in many anthologies. She is a member of London Voices Poetry Group and also produces art work for them. Her new volume of poetry called 'The Shipping News and Other Poems' came out in August 2016. The German translation of her book 'Under charred skies' has now been published in Germany under the title 'Unter verbranntem Himmel' by Eulenspiegel Verlag. She is the chair of the Socialist History Society and has organised joint poetry events for them at the Poetry Café. She is a trained child psychologist and has taught at the Institute of Education, London University, where she is now an associate researcher. Her particular focus is now on women's emancipation and antiquity.



#### **Gilgamesh finds the secret dogrose plant**

For an immensely short moment in time Gilgamesh's luck seemed to return to him. He was told about a magic plant with the power of rejuvenating a man or a woman. But he did not know how to take care of such a precious living thing. He had never learnt to take care of a living thing apart from himself. He was too deeply consumed by his own world to pay attention to nature around him or show care or appreciation.

'Gilgamesh and Ur-Shanaby crewed the boat,  
They launched the craft and crewed it themselves,  
Said his wife to him, to Uta-Napishti the Distant,  
Gilgamesh has come here by toil and travail,  
What do I give for your homeward journey?  
Let me disclose, o Gilgamesh, a matter most secret,  
To you I will tell a mystery of the gods.  
There is a plant that looks like a boxhorn,  
It has prickles like a dogrose  
And will prick one who plucks it,  
But if you can possess this plant,  
You'll be again as you were in your youth.



Just as soon as Gilgamesh heard what he said,  
 He opened a channel, heavy stones he tied to his feet  
 And they pulled him down to the ocean below,  
 He took the plant and pulled it up,  
 The heavy stones he cut loose from his feet,  
 And the sea cast him up on its shore.  
 Said Gilgamesh to him, to Ur-shanabi the boatman:  
 This plant, Ur-shanabi, is the plant of Heartbeat,  
 With it a man can regain his vigour.  
 To Uruk the sheepfold I will take it,  
 To an ancient I will feed some and put the plant to the test.  
 It's name shall be 'Oldman grown young'.  
 I shall eat it myself and be again as I was in my youth.  
 Gilgamesh found a pool whose water was cool,  
 Down he went into it, to bathe in the water.  
 Of the plant's fragrance a snake caught scent,  
 Came up in silence and bore it off.  
 As it turned away it sloughed it's skin.  
 Then Gilgamesh sat down and wept,  
 Down his cheeks the tears were coursing,

### Inanna visits Shagshag, the Goddess Bau

After many days of travelling Inanna and her loyal companions Miah, Tibem, two eunuchs and three warriors reached Girsu, where one of Sumer's famous goddesses reigned. She is the goddess of feathered farm animals, and on arrival the hens were chasing each other with noisy eloquence along the enclosure pecking for barley seeds thrown to them. Shagshag, her actual name, emerged unceremoniously in her flounced and pleated dress which reached down to her ankles and was made of thick and squat material. She was a cheerful woman with a broad smile who received her visitor with a welcoming handful of freshly laid eggs.

'Inanna, wonderful one, glory be to you, your fame has reached all the far places of Sumer. I am so glad to welcome you. Come and join me in the temple garden where we shall relish a meal with an egg soufflé, four different soft cheeses and freshly baked bread.'

Weary from her journey Inanna did not delay to follow Shagshag, the Goddess Bau into her garden. She relaxed into the friendly situation and was invited to sit down on the cushions that were spread out on a terrace overlooking a pond with reeds and birds twittering. Jugs with beer were brought and straws for them to drink, as they watched the sun setting, a giant red ball in the western distance. The nightingale began her song as soon as the sky darkened. They listened enraptured. Inanna could feel that Shagshag was a true earth mother with her strong and stocky body, muscular arms, short hair and a very direct manner of talking. She asked for her choir and musicians to present a hymn to Inanna.

'Lengthen my days, bestow life!  
 Let me live, let me be well, let me proclaim your divinity.  
 Let me achieve what I desire.'

She picked up the conversation with one of those topics that entertain many women. 'Men, you say! Well, I call them children. They are great, and will do as told, if you are strict and strong and if you don't allow any nonsense. If you just give way a bit, they start to harass you, become demanding, picky and choosy and finally dissatisfied. I do have some very good men around me. They respect me one hundred percent. One of them is Urukagina, my scribe. He is diligent, reliable and totally loyal. It's rare even amongst women to get such loyalty. And to rule well that is what you need. Then there are my eunuchs. They are fast, quiet and attentive. The shepherds and peasants are free to run their land as they wish, but we have accountability exercised by our scribes who won't tolerate muddle and inconsistencies. Everything is written down. Urukagina makes sure of that.'

'Tell me about your glorious temples, Shagshag.'

You have seen, I guess, our ziggurats. Yes, they were built by our men. You should have seen them enjoy the work. The tall and mighty structure made them feel good. We laughed watching them standing, their chest out, legs wide apart, admiring their building work.





They made thousands of sun-dried bricks to create an artificial mountain and then erected the temple, palaces and the ziggurat on top. We prayed to Enlil and thanked him. But our men were the proudest of them all. They felt they were God Enlil himself.'

The days at Bau were enlightening and refreshing. As it happened her worries about invasions had lessened. The battles took place a long way from home. It meant that the warriors could rest and relax. Miah and Tibem were looked after by Shagshag's priestesses, while she and Inanna talked about how to preserve the good life for all. It meant to stick to the rules and write them down for all to remember. How easy would it be to forget what Shagshag had achieved, if it was not written down? They shuddered, if such fate could befall women in later years. Shagshag told Inanna that the women who held the reigns of power in Girsu were Dimtur, Baranatama and Sasha. Their men were most of the time in foreign lands conducting military campaigns. These men like fighting. They go away sometimes for years. When they come back some of them are surprised that they have no role to play locally. We give them administrative jobs to do and a role as an elder of the city. Some of them manage to adapt quite well. Others run off again and get killed in another battle. Our women rule over forty-six square kilometres of land, excluding our orchards, and reed-beds. Inanna learnt a great deal as they marched together over the fertile land and inspected the work of the peasants and shepherds. The agricultural activity included sowing, animal husbandry, fishing and canal maintenance. Weaving mills are used to produce cloth for men, women and children. Surplus is used to trade with travelling merchants for goods they do not have. Inanna learnt that Baranatama had diplomatic relations with women in other cities to exchange news and views about financial management and trade and to warn about nomadic invaders.

'We use the status of god or goddess to elevate the status of a queen or king when the person is competent and good at their job to protect the good life of the citizens. The elders determine such elevations. Usually the people are pleased as they feel proud of having a god or goddess rule their city,' Shagshag explained. They were sipping beer from a straw and ate olives and dates when they had come to a rest under a large apricot tree.

'I am glad to hear from you that your women have a high status in your city, and that you control the distribution of food when people are needy, as you told me. It suggests to me that everyone is taken care of, so that all can participate in the good life,' Inanna commented. She added,

'I shall have to leave you in a couple of days and return to my home town, but I have a present for you which I hear has just arrived in the Bau temple. It is a statue of myself as Goddess which my good friend and seal maker Nafen from Uruk has constructed. Shall we go to see it?'

With these words the two women ambled to the temple entrance where indeed a large statue was just being lifted from a chariot. Shagshag called her priestesses and a noisy welcome emanated from the women to the Goddess Inanna cut in stone, shown in battle dress, with wings, weapons and one foot positioned on a lion. It was placed opposite of Shagshag's own statue in the town square so the two Goddesses could be viewed in conversation with each other. The Bau Goddess statue was small and of dark shiny stone. The figure was seated on a throne, supported by geese. A delicate gold crown was fastened to her head.

'We need to erect plenty of statues and plaques for ourselves,' Shagshag commented, 'so that future generations will be reminded that here we had a good life for women. May it last long.' Inanna wholeheartedly agreed.

That evening they sat again in the orchard together with Miah and Tibem and talked about the ways of the gods and goddesses and how they were a phenomenon of nature made visible and comprehensible. They reflected on how time was always in the present, the gods of old times as present as the gods and goddess in the now time, which included Shagshag and Inanna. They watched the horizon and infinity darken as the blood red ball of the sun slowly vanished, and they prayed for a continuation of their lucky fate by reciting the hymn of the Goddess Ningal when she witnessed the coming of the flood:

'When I was grieving for the day of storm,

That day of storm, destined for me, laid upon me, heavy with tears.

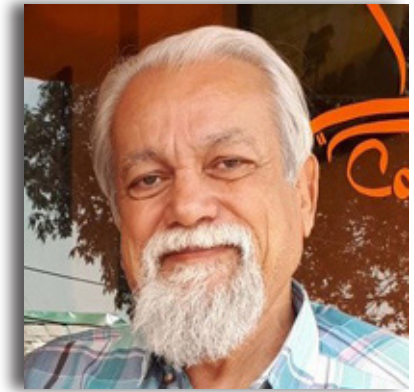
Though I was trembling for that day of storm, that day of storm,

Destined for me, laid upon me, heavy with tears.'

This article is the first in a series of three by Randhir Khare. He talks about his experiences with three types of shamans: *The Spirit Healer*, *The Story Healer* and *The Physician*. For the last three and a half decades he has shared a meaningful and enriching relationship with shamans. Randhir is presently working on a book... WALKING WITH SHAMANS.



With Nathu baba the Shaman of Jhinhini. Photograph by Randhir Khare.



Randhir Khare is an award winning poet, artist, writer, playwright, folklorist and distinguished educationist who has published thirty-six volumes of poetry, short fiction, essays and novels and educational handbooks and has travelled widely, reading and presenting his work, nationally and internationally. He has presented his work at the Nehru Centre in London, at the Ubud Writers Festival in Bali, the India Festival In Bulgaria, at the Writers Union in the Czech Republic, in Bulgaria, Slovenia, the Pune International Literary Festival and at the Europalia Arts Festival in Belgium. In India, he has performed his poetry with various traditional and contemporary musicians and founded (and leads) MYSTIC, India's first poetry-music band. In the last few months, he has published two path-breaking volumes of poetry, MOUNTAINS OF MY SILENCE and MEMORY LAND, which also feature his line drawings in a style uniquely his own. He is the recipient of The Sanskriti Award for Creative Writing, The Gold Medal for Poetry awarded by the Union of Bulgarian Writers, The Human Rights Award, The Residency Grant 2009 for his lifetime contribution to literature in English awarded by The Sahitya Akademi and The Palash Award (for his lifetime contribution to education and culture) among others.

## RANDHIR KHARE

### BETWEEN WORLDS

### WALKING WITH SHAMANS

### PART - 1

This way, he said walking ahead of me, a lantern swinging by his side. This way. Don't think, just walk. Keep my pace. See how I move, feel how I move, become me. Then he chuckled, but you'll never really become me, that's for sure so just imagine that you are me.

The lantern splashed light along the broken road as we trudged along. The glowing eyes of hyenas appeared on either side of the road. Nathu Baba sang a string of praises to them...

O you friends of the dead and of the living,  
O you wretches who stink of nothingness,  
O you spirits who walk in the realms of the living,  
When you eat the heart of a carcass, think of me,  
I am a friend of the dead and of the living,  
I stink of nothingness,  
I am an angel who walks in the realms of the living...  
We are brothers.





Nathu baba and a stump of the sacred Kheriya that he has nurtured. Photograph by Randhir Khare

Later that night we sat in a small grove of ancient trees, warming our hands around a small fire. The fragrance of the smouldering wood filled the night. *This is wood from an ancient Kheriya tree. It is sacred to my people.* He began singing softly till his words seem to suffuse the air and hang suspended in the night. Some seem to fall on me like stardust. A stillness descended.

*Smoke of the Kheriya give us the power to travel worlds of being and non-being,  
Leaves of the Kheriya bless us with the songs of the wind that we never forget the spirit of dance,  
Bark of the Kheriya be our shield against those who envy us,  
Wood of the Kheriya help us understand the strength of belonging,  
Trunk of the Kheriya build bridges between worlds,  
Roots of the Kheriya drink the sacred juices of the earth and spread its light.  
We dance to you, we dance with you, we dance, dance, dance, dance.*

My eyes closed and I rested back and listened to his words. They had lured me into a quietness that I had never experienced before. I lay there in an ancient wood, a night flooded with stars gently quilted me.

For three consecutive nights I trailed Nathu Baba, the Badua (or Shaman) of the Bhilala tribal

community living in Alirajpur, Western Madhya Pradesh and each occasion led me deeper into myself. On the morning of the fourth day, we sat sipping piping hot tea outside his home in the village of Jhinjhini.

*You are not a city fellow, you belong here. You are a Bhilala. I watched you when I was singing. You were dancing. You walked in circles like a Badua does. You touched the trunks of trees. You were one with them. I know that you have died many times. Tell me. How many times?*

I looked into his large watery eyes. *Five times, I replied. Nearly died.*

*The first time, you died, my friend. It was by drowning. They brought you back.*

Yes, he was right. I was seven and drowned in the river Hooghly in West Bengal. They brought me back. But I tried to forget what I saw. What I heard. What I felt. I left the experience behind.

*You should have seen yourself, moving your arms as if you were swimming. Sometimes swimming, sometimes dancing.*

I didn't reply. I was confused. In the presence of a shaman I lose my sense of self and dissolve, forget.



The sacred grove. Photograph by Randhir Khare





Where worlds meet, according to Spirit healers.  
Photograph by Randhir Khare

*If you really want to heal your wounds, he said quietly, if you really want to patch up all the tatters in your spirit...stay here through the seasons, one year. Each season offers its own special healing ways – the trees, the air, the heat, the cold...and so much more. Then one day you will accept yourself and the healing will begin. You must be strong to heal others. You have been on the other side...don't forget that.*

Nathu was a Badua of the highest degree. He was a Spirit Healer. Few people around him actually understood what he was capable of. At the time I had met him, his community had begun to ignore him because he couldn't do (or didn't want to do!) what other Baduas offered to do – heal ailments and exorcise unwanted spirits. Of course he was still accepted as the only Badua in the area who could bless and empower a sacred pithora wall painting which had been installed in a home in preparation to welcome a new born child, bless a marriage, ensure the safety and security of livestock, propitiate the harvest spirits and call upon the powers of the Other Side to accept and guide a dying person.

Baduas of the highest degree were special beings who few chose to recognise and accept in everyday life. In fact no one ever visited such a spirit healer during the daylight hours. They turned up at his doorstep after he had had his last meal for the day and was reclining on his rope and bamboo bed which was placed in the open between the cattle shed and his living quarters.

When I asked him if there was a reason why he had placed his bed in that position he explained. *That is the most exposed part of my household.*

*Exposed to what?*

*To the elements, he replied. Besides, our livestock is part of our lives. If the animals can't live inside our homes then they must live near us. My sleeping position here helps link them to us. All my life I have been the spirit who knows how to bring life together to live as a whole. Everywhere, my people are getting scattered, they are losing their old ways, they are losing their connection with the land and the seasons, they are losing touch with their own spirits. My people are fragments held together by everyday needs and hopes and have discarded ritual and custom, awareness, respect. They don't realise that they need to be healed. I am the last of the Spirit Healers. Before me my father Bhoona Baba was a Spirit Healer. He already saw it coming. He struggled to heal people. I am struggling too. There is no one after me.*

Spirit Healers are a vanishing breed. As each one leaves his/her body, our world loses yet another connection with the secret life of the self.

It took me a long time to return to Jhinhini. When I did, it was too late. Nathu Baba had left his body and there remained a void. I checked in to a small guest house in the township of Alirajpur which was an hour's drive from Jhinhini and spent the night for nearly a week in the grove of ancient trees. A kind Bhilala accompanied me. Then one day, Nathu Baba's bow and arrow wielding younger brother turned up and asked me to leave. You don't belong me. Go away. All that has passed.

Respecting his warning, I left.

My sources informed me that during the next monsoons, most the cattle in Nathu Baba's household perished when the roof of the livestock shed caved in. Snakes set up home among the boulders clustered in the courtyard of the house and every night through summer, a pack of hyenas lounged around just outside the boundary fence.

Spirit Healers are a vanishing breed. As each one leaves his/her body, our world loses yet another connection with the secret life of the self.



Sacred Fixng Stone of a spirit Healer.  
Photograph by Randhir Khare





Aarti David is Director, Publishing at SAGE India. She jointly heads books and journals commissioning along with marketing. As head of commissioning, she oversees all the streams SAGE publishes in English. This currently includes SAGE India Journals, SAGE India (Academic Books), SAGE Texts (Textbook publishing programme), SAGE Response (Business and Management Books), SAGE Select (Non-Fiction), SAGE AdvantEDGE (educational resources programme), SAGE Vistaar (South Asian Rights Programme). Besides these, she is also responsible for managing the joint imprints with Yoda Press, Popular Prakashan, Stree, Samya and Vitasta.



## AARTI DAVID, Director Publishing, Sage India.

*In an interview with Live Encounters*

**Tell us about the contribution of SAGE India towards the knowledge enrichment of the society and academia. Are the serious non-fiction books worth emulating? Is there a standard being set?**

SAGE's vision and mission has been dissemination of knowledge. Whether it has been in the academic space or in the non-fiction space. We believe that the content we produce should contribute to the society and with that intent alone our non-fiction publishing has taken shape. Our aim is to give scholarly voices a platform to reach out to a larger audience and build bridges to knowledge. Through our non-fiction publishing program SAGE Select, we wish to challenge outdated thoughts and social practices and present novel perspectives on changing world realities. We have a compelling list of titles on crucial subjects ranging from political debates across the Social Sciences to Gender and Sexuality studies; life stories, field studies, policy studies. Books that aim to unravel the politics of cultural hegemony as well as resistance and present a blend of real life stories and social issues viewed from a critical and progressive standpoint.

**What is SAGE India's publishing philosophy?**

Our publishing philosophy is all about shepherding ideas from creation, to communication and critical understanding. We are proud to play a creative role in society by disseminating quality content that is associated with teaching, learning and research. And fearlessly capturing the critical and reigning issues of today's world through our various imprints.

<https://pixabay.com/>



Publishing depends on credibility of the content and whether it is for a book or a journal, it is imperative that the research is adequately referenced and backed by evidence to support the claims of an author. It is also true that books and journals are as different as Chalk and Cheese. The business models for these are different and the publishing decisions too. While one would opt to publish a book on a certain issue/topic, it would need to be brought out within a specified time period ranging from six to eight months. Journals on the other hand publish in a certain kind of cycle and periodicity. Depending on the topicality/theme of the journal, these could be quarterly, bi-annual or annual.



**Tell us about the kind of books SAGE publishes? What is the driving force for your publishing decisions besides revenue?**

SAGE publishes academic library books which include—reference books, handbooks, multi-volume sets; textbooks meant for the UG and PG level students, based on the UGC curriculum; Business and management books that are meant for students, entrepreneurs, HR heads, as well as practising managers who wish to find tools to succeed in their corporate journey; non-fiction books which effectively capture the non-mainstream and critical reality of contemporary India and/or Asia on various topics close to everyday life are aimed at the general, yet discerning and informed readers. And our Indian language publishing program-SAGE Bhasha was launched in 2015 with an aim to reach every strata of academia through cutting edge research that transcends boundaries in Indian languages. While revenue plays an integral role in making any publishing successful, the primary driver for our publishing has been to support quality research that transforms society and our understanding of individuals, groups, and cultures. SAGE has perpetuated itself as an independent, innovative, natural home for scholars and educators who share our commitment and passion for the social sciences.

**Every market is different as every author and reader is. How do you plan to handle all your stakeholders differently?**

It is true that every market is different and every reader is too. And we ensure that we cater to each category of readership through our wide range of publishing across our various imprints. We also look into the buying potential of each individual category and try to ensure that our books are priced to market. In addition SAGE is known for its marketing and sales efforts globally. We leverage on these strengths to bring value to our stakeholders.

**In 2015, SAGE India entered into partnerships with independent publishers to form new imprints. What was the thought behind this decision?**

The idea to partner with independent publishers was to provide a wider reach to the co-partners and also to supplement our own existing list of titles. Each partner brings their unique flavour and strength to the program. To ensure we retain their originality and individuality, we have created a

separate logo for each partner within the co-pub arrangement, while being published under the SAGE umbrella. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement- where two entities with a common ideology are able to tie up with each other and leverage on each other's strengths. We are all equally committed to make this a success.

**How different or similar is books and journals publishing? What are the challenges or guiding principles that guide these commissioning decisions?**

Publishing depends on credibility of the content and whether it is for a book or a journal, it is imperative that the research is adequately referenced and backed by evidence to support the claims of an author. It is also true that books and journals are as different as Chalk and Cheese. The business models for these are different and the publishing decisions too. While one would opt to publish a book on a certain issue/topic, it would need to be brought out within a specified time period ranging from six to eight months. Journals on the other hand publish in a certain kind of cycle and periodicity. Depending on the topicality/theme of the journal, these could be quarterly, bi-annual or annual.

Reviews play a key role in journal publishing—articles/papers need to be peer reviewed and the credibility of a journal develops with timely publication; citations; high impact factor rankings, which in turn widen the reach and scope of the journal and also its readership base. The higher the ranking of the journal, the more respected it becomes. It is also quite commonplace to publish these in collaboration with societies. On the other hand, books can be published by stand alone authors who only need a publisher who believes in their work. Of course, both these publishing programs cannot be successful unless these are commercially viable.

As a publisher, one walks the thin line between providing a platform to disseminate knowledge to a wide audience and also ensuring that to be successful, the approach that is followed is sustainable. Each journal has an independent board of editors. These ensure that the content is evaluated at arm's length from the publisher's standpoint. The independence of the board, even if the journal is owned by SAGE ensures that the benchmark is set high on quality and credibility.



Today budding authors have choices that earlier they didn't. Marketing and sales still play an important part in making a book successful but the online space has democratized this in many ways. It's a great time to be an author and equally difficult to be a successful one.



**Textbook market is hugely competitive. What makes SAGE stand apart?**

SAGE has entered the textbook arena not just to dislodge the established players in the market, but to fill in where gaps exist. It is a very competitive market and yet, we believe that staying true to our larger goal of dissemination of knowledge and sticking to our core area of competence in publishing in the social sciences and business and management, we will be able to carve a niche for our program. We started our program in 2015 and though it is early days, we are quite bullish about the content we are publishing and the response that we have been receiving. SAGE Texts have been able to establish an identity in the market and that's something we are proud of.

**Considering SAGE is essentially a social sciences publisher, how do you see your movement towards STEM subjects shaping up in coming years?**

Globally, SAGE has been publishing journals in STM and Engineering and in India too we have started exploring this field as a potential area of publishing. With Open Access the scope of publishing has only widened. We think that this could be a growth driver for us in the future. We don't publish books in this area.

**Open Access now is well established. Is SAGE India ready to go open access? How much of publishing currently is open access?**

SAGE globally is already publishing Open Access journals and in India too we have started exploring opportunities for the same. OA publishing out of the India office is still at a nascent stage and we hope to build this in the coming years. Since this type of publishing adds greater responsibility with regards to the content, one has to ensure that the peer review mechanism is more stringent to avoid any plagiarism issues.

**What is the response of the global audience to the content of SAGE India books?**

Books focussing on South Asia or having a wider/more holistic approach tend to do better globally since they are able to connect to that audience. In addition, social issues, research, gender, sexuality, politics, caste based issues also find interest.

We have been selling our content through the SAGE London and US offices since the India office began its publishing program and we continue to do so. Technology now allows us to reach markets that were earlier very difficult to service.

**How do you see the publishing decisions shaping up over the years? Will there be room for original fiction and schoolbooks?**

Publishing decisions largely depend on the target market, topicality/relevance and the commercial viability of the project. While we have moved into various types of publishing, we have always maintained to stay within the guidelines of our company's vision. This is clearly in the higher education space. At this point in time, it seems highly unlikely that we would foray into school books. As far as Fiction publishing is concerned, it is not our mandate to move into this type of publishing. I don't see this happening at any time for SAGE.

**What books have you read recently that you would recommend to readers of this interview?**

I love reading all kinds of genres ranging from fiction to social issues to Archie comics. Not sure what I could recommend to readers but I would definitely like to share that I just finished reading Jerry Pinto's brilliantly edited volume *A Book of Light: When a Loved One has a Different Mind*, which to me is a must read book to get some insight about mental health issues, especially in today's stressful times, it opens new doors of understanding about this very relevant and most misunderstood issue. Currently I'm reading *Honor* by Elif Shafak.

**What would you like to suggest to authors who are just starting out?**

I would simply say, stay true to your core and believe in yourself. You will find the right publisher for your work, just maintain the quality and credibility of your content. SAGE has always provided a platform for budding authors provided they meet with certain basic criteria that make their manuscript worthy of publishing. For us content has always been king and will continue to be so. Today budding authors have choices that earlier they didn't. Marketing and sales still play an important part in making a book successful but the online space has democratized this in many ways. It's a great time to be an author and equally difficult to be a successful one.



[www.amazon.com/author/jillgocher](http://www.amazon.com/author/jillgocher)  
Instagram jillgocher



## PUTTING IT ON

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
JILL GOCHER

---

Ceremonies come in all shapes and sizes in Bali, but increasingly, they all involve makeup. Lots of it. Eyelashes are mandatory, as well as thick foundation and huge amounts of work for the eyes. But the results are stunning as they transform themselves from mere mortals to god like creatures, hovering between the seen and the unseen - somewhere between fantasy and reality.

This photo series of two girls getting ready for their performance for the gods, during a temple ceremony in a remote village, show just what an intricate process it really is. Because it is now 2019, handphones are an important part of the process and everyone spends time on selfies. Not only the gods are pleased, but after all this work, it would be churlish not to please their friends and neighbours as well. Surely.



01 JG Bali





02 JG Bali





03 JG Bali





04 JG Bali





05 JG Bali





06 JG Bali



Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.



## MEDITATION

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
MIKYOUNG CHA

---

We genuflect before the Almighty looking for peace within whilst overlooking the captivating natural elements that surround us – Nature's continuous celebration of life, a stunning montage of colours, textures, aromas et al. What a pity that so many of us are numb to this display of such awesome splendour created by none other than the very Almighty that we worship? Perhaps if we begin to meditate on this celestial gift we will stop destroying this world, our only home.



Haeinsa, Hapchun





Cheomeongdae, Gyeongju





Hwangmae Mount, Hapcheon





Hwangmae Mount, Hapcheon

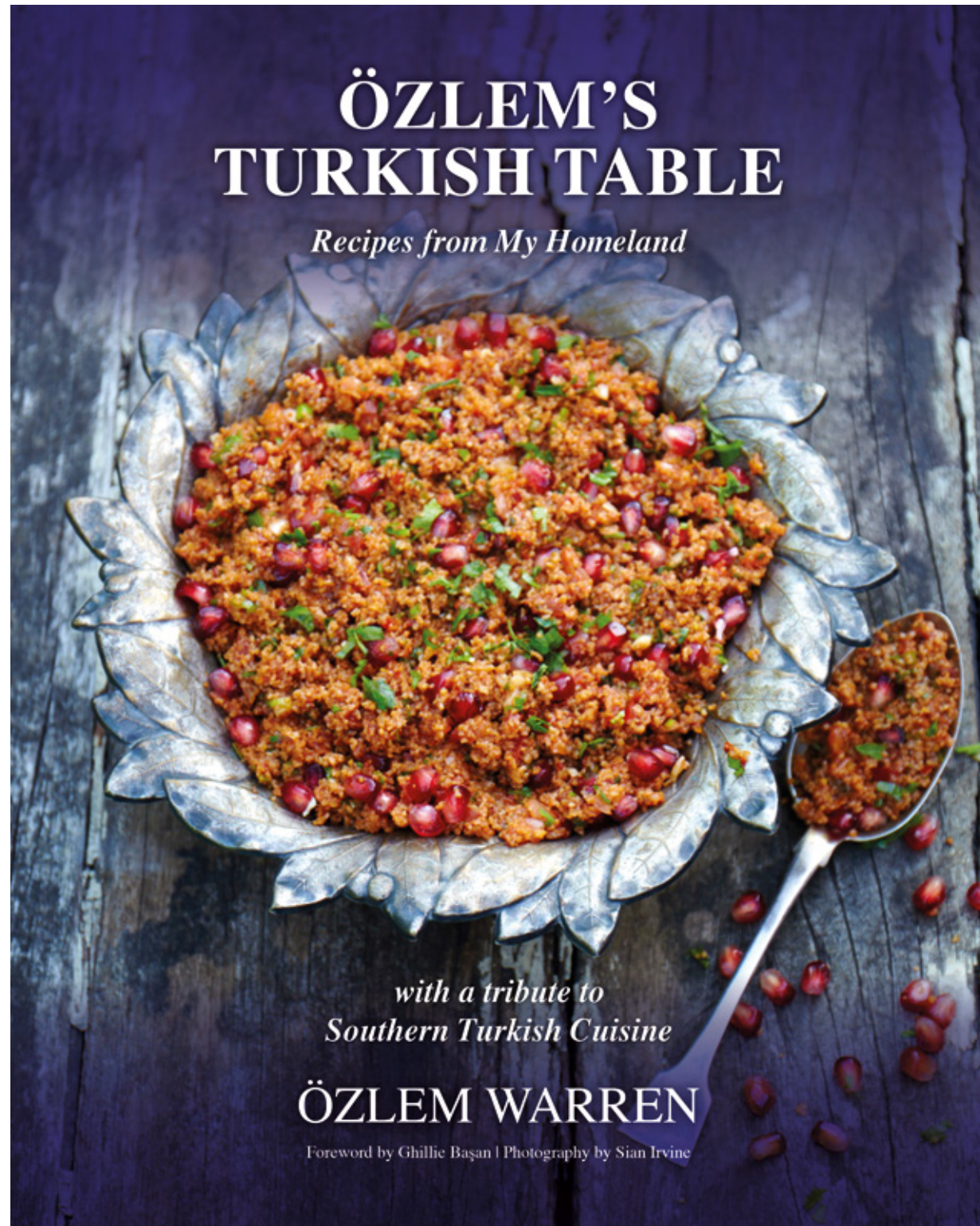




Hwangmae Mount, Hapcheon



[www.ozlemsturkishtable.com](http://www.ozlemsturkishtable.com)



## FISH KEBABS WITH LEMON, PEPPER, RED ONIONS AND BAY LEAVES

This is such an easy and tasty fish kebab; a simple marinade of olive oil, refreshing lemon juice with a little spicy kick from red pepper flakes flavor the fish kebabs beautifully. I like to roast extra vegetables by the side to complement the fish kebabs; with some boiled potatoes aside, these fish kebabs make a delicious, impressive meal for entertaining.

*Afiyet Olsun,*

*Ozlem*

Signed copies of  
**Ozlem's Turkish Table; Recipes from My Homeland**  
 by Ozlem Warren is available at  
[www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table-hardback](http://www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table-hardback)



**Serves: 2**

- 350 gr/ 12 oz. skinned, boneless cod lion (or any firm fleshed fish), cut into bite size chunks
- 1 red onion, quartered and coarsely sliced
- 2 red pointy (or bell) peppers, deseeded and coarsely sliced
- 1 lemon, cut into small wedges
- 5 – 6 fresh bay leaves
- 2 tbsp. / 30 ml olive oil (for roasting the vegetables)

*For the marinade:*

- 30 ml / 2 tbsp. olive oil
  - Juice of ½ lemon
  - 1 – 2 teaspoon Turkish red pepper flakes or chili flakes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
Lemon wedges to serve

**Instructions**

1. Soak wooden skewers in water for 15 minutes before using.
2. Preheat oven to 180 C / 350 F
3. Cut the skinned, boneless cod lion (or your choice of firm fleshed fish) into bite size (about 3 cm/1.2" in.) chunks.
4. Place the fish in a bowl and stir in the olive oil, lemon juice and red pepper flakes. Season the fish with salt and ground black pepper. Gently coat the chunks of the fish with this marinade.
5. Cover the bowl and set aside for 15 minutes to marinate and for the fish to absorb the flavors.
6. Place the chopped red onion, red pointy (or bell) pepper and green pepper slices on a baking tray. Drizzle 2 tbsp. olive oil over them. Season with salt, ground black pepper and mix well.
7. Thread the fish on to the skewers, alternating with a wedge of lemon, red onion slice, red and green pepper slices. Thread one or two bay leaves into each skewer. Brush the kebabs with any leftover marinade.
8. Place the skewers at one side of your baking tray. Spread the remaining chopped vegetables next to the fish kebab skewers. Bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes.
9. Serve the fish kebabs hot with roasted vegetables and a wedge of lemon by the side. Boiled or roasted potatoes also complement the fish kebabs well.



Healthy, delicious fish kebabs in olive oil, lemon juice and red pepper flakes marinade.



FOUNDED 2010

# Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH  
JANUARY 2019

Ivory plaque depicting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. 10th century CE.

