

DICASTERIUM
PRO
DIALOGO INTER RELIGIONES

Pro Dialogo



**INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY:
UNDERSTANDING SYNODALITY
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE OTHER BELIEVERS**

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Bulletin 173

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2023, the celebration of the first Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops shall start.

Pro Dialogo N. 173 is aiming at a double target:

- a) to offer believers of other religions an opportunity to understand how Catholics are moving towards synodality;
- b) to contribute to the synodal path, responding to the thirst of Catholic believers to listen to the followers of other religions about how they think about and practice synodality.

In short, it is a real dialogue opening - moving from the conviction that a Church that learns from listening to the other can offer humanity a way of being and living in which all can feel included as protagonists.¹

The Synod Consultative Phase (2021-2022)

The path entitled “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*” was solemnly opened on the 9th – 10th of October 2021 in Rome and on the following 17th of October in each particular Church (*Consultative Phase*). Globally, participation exceeded all expectations. The Synod Secretariat received contributions from 112 out of 114 Episcopal Conferences and from all the 15 Oriental Catholic Churches, plus reflections from 17 out of 23 Dicasteries of the Roman Curia besides those from Religious Superiors, from Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and from associations and lay movements of the faithful. In addition, over a thousand contributions arrived from individuals and groups as well as insights gathered through social media, thanks to the initiative of the “Digital Synod.”

These materials were distributed to a group of experts: bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, lay men and lay women, from all continents and with very diverse disciplinary expertise.

After reading the reports, these experts met for almost two weeks together with the writing group, composed of the General Relator, the Secretary General of the Synod, the Undersecretaries and various officials of the Synod Secretariat, plus members of the Coordinating Committee. This group was finally joined by the members of the General Council. Together they worked in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment to share the fruits of their reading in preparation for the drafting of the *Document for the Continental Stage*.

¹ Cf. *Document for the Continental Stage* = DCS, no. 13.

During the first part of the consultative phase, millions of Catholics all over the world have actually been involved in the Synod's activities: some by participating in the meetings at the local level, some by collaborating in the animation and coordination of the activities at the different levels, and some others by offering the support of their prayers.

All of these people who set in motion urged on a desire to respond to the basic question guiding the entire process: “*How does this ‘journeying together,’ which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?*”²

Some reports noted that the cultures of their countries have made progress in the inclusion and participation of women- a progress that could serve as a model for the Church. “*This lack of equality for women within the Church is seen as a stumbling block for the Church in the modern world*”.³ Almost all reports raise the issue of full and equal participation of women: “*The growing recognition of the importance of women in the life of the Church opens up possibilities for greater, albeit limited, participation in Church structures and decision-making spheres*”. However, the reports do not agree on a single or complete response to the question of the vocation, inclusion and flourishing of women in Church and society.⁴

Along the way people experienced the joy of meeting as brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing what resonated within them, from listening to the Word, and reflecting together on the future of the Church based on the impetus of the *Preparatory Document* (PD). This has nourished the desire for an increasingly synodal Church: synodality has ceased to be an abstract concept for them and has become a concrete experience; they have tasted its flavor and want to continue to do so. “*Through this process we have discovered that synodality is a way of being Church – in fact, it is the way of being Church*’. *The Holy Spirit is asking us to be more synodal*”.⁵

The Continental Stage (2022-2023)

The *Document for the Continental Stage* (DCS) presents a biblical icon, the image of the tent with which chapter 54 of the biblical book of Isaiah opens. This image and narrative represents a key to an interpretation of the contents within

² *Preparatory Document* no. 2.

³ *Document for the Continental Stage*, no. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 3.

the DCS in the light of the Word, placing them in the arc of God's promise that becomes a vocation for his People and his Church: "*Enlarge the space of your tent!*"

*Listening to the Holy Bible*⁶

It is to a people living the experience of exile that the prophet addresses words that help us today to focus on what the Lord is calling us to through the experience of a lived synodality: "*Enlarge the space of your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly, lengthen your ropes and make firm your pegs*" (Isaiah 54:2).

To the people in exile the prophet's words evoke the experience of the exodus, when they dwelt in tents, and announces the promise of the return to the land, a sign of joy and hope. To prepare, it is necessary to enlarge the tent, acting on the three elements of its structure. The first is the tent cloths, which protect people from the sun, wind and rain, delineating a space of life and conviviality. They need to be spread out, so that they can also protect those who are still outside this space, but who feel called to enter it. The ropes that hold the cloths together are the second structural element of the tent. They must balance the tension needed to keep the tent from drooping with the softness that cushions movement caused by the wind. That is why if the tent expands, the ropes must be stretched to maintain the right tension. Finally, the pegs are the third element: they anchor the structure to the ground and ensure its solidity, but remain capable of moving when the tent must be pitched elsewhere.

Listened to today, these words of Isaiah invite us to imagine the Church similarly as a tent, indeed as the tent of meeting, which accompanied the people on their journey through the desert: called to stretch out, therefore, but also to move. At its centre, stands the tabernacle, that is, the presence of the Lord. The tent's hold is ensured by the sturdiness of its pegs, that is, the fundamentals of faith that do not change but can be moved and planted in ever new ground, so that the tent can accompany the people as they walk through history. Finally, in order not to sag, the structure of the tent must keep in balance the different forces and tensions to which it is subjected: a metaphor that expresses the need for discernment. This is how many reports envision the Church: an expansive, but not homogeneous dwelling, capable of sheltering all, but open, letting in and out (cf. John 10:9), and moving towards embracing the Father and all of humanity.

Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for their diversity. It thus entails a willingness to die to self out of love, finding oneself again in and through relationship with Christ and one's neighbour: "*Amen, amen, I say*

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 25-28.

to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit" (John 12:24). The fruitfulness of the Church depends on accepting this death, which is not, however, an annihilation, but an experience of emptying oneself in order to be filled by Christ through the Holy Spirit, and thus a process by which we receive richer relationships, deeper ties to God and to each other. This is the place of grace, and of transfiguration. For this reason, the apostle Paul recommends, "*Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness*" (Philippians 2:5-7). It is under this condition that the members of the Church, each and all together, will be able to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the mission assigned by Jesus Christ to his Church.

A Space of Communion

This tent is a space of *communion*, a place of *participation*, and a foundation for *mission*. In turn, the third chapter of the DCS articulates the key words of the synodal journey connecting them with the fruits of listening to the People of God. It does so by gathering them around five generative tensions that are intertwined with one another:

1. listening as openness to welcome: this starts from a desire for radical inclusion – no one is excluded – to be understood in a perspective of communion with sisters and brothers and with our common Father; listening appears here not as an instrumental action, but as the assumption of the basic attitude of a God who listens to his People, as the following of a Lord whom the Gospels constantly present to us in the act of listening to the people who come to him along the roads of the Holy Land;
2. our outgoing drive toward mission: this is a mission that Catholics recognize as needing to be carried out with brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions and in dialogue with believers of other religious traditions, transforming human actions of care into authentically spiritual experiences that proclaim the face of a God who cares to the point of giving his own life so that we may have it in abundance;
3. carrying out the mission requires assuming a style based on participation: this corresponds to the full assumption of co-responsibility of all the baptized for the one mission of the Church arising from the common baptismal dignity;
4. the construction of concrete possibilities for living communion, participation and mission through structures and institutions inhabited by people properly formed and sustained by a living spirituality;

5. the liturgy, especially the Eucharistic liturgy, the source and summit of Christian life, which brings the community together, making communion tangible, enables the exercise of participation, and nourishes the momentum toward mission with the Word and the Sacraments.⁷

A Two-Session Synod (2023-2024)

On 16th October 2022, Pope Francis announced that the fruits of the journey begun on 10 October 2021 were too many and they needed to mature.

Hence the decision to organise two sessions of the Synod, instead of one:

- the first session is running from 4 to 29 October 2023;
- the second will be held in October 2024.

The second session will be followed by the *Implementation Phase* that will again involve the local Churches all over the world.

The Perspective of the Others

Offering a Witness of Radical Inclusion

The vision of a Church capable of radical inclusion, shared belonging, and deep hospitality according to the teachings of Jesus is at the heart of the synodal process: “*Instead of behaving like gatekeepers trying to exclude others from the table, we need to do more to make sure that people know that everyone can find a place and a home here*”. We are called to go to every place, especially outside the more familiar territories, “*leaving the comfortable position of those who give hospitality to allow ourselves to be welcomed into the existence of those who are our companions on the journey of humanity*”.⁸ The call is to live better the tension between truth and mercy, as Jesus did [...]. The dream is of a Church that more fully lives a Christological paradox: boldly proclaiming its authentic teaching while at the same time offering a witness of radical inclusion and acceptance through its pastoral and discerning accompaniment.⁹

Listening that becomes welcoming

In this journey, the Churches have realised that the path to greater inclusion – the enlarged tent – is a gradual one. It begins with listening and requires a broader

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, no 30.

and deeper conversion of attitudes and structures, as well as new approaches to pastoral accompaniment; it begins in a readiness to recognise that the peripheries can be the place where a call to conversion resounds along with the call to put the Gospel more decisively into practice.

Listening requires that we recognize others as subjects of their own journey. When we do this, others feel welcomed, not judged, free to share their own spiritual journey. This has been experienced in many contexts, and for some this has been the most transformative aspect of the whole process.

The synodal experience can be read as a path of recognition for those who do not feel sufficiently recognised in the Church. This is especially true for those lay men and women, deacons, consecrated men and women who previously had the feeling that the institutional Church was not interested in their faith experience or their opinions.¹⁰

Walking together on the Path leading to Human Fraternity

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue hopes that this Pro Dialogo issue presenting the Hinduist, Buddhist, Hebrew, Islamic, Taoist, Confucian, Sikh, Jain as well as African Traditional Religion perspective on Inclusion and Solidarity will be a valuable tool for raising general interest in promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and co-operation.

The testimonies and Best Practices from India, Morocco, Turkey, Lebanon and Malawi reported in this issue of Pro Dialogo prove that creating shared experiences and opening to new developments can help overcome stereotypes and increase understanding among “all persons who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters”.¹¹

These are the fruits of dialogue that we wish to come true for in the incoming synodal stage and post-synodal *Implementation Phase*.

Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot
Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no 32.

¹¹ *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019.

INTRODUCTION

Au mois d'octobre 2023 débutera la célébration de la première session de la XVI^e Assemblée générale ordinaire du Synode des évêques. En regard de cet événement, *Pro Dialogo* N. 173 s'est fixé un double objectif :

- a) offrir aux croyants d'autres religions l'opportunité de comprendre comment les catholiques avancent vers la synodalité ;
- b) contribuer au chemin synodal, en répondant à la soif des croyants catholiques d'écouter les membres d'autres religions sur la manière dont ils pensent et pratiquent la synodalité.

Il s'agit d'une véritable ouverture au dialogue qui part de la conviction qu'une Église qui apprend à écouter l'autre peut offrir à l'humanité une manière d'être et de vivre dans laquelle tous peuvent se sentir inclus en tant que protagonistes¹.

La phase consultative du Synode (2021-2022)

Le chemin synodal, intitulé « *Pour une Église synodale : Communion, Participation et Mission* », a été solennellement ouvert les 9 et 10 octobre 2021 à Rome et, le 17 octobre suivant, dans chaque Église particulière (*phase consultative*). Globalement, la participation a dépassé toutes les attentes. Le Secrétariat du Synode a reçu des contributions de 112 Conférences épiscopales sur 114 et de 15 Églises orientales catholiques, ainsi que des réflexions de 17 des 23 Dicastères de la Curie romaine, outre celles des Supérieurs religieux, des Instituts de vie consacrée et des Sociétés de vie apostolique, des associations et des mouvements laïcs de fidèles. En outre, plus d'un millier de contributions sont parvenues de la part d'individus et de groupes, de même que des idées recueillies par le biais des médias sociaux grâce à l'initiative du « Synode numérique ».

Ces documents ont été distribués à un groupe d'experts : évêques, prêtres, hommes et femmes consacrés, laïcs, hommes et femmes, provenant de tous les continents et possédant des compétences disciplinaires très diverses.

Après avoir lu les rapports, ces experts se sont réunis pendant près de deux semaines avec le groupe de rédaction, composé du Rapporteur général, du Secrétaire général du synode, des Sous-Secrétaires et de divers fonctionnaires du secrétariat du synode, ainsi que de membres du comité de coordination. Ce groupe a finalement été rejoint par les membres du Conseil général. Ensemble, ils ont travaillé dans un climat de prière et de discernement pour partager les fruits de leurs lectures en vue de la rédaction du *Document pour l'étape continentale*.

¹ Cf. *Document pour l'étape continentale* = DCS, no. 13.

Au cours de la première partie de la phase consultative, des millions de catholiques du monde entier ont été impliqués dans les activités du Synode : certains en participant aux rencontres au niveau local, d'autres en collaborant à l'animation et à la coordination des activités à différents niveaux, et d'autres encore en offrant le soutien de leur prière.

Toutes ces personnes se sont mises en mouvement, poussées par le désir de répondre à la question fondamentale qui a guidé tout le processus : *Comment ce « cheminer ensemble », qui se déroule aujourd'hui à différents niveaux (du niveau local au niveau universel), permet-il à l'Église d'annoncer l'Évangile conformément à la mission qui lui a été confiée ; et quels pas l'Esprit nous invite-t-il à faire pour grandir en tant qu'Église synodale ?*²

Certains rapports notent que les cultures de leurs pays ont fait des progrès en matière d'inclusion et de participation des femmes, progrès qui pourraient servir de modèle à l'Église. « Ce manque d'égalité pour les femmes au sein de l'Église est considéré comme une pierre d'achoppement pour l'Église dans le monde moderne »³. Presque tous les rapports soulèvent la question de la participation pleine et égale des femmes : « *La reconnaissance croissante de l'importance des femmes dans la vie de l'Église ouvre des possibilités de participation accrue, bien que limitée, aux structures de l'Église et aux sphères décisionnelles* ». Toutefois, les rapports ne s'accordent pas sur une réponse unique ou complète à la question de la vocation, de l'inclusion et de l'épanouissement des femmes dans l'Église et la société⁴.

Tout au long de ce parcours, les personnes ont expérimenté la joie de se rencontrer en tant que frères et sœurs en Christ, de partager ce qui résonnait en eux à l'écoute de la Parole, et de réfléchir ensemble à l'avenir de l'Église sur la base de l'élan du *Document Préparatoire* (PD). Cela a nourri le désir d'une Église de plus en plus synodale : la synodalité a cessé d'être un concept abstrait pour eux et est devenue une expérience concrète ; ils en ont goûté la saveur et veulent continuer à le faire. « *Grâce à ce processus, nous avons découvert que la synodalité est une manière d'être Église - en fait, c'est la manière d'être Église. L'Esprit Saint nous demande d'être plus synodaux* »⁵.

² *Document préparatoire* no. 2.

³ *Document pour l'étape continentale*, no. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 3.

La phase continentale (2022-2023)

Le Document pour l'étape continentale (DCS) présente une icône biblique, l'image de la tente par laquelle s'ouvre le chapitre 54 du livre d'Isaïe. Cette image et ce récit représentent une clé pour interpréter les contenus du DCS à la lumière de la Parole, en les plaçant sous le prisme de la promesse de Dieu qui devient une vocation pour son Peuple et son Église : « Élargis l'espace de ta tente » !

À l'écoute de la Sainte Bible⁶

C'est à un peuple qui vit l'expérience de l'exil que le prophète adresse des paroles qui nous aident aujourd'hui à nous concentrer sur ce à quoi le Seigneur nous appelle à travers l'expérience de la synodalité vécue : « Élargis l'espace de ta tente, étend tes toiles sans ménagement, allonge tes cordes et affermis tes piquets » (Isaïe 54,2).

Pour le peuple en exil, les paroles du prophète évoquent l'expérience de l'exode, lorsqu'il habitait sous des tentes, et annoncent la promesse du retour au pays, signe de joie et d'espérance. Pour se préparer, il est nécessaire d'agrandir la tente, en agissant sur les trois éléments de sa structure. Le premier est la toile de tente, qui protège du soleil, du vent et de la pluie, délimitant un espace de vie et de convivialité. Elles doivent être étendues, afin de protéger également ceux qui sont encore à l'extérieur de cet espace, mais qui se sentent appelés à y entrer. Les cordes qui maintiennent les toiles ensemble sont le deuxième élément structurel de la tente. Elles doivent équilibrer la tension nécessaire pour empêcher la tente de s'affaisser et la souplesse qui amortit les mouvements causés par le vent. C'est pourquoi, si la tente s'agrandit, les cordes doivent être tendues pour maintenir la bonne tension. Enfin, les piquets constituent le troisième élément : ils ancrent la structure au sol et assurent sa solidité, mais restent capables de se déplacer lorsque la tente doit être montée ailleurs.

En les écoutant aujourd'hui, ces paroles d'Isaïe nous invitent à imaginer l'Église comme une tente, voire comme la tente de la rencontre qui accompagnait le peuple dans sa traversée du désert : appelée à s'étendre, donc, mais aussi à se déplacer. En son centre se trouve le tabernacle, c'est-à-dire la présence du Seigneur. La tenue de la tente est assurée par la solidité de ses piquets, c'est-à-dire les fondements de la foi qui ne changent pas mais qui peuvent être déplacés et plantés dans un terrain toujours nouveau afin que la tente puisse accompagner le peuple dans sa marche à travers l'histoire. Enfin, pour ne pas s'affaisser, la structure de la tente doit maintenir en équilibre les différentes forces et tensions auxquelles elle est sou-

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 25-28.

mise : une métaphore qui exprime la nécessité du discernement. C'est ainsi que de nombreux rapports envisagent l'Église : une demeure vaste, mais non homogène, capable d'abriter tout le monde, mais ouverte, laissant entrer et sortir (cf. *Jn* 10,9), et se dirigeant vers l'accueil du Père et de toute l'humanité.

Agrandir la tente, c'est accueillir l'autre, c'est faire place à sa diversité. Cela implique donc la volonté de mourir à soi-même par amour, en se retrouvant dans et par la relation avec le Christ et le prochain : « *Amen, amen, je vous le dis : si le grain de blé ne tombe pas en terre et ne meurt pas, il reste un grain de blé ; mais s'il meurt, il produit beaucoup de fruits* » (Jean 12,24). La fécondité de l'Église dépend de l'acceptation de cette mort, qui n'est cependant pas un anéantissement, mais une expérience de dépouillement pour être rempli par le Christ à travers l'Esprit Saint, et donc un processus par lequel nous recevons des relations plus riches, des liens plus profonds avec Dieu et les uns avec les autres. C'est le lieu de la grâce et de la transfiguration. C'est pourquoi l'apôtre Paul recommande : « *Ayez entre vous la même attitude que celle que vous avez eue dans le Christ Jésus, qui, bien qu'ayant la forme de Dieu, n'a pas considéré l'égalité avec Dieu comme un but à atteindre. Au contraire, il s'est dépouillé lui-même, en prenant la forme d'un esclave, en se rendant semblable aux hommes* » (Philippiens 2,5-7). C'est à cette condition que les membres de l'Église, tous et chacun ensemble, pourront coopérer avec l'Esprit Saint à l'accomplissement de la mission assignée par Jésus-Christ à son Église.

Un espace de communion

Cette tente est un espace de communion, un lieu de participation et un fondement pour la mission. Le troisième chapitre du DCS articule à son tour les mots clés du parcours synodal en les reliant aux fruits de l'écoute du Peuple de Dieu. Il le fait en les regroupant autour de cinq tensions génératives qui sont entrelacées les unes avec les autres :

1. l'écoute comme ouverture à l'accueil : elle part d'un désir d'inclusion radicale - personne n'est exclu - à comprendre dans une perspective de communion avec les sœurs et les frères et avec notre Père commun ; l'écoute apparaît ici non pas comme une action instrumentale, mais comme l'assomption de l'attitude fondamentale d'un Dieu qui écoute son Peuple, comme la suite d'un Seigneur que les Évangiles nous présentent constamment dans l'acte d'écoute des personnes qui viennent à lui sur les routes de la Terre Sainte ;
2. notre élan vers la mission : il s'agit d'une mission que les catholiques reconnaissent comme devant être réalisée avec des frères et des sœurs d'autres confessions chrétiennes et en dialogue avec des croyants d'autres religions, en transformant les actions humaines d'assistance en expériences authentiquement

- spirituelles qui proclament le visage d'un Dieu qui se soucie au point de donner sa propre vie pour que nous puissions l'avoir en abondance ;
3. l'accomplissement de la mission exige d'assumer un style fondé sur la participation : cela correspond à la pleine prise en charge de la co-responsabilité de tous les baptisés pour l'unique mission de l'Église, qui découle de la dignité baptismale commune ;
 4. la construction de possibilités concrètes de vivre la communion, la participation et la mission à travers des structures et des institutions habitées par des personnes convenablement formées et soutenues par une spiritualité vivante ;
 5. la liturgie, en particulier la liturgie eucharistique, source et sommet de la vie chrétienne, qui rassemble la communauté, rendant la communion tangible, permettant l'exercice de la participation et nourrissant l'élan vers la mission par la Parole et les Sacrements ⁷.

Un synode en deux sessions (2023-2024)

Le 16 octobre 2022, le pape François a annoncé que les fruits du voyage commencé le 10 octobre 2021 étaient trop nombreux et qu'ils avaient besoin de mûrir.

D'où la décision d'organiser deux sessions du Synode, au lieu d'une :

- la première session se déroule du 4 au 29 octobre 2023 ;
- la seconde se tiendra en octobre 2024.

La deuxième session sera suivie de la *phase de mise en œuvre* qui impliquera à nouveau les Églises locales du monde entier.

Le point de vue des autres

Offrir un témoignage d'inclusion radicale

La vision d'une Église capable d'une inclusion radicale, d'une appartenance partagée et d'une hospitalité profonde selon les enseignements de Jésus est au cœur du processus synodal : « *Au lieu de nous comporter comme des gardiens qui essaient d'exclure les autres de la table, nous devons faire davantage pour nous assurer que les gens savent que chacun peut trouver une place et une maison ici* ». Nous sommes appelés à aller partout, surtout en dehors des territoires les plus familiers, « *en quittant la position confortable de ceux qui donnent l'hospitalité pour nous laisser accueillir dans l'existence de ceux qui sont nos compagnons sur le chemin de l'humanité* »⁸. L'appel est

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no 31.

de mieux vivre la tension entre la vérité et la miséricorde, comme l'a fait Jésus [...]. Le rêve est celui d'une Église qui vit plus pleinement le paradoxe christologique : proclamer avec audace son enseignement authentique tout en offrant un témoignage d'inclusion et d'acceptation radicales à travers son accompagnement pastoral et de discernement⁹.

L'écoute qui devient accueil

Au cours de ce voyage, les Églises ont compris que le chemin vers une plus grande inclusion - la tente élargie - est un chemin graduel. Il commence par l'écoute et exige une conversion plus large et plus profonde des attitudes et des structures, ainsi que de nouvelles approches de l'accompagnement pastoral ; il commence par la volonté de reconnaître que les périphéries peuvent être le lieu où résonne un appel à la conversion ainsi que l'appel à mettre l'Évangile en pratique de manière plus décisive.

L'écoute exige que nous reconnaissons les autres comme des sujets de leur propre cheminement. Lorsque nous le faisons, les autres se sentent accueillis, non jugés, libres de partager leur propre cheminement spirituel. Cette expérience a été vécue dans de nombreux contextes et, pour certains, elle a été l'aspect le plus transformateur de l'ensemble du processus.

L'expérience synodale peut être considérée comme un chemin de reconnaissance pour ceux qui ne se sentent pas suffisamment reconnus dans l'Église. C'est particulièrement vrai pour les laïcs, les diacres, les personnes consacrées qui avaient auparavant le sentiment que l'Église institutionnelle ne s'intéressait pas à leur expérience de foi ou à leurs opinions¹⁰.

Marcher ensemble sur le chemin de la fraternité humaine

Le Dicastère pour le dialogue interreligieux espère que ce numéro de *Pro Dialogo* présentant la perspective hindouiste, bouddhiste, hébraïque, islamique, taoïste, confucéenne, sikhe, jaïn ainsi que celle des religions traditionnelles africaines sur l'inclusion et la solidarité sera un outil précieux pour susciter l'intérêt général et promouvoir le dialogue et la coopération interculturels et interreligieux.

Les témoignages et les bonnes pratiques de l'Inde, du Maroc, de la Turquie, du Liban et du Malawi rapportés dans ce numéro de *Pro Dialogo* prouvent que la création d'expériences partagées et l'ouverture à de nouveaux développements peuvent aider à surmonter les stéréotypes et à accroître la compréhension entre

⁹ *Ibid.*, no 30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no 32.

« toutes les personnes qui ont foi en Dieu et foi en la fraternité humaine pour s'unir et travailler ensemble pour les générations futures afin de faire progresser une culture de respect mutuel dans la conscience de la grande grâce divine qui fait de tous les êtres humains des frères et des sœurs »¹¹.

Tels sont les fruits du dialogue que nous souhaitons voir se concrétiser lors de la prochaine phase synodale et de la *phase de mise en œuvre post-synodale*.

Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot
Préfet du Dicastère pour le dialogue interreligieux

¹¹ *Document sur la fraternité humaine pour la paix mondiale et la coexistence commune, Abu Dhabi, 4 février 2019.*

INTRODUZIONE

Nel mese di ottobre 2023 avrà inizio la prima sessione della XVI Assemblée Generale Ordinaria del Sinodo dei Vescovi. In vista di questo evento, Pro Dialogo N. 173 si è posto un duplice obiettivo:

a) offrire ai credenti di altre religioni l'opportunità di capire come i cattolici si stanno orientando verso la sinodalità;

b) contribuire al cammino sinodale, rispondendo al desiderio dei credenti cattolici di ascoltare i membri di altre religioni sul loro modo di concepire e praticare la sinodalità.

Si tratta di un'autentica apertura al dialogo, basata sulla convinzione che una Chiesa che impara ad ascoltare gli altri possa offrire all'umanità un modo di essere e di vivere in cui tutti si sentano inclusi come protagonisti¹.

La fase consultiva del Sinodo (2021-2022)

Il cammino sinodale, intitolato “*Per una Chiesa sinodale: comunione, partecipazione e missione*”, si è aperto solennemente il 9 e 10 ottobre 2021 a Roma e, il 17 ottobre successivo, nelle Chiese particolari (fase consultiva). Nel complesso, la partecipazione ha superato ogni aspettativa. La Segreteria del Sinodo ha ricevuto contributi da 112 delle 114 Conferenze episcopali e da 15 Chiese cattoliche orientali, nonché riflessioni da 17 dei 23 Dicasteri della Curia romana, oltre all'apporto di Superiori religiosi, Istituti di vita consacrata e Società di vita apostolica, associazioni e movimenti laicali. Inoltre, sono pervenuti oltre mille contributi da singoli e gruppi, nonché idee raccolte attraverso i social media grazie all'iniziativa del “Sinodo digitale”.

I documenti sono stati assegnati a un gruppo di esperti: vescovi, sacerdoti, consacrati e consacrate, laici e laiche, provenienti da tutti i continenti e con un'ampia gamma di competenze disciplinari. Dopo aver letto le relazioni, questi esperti si sono incontrati per quasi due settimane con il gruppo di redazione, composto dal Rappresentante generale, dal Segretario generale del Sinodo, dai Sottosegretari e da vari funzionari della Segreteria del Sinodo, oltre che dai membri del Comitato di coordinamento. A questo gruppo si sono poi aggiunti i membri del Consiglio generale. Insieme, hanno lavorato in un clima di preghiera e discernimento per condividere i frutti delle loro letture in vista della stesura del *Documento per la fase continentale*.

Durante la prima parte della fase consultiva, milioni di cattolici di tutto il

¹ Cf. *Documento per la Fase Continentale* = DCS, n. 13.

mondo sono stati coinvolti nelle attività del Sinodo: alcuni hanno partecipato agli incontri a livello locale, altri hanno collaborato all'animazione e al coordinamento delle attività a diversi livelli, altri ancora hanno offerto il sostegno della loro preghiera. Tutte queste persone sono state mosse dal desiderio di rispondere alla domanda fondamentale che ha guidato l'intero processo: *In che modo questo "camminare insieme", che oggi si sta realizzando a diversi livelli (da quello locale a quello universale), permette alla Chiesa di annunciare il Vangelo secondo la missione che le è stata affidata; e quali passi lo Spirito ci invita a compiere per crescere come Chiesa sinodale?*²

Alcuni rapporti segnalano che le culture dei loro Paesi hanno fatto progressi nell'inclusione e nella partecipazione delle donne, progressi che potrebbero servire da modello per la Chiesa. "La mancanza di uguaglianza per le donne all'interno della Chiesa è vista come una pietra d'inciampo per la Chiesa nel mondo moderno"³. Quasi tutti i rapporti sollevano la questione della partecipazione piena e paritaria delle donne: "Il crescente riconoscimento dell'importanza delle donne nella vita della Chiesa apre opportunità per una maggiore, seppur limitata, partecipazione alle strutture della Chiesa e alle sfere decisionali". Tuttavia, i rapporti non concordano su una soluzione unica o completa alla questione della vocazione, dell'inclusione e della realizzazione delle donne nella Chiesa e nella società⁴.

Durante questo percorso, le persone hanno sperimentato la gioia di incontrarsi come fratelli e sorelle in Cristo, di condividere ciò che risuonava in loro nell'ascolto della Parola e di riflettere insieme sul futuro della Chiesa a partire dallo slancio del *Documento Preparatorio* (PD). Questo ha alimentato il desiderio di una Chiesa sempre più sinodale: per loro, la sinodalità ha smesso di essere un concetto astratto ed è diventata un'esperienza concreta; ne hanno assaporato il sapore e vogliono continuare a farlo. *"Grazie a questo processo, abbiamo scoperto che la sinodalità è un modo di essere Chiesa - anzi, è il modo di essere Chiesa. Lo Spirito Santo ci chiede di essere più sinodali"*⁵.

La fase continentale (2022-2023)

Il *Documento per la Fase Continentale* (DCS) presenta l'icona biblica della tenda, con cui si apre il capitolo 54 del libro di Isaia. Questa immagine e la sua narrazione rappresentano una chiave di lettura dei contenuti del DCS alla luce della

² *Documento preparatorio*, n. 2.

³ *Documento per la Fase continentale*, n. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 3.

Parola, posti sotto il segno della promessa di Dio, che diventa vocazione per il suo Popolo e la sua Chiesa: “Allarga lo spazio della tua tenda”!

*In ascolto della Sacra Bibbia*⁶

È a un popolo che vive in esilio, che il profeta rivolge parole che ci aiutano anche oggi a mettere a fuoco ciò a cui il Signore ci chiama attraverso la nostra esperienza di sinodalità: “Allarga lo spazio della tua tenda, stendi i tuoi teli senza risparmio, allunga le tue corde e rafforza i tuoi pali” (Isaia 54,2).

Per il popolo in esilio, le parole del profeta evocano l'esperienza dell'esodo, quando viveva nelle tende, e annunciano la promessa del ritorno in patria, segno di gioia e di speranza. Per prepararsi, la tenda deve essere aperta, agendo sui tre elementi della sua struttura. Il primo è la tela della tenda, che protegge dal sole, dal vento e dalla pioggia, e delimita uno spazio per vivere e socializzare. Le tende devono essere stese per proteggere coloro che sono ancora fuori da questo spazio, ma che si sentono chiamati a entrarvi. Le corde che tengono insieme la tela sono il secondo elemento strutturale della tenda. Devono bilanciare la tensione necessaria per evitare che la tenda crolli, con la flessibilità che ammortizza i movimenti causati dal vento. Per questo motivo, se si ingrandisce la tenda, è necessario stringere le corde per mantenere la giusta tensione. Infine, i picchetti sono il terzo elemento: ancorano la struttura al terreno e ne garantiscono la solidità, ma si possono spostare quando la tenda deve essere montata altrove. Nell'ascoltarle oggi, queste parole di Isaia ci invitano a immaginare la Chiesa come una tenda, o addirittura come la tenda dell'incontro che accompagnava il popolo nel suo viaggio attraverso il deserto: chiamata a espandersi, dunque, ma anche a muoversi. Al centro c'è il tabernacolo, la presenza del Signore. La tenda è tenuta insieme dalla solidità dei suoi pali, le fondamenta della fede che non cambiano, ma che possono essere spostate e piantate in terreni sempre diversi, affinché la tenda possa accompagnare il popolo nel suo viaggio nella storia. Infine, per non crollare, la struttura della tenda deve mantenere in equilibrio le diverse forze e tensioni a cui è sottoposta: una metafora che esprime la necessità del discernimento. È così che molte relazioni immaginano la Chiesa: una dimora vasta, ma non omogenea, capace di ospitare tutti, ma aperta, che lascia entrare e uscire tutti (cfr. Giovanni 10,9), e che si muove perché il Padre accolga tutta l'umanità.

Allargare la tenda significa accogliere gli altri, fare spazio alla loro diversità. Ciò implica la disponibilità a morire a sé stessi per amore, per ritrovarsi nella relazione con Cristo e con il prossimo e attraverso di essa: *“Amen, amen, io vi dico: se*

⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 25-28.

il chicco di grano non cade in terra e non muore, non porta frutto; ma se muore, porta molto frutto” (Giovanni 12,24). La fecondità della Chiesa dipende dall'accettazione di questa morte, che non è però un annientamento, ma un'esperienza di spogliazione per essere riempiti da Cristo attraverso lo Spirito Santo, e quindi un processo attraverso il quale riceviamo relazioni più ricche, legami più profondi con Dio e tra di noi. Questo è il luogo della grazia e della trasfigurazione. Per questo l'apostolo Paolo raccomanda: *“Abbiate in voi lo stesso atteggiamento di Cristo Gesù, il quale, pur essendo nella forma di Dio, non considerò l'uguaglianza con Dio una meta da raggiungere. Al contrario, svuotò sé stesso, assumendo la forma di schiavo e diventando simile agli uomini”* (Filippesi 2,5-7). È a questa condizione che i membri della Chiesa, tutti insieme, saranno in grado di cooperare con lo Spirito Santo nell'adempimento della missione assegnata da Gesù Cristo alla sua Chiesa.

Uno spazio di comunione

Questa tenda è uno spazio di comunione, un luogo di partecipazione e un fondamento per la missione. Il terzo capitolo del DCS articola a sua volta le parole chiave del cammino sinodale collegandole ai frutti dell'ascolto del popolo di Dio. Lo fa raggruppandole attorno a cinque tensioni generative che si intrecciano tra loro:

1. l'ascolto come apertura all'accoglienza: parte da un desiderio di inclusione radicale - nessuno è escluso - da intendersi in una prospettiva di comunione con le sorelle e i fratelli e con il nostro Padre comune; l'ascolto appare qui non come un'azione strumentale, ma come l'assunzione dell'atteggiamento fondamentale di un Dio che ascolta il suo Popolo, come la sequela del Signore che i Vangeli ci presentano costantemente nell'atto di ascoltare le persone che vengono a lui sulle strade della Terra Santa;
2. il nostro slancio verso la missione: si tratta di una missione che i cattolici riconoscono di dover svolgere con fratelli e sorelle di altre confessioni cristiane e in dialogo con credenti di altre religioni, trasformando le azioni umane di assistenza in esperienze autenticamente spirituali che annunciano il volto di un Dio che si prende cura fino al punto di dare la propria vita perché noi possiamo averla in abbondanza;
3. la realizzazione della missione richiede uno stile fondato sulla partecipazione: ciò corrisponde alla piena assunzione della corresponsabilità di tutti i battezzati per l'unica missione della Chiesa, che scaturisce dalla comune dignità battesimale;
4. la ricerca di possibilità concrete per vivere la comunione, la partecipazione e la missione attraverso strutture e istituzioni abitate da persone adeguatamente formate e sostenute da una spiritualità viva;

5. la liturgia, in particolare la liturgia eucaristica, fonte e culmine della vita cristiana, che riunisce la comunità, rende tangibile la comunione, consentendo l'esercizio della partecipazione e alimentando lo slancio verso la missione attraverso la Parola e i Sacramenti⁷.

Un sinodo in due sessioni (2023-2024)

Il 16 ottobre 2022, Papa Francesco ha annunciato che i frutti del cammino iniziato il 10 ottobre 2021 erano troppo numerosi e avevano bisogno di maturare.

Da qui la decisione di tenere due sessioni del Sinodo anziché una:

- la prima sessione si svolgerà dal 4 al 29 ottobre 2023;
- la seconda si terrà nell'ottobre 2024.

Alla seconda sessione seguirà la fase di attuazione, che coinvolgerà nuovamente le Chiese locali di tutto il mondo.

Il punto di vista degli altri

Offrire una testimonianza di radicale inclusione

Al centro del processo sinodale c'è la visione di una Chiesa capace di inclusione radicale, di appartenenza condivisa e di profonda ospitalità, secondo le parole di Gesù: *“Invece di comportarci come guardiani che cercano di escludere gli altri dalla mensa, dobbiamo fare di più per garantire che la gente sappia che tutti possono trovare qui un posto e una casa”*. Siamo chiamati ad andare ovunque, soprattutto al di fuori dei territori più familiari, *“lasciando la comoda posizione di chi dà ospitalità per lasciarci accogliere nell'esistenza di coloro che sono i nostri compagni di viaggio dell'umanità”*⁸. La chiamata è a vivere più pienamente la tensione tra verità e misericordia, come ha fatto Gesù. Il sogno è quello di una Chiesa che viva più pienamente il paradosso cristologico: proclamando con coraggio il suo insegnamento autentico e offrendo al contempo una testimonianza di inclusione e accettazione radicale attraverso la cura pastorale e il discernimento⁹.

L'ascolto diventa accoglienza

Durante questo percorso, le Chiese hanno intuito la gradualità del cammino verso una maggiore inclusione - la tenda allargata - che inizia con l'ascolto e rich-

⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 30.

iede una conversione più ampia e profonda degli atteggiamenti e delle strutture, nonché nuovi approcci alla pastorale. Si comincia con l'ascolto e si richiede una conversione più ampia e profonda degli atteggiamenti e delle strutture, nonché nuovi approcci alla cura pastorale; si parte dalla disponibilità a riconoscere che le periferie possono essere il luogo in cui risuona l'invito alla conversione, nonché la chiamata a mettere in pratica il Vangelo in modo più deciso.

L'ascolto richiede di riconoscere gli altri come soggetti del proprio cammino. Quando lo facciamo, gli altri si sentono accolti, non giudicati, e liberi di condividere il proprio cammino spirituale. Questa esperienza è stata vissuta in molti contesti e, per alcuni, è stata l'aspetto più trasformativo dell'intero processo.

L'esperienza sinodale può essere vista come un percorso di riconoscimento per coloro che non si sentono sufficientemente riconosciuti nella Chiesa. Questo è particolarmente vero per i laici, i diaconi e le persone consacrate che in precedenza sentivano che la Chiesa istituzionale non era interessata alla loro esperienza di fede o alle loro opinioni ¹⁰.

Camminare insieme sulla strada della fraternità umana

Il Dicastero per il Dialogo Interreligioso si augura che questo numero di Pro Dialogo, che presenta le prospettive delle religioni tradizionali indu, buddista, ebraica, islamica, taoista, confuciana, sikh, giainista e della religione tradizionale africana sull'inclusione e la solidarietà, costituisca uno strumento efficace per suscitare l'interesse generale e promuovere il dialogo e la cooperazione a livello interculturale e interreligioso.

Le testimonianze e le buone pratiche provenienti da India, Marocco, Turchia, Libano e Malawi riportate in questo numero di Pro Dialogo dimostrano che la creazione di esperienze condivise e l'apertura a nuovi sviluppi possono aiutare a superare gli stereotipi e ad aumentare la comprensione tra "tutte le persone che hanno fede in Dio e fede nella fratellanza umana per unirsi e lavorare insieme per le generazioni future e far progredire una cultura del rispetto reciproco nella consapevolezza della grande grazia divina che rende tutti gli esseri umani fratelli e sorelle" ¹¹.

Questi sono i frutti del dialogo che speriamo prendano forma durante la prossima fase sinodale e la fase di attuazione post-sinodale.

Cardinale Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot
Prefetto del Dicastero per il Dialogo interreligioso

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 32.

¹¹ *Documento sulla fratellanza umana per la pace mondiale e la convivenza comune*, Abu Dhabi, 4 febbraio 2019.

INTRODUCCIÓN

En el mes de octubre de 2023 comenzará la celebración de la primera sesión de la XVI Asamblea general ordinaria del Sínodo de los obispos. En atención a este evento, *Pro Dialogo* N. 173 se ha puesto un doble objetivo:

- a) ofrecer a los creyentes de otras religiones la oportunidad de comprender cómo los católicos avanzan hacia la sinodalidad;
- b) contribuir al camino sinodal, respondiendo a deseo de los creyentes católicos de escuchar a los miembros de otras religiones sobre su forma de concebir y practicar la sinodalidad.

Se trata de una auténtica apertura al diálogo, que se fundamenta en la convicción de que una Iglesia que aprende a escuchar al otro puede ofrecer a la humanidad un modo de ser y de vivir en el que todos puedan sentirse incluidos y protagonistas¹.

La etapa consultiva del Sínodo (2021-2022)

El camino sinodal, titulado “*Por una Iglesia sinodal: comunión, participación y misión*”, se abrió solemnemente el 9 y el 10 de octubre de 2021 en Roma, y el 17 de octubre, en las Iglesias particulares (etapa consultiva). En su conjunto, la participación ha superado toda expectativa. La Secretaría del Sínodo ha recibido contribuciones de 112 de las 114 Conferencias episcopales y de 15 Iglesias orientales católicas; así como reflexiones de 17 de los 23 Dicasterios de la Curia romana, además de las aportaciones de los Superiores de los religiosos, Institutos de vida consagrada y Sociedades de vida apostólica, asociaciones y movimientos laicales. Además, se han recibido más de mil aportaciones de particulares y colectivos, así como ideas recogidas a través de las redes sociales gracias a la iniciativa del “Sínodo Digital”.

Los documentos fueron asignados a un grupo de expertos: obispos, sacerdotes, consagrados y consagradas, laicos y laicas, de todos los continentes y con una amplia gama de competencias disciplinarias. Después de leer los informes, estos expertos se reunieron durante casi dos semanas con el equipo de redacción, compuesto por el Representante general, el Secretario General del Sínodo, los Subsecretarios y varios oficiales de la Secretaría del Sínodo, así como miembros del Comité de coordinación. A este grupo se unieron luego los miembros del Consejo General. Juntos trabajaron en un clima de oración y discernimiento para compartir los frutos de sus lecturas de cara a la redacción del *Documento para la fase continental*.

¹ *Documento de trabajo para la Etapa Continental*, n. 13.

Durante la primera parte de la fase consultiva, millones de católicos de todo el mundo se involucraron en las actividades del Sínodo: algunos participaron en encuentros de ámbito local, otros colaboraron en la animación y la coordinación de las actividades en otros ámbitos, y hubo quienes ofrecieron el sustento de la oración. Todas estas personas estaban movidas por el deseo de responder a la pregunta fundamental que guio el proceso en su conjunto: *¿Cómo este “caminar juntos”, que se realiza hoy en varios niveles (desde el local hasta el universal), permite a la Iglesia anunciar el Evangelio según la misión que le ha sido encomendada, y qué pasos nos invita el Espíritu a dar para crecer como Iglesia sinodal?*²

Algunos informes indican que las culturas de sus países han avanzado en la inclusión y participación de las mujeres, progresos que podrían servir de modelo para la Iglesia. “La falta de igualdad de las mujeres dentro de la Iglesia se considera un obstáculo para la Iglesia en el mundo moderno”³. Casi todos los informes plantean el tema de la participación plena e igualitaria de las mujeres: “El creciente reconocimiento de la importancia de las mujeres en la vida de la Iglesia abre la posibilidad de una mayor participación, aunque limitada, en las estructuras eclesíásticas y en los ámbitos de decisión. Sin embargo, (los informes) no concuerdan en una respuesta única o exhaustiva a la cuestión de la vocación, la inclusión y la valoración de las mujeres en la Iglesia y en la sociedad”⁴.

Durante este proceso, las personas experimentaron la alegría de encontrarse como hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, de compartir lo que resonaba en ellos al escuchar la Palabra y al reflexionar juntos sobre el futuro de la Iglesia a partir del impulso del *Documento Preparatorio* (DP). Esto ha alimentado el deseo de una Iglesia cada vez más sinodal: para ellos, la sinodalidad ha dejado de ser un concepto abstracto y se ha convertido en una experiencia concreta; han probado su sabor y quieren seguir haciéndolo. “A través de este proceso, hemos descubierto que la sinodalidad es un modo de ser Iglesia; es más, es el modo de ser Iglesia. El Espíritu Santo nos pide que seamos más sinodales”⁵.

La etapa continental (2022-2023)

El *Documento para la Etapa Continental* (DEC) presenta el icono bíblico de la tienda, con el que comienza el capítulo 54 del libro de Isaías. Esta imagen y su narración representan una clave para comprender los contenidos del DEC a la luz

² *Documento preparatorio*, n. 2.

³ *Documento de trabajo para la Etapa Continental*, n. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 3.

de la Palabra, bajo el signo de la promesa de Dios, que se convierte en vocación para su Pueblo y su Iglesia: “Ensancha el espacio de tu tienda”.

*A la escucha de las Escrituras*⁶

El profeta dirige estas palabras a un pueblo que vive en el exilio, y estas mismas palabras nos ayudan también hoy a centrarnos en la llamada que el Señor que el Señor nos hace a través de nuestra experiencia sinodal: “Ensancha el espacio de tu tienda, despliega los toldos de tu morada, no los restrinjas, alarga tus cuerdas, afianza tus estacas” (Isaías 54,2)

Las palabras del profeta recuerdan al pueblo en el exilio la experiencia del éxodo, cuando vivía en tiendas, y anuncian la promesa del regreso a casa, signo de alegría y de esperanza. Para prepararse, es necesario ampliar la tienda, actuando sobre los tres elementos de su estructura. El primero es el toldo de la tienda, que protege del sol, del viento y la lluvia, delineando un espacio de vida y convivencia. Debe desplegarse, para que también pueda proteger a los que todavía están fuera de este espacio, pero se sienten llamados a entrar en él. El segundo elemento estructural de la tienda son las cuerdas, que mantienen unidos los toldos. Deben equilibrar la tensión necesaria para evitar que la tienda se derrumbe con la flexibilidad que amortigua los movimientos provocados por el viento. Por lo tanto, si la tienda se expande, deben alargarse para mantener la tensión adecuada. Por último, el tercer elemento son las estacas, que anclan la estructura al suelo y garantizan su solidez, pero que pueden moverse cuando la tienda tiene que ser montada en otro lugar. Al escuchar hoy estas palabras de Isaías, se nos invita a imaginar a la Iglesia como una tienda, o más bien como la tienda del encuentro que acompañó al pueblo en su travesía por el desierto. Está llamada a expandirse, pero también a moverse. En su centro está el tabernáculo, es decir, la presencia del Señor. La firmeza de la tienda está garantizada por la solidez de sus estacas, es decir, los cimientos de la fe que no cambian, pero sí pueden ser trasladados y plantados en un terreno siempre nuevo, para que la tienda pueda acompañar al pueblo en su caminar por la historia. Por último, para que no se caiga, la estructura de la tienda debe mantener el equilibrio entre las diferentes presiones y tensiones a las que está sometida. Esta metáfora expresa la necesidad del discernimiento. Así es como muchas de las síntesis recibidas imaginan a la Iglesia: una morada espaciosa, pero no homogénea, capaz de cobijar a todos, pero abierta, que deja entrar y salir (cf. Juan 10,9), y que avanza hacia el abrazo con el Padre y con todos los demás miembros de la humanidad.

Ensancha la tienda requiere acoger a otros en ella, dando cabida a su diversi-

⁶ *Ibid.*, nn. 25-28.

dad. Implica, por tanto, la disposición a morir a sí mismo por amor, encontrándose en y a través de la relación con Cristo y con el prójimo: «En verdad, en verdad os digo que si el grano de trigo, no cae en tierra y muere, queda infecundo; pero si muere, da mucho fruto» (Juan 12,24). La fecundidad de la Iglesia depende de la aceptación de esta muerte, que no es, sin embargo, un anonadamiento, sino una experiencia de vaciamiento de uno mismo para dejarse colmar por Cristo a través del Espíritu Santo y, por tanto, un proceso a través del cual recibimos como un don las relaciones más ricas y los vínculos más profundos con Dios y con los demás. Este es el lugar de la gracia y de la transfiguración. Por eso, el apóstol Pablo recomienda: *“Tened en vosotros los sentimientos propios de Cristo Jesús. El cual, siendo de condición divina, no retuvo ávidamente el ser igual al Dios; al contrario, se despojó de sí mismo”* (Filipenses 2,5-7). Con esta condición, todos y cada uno de los miembros de la Iglesia, serán capaces de cooperar con el Espíritu Santo en el cumplimiento de la misión encomendada por Jesucristo a su Iglesia.

Un espacio de comunión

Esta tienda es un espacio de comunión, un lugar de participación y una base para la misión. El tercer capítulo del DEC articula las palabras clave del camino sinodal con los frutos de la escucha del pueblo de Dios. Para ello, los frutos se estructuran en torno a cinco tensiones creativas que se interrelacionan:

1. La escucha, como apertura a la acogida a partir de un deseo de inclusión radical -nadie queda excluido-, se ha de entender en una perspectiva de comunión con las hermanas y los hermanos y con nuestro Padre común. La escucha aparece aquí, no como una acción instrumental, sino como la asunción de la actitud fundamental de un Dios que escucha a su pueblo, y el seguimiento de un Señor que los Evangelios nos presentan constantemente en escucha de la gente que acude a él recorriendo los caminos de la Tierra Santa.
2. El impulso hacia la misión. Se trata de una misión que los católicos reconocen que deben llevar a cabo con sus hermanos y hermanas de otras confesiones cristianas y en diálogo con creyentes de otras religiones, transformando las acciones humanas de asistencia en experiencias auténticamente espirituales que proclamen el rostro de un Dios que cuida hasta el punto de dar su vida para que nosotros la tengamos en abundancia.
3. Llevar a cabo la misión exige un estilo basado en la participación, que corresponde a la plena asunción de la corresponsabilidad de todos los bautizados en la única misión de la Iglesia, que brota de la común dignidad bautismal.
4. La búsqueda de posibilidades concretas para vivir la comunión, la participación y la misión a través de estructuras e instituciones que cuente con personas debidamente formadas y sostenidas por una espiritualidad viva.

5. La liturgia, especialmente la liturgia eucarística, fuente y cumbre de la vida cristiana, que reúne a la comunidad, hace tangible la comunión, permite el ejercicio de la participación y alimenta el impulso a la misión a través de la Palabra y los Sacramentos⁷.

Un sínodo en dos sesiones (2023-2024)

El 16 de octubre de 2022, el Papa Francisco anunció que los frutos del camino iniciado el 10 de octubre de 2021 eran demasiado numerosos y necesitaban madurar.

De ahí la decisión de celebrar dos sesiones del Sínodo en lugar de una:

- la primera sesión tendrá lugar del 4 al 29 de octubre de 2023;
- la segunda se celebrará en octubre de 2024.

A la segunda sesión le seguirá la fase de implementación, en la que volverán a participar las Iglesias locales de todo el mundo.

El punto de vista de los otros

Ofrecer un testimonio de inclusión radical

En el corazón del proceso sinodal está la comprensión de una Iglesia capaz de una inclusión radical, de pertenencia compartida y de profunda hospitalidad, según las enseñanzas de Jesús: *“En lugar de comportarnos como custodios que intentan excluir a otros de la mesa, tenemos que hacer más para asegurarnos de que la gente sepa que todos pueden encontrar un lugar y un hogar aquí”*. Estamos llamados a ir a todas partes, sobre todo fuera de los territorios más familiares, *“saliendo de la posición cómoda de quienes dan hospitalidad, para dejarnos acoger en la existencia de los que son nuestros compañeros de viaje de la humanidad”*⁸. La llamada es a vivir mejor la tensión entre la verdad y la misericordia, como hizo Jesús. El sueño es el de una Iglesia que viva más plenamente una paradoja cristológica: proclamar con audacia la propia enseñanza auténtica y, al mismo tiempo, ofrecer un testimonio de inclusión y aceptación radicales mediante un acompañamiento pastoral basado en el discernimiento⁹.

La escucha se convierte en acogida

En este camino, las Iglesias se han dado cuenta de que el camino hacia una mayor inclusión —la tienda extendida— se realiza de un modo gradual. Comienza

⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 30.

por la escucha y requiere de una conversión más amplia y profunda en las actitudes y las estructuras, de nuevos enfoques en el acompañamiento pastoral y de la disposición a reconocer que las periferias pueden ser el lugar donde resuena una llamada a la conversión y a poner en práctica el Evangelio más decididamente.

Escuchar requiere reconocer al otro como sujeto del propio camino. Cuando lo conseguimos, los demás se sienten acogidos, no juzgados, libres para compartir su camino espiritual. Esto se ha experimentado en muchos contextos y para algunos ha sido el aspecto más transformador de todo el proceso.

La experiencia sinodal puede leerse como un camino de reconocimiento para aquellos que no se sienten suficientemente reconocidos en la Iglesia. Esto es especialmente cierto para aquellos laicos y laicas, diáconos, consagradas y consagrados que anteriormente tenían la sensación de que la Iglesia institucional no estaba interesada en su experiencia de fe o en sus opiniones¹⁰.

Caminar juntos por la senda de la fraternidad humana

El Dicasterio para el Diálogo Interreligioso espera que este número de Pro Dialogo, que presenta las perspectivas de las religiones tradicionales hinduista, budista, judía, islámica, taoísta, confucionista, sikh, jainista y africana tradicional sobre la inclusión y la solidaridad, constituya una herramienta eficaz para suscitar interés general y promover el diálogo y la cooperación intercultural e interreligiosa.

Los testimonios y buenas prácticas de India, Marruecos, Turquía, Líbano y Malawi recogidas en este número de Pro Dialogo demuestran que la creación de experiencias compartidas y la apertura a nuevos desarrollos pueden ayudar a superar los estereotipos y aumentar el entendimiento entre “todas las personas que tienen fe en Dios y fe en la fraternidad humana para unirse y trabajar juntos en favor de las generaciones futuras y promover una cultura de respeto mutuo en la conciencia de la gran gracia divina que hace a todos los seres humanos hermanos y hermanas”¹¹.

Estos son los frutos del diálogo que esperamos que tomen forma durante la próxima fase sinodal y la etapa de implementación postsinodal.

Cardenal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot
Prefecto del Dicasterio para el Diálogo Interreligioso

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 32.

¹¹ *Documento sobre la fraternidad humana para la paz mundial y la convivencia común*, Abu Dhabi, 4 de febrero de 2019.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Hinduism

PR. SHARDA S. NANDRAM*

Integrative Worldview as a Direction

In our world, sectarianism and ingroup-outgroup mentalities hinder solidarity and inclusion, essential for a more convivial society. Dismissing others' ideas to uphold one's own validity exacerbates this issue, particularly when different racial backgrounds or religions are involved. The deep-rooted lack of solidarity and inclusion, seen as racial or religious disharmony, poses a complex and long-standing challenge. Pursuing world peace has been an enduring ideal.

To address this, an unconventional approach can inspire harmonious societies. This article proposes an Integrative Worldview based on Hindu Scriptures. By embracing a worldview, individuals transcend geographical boundaries, allowing diverse people from various countries, religions, and races to connect beyond conventional divisions based on birthplace, race, gender, profession, religion, or class. This approach celebrates diversity and inclusion grounded in individuals' present behavior and embodiment of these principles, free from external dogmas or detached universal principles. It avoids imposing irrelevant concepts and fosters a belief in a convivial world where everyone has a place.

Inspirations from Hindu Scriptures

Nandram et al. (2019) conducted a study on Hindu Spirituality and Hindu Worldview by examining Hindu Scriptures. They concluded that there are two predominant fundamental assumptions regarding everything that exists in the universe: (1) Everyone and everything possess consciousness. (2) Everyone and everything are manifestations of divinity. Hinduism is built upon these two pillars and emphasizes that we have a conscious and divine relationship with all aspects of nature, including both living and non-living entities. This implies that nothing in the entire universe exists in isolation but rather in interconnectedness and in accordance with a universal order. The second aspect of the Hindu Worldview pertains to the cyclicity of life, suggesting that there is more to experience in future lives as time unfolds.

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All-Connectedness

In the Hindu Worldview, the following can be considered as fundamental: human beings aspire to achieve harmony, as it is believed that everything exists in coherence. Vedic verses offer various expressions of the concept of interconnectedness, and a selection of these verses is mentioned here:

- *Sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma* “All this is Brahman” (Chāndogyopaniṣad 3.14.1).
- *Ekam evādvitīyam* “That (Brahman) is one, without a second” (Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.2.1).
- *Prajñānaṃ brahma* “Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareyopaniṣad 3.3, Rig Veda).
- *Ayam ātmā brahma* “This Self (Atman) is Brahman” (Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad 1.2 Atharvaveda).
- *Tat tvam asi* “Thou art that” (“You are Brahman” or “Knowledge is Brahman”) (Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.8.7, Samaveda).
- *Aham brahmāsmi*: “I am Brahman” (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 1.4.10, Yajurveda).

The mentioned verses serve as ideal paths, guiding individuals towards interconnectedness. They convey the message that harming others is ultimately harming oneself, and discriminating against others is essentially discriminating against oneself.

Characteristics of Integrative Worldview

Ancient Hindu scriptures reveal that the ultimate purpose of life is to harmonize our *Dharma* (righteousness or the framework of duties), mobilize *Artha* (resources for fulfilling those duties), and experience *Kāma* (conscious fulfillment of desires through the use of those resources, bringing joy). This journey eventually leads to *Mokṣa* (liberation or emancipation). By aligning with our natural Self (Atman), we tap into the deeper sources within us. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Mokṣa* then become *Svadharmā* (intrinsic self-related path of righteousness), *Svārtha* (mobilizing wealth from one’s own purpose), *Svāvalambana* (utilizing available resources to achieve desired outcomes), and *Svarāja* (freedom of oneself). By fulfilling *Svadharmā*, *Svārtha*, and *Svāvalambana*, we naturally manifest *Svarāja*, the realization of liberation (*Mokṣa*) evoked from within the Self.

These self-related purposes, both inward and outward, guide us toward integrativeness. Bindlish et al. (2017) define integrativeness as the intention to seek coherence by embracing life’s purposes holistically, incorporating the four goals of life, and fostering connections both locally and globally. Within an In-

tegrative Worldview, combating racial disharmony can draw from the concept of *Lokasamgraha*, which emphasizes contributing to the welfare and well-being of all.

Working for Solidarity and Inclusion through Lokasamgraha

The Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita (2010), imparts one of the most important lessons of *Lokasamgraha* in verses 3.20 and 3.25 (Daily Katha, 2015). *Lokasamgraha* signifies the interconnectedness of society for the welfare of the world. Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to “perform your work for the sake of *Lokasamgraha*.” This term, drawn from ancient Indian literature, denotes a concern for the welfare of people and the environment. Radhakrishnan (1951) further defines *Lokasamgraha* as ‘working for world maintenance.’ Agarwal (1997) explains it as “Social Harmony” and “World Preservation,” emphasizing its role in promoting common welfare. He breaks it down into two components: “*Loka*,” referring to humans and the world, and “*samgraha*,” implying protection, care, and maintenance.

Present-day needs call for the application of the beautiful concept of *Lokasamgraha* in society as a whole. *Lokasamgraha* at work involves dedicating oneself to work, considering it an opportunity to make a positive and constructive difference in societal and environmental contexts, thus infusing work with greater meaning. Leaders who embrace the notion of *Lokasamgraha* have a broader sense of community. They work not only for their own welfare but also for the well-being of every individual connected to them directly or indirectly, contributing to the creation of a compassionate and humane society. Bhawuk (2018, p.282) suggests that *Lokasamgraha*, as an outward-focused approach leading to higher goals, is comparable to inward-focused spiritual practices. This implies that serving others by working for their welfare is a path to realizing our true nature. This notion becomes relevant when pursuing solidarity and inclusion, as serving others regardless of their racial background becomes a means of self-realization, with the welfare of others seen as a by-product.

Conclusion

An Integrative Worldview promotes oneness and encompasses both objective and subjective realities. It provides valuable insights into understanding lack of solidarity and inclusion, recognizing the unique perspectives and purposes shaped by individuals’ life stages and talents. There is no universal solution, as circumstances are not inherently good or bad. Emphasizing embodied knowledge gained through personal experiences, this worldview fosters the belief in the gradual enhancement of solidarity and inclusion. To achieve this, individuals need to be aware of their

duties, responsibilities, and the workings of the karmic cycle. Embracing the concept of all-connectedness, expressed as integrativeness, is crucial in approaching solidarity and inclusion. Active engagement in working for the welfare of others facilitates a natural progression toward universal solidarity and inclusiveness.

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INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Theravada Buddhism

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Introduction

Theravada Buddhism is one of the oldest and most traditional schools of Buddhism, which originated in India around 500 BCE. This branch of Buddhism is based on the Pāli canon, which contains the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in the ancient language of Pāli.

In a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, it is important to examine the role of religions in promoting inclusion and solidarity among communities. Theravada Buddhism, one of the oldest and most widely practiced Buddhist traditions, has a rich history of promoting inclusion and solidarity, and can serve as a model for other religions in promoting these values. This article explores the role of religions, specifically Theravada Buddhism, in promoting inclusion and solidarity and highlights the ways in which Theravada Buddhism can contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

In recent times, the principles of inclusion and solidarity have become increasingly important as society grapples with issues related to diversity, equity, and justice. In this context, religion has a crucial role to play, as it has the potential to promote social harmony and a sense of community among its followers. In Theravada Buddhism, one of the oldest and most widely practiced forms of Buddhism, the concepts of inclusion and solidarity are deeply ingrained in the teachings and practices of the religion.

Theravada Buddhism emphasizes the importance of individual spiritual development as a means of achieving enlightenment, but it also emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of cultivating compassion and empathy for others. This includes not only fellow human beings but also all sentient beings. Religion also stresses the importance of community and the support that can be gained from practicing with others.

Through the lens of Theravada Buddhism, this essay will explore the role that religion can play in promoting inclusion and solidarity, both within the Buddhist community and in society at large. It will examine the ways in which Buddhist teachings and practices can promote a sense of connectedness and social respon-

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sibility among individuals and communities, and how these principles can be applied to contemporary issues related to social justice and diversity.

Defining Inclusion and Solidarity

Inclusion refers to the practice of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background or identity, have equal access to resources, opportunities, and participation in society. Solidarity, on the other hand, refers to the practice of standing together in support of a common goal or cause, often in the face of social or political oppression. Both inclusion and solidarity are essential for building a more just and equitable society, as they promote equality, respect, and mutual support among individuals and communities. In the same ways, Theravada dialogues is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other despite their differences. The term refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, at both the individual and institutional levels.

Theory of Inclusion and Solidarity

It is a central theme in Theravada Buddhism, which teaches that all beings are interconnected and that it is our duty to help each other in achieving enlightenment. This concept is based on the belief that all beings possess the potential for enlightenment, regardless of their background or status in society. Theory of Theravada Buddhism is to be open-minded for mutual clarification of perceptions and relations and improve communications. The heat of open-minded lies in building a relationship and trust among dialogue participants where keeping trust is a key element to make communication happens and this led to the growth of empathy which promotes cooperation for final problem-solving. Inclusion in Theravada Buddhism refers to the idea that all beings are included in the spiritual journey toward enlightenment. This means that no being is excluded from the possibility of achieving enlightenment, regardless of their social status, gender, ethnicity, or any other characteristic. This concept is rooted in the Buddhist belief in the equality of all beings and the importance of compassion and empathy towards all living beings.

The concept of solidarity in Theravada Buddhism refers to the idea that we are all interconnected and that we must support each other in our spiritual journey. This means that we must cultivate a sense of community and interconnectedness with all beings, and that we must work together to achieve the common goal of enlightenment. Solidarity is also closely tied to the Buddhist concept of kamma, which teaches that our actions have consequences and that we must take respon-

sibility for our actions¹. This means that our actions not only affect ourselves, but they also affect those around us and the world as a whole. Therefore, cultivating a sense of solidarity means taking responsibility for our actions and striving to create positive kamma for ourselves and others.

The practice of mindfulness meditation is a central aspect of Theravada Buddhism, and it is often used as a tool for cultivating a sense of inclusion and solidarity. Through meditation, we can develop greater awareness of our interconnectedness with all beings, and we can cultivate compassion and empathy for all living beings.

In addition to meditation, the practice of generosity is also an important aspect of the Theory of Inclusion and Solidarity in Theravada Buddhism. Generosity is seen as a way to cultivate a sense of community and interconnectedness with all beings, and it is viewed as a way to create positive kamma for ourselves and others. Therefore, the Theory of Inclusion and Solidarity is a central theme in Theravada Buddhism, which teaches that all beings are interconnected and that it is our duty to help each other in achieving enlightenment. This concept is based on the belief in the equality of all beings and the importance of compassion and empathy towards all living beings. Through meditation, generosity, and other practices, we can cultivate a sense of community and interconnectedness with all beings, and work together to achieve the common goal of enlightenment.

Role of Religions in Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism have the potential to play a powerful role in promoting inclusion and solidarity among communities, as they provide a shared set of values, beliefs, and practices that can bring individuals together and promote mutual understanding and respect. In Theravada Buddhism, the role of religion in promoting inclusion and solidarity is rooted in the concept of the samgha, or community.

Samgha refers to the community of Buddhist practitioners, both monastic and lay men, who support each other in their practice and in their daily lives. The Samgha is a key aspect of Theravada Buddhism, as it provides a sense of belonging and support for individuals, regardless of their background or identity. This sense of community is essential for promoting inclusion and solidarity, as it encourages individuals to look beyond their own interests and to support the well-being of others.

Theravada Buddhism also promotes inclusion and solidarity through the practice of dana, or generosity. Dāna involves giving freely of one's resources, whether they be material or spiritual, to support the well-being of others. Through

¹Note of the Editor: The Pali word *kamma* means 'action' and in Buddhist doctrine refers to any intentional mental, verbal or bodily act. The more commonly known term is the Sanskrit *karma*.

the practice of *dāna*, individuals are encouraged to develop a sense of interconnectedness with others and to recognize the ways in which their own well-being is linked to the well-being of others. This practice of generosity promotes inclusion and solidarity by encouraging individuals to support the needs of others, regardless of their background or identity.

In addition to the concepts of *samgha* and *dāna*, Theravada Buddhism also promotes inclusion and solidarity through the practice of *mettā*, or loving-kindness. *Mettā* involves cultivating a sense of unconditional love and compassion for all beings, regardless of their background or identity. Through the practice of *mettā*, individuals are encouraged to develop a sense of empathy and understanding for others and to recognize the ways in which their own well-being is linked to the well-being of others. This practice of loving-kindness promotes inclusion and solidarity by encouraging individuals to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all beings and to work towards the well-being of all.

Conclusion

In the heart of Theravada Buddhism, Inclusion and solidarity are essential values for building a more just and equitable society, and religions have the potential to play a powerful role in promoting these values. Theravada Buddhism, with its emphasis on the concepts of *samgha*, *dāna*, and *mettā*, can serve as a model for other religions in promoting inclusion and solidarity among communities. By cultivating a sense of community, generosity, and loving-kindness, Theravada Buddhism encourages individuals to support the needs of others, regardless of their background or identity, and to work towards the.

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INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Judaism

RABBI ALLYSON ZACHAROFF*

Introduction

Any discussion of inclusion and solidarity through a Jewish lens necessarily begins with the framing of *betzelem Elohim*—the idea that we are all created in the image of G-d:

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם

G-d created humankind in G-d's image; in the image of G-d did the Almighty create the masculine and feminine, G-d created them. (Genesis 1:27)

The idea that we are all created in the Divine image teaches us of the holiness in everyone, regardless of any aspects of their personhood—religion, gender, age, ability, economic resources, and more. It signifies that each of us comes from a Divine source and so we extrapolate from there that we are called upon to honor the humanity of each individual. This need not suggest that we agree with everything that someone does, but it means that we must remember the inherent worth of every person, and so build ways of inclusion and solidarity both within and outside the Jewish community.

Inclusion (Jewish Community)

The concept of *betzelem Elohim* extends then to truly embrace a world of deep inclusion. In a text we often sing with joy on Shabbat, we share:

הִנֵּה מַה-טוֹב וּמַה-נִּיְעִים שְׁבֹת אֶתִּים גַּם-יָחַד

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when siblings dwell together. (Psalm 133:1)

This imagery of families dwelling together reminds us that living in close proximity requires a level of understanding and respect beyond a mere courtesy; it requires a true honoring of the individual in their wholeness.

This idea then of expansive inclusion in the closest of settings also means an

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inclusion of the deep diversity of people in this world, and some of our most fundamental stories in Judaism tell of those leaders who lived lives in some ways on the margins. For example, in the story of Avram and Sarai, we learn of the struggles of infertility before this couple ultimately had a son:

הִנֵּה-נָא עָצַרְנִי יְהוָה מִלָּדוֹת

Behold, G-d has prevented me from bearing children. (Genesis 16:2)

Our great leader Moses was thought to have possibly had some kind of speech impediment, quite a challenge for someone called vocationally to so much public oration, when he seemingly pleads with G-d about leading the people from slavery, saying:

כִּי כִבְד־פִּי וְכִבְד־לְשׁוֹן אֲנִי

But I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue. (Exodus 4:10)

Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth suffered the loss of both of their spouses and mutually made a choice to form a family together even in that grief, forming lasting close ties even when that connection went beyond biological. In a key scene, Naomi urges Ruth to leave her in order to return to her original community:

וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אֶל-תַּחֲנֻנֵי-בִי לְעִזָּבֶךָ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרַיִךְ כִּי אֶל-אֱשֶׁר תִּלְכִּי אֵלָּהּ וּבְאִשֶּׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֶלֵּין עַמָּךְ עִמִּי וְאֵלֶּהֶךָ אֶלֶּהֶי

But Ruth replied, “Do not entreat me to leave you, to turn back from after you. For wherever you will go, I will go; wherever you will lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people; and your G-d, my G-d.” (Ruth 1:16)

We see in the story of Esther an early example of an interfaith family, in which the Jewish Esther marries a foreign king of a different tradition:

וַיִּשֶׂם כְּתָר-מֶלֶכּוֹת בְּרֵאשִׁיהָ וַיְמַלִּכֶהָ תַּחַת וַשְׁתִּי

Then he set a royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. (Esther 2:17)

Esther later advocates for her people and ultimately saves them from violent hatred because of her own close relationship across faith lines

Our stories repeatedly tell of those who lived lives that even today might be considered outside of common or discussed scenarios, and yet they are honored as our ancestors and leaders. The Jewish community has always had such profound diversity that navigating inclusion is built into our very fabric and so too must those of all identities and experiences be a part of our story today.

Inclusion (Broader Community)

Our tradition also includes the history of the Jewish people's engagement with other communities, and numerous examples of how that interaction involved aspects of inclusion. For example, as the Israelites fled Egypt after the Ten Plagues and their release from slavery, our text reads:

וּגְמִי־עָרַב רַב עִלָּה אִתָּם

And a mixed multitude went up with them. (Exodus 12:38)

The commentators consider this phrasing of “mixed multitude” to signify in some way that the group leaving Egypt included those from outside the Israelite community—perhaps proselytes of multiple nations according to Rashi, or even Egyptians according to Ibn Ezra.

Judaism also includes an idea known as the Noahide Laws. These seven ethical principles are thought to apply to all of global humanity, in comparison to what some would consider the 613 commandments specific to the Jewish community. We learn in Talmud how some principles were thought to include the broader community beyond the Jews:

תנו רבנן איש מה ת“ל איש איש לרבות את העובדי כוכבים

The Sages taught [on a particular topic], “Man.” Why then does it say [in Leviticus 24:15], “Anyone—man, man?” [Listing the word twice.] This is to include those who are worshippers of stars [people who are other than Jewish]. (Sanhedrin 56a:14)

This piece of text purposely includes those outside the community in a worldview of ethical principles, though it is a type of inclusion that does not seek conformity to a Jewish way of life but instead respects that there are different life paths that can be united by some common ethical principles.

Solidarity (Jewish Community)

Judaism has long considered itself a people that emphasizes the importance of being Jewish in community, so fostering an internal solidarity that we can witness in a number of practices. As one example, many communities observe the principle of requiring a *minyan*, a quorum of participants, in order to engage in certain prayers. Many mourners who have lost a parent will choose to recite the Mourner's Kaddish (an Aramaic affirmation of the glory of G-d) daily for approximately a year following the loss. This can mean that a person might need to find a community of ten people who will come to make the *minyan* every day, and often others in the community will intentionally come out to offer this type of support through their presence for prayer.

We also see the principle of Jewish solidarity associated with the holiday of Purim. One of the practices associated with the holiday is to give support to those in need, which came out of a letter Esther's relative Mordecai wrote about observing practices yearly in celebration of the community being saved from destruction. Mordecai enjoins the Jews to make sure that they send:

וּמִתְּנוּת לְאֶבְיָוִים

Gifts to the poor. (Esther 9:22)

Some communities today interpret this particular guidance to apply specifically to helping those in need within the Jewish community. There exists in Judaism a balance of universalism and particularism, as we strive to balance caring for all of humanity and also taking care of those within our wider Jewish family.

Solidarity (Broader Community)

Solidarity also as support for those at a disadvantage in society outside the Jewish community comes up regularly. A common phrase related to this concept and used today is *tikkun olam*—repairing the world. The idea is that we are partners with G-d in helping heal a broken world. We see reference to the concept in the Mishnah when a ruling is made that it was ordered as such:

מִפְּנֵי תִיקוּן הָעוֹלָם

For the sake of repairing the world. (Gittin 34b)

One way that this call to repair emerges is that we are regularly instructed in how we should treat others ethically. The principle embodied in what is often called today the Golden Rule finds a home in one particular line:

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ

Love your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)

Some examples of this care comes in the form of our Jewish tradition of *tzedakah*, or giving charity. In addition to a culture of notable philanthropic giving, many households, synagogues, or Hebrew School classrooms contain a *tzedakah* box, a small box with a slot at the top for donating money to go to charity. These boxes serve as physical reminders of the need to stand in solidarity with everyone.

Similarly, we are reminded during the Passover Seder (the ritual dinner during which we recount the memory of the Israelite people in Egypt escaping slavery for freedom) of a critical piece of solidarity with the less fortunate:

וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָצוּ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Do not oppress the stranger, for you all knew the feeling of the stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 23:9)

Finally, a particular category of those in need that regularly comes up comprises the widow, orphan, and stranger as people particularly requiring support:

וְאַל־מַגְדָּה וְיָתוּם גֵּר וְעַנִּי אֶל־תַּעֲשֶׂקוּ

Do not defraud a widow, orphan, stranger, and poor... (Zechariah 7:10)

We live out our values of solidarity when we recall the imperative to support those in need, both in the Jewish community and more broadly.

Conclusion

Many Jewish communities today undertake incredible work to build their capacity for inclusion and solidarity. Efforts across the Jewish spectrum have been undertaken to ensure that members of the community of varying identities or facing specific disadvantages are more wholly supported. Recent decades have seen enormous strides forward of living out the above principles to ensure that our communities are built to better support women; the LGBTQIA+ community; those who have disabilities; and more. While there always exists internal varying perspectives within the wider Jewish community on inclusion and solidarity, we need only look to our tradition to identify stories and ethical principles that call us to include those of various identities, and to stand in solidarity with those in need. As the world continues to connect more internationally and we engage evermore across lines of difference, may we all find inspiration in the Jewish imperative to approach this engagement through a lens of inclusiveness and solidarity as we strive to connect across lines of difference and build a stronger world.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Islam

ADNANE MOKRANI*

Dalla tribù alla *Umma*

L'Egira, l'emigrazione del Profeta Muḥammad, la pace sia su di lui, dalla Mecca a Medina ha segnato un passaggio storico sia religioso che sociale: da un sistema tribale basato sulle alleanze di sangue, in cui l'uomo difende la propria tribù a prescindere da qualsiasi considerazione, ad un sistema fondato sulla solidarietà all'interno di un gruppo di fede, quello della comunità libera e autonoma dei seguaci del Profeta. Sotto l'attacco dei Qurayshiti, la tribù alla quale il Profeta stesso apparteneva, e dei loro alleati, la nuova comunità di Medina fu costretta a combattere come atto di sopravvivenza, il che significava combattere contro le proprie famiglie, un tabù nella società araba dell'epoca. Una sfida tale che ha messo alla prova la solidarietà della comunità nascente. Questa trasformazione sociale è riassunta da un Ḥadīṭ narrato da Anas b. Mālik:

Il Messaggero di Dio disse: "Aiuta tuo fratello, che sia oppressore o oppresso". Un uomo disse: "O Messaggero di Dio! Lo aiuterò se è oppresso, ma se è un oppressore, come lo aiuterò?" Il Profeta disse: "Impedendogli di opprimere [gli altri], perché questo è come aiutarlo".¹

La genialità del Profeta è stata quella di trasformare un proverbio preislamico, "aiuta tuo fratello, che sia oppressore o oppresso", che riassumeva il "sentimento di gruppo", *ʿaṣabiyya*, cambiandone radicalmente il significato e dotandolo di una finalità morale. Tutto ciò non significa che la solidarietà tribale, come quella familiare o nazionale, sia un male di per sé. Tuttavia, essa rischiava di diventare nociva quando assurgeva ad idolo assolutizzato, esigendo il sacrificio degli individui e dei valori etici sull'altare del tribalismo o del nazionalismo. L'obiettivo del Profeta Muḥammad non era quello di cancellare il sistema tribale, ma piuttosto di contenerlo, trascenderlo e usarlo per servire una causa più grande, un atteggiamento

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¹ Buḥārī, *al-Ġāmiʿ al-Šāḥiḥ*, a cura di Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, il Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1980, K. al-ikrāh, ḥ. 6952, vol. 4, p. 287.

riformista che vuole trasformare gli istinti umani, orientandoli verso un nobile obiettivo.

Il modello solidale della comunità di Medina non era solamente religioso ma anche interreligioso: ciò si manifesta nel Documento, *waṭīqa*, detto anche *Costituzione di Medina*, che includeva le tribù ebraiche della zona in un'alleanza contro gli invasori. Tutti i componenti di Medina erano chiamati "una sola umma" nel Documento, a prescindere dall'affiliazione religiosa.² Questo testo, scritto subito dopo l'Egira, preserva ancora oggi il suo valore come precedente storico di un'idea di cittadinanza inclusiva e plurale, come si legge in diversi documenti islamici recenti. La *Dichiarazione di Marrakech* del 2016 è un caso significativo, che affronta i diritti delle minoranze nei Paesi a maggioranza islamica e che si concentra sul concetto di piena cittadinanza, come risultato di una conferenza internazionale con una estesa partecipazione islamica.³

Il modello di Medina non ha avuto seguito nella storia islamica, è rimasto piuttosto un'alternativa archiviata nella memoria storica dei musulmani. È stato invece sostituito gradualmente dalla *dimma*, il sistema delle minoranze protette che godevano di una certa autonomia e libertà religiosa, pagando allo Stato la tassa della *ḡizya*. Questo sistema è diventato dominante negli imperi successivi. Gli ebrei di Medina sono stati trasferiti nei centri urbani del nord, successivamente la capitale stessa dell'Impero nascente degli Omayyadi è stata trasferita da Medina a Damasco. Il sistema della *dimma* era vantaggioso nel suo contesto storico, ma in epoca moderna ha mostrato i suoi limiti, soprattutto con la nascita di sistemi che garantiscono livelli più alti di uguaglianza e di giustizia.

Dopo la morte del Profeta, la solidarietà tribale torna a giocare un ruolo determinante nei conflitti del potere, che hanno preso una piega etnica, se non addirittura razzista, tramite il movimento della *ṣu'ūbiyya*, una forma di nazionalismo etnico e linguistico che ha segnato le tensioni tra arabi e persiani all'epoca degli Omayyadi e degli Abbasidi. La teoria politica classica ha adottato principi etnici come il monopolio del califfato dai Qurayshiti.⁴

Ibn Khaldūn (m. 1406), nella sua sociologia della Storia, considera il "sentimento di gruppo" come principale motore della *storia*, riteneva che la solidarietà tribale sarebbe tornata subito dopo la morte del Profeta Muḥammad per essere la

² Vedi per esempio: Michael Lecker, *the "Constitution of Medina" Muḥammad's First Legal Document*, Princeton: the Darwin Press, 2004.

³ Vedi <http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/>

⁴ Abu'l Hasan Ali al-Mawardi (d. 1058), *Al-Abkam as Sultaniyyah, the Laws of Islamic Governance*, Assadullah Yate (tr.), Dar ul Thaqafah, 2018.

regola politica e sociale dominante. Comprende così il fallimento della rivolta di al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī e il massacro della famiglia del Profeta a Karbalā’ nel 680.⁵

Al-mulk al-‘dūd, ossia il regno ereditario dispotico, è diventato, purtroppo la regola nella storia islamica, -il fatto che ha lasciato tracce nella cultura religiosa. Uscire da questa eredità negativa rappresenta una delle priorità della riforma del pensiero islamico di oggi: ritrovare i principi fondanti della solidarietà e dell’inclusione, basati sulla consultazione, *šūrā*, e sulla giustizia sociale, *‘adl*.

Dalla *Umma* all’umanità

L’orizzonte umanistico che va oltre le comunità religiose è presente nei testi fondanti dell’Islam, il Corano (=C) e la Sunna. Si vede, ad esempio, nel famoso versetto:

“O uomini, vi abbiamo creato da un maschio e una femmina e abbiamo fatto di voi popoli e tribù, affinché vi conoscete a vicenda. Presso Dio, il più nobile di voi è colui che più Lo teme. In verità Dio è sapiente, ben informato.” C (49, 13)

Come si manifesta anche nel *Sermone d’Addio*, tenuto durante l’ultimo pellegrinaggio del Profeta, *ḥiġġat al-wadā’*, che rappresenta il suo testamento finale, pochi mesi prima della sua morte:

“O gente! Uno è il vostro Signore e uno è vostro padre. Infatti, non c’è superiorità per un arabo su un non-arabo, né per un non-arabo su un arabo, né per un rosso su un nero, né per un nero su un rosso, se non per pietà. Ho trasmesso [il messaggio]?” Dissero: *“Sì, il Messaggero di Dio ha trasmesso”* (Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal e altre fonti).

La solidarietà sociale è stata istituzionalizzata tramite la *zakāt*, l’elemosina obbligatoria organizzata tramite una istituzione che cerca i poveri per aiutarli, ponendosi come un intermediario tra i donatori e i beneficiari, preservando la dignità di questi ultimi come si evince da questo versetto:

“Il ricavato delle elemosine serve per i poveri e per chi ha bisogno, e per chi è incaricato di raccoglierte, e per quelli dei quali abbiamo ammansito il cuore, e serve per riscattare lo schiavo e il debitore insolvente, e per il sentiero di Dio e per il viandante. Questo è un obbligo imposto da Dio, Dio è sapiente e saggio.” C (9, 60)

⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *the Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History*, F. Rosenthal (tr.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, vol. I, pp. 443–46.

La *zakāt* è uno dei cinque pilastri dell'Islam, inseparabile dalla preghiera e dal definirsi musulmano, come lo indica la formula “compiere la preghiera e pagare l'elemosina” che si ripete nel Corano ben 23 volte,⁶ come si legge in questi versetti:

“La vera pietà non è volgere il viso verso oriente o verso occidente, la vera pietà è quella di chi crede in Dio e nell'ultimo giorno, negli angeli, nel libro e nei profeti, di chi dona dei propri beni per amore Suo ai parenti, agli orfani, ai poveri, ai viandanti e ai mendicanti e per il riscatto dei prigionieri, è quella di chi compie la preghiera e paga l'elemosina e tiene fede al patto dopo averlo stipulato, di chi è paziente nei dolori, nelle avversità e nei momenti di tribolazione. Ecco quelli che sono sinceri, ecco quelli che temono Dio.” C (2, 177).

“Quelli che per amore di Lui nutrono il povero, il prigioniero e l'orfano: “Noi vi nutriamo per il volto di Dio, non vogliamo da voi alcuna ricompensa e nemmeno gratitudine.” C (76, 8-9)

Questi valori etici, religiosi e umanistici, sono ben radicati nelle Fonti scritturali dell'Islam. La sfida di oggi, di fronte alla modernità, consisterebbe nel tradurli in forme nuove e creative nel contesto di uno Stato democratico.

Il “*Documento sulla fratellanza umana per la pace mondiale e la convivenza comune*”, firmato da Papa Francesco e dallo Shaykh al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, offre, a mio parere, una risposta islamo-cristiana a queste sfide. Il *Documento* rappresenta un evento storico che mette al centro del dialogo islamo-cristiano l'urgente questione della cittadinanza. Da questo punto di vista, è un documento riformista in modo radicale: esso sottolinea chiaramente i valori fondamentali dell'uguaglianza e della piena cittadinanza:

Il concetto di cittadinanza si basa sull'eguaglianza dei diritti e dei doveri sotto la cui ombra tutti godono della giustizia. Per questo è necessario impegnarsi per stabilire nelle nostre società il concetto della piena cittadinanza e rinunciare all'uso discriminatorio del termine minoranze, che porta con sé i semi del sentirsi isolati e dell'inferiorità.⁷

Queste affermazioni sono importanti nel contesto islamico, dove in alcuni Paesi le minoranze, incluse quelle cristiane, soffrono di diverse forme di discriminazione, considerate talvolta cittadini di seconda classe anche se in modo non dichiarato. In altri Paesi, le minoranze islamiche sono perseguitate, come in Myanmar, in Cina e in India. In Occidente, L'Europa e l'America del Nord, dove

⁶ Corano (2, 43, 83, 110, 177, 277), (4, 77, 162), (5, 12, 55), (9, 11, 71), (19, 31, 55), (21, 73), (22, 41), (24, 37, 56), (27, 3), (31, 4), (33, 33), (58, 13), (73, 20), (98, 5).

⁷ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html (consultato il 28 aprile 2023).

la democrazia è più radicata, con la salita dei movimenti e dei partiti populistici e di estrema destra, c'è una vera preoccupazione per la crescita dell'islamofobia e dell'antisemitismo.

Il *Documento* esige il superamento del concetto peggiorativo di “minoranza”, per accedere alla piena cittadinanza, dove l'uguaglianza nei diritti e nei doveri è garantita. Questo Stato di diritto non può essere che lo Stato neutrale, dove tutti i cittadini godono dello stesso trattamento a prescindere dell'affiliazione religiosa. Troviamo tracce di una teoria politica nel *Documento* che chiarisce il rapporto tra religione e spazio pubblico: La religione rappresenta una coscienza etica e morale nella società e nel mondo, senza averne il privilegio né pretendere il monopolio. La religione ha una missione di umanizzazione e di divinizzazione, aiutando l'essere umano a attualizzare il potenziale di bellezza e di bontà.

Libertà e pluralismo

Il *Documento sulla Fratellanza umana* tratta anche il legame tra libertà, diversità e Sapienza divina. Il pluralismo religioso è visto come una cosa positiva che fa parte della Saggezza divina:

*La libertà è un diritto di ogni persona: ciascuno gode della libertà di credo, di pensiero, di espressione e di azione. Il pluralismo e le diversità di religione, di colore, di sesso, di razza e di lingua sono una sapiente volontà divina, con la quale Dio ha creato gli esseri umani. Questa Sapienza divina è l'origine da cui deriva il diritto alla libertà di credo e alla libertà di essere diversi. Per questo si condanna il fatto di costringere la gente a aderire a una certa religione o a una certa cultura, come pure di imporre uno stile di civiltà che gli altri non accettano.*⁸

Il pluralismo è visto nel Corano come una *Sunna* divina, il modo in cui Dio agisce e crea. È il segno della Sua infinita creatività, che è sempre rinnovata e sorprendente. Non c'è spazio in Dio per l'abitudine e la monotonia. La creazione è dinamica, sinfonica, colorata. In essa si manifesta la Bellezza e la Maestà del Signore. Di conseguenza, chi vuol rendere il creato monotono e monocoloro non ha colto la Saggezza divina e si oppone alla Volontà del Creatore. La pluralità è una verità ovvia, la vediamo tutti i giorni, ovunque ed in ogni contesto, dai fiori fino alle lingue e alle culture. Sfortunatamente, ciò non ha impedito alle religioni di cadere nella trappola dell'esclusivismo, visto erroneamente come garanzia di unità e di credibilità, e come unico modo per giustificare la scelta e l'appartenenza. Essere nella verità, in questa ottica esclusivista, significa che gli altri sono nella falsità.

⁸ Ibid.

Come se la mia verità avesse bisogno della falsità dell'altro per brillare. Le religioni, in generale, tendono ad essere conservatrici e scettiche verso il valore del pluralismo, che in epoca moderna ha assunto una nuova dimensione.

Il *Documento* esprime una religiosità fiduciosa e serena che non teme la pluralità e non la vede come minaccia. Anzi, ci permette di pensare che una religiosità senza libertà non è altro che ipocrisia o persecuzione. La libertà, che è la condizione per vivere una religiosità sana e compiuta, esige la diversità e la possibilità di non seguire una fede o di uscirne. Il *Documento* sottolinea il rapporto stretto tra religione e cittadinanza piena. La democrazia è una opportunità per le fedi, perché libera lo spazio pubblico dal dominio di una sola fede, e permette la diversità delle espressioni religiose. È un nuovo paradigma politico e religioso che prende forma e viene qui confermato da due grandi autorità religiose.

Il Corano indica che la diversità e la pluralità rientrano nel disegno di Dio. La diversità è voluta da Dio per una Saggezza suprema, per spingere gli uomini a gareggiare nel bene, trasformando la gelosia negativa in una competizione leale nel servizio dell'umanità:

“Ognuno ha una direzione verso la quale volgere il viso. Gareggiate nel bene. Ovunque voi siate, Dio vi riunirà tutti. In verità, Dio è Onnipotente.” C (2, 148)

“Ad ognuno di voi abbiamo assegnato una via e un percorso. Se Dio avesse voluto, avrebbe fatto di voi una sola comunità. Ha voluto però mettervi alla prova con quel che vi ha dato. Gareggiate in opere buone: tutti ritornerete a Dio ed Egli vi informerà a proposito delle cose sulle quali siete discordi.” C (5, 48), vedi anche (42, 8).

“Certo: quelli che hanno creduto, gli ebrei, i cristiani, i sabei, chiunque ha creduto in Dio e nel Giorno ultimo e compie opera buona, avranno la loro ricompensa presso il Signore. Per loro nessun timore, e non verranno afflitti.” C (2, 62). Vedi anche (5, 69) e (22, 17).

Si tratta di una diversità e di una pluralità legittime, in quanto volute da Dio. Il Corano afferma qui che se Dio avesse voluto avrebbe fatto di voi una sola comunità, ma non l'ha fatto. Invece, è stata proprio la Sua Volontà a stabilire tale pluralità di vie.

Il pluralismo religioso è un garante della dignità umana, nessuno è escluso dalla Misericordia divina. È una condizione teologica ed etica che permette una maggior apertura e inclusione sociale, solidarietà tra credenti e comunità che si apprezzano e si rispettano a vicenda.

“Non c'è costrizione nella fede,” C (2, 256), come afferma il Corano, esige il pluralismo. Il principio della *“non-costrizione”* non è solamente un principio morale fondamentale ma anche una definizione di religione. La religione non si coniuga con la coercizione, che spazia tra la violenza con le mani e con le armi e la violenza con le parole e con i gesti, e si estende al silenzio e all'abbandono. La non-costrizione è un rifiuto categorico di ogni forma di violenza: ciò che è visibile, ciò che

è invisibile, attraverso la brutalità o la tentazione, la seduzione e lo sfruttamento delle debolezze e dei bisogni. La non-costrizione è una purificazione della religione da tutte le impurità che metterebbero in dubbio o diminuirebbero la libera scelta umana. Abbracciare o abbandonare una religione, praticarla o abbandonarla, sono tutte opzioni possibili per una persona purché sia libera e responsabile. Sbaglia chi pensa che un'autorità esterna (stato o legge) possa fare un buon credente. La coercizione rende solo ipocriti o timorosi oppressi. La coercizione è un terrore psicologico che schiavizza e non libera, è antireligioso e contrario all'essenza dell'esperienza religiosa.⁹

I credenti gestiscono i loro affari attraverso la consultazione, *šūra*, dalla famiglia allo Stato; mentre pregano, si consultano a vicenda. La consultazione è la loro etica sociale di base:

“Coloro che rispondono al loro Signore e adempiono alla preghiera e nelle loro faccende impiegano la consultazione e versano parte di ciò che abbiamo loro donato”. C (42, 38), vedi anche (3, 159).

La pace con Dio discende sulla terra come pace tra gli uomini. La consultazione è la prima espressione sociale della solidarietà e dell'inclusione. Senza consultazione prevalgono la tirannia e l'ipocrisia, due facce della stessa medaglia.

In mezzo a populismi e fondamentalismi, laici e religiosi, in un mondo colmo di guerre politiche, economiche e culturali, in una violenza sistemica contro gli uomini e il creato, le religioni hanno l'obbligo morale di mostrare una solidarietà umana maggiore, per testimoniare, con coscienza viva e profetica, una umanità nuova. Su questa solidarietà interreligiosa dipende il futuro della credibilità delle religioni stesse e il destino di tutta l'umanità.

⁹ Vedi: Adnane Mokrani, *Toward an Islamic Theology of Nonviolence, in Dialogue with René Girard*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2022, pp. 35-37.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Taoism

WAI HOP TONG*

In Taoism Philosophy, “Inclusion and solidarity” have three meanings: First, it is the ontological meaning. The second is category meaning, and the third is social meaning.

The first is ontological meaning, use on philosophy of language

Inclusion and solidarity are interconnected concepts that promote equality, acceptance, and a sense of belonging among individuals and communities.

The ontological meaning of inclusion is to accept and respect all different individuals and groups, regardless of their differences in race, gender, religion, culture, economic, political status, etc. Inclusion focuses on ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their difference, are valued, respected, and provided equal opportunities to participate and contribute to society. It emphasizes the removal of barriers and the creation of environments that embrace diversity and accommodate the needs of all.

The ontological meaning of solidarity is to help on the basis of common goals or common above all, solidarity and mutuality among individuals or groups interests. Solidarity is emphasizing unity, support, and cooperation among individuals or groups who share common goals or face common challenges. It involves standing together, advocating for the rights and well-being of others, and working collectively towards social change. Regardless of their differences or diverse backgrounds, are valued, respected, and provided equal opportunities to participate in and contribute to various aspects of society, such as education, employment, social activities, and decision-making processes. It promotes a sense of belonging, acceptance, and fairness for everyone, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.

Inclusion and solidarity go hand in hand. Inclusive practices and policies foster a sense of belonging and acceptance, laying to foundation for solidarity. Solidarity, in turn, strengthens inclusion by promoting empathy, understanding, and collective action to address systemic barriers and promote equality.

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Both inclusion and solidarity are essential for building harmonious, equitable, and just societies where everyone can thrive and contribute their unique perspectives and talents.

The second is category meaning, use on specific object

Inclusion and solidarity can be categorized as social concepts or principles that promote equality, diversity, and cooperation among individuals and groups, they fall under the broader category of social justice or social cohesion.

“Inclusion and solidarity” are also a very important element in Taoism’s practice, it is a life precept of “Taoist practice”. In the Taoist law, gathering fellow practitioners to practice together is a very serious matter. Because we live together, it is very important to help and encourage each other. Therefore, “inclusion and solidarity” is one of the important principles of Taoism.

Wang Chong Yang, the founder of the Quan Zhen School of Taoism, his volume----In the fifteen treatises on the creation of religion.

道教全真派祖師王重陽在創教十五論中有言。

論合道伴：

道人合伴，本欲疾病相扶，你死我埋，我死你埋。

然先擇人而後合伴，不可先合伴而後擇人。

不可相戀，相戀則繫其心；不可不戀，不戀則情相離。

戀與不戀，得其中道可矣！

有三合三不合：明心、有慧、有志，此三合也。

不明著外境，無智慧性愚濁，無志氣乾打闕，此三不合也。

立身之本在叢林，全憑心志。

不可順人情，不可取相貌，唯擇高明者，是上法也。”

Chinese translation on “Companionship”:

Taoist companions, originally want to help each other in illness, you die and I bury you, and I die and you bury me.

Then choose someone first and then partner, not partner first and then choose someone.

You can't be in love, if you are in love, you will be too sentimental; you can't be in love, if you are not in love, you will be separated with your partner and unreasonable.

To love or not to love, you can find the right way!

There are three unions principle and three discordances:

Clear mind, wisdom, and ambition, these are three unions principle.

Not understanding the external environment, being ignorant and stupidity,

having no ambition and being internal struggle, these three things are not in harmony.

In the law of jungle, it depends entirely on one's will.

The best way is, you can't follow people's feelings, you can't take appearances, and you only choose the wise ones.

The "inclusion and solidarity" of Taoist believers is mainly experienced in the life of practicing together. So, Taoist companionship just like wedding. In the past, we practiced together in temples, mountains and forests; in modern times, we practice together in society, city and home. The best companionships are couple and cultivation together. If the husband and wife practicing together, building a happy family together, promoting prosperity for children and grandchildren, and being happy forever. Inclusion and solidarity are inseparable. Therefore, it is not a dream to cultivate one's morality, regulate one's family, govern one's country, and a peaceful world of great harmony.

"Inclusion" is a way to choose people and seek common ground while reserving differences. Unity is to combine as partners and live together with mutual care. It is the purpose of human beings to tolerate and understand different opinions, and to reach a consensus of unity. Tolerance is an individual's daily life of cultivating the three virtues; the three virtues are seeing kindness, speaking kindly, and doing kindness. Taoist practices the three kindnesses every day, and will inevitably be able to tolerate things that are difficult to tolerate in the world.

"Solidarity" refers to macro tolerance; it means that human beings live together, and choose a partner based on the criteria for choosing a spouse, respect and tolerate each other, unite and struggle for survival, and depend on each other. "Unity" is the collective method of choosing a partner for the three-in-one; the three-in-one is a clear mind, wisdom, and ambition; you can comfortably cultivate together and become enlightened.

Taoist activities can be divided into two levels: individual and collective; in the individual it is called inclusive behaviour; in the collective it is called solidarity action. In the behaviour of Taoism, tolerance comes from the mind, which is called tolerance, but there is a difference between suitable and inappropriate thoughts, so tolerance has to be chosen; tolerance is the metaphysical Taoist wisdom that goes up. Ascension is the value wisdom of the collective through personal control of self-worth. The collective action of Dao activities is called unity only when everyone's efforts are gathered, but the results of the karma are divided into public and private. Unity actions make everyone abide by the law, infect individuals with responsibility, and then achieve public morality, so unity cannot be falling into the dream of populist; unity is the descending metaphysical Taoist neutral wisdom.

The best side is the value of collective compliance with the law affecting the value wisdom of the individual.

Appropriate or inappropriate, public or private, all come from people's minds. Thinking of good and good fortune follows, and thinking of evil follows disaster. Therefore, practitioners must be seeing kindness, speak kindly, and do good deeds. If you do the three kindnesses every day, you will surely have future blessings.

The third is social meaning, use on society or common laws:

All the social level, inclusion and solidarity have the following meaning:

Inclusion

Inclusion means that society accepts and respects all people, regardless of their background, characteristics or identities. This means elimination discrimination, prejudice and exclusion, and ensuring equal opportunities and rights for everyone. Inclusion refers to the practice of ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or characteristics, is given equal opportunities, access, and treatment within a particular group or society. It aims to foster acceptance, diversity, and belonging, promoting a sense of fairness and equity for all individuals.

Solidarity

Solidarity implies the sharing of common goals, values and interests between individuals and groups. It involves people supporting each other, cooperating and coming together to achieve common interests, defend rights and solve common problems. Solidarity refers to the unity, support, and cooperation among individuals or groups who share common goals, interests, or values. It involves standing together in time of need, advocating for the rights and well-being of others, and working collectively towards achieving social, economic, or political change. Solidarity emphasizes empathy, compassion, and a sense of shared responsibility, often expressed through actions such as protests, strikes, donations, volunteering, or community organizing. It is a powerful force that can foster social cohesion, challenge injustices, and promote equality and justice.

The most common occasion is at a wedding; the testimonies must have the encouragement of "inclusion and solidarity". Marriage is a life activity, that combines two independent individuals by law to achieve a covenant of life and death, and establish a family. On the day of the wedding, Taoist often use "inclusion and solidarity" to encourage the groom and bride, to explain and educate the couple the precept of life, and the importance of starting a family. Basically, exhorting them to tolerate each other and unite their strengths to fight for liv-

ing. In the wedding activities, “inclusion and solidarity” have become two faces of the Tao.

For example, marriage in the above example is a lifelong choice of choosing someone as a partner. Therefore, in the process of communication, the other half needs to go through a tolerant process of communication, mutual understanding, mutual understanding, and mutual trust. This is the way for the two to enhance internal unity. action. The wedding unites the two families to form an in-law relationship, which becomes a collective relationship network. It must be tolerant and reciprocal, unanimously external, and combine all forces to achieve the goal of life continuation.

Taoist people live together and cultivate the chain, just like marriage, it needs to go through the same rigor of tolerance and unity. Tolerance is internal unity; therefore, to have a choice, the most important thing is to choose someone to be your partner. Taoist companionship (unity), the original intention is to help each other, help each other in illness, you die and I bury you, and I die and you bury you. Therefore, it is necessary to choose people (tolerance) first, to be tolerant and to adapt, to know oneself and the enemy, and then to be a Taoist partner. You must not first be a Taoist partner (unity) and then choose a person (tolerance).

The relationship between people, the tactile perception of emotions, love, care, etc., is a structure of restraint. For Taoist falling in love or too tolerant will lead to lust and easy emotional injury; Do not fall in love or excessive heart-to-heart, and don't care about the pain, will separate your attitude and feelings, and become unhuman. Love which is a continuous feeling and not love is a broken feeling, Taoist practice is to find the middle way of broken and continuous!

There are three unions principle: When choosing someone as a partner, you need to know the person, and the partner should: have a clear heart, have wisdom, and have ambition; only with these three combinations can we cooperate and understand each other easily, and tolerance or inclusion can have real meaning.

If the partner is not sincere or no clear heart, he will be ignorant of the outside world; if he is no wisdom, his temperament will be dull; if he is no ambition, he will only make noise. These three are not compatible and harmony.

The foundation of life lies in the unity of the family, which depends on the whole family's single-mindedness. Therefore, we can learn the practice method of “companion to the Tao” in Taoism. Inclusion and solidarity are key elements for building harmonious, stable and justice societies. They promote diversity, equality and inclusion and reduce division, injustice and inequality in societies. They help create more harmonious, warm and supportive communities, promoting understanding, respect and cooperation among people.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Confucianism

PARK MING KAO*

Religious Unity

Mankind is currently being hit by the highest temperature in 2 million years. This may be a sign of an ice age that will occur one day. At that time, more than 90% of life will disappear. The last three ice ages have been preceded by the highest temperatures in the history of mankind.

In addition, there is another natural omen that is beginning to appear. It is that the leading American ecologist and entomological authority, Edward Wilson, sees a sign of the gradual loss of insect diversity on Earth. This is due to the destruction of nature and the decreasing space for insects to survive. He warns humans that if insects disappear, so will almost all flowering plants and the food webs on which they depend. Such a loss would lead to the extinction of reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. Humans would not survive either. He cried out: "Leave half the earth to other species than humans!"

On the other hand, mankind is facing the possibility of another world war as a result of some bad decisions made since the war between Russia and Ukraine.

If all of these disasters occur in the world, they will lead to massive human deaths. The saddest thing is that this horrific scenario is the result of the moral failure of human existence. The only way to save ourselves from these calamity is to gather all the wisdom and moral power of mankind to resolve this life-and-death crisis.

History tells us that religion is the strongest force for moral education and the strongest moral education team in society. It is also a fusion of civilisation and wisdom. Therefore, in this battle for the survival of mankind, religions will definitely fight to the fullest. And it is certain that mankind will win.

Tolerance

From a religious point of view, the supreme masters of all religions created everything in the world. The supreme are all true, all good and all perfect in nature, and all use 'love' as a means of teaching the world, and all have a mission to

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help people live happily and get out of trouble. This is exactly what Confucianism says: 'There are no two ways in heaven and no two hearts in the sage. It is also the reason why the great Confucian scholar Zi Xia called 'All people within the four seas are brothers and sisters'. Confucianism states that benevolence and love should be extended from human beings to all things in the world, because all things have the same origin. Moreover, all things under the sky also show, as our sages have said, that 'all things are nurtured together without harming each other, and the Way is practiced together without contradicting each other'. As the great Confucian scholar Zhang Zai said, "love all people as myself, treat all things as my dear friends" His saying has become the core of Confucianism's ecological ethics and the guiding principle of human morality.

The interfaith exchange began in 1977 and was followed by the establishment of the Joint Secretariat of the Six Religions (Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism) in 1978. Since then, the six religions have regularly exchanged views on issues of common concern to society. At these meetings, religious leaders and scholars present their views and propose possible solutions according to their own religious perspectives. This kind of religious activity has greatly increased the understanding between different religions. It broadens the wisdom and ability of human beings to understand and respond to things. At the meetings, the different religions show respect to each other and feel the sincerity of the love they transmit. The six religions have been holding regular exchanges for 46 years and will continue to do so. This year is the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Joint Secretariat of the Six Religions, and our religious community will join together to celebrate.

Another major religious event in Hong Kong is the annual *Avalokiteshvara Cultural Festival* organised by the Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, which is now in its ninth year to promote Avalokiteshvara's compassion and pray for world peace. Each year, the theme of the event is the world's plight at the time. Last year, for example, we held an event on how to fight the plague and reduce climate rise. We promote the health benefits of vegetarian food and give away free vegetarian lunch boxes on that day. We hope that the world will reduce the demand for meat, thus reducing the greenhouse gases produced by the livestock and meat industries and helping to reduce the rising temperatures. We also distributed epidemic masks, hand sanitizer, and held a prayer march to remove the plague and pray for those who died from the plague. The public participated in this activity too.

In addition to the project seminars and exchanges, religious groups also held friendship activities for different religions. The activities of each religion are celebrated by inviting each other and supporting each other for decades. Therefore, the religious life of Hong Kong people is very colorful, because the religious life of

Hong Kong people is not only limited to their own religion, but also to participate in the celebrations of other religions.

Recently, Hong Kong religions have been enthusiastically supporting the Scout Association of Hong Kong's 'Day of Responsibility to God'. All religions have been welcoming Scouts to their churches, temples and monasteries, and giving guided tours. Religious leaders also introduced their religious practices to help Scouts understand more about their religion.

Some time ago in this year, the Taoist Church held a religious music festival, which was supported by all the major religions, and sent an orchestra to participate in the festival, which was very successful. Some religious colleagues advocated that it should be hosted by each religion in turn every year and become a regular activity of the religious community in Hong Kong. It was agreed that Taoism would continue to host the event next year to give more time for the religious groups to prepare.

Saving Human Existence from Danger

Here, I deeply feel that there are two reasons why the religious community in Hong Kong can work together so harmoniously. First, the religions are different, but they have the same mission to society and are willing to do their best and support each other to realise their mission in society. Secondly, the successful operation of the Joint Secretariat of the six religions for 45 years is due to the influence of the Chinese culture of Confucius and Mencius. When there are conflicts among religions, the first principle is to deal in a harmonious manner, respecting and tolerating each other and then seeking common ground while reserving differences, in the end the matter will be solved satisfactory.

Here, I hope that some other places in the world would establish joint secretariats similar to ours in Hong Kong. Let the community feel the harmony and love between religions. I hope wars would never happen because of religion and I hope justice would govern the world and that all people would do in the same way.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Les traditions africaines

GRÉGOIRE MALOBA KAYAMBA*

De la palabre à la réconciliation

Les conflits sont inhérents à chaque corps social et constituent un défi permanent au vivre-ensemble. Dans les traditions africaines, le conflit comme la maladie dépassent le cadre purement physique et individuel, ils ont un impact social et cosmique¹.

Héritières de la tradition orale, les sociétés africaines ont toujours mis en valeur le dialogue et la discussion pour régler les conflits communautaires afin de rétablir l'harmonie et la cohésion vitale. A ce titre, la palabre apparaît comme la voie privilégiée pour parvenir à la réconciliation. Je voudrais analyser la structure de la palabre et des rites de réconciliation puisés dans les Religions traditionnelles africaines afin d'en dégager les éléments de synodalité.

A propos de la palabre

Qu'est-ce que la palabre ?

La palabre intervient dans un contexte conflictuel et vise à rétablir l'harmonie et la communion du groupe. Elle suppose un dialogue où tous les partenaires, dans une même égalité des chances, prétendent à la franchise et à la liberté intégrale. Vu sous cet angle, la palabre « est dialogue qui s'achève dans la communion. Car, c'est en fait la réduction d'un conflit par le langage, c'est la violence, prise humainement dans la discussion et soumise à l'action efficace de la toute-puissance du verbe »². De ce point de vue, la palabre renvoie à la parole partagée et à l'éthique de la discussion³, elle est le lieu où la parole se mange, se mâche et se digère ensemble, selon

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¹ Cf. G. MALOBA KAYAMBA, « Comme la sangsue adhère à la peau et suce le sang. Symbolique et théologie du pardon dans le MRDZ », dans *Cahiers des Religions africaines*, Nouvelle série, Vol. 1, n. 1 (avril 2020), p. 135.

² CEZ, *Présentation de la liturgie de la messe. Supplément au missel romain pour les diocèses du Zaïre*, Kinshasa, Edition du Secrétariat Général, 1989, p. 16.

³ Cf. F. BATUAFE NGOLE, *La Bible au cœur de l'interculturalité. Les enjeux de la tribalité, de*

l'expression de Bénézet Bujo⁴. En effet, elle consiste à ne pas aller droit au but, mais à débayer longuement le terrain en faisant état de tous les aspects du problème. Les faits n'y sont pas directement déballés.

A en croire A. Yinda et N. Delbrassine, la palabre africaine peut s'orchestrer de trois manières différentes : elle peut être envisagée soit comme une discussion formatrice ou informatrice concernant une question précise tel que l'interdit au sein d'une communauté, soit comme une discussion contractuelle entre les parties, soit enfin comme une discussion juridictionnelle dont la finalité est de régler les litiges et les conflits communautaires⁵.

Déroulement et composantes de la palabre

S'il s'avère que la palabre ne s'improvise pas, il est tout aussi vrai que n'importe qui n'y préside pas. C'est le chef en tant qu'autorité de la communauté qui convoque et organise la palabre, assisté de sages juges du village. Elle a lieu souvent le soir, car la nuit permet d'être en contact avec les ancêtres, les relais privilégiés de l'Invisible.

La palabre est publique en général et se déroule, chez les *Alur* (R.D. Congo) dans la cour du chef sous un ficus (*bongu*) ou dans un hangar conçu à cet effet (*kawec*)⁶. Chez les *Babemba* et les *Tshokwe*, elle se déroule dans une paillote circulaire. La forme géométrique n'est pas anodine, elle est chargée de signification : à la palabre, la parole circule à tour de rôle. Au vrai, la paillote, en tant que référence spatiale, « symbolise la rencontre de plusieurs personnes pour débattre un sujet donné plutôt que cette toiture conique soutenue par des piliers abritant les participants contre les intempéries, elle protège mieux que l'ombrage d'un baobab qui se vide quand survient la tempête ou la pluie. (...) Un proverbe dit : « *Uwatwala pan saka tonaula* (qui soumet son problème à la discussion du groupe ne le détruit pas) »⁷. Exceptionnellement, pour des problèmes délicats et confidentiels, la palabre peut être privée, elle se tient alors dans « la maison du problème ».

Le déroulement de la palabre suit un procédé dialogique où le chef ou son

l'oralité et des migrations en Afrique, Kinshasa, Presses de l'Université Catholique du Congo, 2023, p. 55.

⁴ Cf. B. BUJO, « Le christianisme africain et sa théologie », dans *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, n° 84/2 (2010), p. 165.

⁵ Voir : A. YINDA et N. DELBRASSINE, « La palabre africaine », dans *Diotime. Revue internationale de la didactique et des pratiques de la philosophie*, n° 84 (04/2020), p. 1.

⁶ Cf. G. UMVOR KENO, *Introduction à l'étude des institutions socio-politiques du peuple Alur*, Kinshasa, CRUPN, 2021, p. 302.

⁷ KABEKE LUBE MBO et MASATA MANIKUNDA, *Proverbes et dictons Babemba du Haut-Katanga (RD Congo). Vivre dans la paillote à palabre*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2017, p. 8.

répondant, ayant ouvert les discussions par une anecdote, un conte ou un proverbe, accorde la parole aux parties en conflit. Quand celles-ci se sont exprimées, les témoins sont entendus et les juges interviennent. Chez les peuples *Alur*, le tout se passe dans une ambiance discursive : « L'atmosphère est celle d'une compétition d'éloquence où les proverbes, les faits d'histoire, la jurisprudence, la prise à témoin des ancêtres viennent étayer les avis (...). Dans le comportement général, tout le monde cherche à en finir avec le conflit pour revenir à un climat normal »⁸. Les parties concernées tendent par le biais des échanges et par l'intermédiaire du chef « impartial » à un consensus, mieux à un accord global et inclusif visant à mettre fin au litige.

La palabre est close par la délibération des juges rendue par la décision du chef en forme d'une opinion habillée dans un langage de persuasion. Alors que dans les procès civils modernes, le verdict donne lieu à un gagnant et un perdant, la délibération dans la palabre africaine ouvre sur la réconciliation et le recouvrement de l'harmonie perdue. On délibère pour qu'en fin de compte on retrouve la vérité pure, la protection du sens de la communauté, l'harmonie sociale et la solidarité. Ainsi, « le savoir-vivre dans une paillote réside dans l'échange, la discussion, l'opposition, le dialogue, la complémentarité... La bienséance exige que les résidents échangent des places, d'opinions, de perception, de vision (...). La vie dans une paillote s'oppose à l'unilatéralisme »⁹.

Quelques rites de réconciliation

Le terme « réconciliation » renvoie à l'action qui fait en sorte que les personnes qui étaient brouillées se remettent d'accord. La réconciliation présuppose des individus ou un groupe qui formait un tout au départ mais qui a été divisé par un événement fâcheux et qui doit être à nouveau uni. Quelles que soient les actions menées pour la réconciliation, si la cause qui est à la racine de la haine n'est pas prise en juste considération et que les personnes n'ont pas appris à vivre dans l'acceptation réciproque, le conflit perdurera¹⁰. C'est dire que le processus de réconciliation est exigeant et difficile, il engage la responsabilité des deux côtés, l'offenseur et la victime sont appelés à se dépasser pour identifier objectivement la faute commise et la réparer ensuite¹¹.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 303.

⁹ KABEKE LUBEMBO et MASATA MANIKUNDA, *Proverbes et dictions Babemba*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Voir : M. ROY, « Réseaux de réconciliation en Afrique », dans *Mission de l'Église*, n° 160 HS (juillet-septembre 2009), p. 14.

¹¹ Cf. F. NSENGIMANA, « La réconciliation chrétienne des Burundais à travers leur processus de paix », dans *Au cœur de l'Afrique*, Numéro spécial (2001), p. 48.

Notons qu'il y a un lien fort entre la religion et la réconciliation. En effet, les attitudes de révérence au divin, les prières et sacrifices offerts à ce dernier n'ont d'autre visée que de sauvegarder la vie et de maintenir la cohésion d'un groupe. Il s'ensuit que quand la vie et la cohésion sont perturbées, un rituel religieux de réconciliation se met vite en place pour restaurer le vivre-ensemble.

Voyons concrètement le processus de réconciliation à travers les traditions religieuses d'Afrique.

Chez les Baluba du Katanga

Il existe plusieurs formes de réconciliation¹². Nous présentons les plus expressives.

La réconciliation par le sang

Hier comme aujourd'hui, le peuple *Luba* a été mis au défi de cas d'inceste ou de meurtre. Ces deux fautes graves nécessitent réparation à travers un processus hérité des Ancêtres. En effet, lorsqu'une ou deux personnes sont coupables d'inceste ou de meurtre, le chef du clan rassemble tous les membres du clan, car c'est la vie de tous qui est menacée. Le rite consiste à tuer une chèvre et à la manger ensemble. Si un membre est résistant, le chef lui délègue des émissaires pour le raisonner. Après cette démarche, on tue la chèvre, on enterre le sang et on mange ensemble la chair avec le « *nshima* » (une pâte de manioc cuite).

La signification de ce rite est intéressante : on égorge la chèvre en faisant couler le sang pour exprimer que le meurtre est un versement de sang, et l'inceste est un drame offensant le même sang familial. Dans les deux cas, il y a eu un crime qui touche à la chair. L'enterrement du sang symbolise l'annulation de l'inimitié. La blessure causée par le crime est enterrée, on passe l'éponge sur les douleurs collectives et personne n'y revient plus.

La réconciliation à travers un médiateur

Il arrive que deux personnes d'un clan entretiennent un conflit qui dégénère en inimitié presque permanente, leur réconciliation peut se faire par un médiateur, le « *Nsenga* », le conciliateur. En voici le processus : « L'adversaire qui se sent 'fatigué' de vivre dans l'inimitié, celui dans le cœur de qui naît le sentiment de compassion « *Lusa* », celui-là prendra l'initiative de trouver un médiateur pour lui

¹² On peut trouver, chez les Baluba du Katanga, une dizaine de rites de réconciliation énumérés par MUTONKOLE MPIANA, *Chrétiens africains appelés à la plénitude de la vie*, Kinshasa, Ed. Filles de saint Paul, 1990, p. 45-59.

confier son désir de paix. Le médiateur qui est aussi le messager essaiera de sonder, par la parole et l'écoute, le cœur de l'intéressé et de juger s'il est oui ou non également prêt à une réconciliation éventuelle. Lorsque le médiateur a suffisamment travaillé les deux parties et jugé de la bonne disposition réciproque, il lui suffira d'informer discrètement l'un et l'autre de leur état d'âme pour les inviter ensuite à guetter la première occasion favorable pour s'adresser la parole par la salutation. Le médiateur pourrait aussi discrètement créer une occasion de rencontre ouverte aux deux parties »¹³.

La portée de cette forme de réconciliation est que, pour arriver à renouer le contact avec un vieil ennemi dont on ignore l'évolution des sentiments, il est sage de passer par la médiation d'une tierce personne neutre, mais sympathique à l'un et à l'autre. Une réconciliation vraie et durable exige un consentement mutuel. Le réconciliateur sait que le temps arrange souvent les choses et que sa démarche auprès des deux ennemis leur permet d'objectiver les arguments du conflit pour le résoudre paisiblement. Cela exige de deux parties le dépassement de soi et un aveu sincèrement réciproque. Cette forme de réconciliation nous instruit sur le fait qu'on a parfois besoin d'un médiateur pour avancer dans le règlement des conflits.

La réconciliation par le rite de la salive

Il peut se faire qu'un conflit oppose un fils ou une fille à ses parents et brouille les relations familiales pour longtemps. La réconciliation consiste ici en un rite assez simple : c'est le fils ou la fille qui prend l'initiative, car le parent en tant que tel ne doit pas se rabaisser. Le fils coupable demande de vive voix pardon aux parents. Si le parent blessé pardonne, il doit le manifester par des attitudes significatives. Le père ou la mère commandera par exemple à son enfant de lui apprêter un repas ordinaire. Le parent mangera un tout petit peu en signe de communion, puis il laissera le gros du plat à son fils ou à sa fille ainsi qu'aux petits fils pour qu'ils en mangent à leur tour. Ensuite, il humectera la terre d'un peu de salive et prononcera à l'égard de son enfant des paroles contraires à celles qu'il aurait prononcées au moment du conflit ou du mécontentement.

Ce rite revêt bien des sens. En effet, consommer un plat cuisiné par un fils qui s'était rendu ennemi est un signe de communion retrouvée. Cracher la salive signifie que l'on crache de son cœur tout le mal qu'on ruminait douloureusement. En crachant, on vomit ce mal, on déracine en quelque sorte la rancune, la haine et l'aigreur. Ici la parole garde une place de choix, les paroles de bénédiction se subs-

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 52-53.

tituent à celles de malédiction pour faire naître dans le cœur des parents et de leur fils de nouveaux sentiments de paix, et de concorde.

Chez les Acholi de l'Ouganda

La pratique de la réconciliation chez les Acholis se fonde sur un principe fondamental : la sacralité de toute vie humaine. C'est sous ce rapport que la religion traditionnelle interdit de verser le sang humain, par respect pour la vie dont seul l'Être suprême est la source. Mais ce principe est parfois trahi par des meurtres à répétition nés des conflits surgissant entre les clans. Pour ce faire, un rite de réconciliation appelé *matooput* vient en appui pour rétablir la paix et la cohésion entre les clans que la mort avait divisés.

La cérémonie se déroule dans un champ, loin des foules, sous l'égide du chef assisté des sages. Le meurtrier apporte un bélier et un taureau, et un proche de la victime apporte une chèvre. Sur le lieu, on dispose des cuves de bières brassées pour la circonstance. Pour commencer, le maître de cérémonies et les sages de deux clans se tiennent debout, silencieux, ils se tournent vers l'ouest. Après l'invocation de l'esprit de réconciliation, le maître de cérémonie dit :

« Vous, nos ancêtres, et les enfants de la Divinité suprême ! Je vous implore et vous demande de reconnaître que le mal fait partie de la vie d'un homme. Ceux qui nous ont précédés l'ont initié. Cet homme, dont la faute nous réunit aujourd'hui, n'a fait que répéter le mal perpétuel dont l'homme n'a pu se libérer depuis des temps immémoriaux. Il a tué son propre frère. Mais depuis, il s'est repenti de son acte maléfique. Il a payé le prix du sang, qui pourra être utilisé pour prendre une femme en mariage et faire des enfants qui honoreront le nom de ce frère mort en hommage à notre postérité. Nous conjurons maintenant, vous nos ancêtres, de laisser les deux familles renouer des relations fraternelles... ».

Tous les sages réunis se rapprochent alors et entonnent tous ensemble le chant suivant : *« Laissez l'homme qui va recevoir le prix du sang épouser une femme, qu'il soit avisé et choisisse une femme prolifique, une femme vierge qui lui donnera de nombreux enfants sains, qui grandiront et rempliront la maison vide ».*

Un autre maître de cérémonie du clan de la victime répond à l'invocation solennelle par le discours suivant : *« Nous ne sommes pas le premier clan à subir un décès prématuré de cette nature. Le tueur s'est repenti de son méfait. Il a payé. Nous vous supplions maintenant, vous nos ancêtres, de bénir le prix du sang versé à la famille pour épouser une femme et faire des enfants qui viendront remplacer notre frère mort ».*

Tous les sages se joignent à l'invocation et chantent en chœur : *« Laissez-nous accepter le prix du sang, purifier nos cœurs et commencer à vivre et à travailler tous*

ensemble comme nous l'avons fait par le passé. Nos ennemis ont eu vent de cette réconciliation et déplorent qu'elle apporte paix et prospérité à nos deux clans... Laissez leur sentiment être emporté vers l'ouest par le soleil et disparaîtra au loin, très loin... »¹⁴.

Dans l'une des cuves, le maître de cérémonie mélange des extraits concassés de racines de l'arbre *Oput* avec de l'alcool. Le meurtrier et un proche de la victime, à genoux, boivent simultanément la mixture de la cuve, tandis que les femmes poussent des cris stridents. Les membres de deux clans s'approchent pour boire à la même cuve. Pendant ce temps, le maître de cérémonie tranche la tête du bélier apporté par le meurtrier et la tête de la chèvre apportée par le proche du défunt. La tête du bélier est cérémonieusement offerte au proche de la victime et celle de la chèvre au meurtrier. Le taureau est rituellement égorgé pour servir de repas partagé entre tous. Cette convivialité rétablit les liens entre les clans¹⁵.

Eléments de synodalité

En vue de la célébration de la 16e assemblée du Synode des évêques en octobre 2023 sur le thème « *Pour une Eglise synodale : communion, participation et mission* », il importe de relever quelques éléments de synodalité dans les rites que nous venons d'analyser. Ces éléments sont susceptibles d'être intégrés dans une démarche spirituelle pour comprendre davantage la nature, la forme et la mission de l'Eglise.

Une Eglise synodale est engagée dans une quête commune des solutions aux problèmes auxquels elle est confrontée : c'est ensemble qu'elle cherche, comme dans la palabre, la vérité. Personne n'en a le monopole. La vérité est devant nous ; quand on la cherche de façon concertée, on la trouve. L'Eglise synodale emprunte à la palabre africaine, l'éthique de la discussion, de la parole partagée et mâchée ensemble, dans la circularité et l'interchangeabilité des rôles.

Une Eglise synodale est au service de la vie : la palabre comme le rite de la réconciliation est une réponse à un appel au secours de la vie menacée. L'Eglise qui annonce l'Evangile du Christ doit aimer la vie, et pour la maintenir, elle doit aider les baptisés à cohabiter en harmonie les uns avec les autres. Sa mission est de revitaliser les liens de fraternité et de solidarité entre les chrétiens. La quête de la

¹⁴ J. OJERA LATIGO, « Nord de l'Ouganda : pratiques traditionnelles dans la région acholi », dans L. HUYSE et M. SALTER, *Justice traditionnelle et réconciliation après un conflit violent. La richesse des expériences africaines*, Stockholm, International IDEA, 2009, p. 114-115.

¹⁵ Cf. OJERA LATIGO, *Nord de l'Ouganda : pratiques traditionnelles*, p. 114-115.

cohésion ecclésiale sollicite la mise en commun des forces vitales. C'est le sens de se réunir, de se rassembler, de se concerter afin de lever ensemble l'option de repartir du bon pied.

Une Eglise synodale est un lieu de réconciliation : elle situe le pardon au cœur de son action évangélisatrice. Dans les rites traditionnels africains, nous avons réalisé à quel point le pardon est une condition sine qua non pour une réconciliation réussie. C'est le pardon qui conjure l'inimitié, enterre la hache de guerre et fait vomir la rancune douloureuse et séparatrice. Dans un monde écartelé par les conflits d'intérêts économiques et politiques, les clivages ethniques, et les guerres d'agression¹⁶, l'Eglise synodale se doit de faire retentir ce vibrant appel du Pape François lors de son récent voyage apostolique en R. D. Congo (février 2023) : « Tous réconciliés en Jésus Christ ». Cet appel a rejoint celui de son prédécesseur Benoît XVI qui, à la Nonciature apostolique de Yaoundé en 2009, déclarait : « (...) pour bien remplir sa mission, l'Église doit être une communauté de personnes réconciliées avec Dieu et entre elles. De cette manière, elle peut annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle de la réconciliation à la société actuelle, qui connaît malheureusement en de nombreux lieux des conflits, des violences, des guerres, et de la haine (...). S'il est vrai qu'en Jésus Christ, nous appartenons à la même famille et partageons la même vie, puisque dans nos veines circule le même sang du Christ, qui fait de nous les fils de Dieu, membres de la famille de Dieu, il ne devrait donc plus y avoir de haines, d'injustices et de guerres entre frères »¹⁷.

Une Eglise synodale est conviviale : manger ensemble restaure et consolide le vivre-ensemble. Il n'est pas banal que nos rencontres ecclésiales se terminent par un repas partagé. Celui-ci réchauffe les relations interpersonnelles. En Afrique, les rites de la réconciliation sont sensibles à cette dimension. Une Eglise synodale réunit les baptisés autour d'une même table, non seulement eucharistique, mais aussi conviviale où l'on apprend à manger à côté de l'autre. L'Eglise synodale doit être une Eglise ouverte et joyeuse.

¹⁶ Voir : G. MALOBA KAYAMBA, *Inculturation et eschatologie. Enjeux et débats dans les traditions bantu*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2014, p. 306-307.

¹⁷ BENOIT XVI, « Rencontre avec les membres du conseil spécial pour l'Afrique du synode des Évêques », Nonciature apostolique de Yaoundé, Jeudi 19 mars 2009, cf. www.vatican.va

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Sikhism

AMANDEEP SINGH*

Introduction

This paper discusses the evolution of my experiences with the Sikh doctrine of *Seva*¹ and its embodiment in religious practices that constitutes its multi-dimensional meaning including inclusion and solidarity. Discussing the understanding of *Seva* in Sikh memory from my lived experiences, I shall discuss how this understanding derives its practical meaning from the *Naam Rasa*² tradition of Sikhi and beyond. I shall further explore how *Seva* renders an opportunity to materialize higher ideals of human life, making these ideals practicable in human societies, while espousing that man has a higher purpose greater than performing mundane practices of everyday living. Such understanding entails a self-reflection that human form is not merely a self-actualizing entity that has a utilitarian purpose for its own self, but it also has an onus of fulfilling life by uplifting this given world into a divine realization that reveals itself beyond historical purpose.

Throughout my raising in Sikh family, I was consistently exposed to values that unveil the universal message of 'life first', while practicing *Seva* in Gurdwaras and beyond. Many common practices that I encountered while practicing *Seva* in Gurdwaras included dusting off shoes of visiting *Sangat* (congregations), brooming and mopping Gurdwara premises, serving *Chabeel* (sweet water) to thirsty travelers on roads, preparing and serving *Langar* (sacred food), cleaning dishes after *langar* to anyone and everyone visiting Gurdwara etc. As I was growing, I continued to learn that beyond these practices in Gurdwara premises across the world, *Seva* also constitutes wider dimensions in service of humanity that Sikhs often undertake in diverse practical situations like undertaking blood donation drives, conducting educational classes and vocational trainings etc. During this course, I further realized three essential components of *Seva*. First, evolution of individual consciousness

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¹ Drawing upon God's mercifulness, the literal translation of *Seva* is "voluntary service". Besides valuing human life and its common Source in God are fundamental to *Seva*. Owing to its multidimensional nature, the word *Seva* has been used in its original form.

² The word *Naam Rasa*, as I cognize from Sikh doctrinal point, is the spiritual joiissance of religions that flows fluidly among diverse expressions of religious faith.

eventually developing into a default habit to help one in need. Second, to connect with the common source of divine light in all humankind and third, to engage individual consciousness with Guru consciousness through consistent verbal recitation of 'Wah-e-Guru' (Wonderous is the Guru), while undertaking these practices.³ I further realized that although *Seva* is primarily a bio-physical⁴ realization and practice that Sikhs are often found undertaking in Gurdwaras, it unfolds its greater purpose in constituting individual and social habits that transcend logocentric hardening of historical imagination thereby fluidly permeating across human hearts through a trans-bodily engagement.

Throughout my experience, I continued to draw from four elements that help to discover multi-layered dimensions of *Seva*. First, at ontological level of being, *Seva* uplifts individual consciousness through embodiment of practices that nurture the values of *Halimi* (humility) and piety. Second, at ideological level, *Seva* resists the idea of 'Otherness' by struggling against the imagined identities. Third, the biophysical actions performed during *Seva* are accompanied by repetitive recitation of 'Satnam-Wah-e-Guru' or only 'Wah-e-Guru' produce fluid bonds developing the capacity to envision open communities and de-racialized societies. These practices modulate to enunciate living episteme assisting liberation of societies from ideological self-affirmations or any assertions of polarizing ideologies. Lastly, at a metaphysical level, *Seva* derives its higher meaning from *Naam Rasa* while acting as a source of pure creativity that opens imagination beyond the dualities of mind and world. The practices undertaken render productive possibilities to transcend the stagnations of symbolic universe and applied logo-centrism. With that background let me delve further into decoding the doctrine of *Seva* in Sikhi that I experienced through this journey.

Seva in Sikh tradition

Human action in history, in certain ways, derives its meaningfulness and authenticity from the ethical conduct reinforced in cultural traditions of diverse religious practices. Religious practices, by and large, draw temporal meaningful-

³ I do not claim that these are complete connotations that can be attached to *Seva*, or that other *Sevadars* (Volunteers) would have similar experiences or in any ways that I am personally a better or worse participant in the acts of *Seva*. Yet, to put things in a perspective, it is prudent to mention that this is a journey that can perhaps be shared with evolving realizations and is something that I have thus far encountered while practicing *Seva*.

⁴ By "Bio-physical", I mean the practices of *Seva* involving active usage and participation of human body in activities serving the corporal world. *Seva* is undertaken with repetitive verbal recitation of 'Wah-e-Guru' or 'Satnam- Wah-e-Guru' invoking divine realization in bodily actions.

ness from the enactment of the ideal of 'mercy' and 'dignity of human life'. These ideals envisioned in both religious and secular domains, in many ways, are reflection of a deeper human seeking striving for a deeper harmony between inner and outer world. In other words, man takes solace in harmonizing his worldly actions with the spirit of ideals that are greater than mundane temporal existence. In Sikh culture such solace finds its home in practices of *Seva*. *Seva*, as I mentioned earlier, constitutes enactment of the *Nam Rasa* tradition in worldly domain. *Nam Rasa*, as I understand, is the spiritual essence of a religion that fills human heart with sublime jouissance enabling one to experience a 'spiritual re-birth'. The meeting point of *Nam Rasa* with human practice is not discoverable through mere intellectualization of conceptual meaning, but through a direct and living interface of human action with the essence of the Truth. This idea of spiritual rebirth gets kindled and nurtured organically while practicing *Seva* thereby illuminating human mind and soul.

Unconscious acquisition of routine habits, in contrast, enforces standardized patterns of behavior upon human subjectivity. These patterns condition individual and social sensibilities that produce deeper destitution of spiritual experience. Human sensibilities become mechanically programmed and accustomed to bereft sense of meaninglessness. This causes a gradual dimming of one's imagination flattening one's consciousness like a barren space resulting in an uncultivated mind deeply devoid of inspirational ingenuity. In this state, the particularity of our being attains a state of self-absorbed sterility that denies itself any universal opening.

The doctrine of *Seva*, that many Sikhs, including me, continue to practice, fosters human potential to overcome this state of flatness of individual and social value systems that conditions everyday behavioral patterns and habits. *Seva* creatively ruptures the morbid cementing of mind from its dualistic modes of thinking while redeeming life from its linear flow in time. Such rupturing, I realized, gets manifested through a state of *Sehaj* (tranquility) and *Santokh* (gratification) that redirects the process of dualistic thinking towards self-realization. In other words, the practice of *Seva*, enunciated through human action, generates a response that inwardly redeems human will and ego from their blatant assertion. *Seva* thus yields self-revival through self-surrender. Human self supersedes itself by transcending the sense of otherness within a realized self through *Seva*. The ideals of mercy and human dignity get assimilated into *Seva* through this process of self-surrender. Every moment in *Seva* is directed towards its cosmological significance that fluidly dissolves itself into a universal essence of unity of mind and nature. Self-consciousness developed in this process realizes a sense of cosmic unity of being. Delving upon the idea of inclusion, a new mode of solidarity becomes enunciable. *Seva*, I have therefore realized, endeavors to preserve the diversity of forms through which the idea of oneness of man and Nature takes a vital expression.

Here, it is worth mentioning that racial arrogance deployed in modern sense of nationalism, reminisces a sense of ideological 'uniformity' instead of fostering a sense of human 'unity'. Uniformity draws its subjective stimulus from negation of the other rather than celebrating the essence of otherness. Self-consciousness developed in this mode of thinking objectifies 'the other' as an absolute entity that must be assimilated or destroyed for fuller realization of Self. Enthusiasm to create a uniformity, condition our thought processes and behavioral patterns to take offence at any deviation from one's self-image. 'The other' renders a deep shock to personal identity of one's being, drawing a sense of insecurity and anxiety to settle coordinates of imagining the other according to set patterns of self-configurations and outlook. It reinforces self-image through negation of the other thereby affirming one's own existence via binary opposition.

Sikh tradition of *Seva*, I believe, stimulates human imagination into radically different principles of self-identification. Devoted to a shared world-view in cosmic realization, *Seva* is directed towards actualizing the ideals of cosmic unity. It underpins the idea that social morality cannot be humanized without uplifting individual consciousness beyond ideological polarization. Therefore, *Seva* gets institutionalized in the form of Langar (serving sacred food to all) and Sangat (congregation of consciousness). Conceptual understanding of *Nam Rasa* gets reinforced in practical actions through *Seva*. The sensibility of *Halimi* that I experience while practicing *Seva* makes it impossible to demarcate closed boundaries of language, religion, history, race, culture, nation, ethnicity etc. Such fortifications impose internal limits by foreclosing the limits of life from becoming a cosmic celebration thereby resulting in failures of spirit of religion to express itself in practical action. These fortifications spur incoherence among religious practitioners, nurture false-consciousness, and render symbolic obfuscations producing spurious understanding of history. *Seva* has rendered me the possibility to resist the demands forced by ideological demarcations, religious boundaries, and those of secular modes of bifurcating public and private life, while allowing to celebrate richness of life in divine serenity.

Conclusion

Inclusion and solidarity are some of the core values of religious ethics that continue to enrich living relationships. The Sikh doctrine of *Seva*, as I realized through different practices in my life journey, fosters organic universality of these values into a distinctive social order that paves way to elevate consciousness in both internal and worldly realms. Sikhs often gain public and media attention while performing *Seva* in domains that are beyond the Gurdwara premises - like arranging food and supplies at refugee camps, assisting victims in politically disturbed

areas, serving fellow humans in situations of crisis like, COVID-19 lockdowns, conducting funeral pyres of abandoned dead bodies etc. *Seva* draws its constitutive nature from the sense of all-pervasive inclusivity that is symbolically manifested in foundational principles of Sikh institutions. The institution of langar, that has dynamically percolated into secular life, offers universal service to modern world while transcending ideological barriers and metaphysical boundaries. The four-sided entrance of Harimandir Sahib (the central Sikh shrine) signifies a welcoming posture to all geo – spatial modes of consciousness. The foundation stone of Harimandir Sahib being laid by Sain Mian Mir, a Muslim seer, and martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur defending humanity's right to faith, etc., are some of the most vivid expressions of inclusion and solidarity reminisced as expressions of *Seva* in Sikh memory. History continues to take its own course to realize the ever-expanding embodiment of *Seva* that acts as the beacon to manifest universal ideals of next age.

INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY IN RELIGIONS

Jainism

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Introduction

In 1974, Jains adopted the following motto, regularly figuring at the bottom of the emblem: “the function of souls is to support one another” (*paraspara-upagraho jivānām*).¹ With such a motto, it comes as no surprise that solidarity and inclusion are prominent in contemporary Jain religious practices. This article will first examine the origins of this centrality of solidarity and inclusion, by presenting the main Jain beliefs around “non-violence” (*ahiṃsā*). Then, we will show how this non-violence is implemented today in three main lines of practices that foster solidarity and inclusion.

The Jains are those who follow the teaching of omniscient spiritual leaders called “*Jinas*”, that is, the “conquerors [of their passions]”. The only extant teaching consists in the preach of Mahāvīra, the last Jina of the current cosmic period, who lived in Magadha in the Northeast of India (599–527/510 BCE). Mahāvīra’s teaching promotes practices to help us renounce our worldly self until we reach liberation. Indeed, what matters is not one’s range of belongings, nor one’s position in society; what matters is not even one’s current identity as a human being. But these identifications are strong ones, and we need strong sets of practices to help us detach ourselves from them.

A peculiarity of Jainism is to essentially associate these liberating practices with the imperative of non-violence. To explain, at the heart of Jainism is the belief according to which each living being – you, me, this midge I should be careful not to crash by moving my hands too quickly – is the transitory embodiment of a permanent divine-like soul (*jīva*). Each soul is essentially absolute knowledge, absolute perception, absolute energy and absolute bliss. What matters is this soul experiencing its inherent qualities in an unobstructed way. Jain religious practices therefore aim at overcoming impediments to this experience by disentangling the soul from a type of subtle matter that is especially harmful, karmic matter. The as-

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¹ This expression comes from the verse 5.21 of the seminal *Treatise on that which is* (*Tattvārthasūtra*, 4th c.).

sociation of karmic matter with a soul can be explained as the result of one's acts. A comparison that might help understand the functioning of karma binding is the formation of habits: while mastering an art, say, the art of speaking English, I generate shortcuts. For example, I will not have to always think about the correct way to conjugate a verb in the third person singular to be able to utter a correct sentence, because I will have assimilated this rule, that will be unconsciously active in me. Now, while these shortcuts make me function better in given situations, they also restrict my view on the infinite range of other possible situations. This is why scientists wonder whether anything can be known in a neutral way, without pre-theoretical implicit assumptions and bias. A metaphor used in Jain canonical texts to explain this state of affair is the following: when pure water is agitated, the sedimentary dust at the bottom gets mixed and distorts the essential clarity of water. Similarly, karmic matter distorts the inherent abilities of the soul.

What is important for our current discussion is that violent acts are those that bind soul and karmic matter the most. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid harming the divine-like souls around us. This, in turn, implies a constant awareness of their presence and true nature, as well as a self-mastery and careful behavior.

It is now clear how the Pan-India slogan “non-violence is the highest religion” (*ahimsā paramo dharmah*) is at the core of Jain practices and translates a complex situation, in which what is at stake is to avoid binding new karma; to realise that all living beings are essentially similar and should be treated accordingly; and that all living beings have a common duty and goal – hence fostering a sense of community, of mutual assistance and of solidarity.

In contemporary Jainism, this importance of solidarity is not a passive stance.

1. Jains are actively committed to the well-being of others.

This is what explains the many philanthropist projects undertaken by Jain laity, including large-scale ones like building hospitals. This is made possible by the fact that the laity is expected to donate money to charity, the act of giving (*dāna*) is an important part of the religious practices. Jain commitment to the well-being of others was notably apparent in Covid times. It is worth noticing that this was the case for most religions. During lockdowns, the activities of Jain communities were firstly directed towards ensuring the well-being of those who needed it, either by directly supplying medical care, food and psychological support, or by donating and helping organise broader humanitarian networks. This dedication was not limited to the frontiers of the Jain faith but directed towards all.

2. Solidarity towards animals and plants

Second, since Jains consider that all living beings are in essence alike, next to solidarity to other human beings, there is a solidarity towards animals and plants. Jains are known for their animal shelters, like the Charity Birds Hospital in Delhi. In contemporary societies, this solidarity especially means that one should actively combat the damages caused to animals and the environment by the modality through which humanity populates the planet, especially with extensive agriculture or the industrial model. In order to start responding to this crisis, many Jains today turn to veganism, therefore excluding dairy products from their already vegetarian diet. For example, the Jain Center of Southern Californian has become a fully vegan institution in 2018. More generally, the Jain insistence on restraint and mindful action promotes an ecologically friendly way of life. The well-known Hindu figure that is Gandhi is ailed by many as being India's first environmentalist, because his non-violent resistance was a model for the first environmentalists, who clung to trees refusing to move until they managed to prevent contractors from cutting these. Interestingly, Gandhi always presented his conception of non-violent resistance as indebted to the society of the Jain spiritual leader Rajcandra.

Now, our short introduction to Jain principles made it clear that this solidarity is not firstly directed towards human beings, animals and plants, but towards *souls* residing in human beings, animals and plants, which is an altogether different project. One of the main points of dissension between what could be inferred from Jain early texts and today's global values has been brought up by the same Gandhi. When observing a Jain animal shelter, he was outraged by the practice of letting the animals die of their natural death, even if this involved letting them suffer. The idea being this practice is that by their pre-death suffering, living beings burn karma, which will secure them a better life in their next rebirth.

The soteriological project and the environmental one regularly diverge. But, first, Jain ancient norms of action do promote a wisdom in harmony on many levels with contemporary considerations on the preservation of the environment and on the protection of animal rights, and that Jainism favours what we could call a "reasoned anthropocentrism". That is, a worldview in which the centrality of human beings does not lead to its dominion over other species. Second, we have just seen that contemporary Jains successfully adapted their values to global ones, putting solidarity towards human beings, animals and the environment at the core of their religious practices.

3. Openness to interfaith dialogue

A third important area of implementation of Jain non-violence today is that of an openness to other faiths, and especially to interfaith dialogue, thereby foster-

ing an inclusive stance. In Jain milieux, this is called “intellectual non-violence” and it derives from an ancient philosophical project of considering several perspectives to explain the same phenomena. Here too, the initial project, although already close to them, was adapted to fit contemporary global values.

To begin with, a famous early example of this philosophy of perspectives is to be found in the canonical text *Bhagavaī Sutta*, the *Venerable [Exposition of the teaching]* (between 5th c. BCE – 2nd c. CE), verse 9.386, in which the monk Jamāli wonders whether the soul is eternal or not. Mahāvīra replies that the soul is eternal, for it did not cease to exist at any time, and non-eternal, for it becomes an animal after being a hellish creature, a man after becoming an animal, a god after being a man. In terms of perspectives, Mahāvīra distinguishes between a claim made from the perspective of substance and another made from the perspective of state. Now, this primordial common-sense intuition that there are hidden parameters when we speak has been diversely used by Jain philosophers to answer the big philosophical questions of their time: “what is the soul?”, “how can causation be explained?”, “what is the nature of universals and particulars?”, “how can I be sure that I know something?”. It is only natural that it is now used to answer one of the big questions of our time, namely “how to dialogue peacefully in a global framework where so many sets of beliefs co-exist?” Jain philosophy of perspectives is especially adapted to answer this line of questioning. While there is a vibrant enthusiasm from some Jains to present this as intellectual non-violence, scholars in Jain studies insist on the fact that Jain philosophers considered their view as the correct view, not as one amongst many correct views. Let me add to these discussions that, while the philosophy of perspective became a highly technical apparatus and does not equate saying that each has a right to speak, it offers relevant sets of parameters within which one can resolve apparently contradictory claims and could as such insightfully contribute to today’s concerns.

On a more concrete level, in Jain communities living outside India – like in the UK, US, United Arab Emirates, etc. – the same place of worship is regularly used by practitioners with deeply different practices. There are two main traditions in Jainism, themselves split into sub-traditions. Śvetāmbara Jainism today is mainly represented by the Derāvāsī idol worshipping lineage, or by the Sthānakvāsī and Terāpanth, who focus on inner practices like meditation. As for Digambara Jainism, the Terāpanthis and the Bispanthi lineages are prevalent. Next to these, Adhyātma trends which focus on a direct experience of the soul, are well represented today, notably in the Śrīmad Rājacandra Mission Dharampur or the Kānjī Svāmī Panth. A place of worship and of communal events that welcomes people from all these traditions is therefore comparable to Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Methodists gathering on a continuous basis. This asks for a truly oecumenic

approach. Myself based in Birmingham, I regularly go to the Jain ashram there and can attest of the liveliness of a truly multifaith community.

Conclusion

Jainism is a pluri-millenary tradition, whose values are essentially compatible with current global values and have been skillfully adapted to contemporary contexts. Jains do not try to convert. Instead, they wish to spread values deemed decisive today, especially non-violence and constant awareness. This is notably clear in the motto of the *Institute of Jainology* in London: “Compassion and non-violence towards all living beings are the fundamental principles of Jain philosophy. Our mission is to propagate Jainism and its values through art, culture and education.” Today, these values especially encompass mutual aid, ecological awareness and multifaith dialogue. These lines of practices are meant to achieve the universal duties of solidarity and inclusion, thereby making an ethical way of life the surest way to be closer to the divine.

TESTIMONIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY

Building Peace between Hindus and Muslims in Varanasi

PRIYANKAR UPADHYAYA*

This article focuses on peaceful perspectives and practices of interreligious inclusion and solidarity among Hindus and other religions. It highlights the inter-religious synergy in the ancient city of Varanasi (Banaras) as an exemplary model of inclusion and solidarity. We draw instructive insights from the unfortunate episode of the terrorist bombing of a sacred temple in March 2006 and its peaceful resolution by the norms and metaphors of interfaith harmony. This remarkable narrative reveals that the connection between cultures can ever be a source of tension as well as reward and the peaceful outcome of their interaction depends largely on the willingness of religious leaders to demagnetize the religious discourse in favour of the peacebuilding resources in their respective cultures.

Hindu-Muslim synergy

The close ties between the Hindu and Muslim communities have a long history in India. The iconoclasts and religious reformers espousing the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity often cite the ancient Hindu city of Varanasi as an equally valued place for all religions.

Muslim presence in Banaras dates to the eleventh century AD. However, the city began to receive waves of Muslim arrival starting in late medieval times. Today it hosts a high percentage of the Muslim population, which accounts for nearly one-third of the city's 1.5 million people.

It was while living in Banaras that Dara Shikoh, the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's beloved son, translated the Upanishads (Hindu religious scriptures) into Persian with the aid of Hindu pundits. Kabir Das, the fifteenth-century poet, rejected the ramparts of the religious and caste divide and espoused the essential unity of mankind. He was equally revered in both communities and legend is that both Hindus and Muslims sparred bitterly over his remains.

Varanasi combined with the traditional norms of the "ritual performance crossover" has historically ushered in a remarkable inter-community synergy.

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Such interreligious mingling reflects in the everyday life of Varanasi which finds both Hindus and Muslims braided together in worship, culture, craft, and commercial affairs. Muslim weavers have all along participated in Hindu rituals and festivities and it is customary for the skilled Muslim artisans to make the traditional masks for the annual Ram Lila - the dance-drama depicting the tale of the divine Hindu god-king, Ram. Similarly, Hindus have participated in Muharram in the spirit of brotherhood and unity. Musicians from both Hindu and Muslim communities traditionally perform both in temples and shrines during important celebrations.

The image of peaceful communal engagement in Banaras has been embellished through folklore and metaphors of a composite culture such as Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb (culture) and Tana Bana. The Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb compares the Hindu-Muslim harmony and friendship to the holy confluence of India's major rivers - the Ganga and Yamuna reminding people of the incomparable unison they share across religious communities. Ustad Bismillah Khan – a world-renowned Muslim musician thus proclaimed: "I am proud of this city Banaras.... where Hindus and Muslims live in perfect harmony like the confluence of Ganges and Yamuna- the two holy rivers." Tana Bana, the other peace metaphor describes the intimate commercial relations drawn from the intertwined lives of Hindu shopkeepers and Muslim weavers in silk textiles.

Building Communal Peace in Varanasi

Banaras lived in relative peace for several decades while many other cities with mixed populations were struck by communal violence. The city, however, succumbed to Hindu-Muslim riots during the early 1990s, in the wake of the temple-mosque controversy in Ayodhya. The failure to anticipate and manage the riots in 1991 led to fresh resolves and initiatives and inspired various initiatives to forge inter-religious understanding to pre-empt communal disaffection. During the 1990s, religious leaders expanded the scope of inter-faith dialogue to include practical activities for communal peacebuilding. A significant initiative was launched at the behest of Maitri Bhavan (friendship house), a Church-run centre for inter-religious dialogue which began to organise regular gatherings of different religious leaders along with community opinion makers and intellectuals.

Unlike the early nineties, people in Banaras were not unwary when the twin bomb blasts rocked the city on 7 March 2006, just a week before the major Hindu festival of Holi. The first explosion occurred inside the Sankat Mochan Temple- the highly revered Hindu shrine, also an epitome of the syncretic spirit of Banaras. The attacks were carried out with the clear intention of offending religious sensibilities among pilgrims in one of the most sacred sites in India. The blasts killed twenty-

eight and injured over one hundred people. The strike on the temple on a pious day with numerous worshippers in attendance was well planned to inflame passions, to pit injured Hindu religious sentiment against perceived Muslim hostility.

However, the religious leaders from all religions took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining peace and communal harmony in the city as well as that of the whole nation. The proactive and timely role played by the two key religious leaders – Mahant Veer Bhadra Mishra (Chief Priest at the Sankat Mochan temple) and Maulana Abdul Batin Nomani (Mufti-e-Banaras) a respected cleric became role models for the rest of the country. Within a few hours of the blast, the temple Mahant resume the divine worship (Aarti) in the temple and offered a special prayer for peace and equanimity for communal harmony. Mahant Mishra thwarted the politicization of the issue to whip up anti-Muslim feelings and made discrete and soothing public statements. His personal with the leading Muslim Clerics made it easy for such peace initiatives. He came out of the temple to welcome the delegation of Muslim leaders led by Mufti-e-Banaras who led a Muslim delegation to Sankat Mochan temple to condemn the dastardly attack. The two religious leaders having their ideas in sync ruled out any misunderstanding between the two communities and condemned the attack against the teachings of all religions. Their well-publicized camaraderie unleashed the synergy of Hindu and Muslim solidarity.

The Muslim community joined their Hindu counterparts in lighting the candles for peace and joined the city closure to express their solidarity with the victims of the blasts. The unprecedented solidarity across the religious community acted as a shock absorber and reinforced the impulse of communal harmony. Prayers were held all over the city in different temples, mosques, and churches to mourn the loss of lives. Women of various faiths met at the Church-run centre wherein they held an interreligious prayer to promote religious harmony. The Muslim cleric, the Bishop and Hindu Saints addressed these meetings and their followers resolved to maintain the communal peace in the town. About a hundred women from diverse religions met at *Maitri Bhavan* at the invitation of *Tera Panth* (a Jain group) to consider their responsibilities in maintaining religious harmony and peace.

The distinctive feature of this unique experience has been the proactive role of religious leaders in nurturing a tradition of intercommunity dialogue and practical intervention to preempt the outbreak of communal frenzy during turbulent times. Many religion-based organizations have developed a sustainable practice of organizing interfaith prayers and dialogues around the year on different religious and cultural occasions. The Varanasi example of religious leaders acting as an effective catalyst of peace appealed to religious leaders across the subcontinent. The then Shahi Imam (Chief Cleric) of the mosque Syed Ahmad Shah Bukhari thus

appealed to “emulate the people of Banaras, who did not react in anger and defeated the plans of communal forces”.

The successful peacebuilding episode illustrates that the communal identities produced by the fusion of religious and cultural traditions may contribute positively to the communal peace process in practical ways. This is indeed a less traversed peacebuilding trajectory and offers new ways of defusing religious and cultural conflicts through the ethos of interreligious understanding and constructive social change.

TESTIMONIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY

Experiencias islamo-cristianas en Marruecos

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Desde que el Papa Francisco convocó el “Sínodo sobre la sinodalidad”, una avalancha de estudios, artículos y publicaciones han inundado el mercado editorial, así como también el audiovisual.

Podría decirse que la sinodalidad se ha puesto de moda, y ello ha contribuido a redescubrir prácticas sinodales que, sin recibir ese calificativo, son realmente realidades animadas por el espíritu de “marchar juntos”, de avanzar tomados de la mano, a pesar de que no en todo coincidamos ni seamos iguales.

Ha resultado espontáneo el preguntarse cómo se puede vivir la sinodalidad, favorecerla y fomentarla, en ambientes donde el diálogo interreligioso es una realidad en curso; cómo hacer que las religiones sean factor de inclusión y de solidaridad y no de exclusión y de competencia.

Desde Marruecos, país oficialmente musulmán, donde los cristianos somos una absoluta minoría, podemos compartir algunas experiencias, de larga data, que pueden inscribirse en este amplio marco de la sinodalidad.

ECAM, una experiencia de inclusión en el mundo de la educación

El ECAM (*Enseignement Catholique au Maroc*) es una realidad ya centenaria. Después de muchos cambios históricos, en la actualidad se concreta en 12 escuelas católicas, con más de 10.000 alumnos de primaria y secundaria obligatoria, casi 600 profesores y unos 200 directivos y personal de servicio.

Llama la atención de quienes se interesan en conocer esta realidad el hecho de que todos los alumnos sean musulmanes, así como también los profesores, los padres de familia y más de la mitad de los directores. ¿Y a pesar de ello puede hablarse de “escuela católica”? Pues sí, porque el ECAM dispone y propone un Proyecto Educativo que es, en sus valores, plenamente evangélico.

Cuando recibí el libro en el que se plasmó dicho Proyecto Educativo, constaté que, aun sin citas bíblicas ni menciones explícitas a Jesucristo, se trataba de un proyecto verdaderamente cristiano. Y cuando pregunté a profesores musulmanes

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su opinión, desde el punto de vista religioso, sobre el mismo, me dijeron: “Este proyecto responde a nuestra religión”.

Nada extraño, porque había sido elaborado, en un proceso de varios años, entre los directores cristianos y los musulmanes, trabajando codo a codo. El fruto de su trabajo es una materialización del diálogo islamo-cristiano que, en mayor o menor medida y en muy variadas formas, se practica en nuestras escuelas.

El ECAM es una demostración de que un ambiente cristiano puede incluir, sin mayor problema, a educandos y educadores musulmanes, y que el sistema educativo católico puede encontrar su lugar dentro de un ambiente legal musulmán, siendo incluso muy apreciado por las autoridades.

Es cierto que 12 escuelas y 10.000 alumnos no son realidades que pesen considerablemente a nivel cuantitativo, pero son signos de lo que podría ser el país y el mundo entero. Y de un signo lo que se valora no es el tamaño o la cantidad, sino la autenticidad y la capacidad de transmitir un mensaje.

Mantener este ambiente inclusivo, en el que cabemos todos, y de trabajo común, implica aceptar y comprender que la educación no puede ser utilizada ni como instrumento de seducción ni como herramienta de proselitismo. Educar consiste en ayudar a cada persona a crecer y desarrollarse plenamente, respetando su libertad y fomentando su espíritu crítico; esto permite incluir a todos, sin excluir a nadie y facilitando a cada uno las herramientas que necesita para su itinerario personal.

Caritas, la solidaridad vivida y practicada juntos

Otra institución que ya va teniendo historia en las dos archidiócesis de Marruecos (Rabat y Tánger) es la *Caritas Diocesana*.

A través de las Caritas Parroquiales, pero también por medio de obras gestionadas directamente a nivel diocesano o congregacional, se ha venido prestando un servicio de ayuda solidaria a familias y personas que se encuentran en dificultad.

En los últimos años se ha acentuado mucho el servicio a las personas en movilidad, a causa del enorme aumento de las migraciones irregulares hacia Europa, atravesando Marruecos. El fenómeno migratorio ha exigido importantes movilizaciones de recursos humanos y materiales, al servicio de personas provenientes de muy diversos países, tanto musulmanes como cristianos. También entre los agentes y trabajadores sociales ha habido y hay personas de diferentes religiones, sin que ello represente un obstáculo para los servicios ofrecidos, antes, al contrario, siendo una cierta ventaja para la acogida de los necesitados.

El fenómeno migratorio no ha sido óbice para seguir ayudando a personas en necesidad naturales del país.

Las necesidades han encontrado respuesta también en numerosas asociacio-

nes marroquíes con las cuales Caritas ha trabajado solidariamente, sea prestando orientación y ayuda, sea derivando personas hacia los servicios prestados por otros, sea compartiendo experiencias e informaciones.

En este ámbito de la solidaridad se da también, pues, el fenómeno “sinodal” de trabajar juntos, de colaborar fraternalmente, de apoyarnos mutuamente.

El *sínodo diocesano*, una perspectiva alentadora para el futuro

Ya antes de que el Santo Padre convocara el Sínodo sobre la sinodalidad, la archidiócesis de Rabat había convocado un “sínodo diocesano”, que sigue su curso después de dos años de caminar juntos y que prevé su clausura el 6 de noviembre de 2023. El sínodo se propone responder a la siguiente pregunta: “Siguiendo a Cristo, ¿qué Iglesia queremos para la archidiócesis de Rabat?”

Uno de los temas que han aflorado en los encuentros de los numerosos grupos es el de una Iglesia en diálogo, una Iglesia que sale de sí misma para encontrarse con los musulmanes entre los que habita.

Esperamos abundantes frutos de cara a avanzar juntos, no sólo los cristianos, sino cristianos y musulmanes, intentando construir juntos un mundo nuevo, donde reinen la paz, la justicia, la libertad, la vida, la verdad y el amor; en pocas palabras: construir el Reino de Dios entre nosotros.

No es tarea fácil, pero un camino de 10.000 km comienza por el primer paso.

TESTIMONIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY

Preventing Idolatry through Dialogue in Istanbul

FR. CLAUDIO MONGE, OP*

I need the truth of others

The title of this small contribution may seem paradoxical to most, especially in these times of easy tensions and often radical opposition, where religions are much more often instrumentalized in the polarization of relations than a concrete contribution to reconciliation between diversities. But the paradox of the Interfaith Dialogue resides precisely in the conciliation of the absolute engagement implied by all religious processes with an attitude of openness toward the convictions of others. How can we remain faithful to our own identity and, at the same time, show that we are open to others with respect for their otherness? The faithfulness to my identity and the truth that I claim as mine does not engender a feeling of superiority if I discover that the Truth, that is for me the object of my total adhesion, does not necessarily exclude or include all other truths. If it is true that “Truth is one”, it is always humanly possessed in a fragmentary way. One does not possess the Truth, and I need the truth of others (Blessed Mgr. Pierre Claverie). It is necessary for us to come to know our differences so that our witness to the truth does not become idolatry. The Interfaith Dialogue is already a dialogue of salvation. It is so because it can represent a moment of a reciprocal conversion to the “One Truth”. To achieve this path of progressive conversion, we must move on from a theology of dominion towards a theology of listening.

A sensitive confrontation requires endurance

Living for over twenty years in Turkey, a land primarily identified with the Islamic religion, I experience the ever-new surprise generated by true encounters between believers. But as Dominicans, being part of a history of eight centuries, one must first know how to take on, new readings of the Gospel, in step with a changing world. This too requires continuous conversion: a long journey also of “purification” with respect to an often reductive view of otherness, which there-

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fore implies missionary strategies of conquest. But the brethren who preceded us, while being men of their time, involved in the 'hegemonic' policies of the Papacy, also stood as a critical conscience that, in study and prayer, sought to foster the maturation of new perspectives and cultural approaches, inspired by the Gospel. Here is the ambitious legacy that we strive to nurture, albeit with minimal force! This history cannot be ignored but must be continually rethought, in an effort to continually renew the meaning of our daily commitment.

Today the priority choice is to enter into dialogue with a different culture and with a religious horizon respected in its otherness. If the contribution of theology is to be translated into an interpretative capacity of human experience, the latter still presents, in the south of the Mediterranean, connotations that are extremely varied and particular. It is necessary, even if it is not always easy, to consider differences as a plot that generates newness of life and thought, and not as a disturbing element. To nurture the "generativity" of this contextual approach means to recognize these contexts not only as valuable in themselves but as valuable in terms of the experience of salvation.

What does it mean, for example, in the Turkish context, to nurture a "frontier theology" capable of listening to "other" voices, taking vital cues from being, and structuring itself with them?

In a country with an Islamic majority, people have not given up waiting for answers in a perspective of salvation, but they also often struggle to have a "secular discernment" of these perspectives in their daily lives: concretely, this expectation of salvation is renewed by attributing a messianic value to the absolute power of the political leader! Critically confronting these attitudes means challenging the too-simple and immediate religious legitimization of constituted power.

It is a sensitive confrontation, which requires endurance. Spaces for encounters and meeting are needed. We seek, for example, to promote a more than twenty-year laboratory of encounter, thanks to the experience of welcoming visitors, primarily Muslims, in the architectural and iconographic space of our Church in Galata. An experience that, among other things, is associated with an equally long tradition of ecumenical sharing (with Protestant Churches and, above all, Syriac Orthodox communities) of several Latin Catholic churches in Istanbul. Of course, we realized that we must, first of all, defuse that side of the notion of sacredness, linked to the purity of a space, of a time, of an object, which contains a dimension of violence and exclusion. The sacredness of places is very often linked to the pair inclusion/exclusion; pure/impure; licit/illicit; permitted/prohibited and can generate a divided and discriminatory view of the world.

We have discovered, with pleasure, that Muslims, also out of emulation, are encouraged, in turn, to enhance and foster hospitality in the city's best-known and most prestigious mosques. This is not, of course, a matter of winking at cheap

proselytism, nor of deluding oneself into thinking that the same gestures (such as, for example, stepping out of one's way) assume the same significance at the heart of different cultural and spiritual horizons. But believing in a possible coexistence between different religious cultures, allows us to break down boundaries that seemed insurmountable: the threshold, from a limit, becomes a breach, a bridge that allows the welcomed guest to come into the light. This, of course, is in an extra-celebratory sphere, but nevertheless in a sacred space that becomes a refuge, a place of peace, of connection, of inspiration, and perhaps, also of inner research. It is no longer a univocal and unidirectional space, but a mobile and moldable confine that shifts its limits more and more, without, however, annulling them, to create a capacious hospitality. Of course, it is necessary to overcome fears and mistrust that often characterize the relationship between religious universes, promoting mutual knowledge and peaceful confrontation, accepting but also working on the limits of such an encounter, on the difficulties of effective communication.

Rethinking the Christian experience in an interreligious context

In perspective, it becomes increasingly urgent to work on a sacred-symbolic-architectural vocabulary. The Turkish language, reformed in accordance with the requirements of the republican post-Ottoman project, naturally did not need such a reform in religious vocabulary in reference to the Islamic cultural universe, contenting itself with maintaining the Arabic matrix of terms.

On the contrary, the words we need to illustrate the concepts proper to the Christian world must be able to be created by shaping the ideas we want to convey while taking into account the meaningful universe of reference for our counterparts. For example, how to express the ineffability of the idea of “(real) Presence” to which, in a Catholic Christian context, the physical space of the Tabernacle refers? Is there a truly meta-Christian way of saying the presence of God? Can we arrive, with “other believers”, at a joint and meaningfully relatable experience of God's presence? The challenge will be to propose the “concept of Real Presence” in another way: by preserving the idea of a God who is neither confined to limited physical spaces nor exclusively within our universe of beliefs. More generally, the aim will be to lay the foundations for an organic rethinking of the Christian experience in an interreligious context, accepting the use of symbolic mediations better adapted to the understanding of our non-Christian interlocutors (in this case, especially Muslims).

Welcoming one another, without hidden agenda

Once again, it is not so much a matter of trying to say, in a totally inadequate way, something about God (about “our” God), from a metaphysical perspective, but, rather, of finding meaningful contexts where the discourse about God could prove fruitful, and thus inspire a fuller and freer life as men and women of this world, independently of religious affiliations. This, mind you, is not because our profession of faith is irrelevant, but because in the context of an encounter and thus of a dialogue, what becomes relevant is not so much the faith we proclaim, but the impact in the concrete life of our creed. As believers, Christians, and Muslims, we are strongly convinced that our belief cannot be confined to the sphere of intimate convictions, but must contribute decisively to the transformation of our lives and the world in which we live. The fact that we can welcome one another, without hidden agenda, in our respective places of worship, is a concrete sign of this transforming value of our faith, a concrete way of making present that pregnant New Testament passage of the Letter of Peter which invites to «... always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have» (1 Peter 3:15).

True dialogue is between believers

Of course, our hope, as Christians believers, is a Person. It is the Lord Jesus whom we recognize as living and present in us and in our brothers and sisters, because Christ is Risen. But this christological accentuation does not distance us from the possibility of a fruitful dialogue because, following the example of Christ, a possible witness takes the form of a “taking care”: listening, assisting, and accompanying people in their questions and, above all, in their suffering. True dialogue is not established between doctrinal systems but between believers capable of putting faith back at the center which coincides with “a good news for humanity”, which is God’s universal salvific will!

This is a “gospel” that even true Muslim believers can willingly share.

TESTIMONIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY

Adyan's Pathways towards Inclusion and Solidarity

NAYLA TABBARA*

One of the forms of religious counter-testimony that is sadly found in all religions, is exclusion, be it in the form of social exclusion or that of theological exclusivism.

During the middle ages, theological exclusivism was understandable, as it was a generalized perception, part of the “air du temps” of competition between religions, and as there were no other interpretations towards inclusivism or pluralism available yet.

But today, we are enriched with a plethora of new theological reflections and updated interpretations of our religious texts pointing to pluralism, inclusion, and solidarity. The fact that some keep holding on to outdated theologies of exclusion, chosenness and supremacy, whereas they are presented nowadays with many theologies of openness and inclusion, is alarming. It shows that identity politics win over the core faith message, that fear wins over trust in the divine, and that hatred wins over love; three forms of dynamics that contradict the heart of the message of religions. I will thus here attempt to describe these dynamics, before giving an idea of how we try to address them at Adyan (meaning “religions” in Arabic), a foundation for diversity, solidarity and human dignity that I co-founded with Christian and Muslim friends in Lebanon in 2006¹.

The deep-rooted problems behind the counter testimony

Identity politics winning over faith

Being faithful means being in hope and in trust, as faith gives our lives meaning, and a relation with a divinity or with the universe, that makes us see it as a harmonious place. In the Arabic language, faith (*iman*) also comes from the same root as security (*aman*). This means that the faithful are persons who not only feel safe in this world, but are also, or ought to be, a safe haven for others.

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¹ See www.adyanfoundation.org

Sadly, this is quite far from the more generalized understanding or positioning in our religions, where we see people moving towards exclusion, or rather moving in contradictory dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. They might include the poor but exclude persons from other religions. Or they might include persons of other religions, but exclude persons of different gender, sexual orientation, different culture, or the non-religious. Thus, the inclusion they apply in one domain gives them a clear conscience, as they trick themselves into believing that they are abiding by the values of their religion, which gives them leeway to apply exclusion in other domains. Moreover, this exclusion can be both geographical, in the sense of moving away from those seen as 'others', not engaging with them, building all sorts of invisible borders between the "us" and the "them", or it can also be a theological barrier: considering them as unworthy of being a locus of divine grace, thus limiting the divine, or rather, reducing the divine love and mercy to the size of their own capacity to love.

Fear winning over trust

We tend to think that what moves us is our brain or our belief system. To some extent both do, yet it seems that our raw feelings move us more deeply. Among those feelings, the angst of existence, of not knowing our place in the world, of being overwhelmed by questions without definite answers. Some find answers in faith, but more questions continue to arise. I believe that we try to calm that fear and those questions by holding on to identities, instead of digging deeper for answers. By doing so, we distort what faith is, as it moves from an impulse of security, to a reaction of insecurity. What is supposed to be an open movement of faith that encompasses others, becomes a closed dynamic of fanaticism rejecting others.

A believer's attitude should be first and foremost trust in the divine. Yet identity dynamics of exclusion are at the opposite of trust. They are dynamics of fear, of mistrust not only of the other, but of the divine that has put these others in our lives. It is as if we transpose on the divine the image of parent with conditional love, who expects us always to win to deserve love. Consequently, we create a dynamic of competition and rivalry with the others, the siblings, who might gain the parent's approval and heart before us.

Hatred winning over love

With this stance, we rid others of their humanity, perceiving them only through the lens of the preconceived images we have of them, of the generalizations made about them, that are always to their detriment. They become ideas we make of them, not people. In the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion, we often

trick ourselves into thinking that we are people who carry a lot of love and mercy, yet we actually love only those we decided to include, who do not pose a threat to our identitarian group, our ingroup, and revoke any humane feeling towards those who belong to outgroups.

Because what I describe above is much more generalized than we would want it to be within our religious, we tend to see acts of inclusion and solidarity as extravagant acts, as amazing laudable positions, whereas they should be the core of our faiths, they ought to be the bare minimum we abide by if we want to call ourselves faithful.

Some pathways towards inclusion and solidarity

From its inception, Adyan foundation tries to reverse these dynamics, creating safe spaces of encounter, of learning about each other, but also about identity dynamics, and all the obstacles from mutual understanding. It also tries to shed light on the opposing difference between faith and fanaticism or sectarianism. A number of years ago, we launched a campaign with banners across Lebanon that read: “Fanaticism blinds us, faith enlightens us”. That campaign was accompanying a film we had made about four religious figures, two Christian and two Muslim, that showcased how in times of war and exclusion, it is possible to be a witness to interfaith solidarity and inclusion².

Spiritual social responsibility

Adyan also developed the concept of “Religious social responsibility”, borrowed from Corporate Social Responsibility. By this concept, it highlights the fact that the faithful are called to uphold values on the level of all of society, not only their “ingroup”, and that there are values of public life that are shared among religions and belief systems, that allow us to all work together for the common good, for human dignity, for justice, for equality and for rights. The foundation has been working with religious leaders and authorities to include this approach in religious education and in religious discourse, especially in Christianity and Islam, through publications, courses and conferences.

Spiritual solidarity

Adyan borrowed this expression from the third pastoral letter of Eastern Catholic Patriarchs issued in 1994 and entitled “Together before God for the wel-

² <https://adyanfoundation.org/library/documentaries/against-the-current/>

fare of the individual and of society”. Spiritual solidarity is about cross-communal solidarity. Instead of always defending the rights of persons from our own “in-group”, spiritual solidarity calls for opening a space within our hearts, our prayers, our minds, our theologies and our social action for the others. Since 2007 Adyan celebrates a Spiritual Solidarity Day on the last Saturday of October of each year since in the form of a national interfaith encounter, following the paradigm of the historic Assisi Interfaith Gathering of 1986.

Since that time, Adyan also grants a spiritual solidarity yearly award to persons who, from the rootedness in their own faith, work for and devote their life to develop and strengthen various forms of solidarity between people from different religions, especially in contexts of tension and violence.

Divine Hospitality

Adyan also works on promoting Christian and Muslim pluralist theologies of religious diversity. Through a book entitled *Divine Hospitality*³, translated into 5 languages and taught in several universities around the world, two of the co-founders of Adyan, Fr. Fadi Daou and myself developed a Christian and a Muslim theology of religious diversity, that was born through a methodology of theologies in dialogue.

What prompted us to work on these theologies, Fr. Fadi Daou as a Christian Maronite Theologian, and myself as a Muslim theologian, was not an endeavor to flatter or compliment the other faith, but a deep genuine need to understand what our own faiths could present in terms of open theologies of diversity, trying to look at things from the vastness of the divine love, and not from the limitedness of our human positions.

In conclusion, the fight for inclusion and solidarity is not an easy one, and it demands the joining together of forces of people from all religions and convictions, of people of good faith who believe that diversity is a gift from the divine, and that all human beings are equally sacred, and that it is incumbent on us all to make sure that we are never selective in the way we try to live the values we uphold.

³ <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/divine-hospitality>

TESTIMONIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY

All Rivers Lead to the Ocean: Interreligious Sharing in Malawi

RUTH MKWAIRA*

In Malawi, there are a number of religions. However, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism are in majority having over 80 percent of the population. African Traditional Religion has been around since time immemorial, but is generally considered as a backward, secretive and archaic faith group. Some even allege it demonic.

Recently, there has been a growing interest from other religious groups. For example there was a public funeral ceremony in 2020 of one of the longest serving members of African Traditional Religion Mr. Elson Soko. He was a well-known actor and was well liked by the public. His funeral was open to the general public and streamed live online and television. Such an event helped African Traditional Religion to open up to other faith groups and vice versa.

African Traditional Religion also held a libation ceremony in praying to the Creator and the ancestors following the devastating effect of Cyclone Freddy that ripped through Malawi in March, 2023 that left over 511 people dead, 392 people missing, 1 724 injured and 563 771 displaced.

Among the attendees were African Traditional Religion adepts as well as those belonging to Christianity, Islam and Rastafarian belief. There was a lot of interest from both the print and electronic media as it was widely covered.

On social media, there has been a growing interest especially from younger generations.

Quite interestingly while many people of other beliefs sometimes talk negatively about African Traditional Religion, there have been many comments responding positively thus helping foster a culture of inclusion and solidarity between different faith groups and African Traditional Religion.

Peggy Nanguku is a primary school teacher based in Blantyre, Malawi where she practices African Traditional Religion. Following her conversion to African Traditional Religion, she reports:

“I lost a lot of friends. Close friends cut off communication once I opened up about my faith. I became lonely and I shut down as my friends openly told me that I had betrayed my past religion. On the part of my family, they never openly

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criticised my decision to join African Traditional Religion, but I could feel the pressure mounting in the house to an extent that I decided to move out to be able to practice my religion freely.”

“However, with the passing of time, a few friends have returned and my family has become more tolerant. They now realised that there are many similarities with what they practice just like all rivers lead to the ocean,” she explained further.

Another member of African Traditional Religion Jane Ngozi shares her own experience as far as solidarity and inclusion with other faith groups is concerned.

Ngozi describes her family as an open-minded family so it has not been a challenge for her.

“Apart from my father who openly does not support my religion,” she says “the rest of my family have been accepting and asking a lot of questions so as to broaden their understanding of African Traditional Religion.”

She says she get invited to baptisms, weddings, funerals and even crusades by her family members, not to try to convince her to join their faith, but rather to also broaden her knowledge and understanding of other faiths.

“I also invite them when we have events like major libation, thanksgiving, initiation for coming of age of boys and girls and many other important events in African Traditional Religion practices,” Ngozi explained.

However, Ngozi has also faced challenges at the work place where she works as a Procurement Officer. There are some work colleagues who do not talk to her at all just because of her religion.

“I hope at some point they will understand the importance of tolerance and inclusion. I still love them though. Religion should not divide or alienate us,” she opines.

Another African Traditional Religion member who shared his own experience is Phillip Kasompha who has since lost out on some business opportunities as he was labelled “lost and old fashioned.”

Although this is a sad situation, other clients are still making use of his business regardless of the differences in religions.

Kasompha is lucky with his family acceptance as there is not much resistance as he still gets invited to major family gatherings and he reciprocates by also inviting family members to African Traditional Religion events.

“A lot of my friends shun me. They no longer associate with me. Some neighbours even warned their children not to play with mine as my kids are labelled “demonic.” So, during big events I provide them with gifts in order to teach them that religion is broad and I respect their faith,” said Kasompha.

“I hope one day they will come around because there is freedom of worship in Malawi. We should all peacefully coexist,” Kasompha added.

Personally, he says he has experienced both successful and challenging events with followers of other beliefs.

He explains: “A few of my family members fully accept my faith, get involved in my religious events, while others totally label me as “rebellious.” I live peacefully with my neighbours who are Moslem and Christian. I respect their faith and they respect mine. We peacefully coexist and get involved in community development programmes. I am not discriminated nor stigmatised because of my belief.”

Kasompha acknowledges that generally speaking, Malawi as a country enjoys freedom of religion because religion-based violence is almost nonexistent.

At one time Malawi was ruled by a Moslem President under whose regime different faith groups used to operate freely. It is the same with the other five presidents that Malawi has had.

It is with this attitudinal approach that African Traditional Religion as an ancient religion is slowly getting recognised, reintegrated and included in various national events.

However, as a person involved in interreligious dialogue, Kasompha would like to see more being done. He would like more inclusion and recognition at national level.

“African Traditional Religion holy sites should be declared as protected places by the government. This is something we are lobbying and advocating for,” suggests Kasompha.

There is still a long way to go, but what is reassuring is that as a country Malawian citizens are slowly getting there. There are a lot of gaps in form of information that the people should access and be able to understand the beliefs of others. There is need therefore for all religious groupings and state authorities to avail and disseminate information so that there is a better understanding, acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs.

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