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EDITORIAL

Martyrs Day – Celebrating non-violence

January, 30th is observed as martyrs' day in India. It commemorates the death of Mahatma Gandhi who was assassinated on this day in 1948.

Gandhiji was a victim of religious fanaticism. As someone who was always proud of his *sanatan dharma*, Gandhiji often defended its practices. He has even been accused of having defended casteism, which drew criticism from different quarters. At the same time, he was also criticized by some within his own faith for endorsing other religions. Gandhiji was squeezed between these two different perceptions and it is sad that the one who held the opinion that "it is good to die for religion, but for religious fanaticism, one must neither live nor die" became the victim of fanaticism. His assassination exposed the constraints of a believer in a religion to prove his religiosity by being a hyper-believer.

Gandhi's ideas posed a challenge to the lives of the traditional as well as urban-westernized elite of the country. Their anxiety and insecurity over the depletion of their lifestyles and hold on society, prompted them to turn to religion to deploy their interests and feed into the violent outlooks of the time.

It is significant to note that there is a general assumption that a group of people who follow a particular religion should have common socio-political and economic interests. Scholars like Bipan Chandra observed such a trend within religions and called it communalism. Those against the collective interests came to be counted as less religious and there emerged a binary between a believer and a hyper-believer. This idea has been gaining momentum globally in recent years as a part of communal mobilisation to manipulate electoral politics. especially in many of the democratic countries.

While community identity is multi-layered and diversely textured, it is possible to evoke certain emotions related to a particular community based on history as well as cultural and religious practices, marked by the intention to consolidate any communal identity as a watertight and colossal identity. The construction of such a community always needs an "other"

The binary is constructed on multiple levels, imagining the 'other' as 'demonic', 'the lost one' or a 'misfit' in society. These 'misfit' communities remain 'othered' within a society while being humiliated in different ways. Eventually such underprivileged communities may try to challenge their position in new and radical ways, creating further disharmony in the society. Therefore, it is imperative to have a healthy society with openness, acceptance and mutual respect.

The first week of February has been consistently set apart as World Interfaith Week by the United Nations since 2010 to develop mutual understanding and dialogue among religious communities and to foster a culture of peace, harmony and co-operation. The General Assembly encourages all States to voluntarily spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week.

Meaningful inter-faith community engagement has been a never-ending discussion within Christian churches and their mission agencies. With the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1947 the search to develop just communities in a pluralist context has been a primary focus. Eventually, after much deliberation the 4th WCC Assembly in Uppsala (1968) formally accepted dialogue as a meaningful method to foster harmony, both among communities of faiths and those of no faiths. A new sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies was created within the programme structures of the WCC in the same year.

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) also encourages its member churches and other constituents to develop dialogical living at a grassroot level to have communities of service and witness without diluting their faith or compromising their commitment to Christ. India Peace Centre, an Inter-religious Centre for Justice and Peace established with the initiative of NCCI is trying to enhance life by promoting the culture of dialogue and mutuality with a spirit of ever widening understanding.

The martyrdom of the Mahatma reminds us of the result of the deep-rooted hate in the society. He was the one who fought against hate through the propagation of love, non-violence and truth. He once said, "retaliation is counter poison and poison breeds more poison. The nectar of Love alone can destroy the poison of hate." Seventy five years after his assassination those words seem even more relevant than when he first uttered them.

Rev Dr Abraham Mathew
Managing Editor

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THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BORDER CONTROL POLICY AND THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION

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Abstract

Since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, border control in the European Union (EU) has evolved. Internally, the signing of the Schengen Agreement, enabled the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU. However, to the outsider, the EU remains a fortress. If the movement of people within the EU is free and seamless for its citizens, the movement of people, particularly migrants, is controlled through various border control policies and management of the EU and its member states. It is owing to such policies that the majority of migrants fleeing conflict and hardship in their own countries and trying to reach Europe are often denied entry. This is more pertinent in the post 9/11 and post Arab spring era when border control policy has taken on a new dimension wherein migration is closely linked with security threats and therefore engenders the desire for robust border control and management. The result is that migrants are often seen as a security threat, which appears to provide a pretext for turning EU into an exclusive zone.

Introduction

The end of the cold war and the emergence of globalization in the 1990s marked a new shift in the way borders operate. The loosening of border restrictions became imperative to facilitate the new wave of globalisation. However, this relaxation of borders was mostly restricted to goods, services, and highly skilled persons while securitizing the State's border took on a new dimension. The objectives of securing the border remain the same, and the scope of securitization has since expanded to non-traditional security issues like cross-border smuggling,

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trafficking, and migration that are now seen as constituting a threat to the State's security. The near paranoid perception of migration as an emerging threat is more dominant in regions where the border divides the rich north from the poor south, as in the case of Europe and North Africa. In such a scenario, the movement of people from developing and underdeveloped countries is restricted and discouraged, while movement between the rich developed countries is seamless and easy, thus making them an exclusive club and a zone of exception and exclusion.

In Europe, the signing of the Maastricht treaty not only transformed the European Communities into an economic and political union but also consolidated Europe as an exclusive club where the movement of people, goods and services within the EU is seamless. In this new borderless EU, EU citizens are bestowed with exclusive rights of movement and social rights within the EU, but the movement of people from outside into the EU is discouraged, screened, and stopped. Layers of policies that are practised through institutions such as the Justice and Home Affairs and its Internal Security Strategy (ISS), the European Commission, and the European External Action Services have internalised migration as a security issue that requires domestic and external action.[1] Therefore, the more Europe becomes the preferred destination for people from poor countries trying to escape civil war, conflict and economic hardship in their homelands, the harder the EU external border becomes. Despite Europe's increasing cultural diversity where those who are foreign-born constitute about 7 per cent of the EU's total population,[2] waves of anti-immigrant rhetoric and the

[1] Sarah Wolff, *The Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union's Internal Security* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Also See, Maciej Stępka, *Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse: The "Migration Crisis" and the EU*. IMISCOE Research Series: Springer, 2022).

[2] Richard Wike, Bruce Stoke, and Katie Simmons, "Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs", *Pew Research Center*, July 11, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/

rise of right-wing parties have rendered many lives of migrants precarious even before they reach European shores. Therefore, in Europe, the construction of a binary of 'north-south', 'insider-outsider', and 'us-them' today extends beyond the external borders of Europe. The 2015 migrant crisis is an example of this externalisation where refugees applying for asylum are subjected to denials, push, and relocation to third countries. This is the case even when the number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Europe during this period was less than 0.2 per cent of the EU's total population.[3] Compared to the refugees and migrants of 2014-15 who were detained for up to 18 months before their papers were processed, the Ukrainian refugees of 2022 have been welcomed and allowed to enter EU countries even without passports, or other valid travel documents.[4] It is such policies along with the perception of migrants and refugees as a security threat that exposes the fault lines between those binaries.

EU Border Control Policy

Internally, the Schengen Agreement of 1990 makes the EU a borderless region. However, externally, the EU is a giant wall that restricts the movement of people from outside into the EU. Today, these external boundaries at the edge of the EU are redrawn as the result of changing geopolitical realities. The transformation of conflicts from inter to intra-state levels has meant that border 'security' is no longer restricted to traditional military security but also includes security that is non-traditional or otherwise known as human security. The threat of terrorist attacks, smuggling, trafficking, cross-border migration and

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[3] Natalie Nougayrède, "Diversity Could Be The Making of Europe – Let's Talk About It", *The Guardian*, January 5, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/05/europes-citizens-need-start-debate-diversity

[4] Rachael Reilly and Michael Flynn, "Ukraine Crisis Double Standards: Has Europe's Response to Refugee Changed?". *ReliefWeb*, March 03, 2022. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), http://reliefweb.int/ukraine/ukraine-crisis-double-standards-ras-europe-s-response-refugees-changed

unresolved conflicts in its neighbourhood has led the EU to redefine its border control management.

The first phase of border control policies started with the introduction of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in 1999–2005. The CEAS introduced several legislative measures to harmonize common minimum standards for asylum. During the first phase of its establishment, the CEAS introduced a database for storing and comparing fingerprint data known as the 'EURODAC'. The EURODAC aims to define common minimum standards for the reception, granting and withdrawal of asylum-seekers and refugee status.[5]

However, the first concrete border management policy in the EU was achieved with the introduction of Integrated Border Management (IBM) in 2002. IBM was devised as an integrated concept for border management to meet the challenges of new security threats and to ensure a high level of internal security within the EU.[6] Therefore, the main aim of IBM is to establish a mechanism of coordination between national and international authorities and agencies for effective and efficient border management at the EU external border.

While the Schengen convention (that came into effect in 1995) assures a free and borderless region within the EU, the IBM was designed as a hard external frontier to protect and secure the EU's internal Schengen border through a common security agency. To supplement the role of IBM, in 2004, the EU established FRONTEX (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) as a nodal agency to coordinate and assist member states in various aspects of border management such as risk analysis, training, research, border surveillance, technical

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[5] European Parliament, *Migration and Asylum: A Challenge for Europe* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2018), p.4, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2017/600414/IPOL_PERI(2017)600414_EN.pdf

[6] European Commission, *Guidelines for Integrated Border Management for Western Balkans*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/european-integrated-border-management_en

and operational assistance.[7]Thus, with the establishment of FRONTEX, the EU's border control and management practices attain legal competence. Following the migration crisis of 2014–15, FRONTEX extended its jurisdiction beyond the sea and also now operates as Coast Guard Agency. This transformation allows the EU's border agencies to operate beyond its external land border and into the sea. In the context of this change, the EU's border management undertook a 'Hotspot Approach' towards migration control policy. Aimed as a single platform of coordination between various agencies such as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), FRONTEX, EUROPOL and EUROJUST, the 'Hotspot Approach' is an immediate emergency support system to assist member states to deal with the pressure of incoming migrants coherently and swiftly.[8]

While border control policies in the EU developed in the 1980s with the Schengen Agreement, however, it is to be noted that the urgency to provide a legal basis to IBM and FRONTEX was mostly influenced by the events of the September 11 terrorist attack. Post 9/11, the EU's view on open borders is linked with its internal security that requires external action. Linking internal security with external action, the European Security Strategy (ESS), published in 2003, is a landmark document that further securitized Europe's external borders.[9] The ESS acknowledged that Europe was facing new threats that were the result of regional conflict, state failure, dysfunctional societies, exploding population growth, organized crimes, and terrorism in its

[7] Council of the European Union. *Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 of 26 October 2004 Establishing a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32004R2007.

[8] Niovi Vavoula, *Immigration and Privacy in the Law of the European Union* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

[9] Sven Biscop, "The EU and Euro-Mediterranean Security: A New Departure?" In Nicola Casarini and Costanza Musu (Eds). *European Foreign Policy in an Evolving International System: The Road Towards Convergence* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.195-208

neighbourhood.[10] The ESS therefore identified Eastern Europe and MENA as regions that posed an immediate threat to the EU's internal security (Thus, the aftermath of 9/11 witnessed an urgency on the part of the EU to secure its border). Even before the ESS was published, the Laeken Council of December 2001, and the Seville Summit of June 2002, reflected the EU's desire for an effective border control mechanism. This anxiety was pronounced in the Communication of the European Commission to the Council and the Parliament in 2002 when it published its communication entitled "Towards Integrated Management of the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union".[11] The Communication proposed various mechanisms for an integrated strategy towards the management of the external borders at the EU level.[12] These include the convergence of national policies, exchange and processing of data between authorities, dealing with third countries, and the creation of European border guards.[13] While 9/11 was a defining moment that shaped the EU's border control regime, it was however not until the aftermath of the Arab uprising in 2010 that the EU's border control faced a major test. The result of this was stricter border control regimes that resulted in migrants being denied entry or being pushed back.

Border Control in the Post Arab-Spring

Immediately after 9/11, the EU's neighbourhood policy, especially in the MENA region, changed. With the threat of global terrorism, the EU's hope for peace, development and democracy promotion through its Mediterranean policy suddenly hit a roadblock. As security issues took precedence, issues of democracy and

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[10] Council of the European Union, European Union External Action Services, *European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/publications/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world/#:~:text=The%20European%20Council%20adopted%20the,based%20on%20our%20core%20values

[11] European Commission, *Towards Integrated Management of the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union.* COM(2002) 233 final

[12] ibid

[13] ibid

human rights were relegated to the background as long as regimes in these countries were willing to deliver on the fight against terrorism. Even the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) also known as the Barcelona Process that was launched in 1995 was stifled because of the overemphasis on European security. The EUROMED, which laid the foundation for a new regional partnership covering political, economic, and social cooperation, was a turning point in Euro-Mediterranean collaboration. However, the onset of 9/11 diametrically changed the discourse of peace, stability and growth to security and securitization of the EU's Mediterranean policy.

Thus, EU border control after 2001 is marked by the increasing restriction on the entry of people at its southern external border. Key to this is a series of border control agreements on resettlement and readmission with regimes in the MENA regions. For example, two weeks after the 24 June 2022 incident where 24 migrants died in the Spanish-Morocco border at Barrio Chino, a new partnership agreement between the EU and Morocco was signed. In this agreement, the EU agreed to pay Morocco Euro 500 million over the next five years as part of its commitment towards border control and in line with European migration policies.[14] Similarly, in April 2022, a convention between Europe and Morocco was signed to address areas of cooperation on issues of security, and the fight against crime, linking them to the trafficking in human beings and illegal immigration.[15] Furthermore, in 2019, Spain's direct aid to Morocco amounted

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[14] BBC, "Death on the Border. BBC Africa Eye Documentary", November 1, 2022, *Youtube*, http://youtube.be/MJoL7E4uvuU

[15] Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europeay Cooperacion, "Convenio entre el Reino de España y el Reino de Marruecos sobre cooperación en materia de seguridad y de lucha contra la delincuencia hecho en Rabat el 13 de febrero de 2019", *Boletín Official del Estado,* No.83 (1), April 7, 2022, p. 46756-46760.

Also see, Statewatch, "Spain and Morocco Renew Security Cooperation Agreement Linking Organized Crime With "Irregular" Migration", April 28, 2022, https://www.statewatch.org/news/2022/april/spain-and-morocco-renew-security-cooperation-agreement-linking-organised-crime-and-irregular-immigration/

to 32 million euros for cooperation on policing and another 30 million Euros in May 2021 to combat irregular migration.[16] Similarly, two years before the Arab Spring, in 2008, Italy agreed with the then Gadaffi regime to manage the border and deter migrants from crossing into Italy. According to the agreement, Italy pledged $5bn to Libya to tighten its border including joint maritime patrols in exchange for Italy's compensation for colonial-era crimes.[17]

These agreements indicate that countries like Morocco, Italy and Turkey have the leverage when bargaining with the EU in combatting irregular migration. They were able to bargain because they thrive on the insecurity and anxiety that Europe exhibited vis-à-vis migrants. As Europe witnessed an economic downturn towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, migrants from the south began to be perceived as a burden and security risk. As political instability, violence, and economic hardship in the MENA region and beyond pushed people towards Europe, the EU's commitment towards the region's democracy and human rights and the development agenda that it promised in the mid-1990s were found to be inadequate. Thus, when the Arab spring exploded in 2011, the EU was caught unaware. Despite signs that repressive regimes across the MENA countries were testing the patience of the public, the EU response to these public anxieties was tepid. The failure of the EU to immediately respond to the popular uprising stemmed from the fact that the EU's faith in authoritarian regimes to provide a security buffer to Europe far outweighed the popularity of the uprising for change.

The change in the EU's response occurred when it was clear that the popular uprisings were turning the table against the authoritarian regimes. Its lackadaisical attitude changed to support when it stated in its official response that the EU was ready to "support

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[16] Sonia Moreno. "The Human Cost of Outsourcing Europe's Border Controls", *Green European Journal,* August 10, 2022, https://www. greeneuropeanjournal.eu/the-human-cost-of-outsourcing-europes-border-controls/

[17] BBC, "How Libya Holds the Key to Solving Europe's Migration Crisis. July 7, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44709974

wholeheartedly the demand for political participation, dignity, freedom and employment opportunities and set out an approach based on the respect of universal values and shared interests".[18] This commitment was facilitated through the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of 2011. This new vision presented by the European Commission emphasized a new "partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the southern Mediterranean".[19] The rationale for this new development was the need to adapt to these new realities. Therefore, concepts like 3M-Money, Mobility, and Market within the 'principles of differentiated policy approach', 'positive conditionality' and 'more for more' were proposed by the Commission to support investment and grants in sectors that would support economic development and strengthen democracy in the region through its SPRING (Support for Partnership Reform and Inclusive Growth) programme.[20]Despite these proposals, two of the 'Ms'- 'mobility and 'market' are stuck in limbo and are a point of contention between the Mediterranean partners and the EU. For example, 'market' access is still a distant dream because the proposal and objective of turning the Mediterranean region into a free trade zone by 2010 failed to materialise. Similarly, the mobility of workers, students, and professionals is another point of contention between the Mediterranean partner and the EU. Despite the commitments to expand Mediterranean partners' mobility to the EU through various programmes such as the Erasmus programme, inter-university collaboration, and support for the modernization of higher education, little progress was made.[21] When analysing these relationships, the EU's policy towards the Mediterranean as conceived through its ENP is

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[18] European Commission, "The EU's Response to the 'Arab Spring'", *Press Release*, Brussels, December 16, 2011, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-918_en.htm. Also see, Yonca Ozer, and Fatmanur Kacar, "The EU's Stance Toward VNSAs During the Syrian Crisis: YPG and ISIS Cases" In Zeynep Oktav,et.al (eds), *Violent Non-state Actors and the Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*. (Cham: Springer 2018), pp. 173-92.

[19] ibid

[20] ibid

[21] ibid

inherently Euro-centric and serves European interests that are framed, developed and implemented by the EU itself, with partner countries having a limited say over the implementation of the programme. As Steven Blockman argues, even when new areas of cooperation are expected, the priority areas of the revised ENP, for instance, are essentially the same as those of the 'old' ENP and are widely regarded as unsuccessful.[22]

While the EU's new-policy orientation through the ENP was supposed to stabilize the Post-Arab spring states, the immediate change of regime and absence of a central authority also led to the civil wars, which defeated the EU's mandate. The immediate collateral of the civil wars was the flood of migrants attempting to cross to Europe. By 2015, more than one million migrants and refugees had reached the shores of Europe putting EU border control agencies under pressure.[23] The Dublin Regulation, which was supposed to streamline and harmonize the EU's asylum policy collapsed and raised questions about the effectiveness of the Schengen regime. Member states like Italy and Greece became burdened with a wave of incoming migrants and refugees and also lacked human and financial resources to cope with the crisis. Other member states unilaterally chose to close their borders. These inconsistencies have further undermined the EU's migration policy.

As migrants entered Europe, the politics of fear gained traction and set the tone for the anti-migrant narrative in the national elections across Europe. This put pressure on the EU to respond to the crisis. In such a crisis, the EU and its member states' responses were often found to be contradictory, thereby putting pressure on a common EU policy aimed at addressing the crisis. While Germany was committed to receiving migrants, countries

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[22] Steven Blockmans, "The ENP and 'More for More' Conditionality: Plus Que Ca Change" In G.Fernández Arribas, K Pieters and T. Takács (eds.). *The European Union's Relations With The Southern-Mediterranean In The Aftermath Of The Arab Spring,* Centre for the Law of EU External Relations (CLEER) Working Papers 2013/3, (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Institute), pp. 53-60.

[23] Susana Ferreira, *Human Security and Migration in Europe's Southern Borders* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

like Hungary and Poland were hostile and Italy and Greece were burdened with the numbers of migrants arriving at their shore. The EU on its part agreed to mitigate poverty and conflict in the Middle East by providing more help to Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and other countries in the region in the hopes of inducing some people to remain in their homelands.[24] The EU-Turkey €6 billion agreement of 2016 on the resettlement of refugees to facilitate and speed up the process of identifying asylum seekers is one example of the EU's attempt to shed its responsibility to a third party when it comes to migrants and refugees from the developing south.

In contrast to the 2014-15 migrant crisis, the Ukrainian war of 2022 exposes the EU and its member states' double standard policy on the issues of refugees and migrants. Through the Temporary Protection Directive of the European Union, about 7.4 million Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's invasion since early 2022 were granted the right to stay, work, and study in any European member state.[25] Ukrainian refugees that entered Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova were welcomed, received and assisted without any difficulties. It is therefore these two contrasting pictures that summed up EU's border control policies as inherently partial to migrants from the developing south. In short, the EU's new migration policy is to filter out migrants and refugees and shed EU responsibility. The EU-Turkey deal, the 'resettlement' scheme, and the 'controlled' centres, have all been aimed at securing Europe from the influx of migration, but at the centre of these agreements and policies are border control practices that securitize migration as a threat

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[24] CNN, "Europe Seeks Unified Response To Unprecedented Migration Crisis", September 24, 2015

[25] European Council, "Ukraine: Council Unanimously Introduces Temporary Protection for Persons Fleeing the War", *Press Release,* 4th March 2022, http://consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-release/2022/03/04/ukraine-council-introduces-temporary-protection-for-persons-fleeing-the-war/

to state security rather than migration as an issue of human security.[26]

Technology and Border Control

Technology as an integral part of the development of border control in the EU did not start with the establishment of IBM or FRONTEX but found its genesis in the Schengen agreement of 1985. The Schengen agreement laid down the arrangements and safeguards for implementing freedom of movement within the EU by abolishing internal border controls, introducing a uniform procedure for issuing a visa, establishing a single database for all members known as the Schengen Information System (SIS), and setting up a structure of cooperation between internal and immigration officers.[27] When the Treaty of Amsterdam was concluded in 1999, the Schengen Agreement was further strengthened with the signing of the Schengen Convention. Thus, through this convention, the Schengen Agreement was also incorporated within the institutional and legal framework of the Treaty of Amsterdam. This framework formed the basis for the later development of the EU's border control policies. Notable in the development of the Schengen system is the evolution of the Schengen Information System (SIS) and its second-generation Schengen Information System II (SIS II).[28] The SIS serves as a crucial EU database information system on the movement of people that records information about people and objects such as vehicle registration certificates or number plates among others. The SIS is a highly efficient large-scale information system

[26] Stephen Castles, et.al., "Irregular Migration: Causes, Patterns, and Strategies" in Irena Omelaniuk. (ed), *Global Perspectives on Migration and Development* (Cham: Springer, 2012), pp.117-157.

[27] European Parliament, "The Schengen acquis - Agreement Between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the Gradual Abolition of Checks at Their Common Borders". *Official Journal of the European Union. L 239 , 22/09/2000 P. 0013 – 0018)*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:42000A0922(01)

[28] Gaetano De Amicis, "Horizontal Cooperation" in Roberto E. Kostoris (ed.) *Handbook of European Criminal Procedure* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), pp. 249-278.

that supports external border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Schengen States to preserve internal security in the Schengen States.[29] Its scope is defined in the three legal instruments of border control cooperation, law enforcement cooperation, and cooperation on vehicle registration. This is complemented through the Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries (SIRENE) cooperation system that acts as a key element for the effective functioning of the concept of the SIS.[30] Through the SIRENE Bureaux at a national level, member states can share complementary information such as fingerprints, biometrics and photographs of individuals travelling into the EU. Such information enables border guards and visa issuing and migration authorities to enter and consult alerts with regard to third-country nationals with a view to refusing entry into or permitting stay in the Schengen Area.[31] It is observed that although the SIS is described as a mechanism aimed at securing stability, order and security in the Schengen region, its major concern appears to be with illegal migration.[32]

To meet the challenge of migration from the Mediterranean, the European Commission in 2008 proposed the setting up of

[29] European Parliament, "Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the Establishment, Operation and Use of the Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II)". *Official Journal of the European Union. OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 4–23* . https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=czPGJqzTQ2PCZN7t1T1MBLq2GYpDGqC0FKxcs7SN8g4D9jK60JJy!-816798593?uri=CELEX:32006R1987

[30] Sarah Wolff, *The Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union's Internal Security.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[31] European Parliament, "Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the Establishment, Operation and Use of the Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II)". *Official Journal of the European Union. OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 4–23* . https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=czPGJqzTQ2PCZN7t1T1MBLq2GYpDGqC0FKxcs7SN8g4D9jK60JJy!-816798593?uri=CELEX:32006R1987

[32] E. Guild, et.al. "The Commission's New Border Package: Does it Take Us One Step Closer to a 'Cyber-Fortress Europe'?", *CEPS Policy Brief,* No.154, 2008.

a *European Border Surveillance System* (EUROSUR) to enhance border management and control. Key to the EUROSUR programme is the use of aircraft, satellites, and sea sensors to track mobile populations.[33] However, it was only in 2013, through the European Council and European Parliament's Regulation that EUROSUR was formally established.[34] EUROSOR is a multipurpose system for cooperation between the EU Member States and FRONTEX to improve situational awareness and increase reaction capability at external borders.[35] Therefore, in the design of EUROSUR, border surveillance through space technology remains a primary role that constitutes the Mediterranean Sea as a space of control[36] While the regulation did not specify the methods of surveillance it did mandate that the Member States should establish national coordination centres to improve the exchange of information and the cooperation for border surveillance between them and with the Agency according to their national law.[37] Apart from maintaining data on migrants' fingerprints and facial images, Member States are thus free to express their tools and methods of surveillance to protect their border. In other words, the development of the EUROSUR is revealing in that it pointed in a direction where

[33] T, Baird, "Interest groups and strategic constructivism: Business actors and border security policies in the European Union", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 44(1), 2017, pp. 118-136

[34] European Parliament, "Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 Establishing the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur)" *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 295/11. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1418993536491&uri=CELEX:32013R1052

[35] ibid

[36] R. Bellanova and D. Duez, "The Making (Sense) of EUROSUR: How to Control The Sea Borders?" in R. Bossong and H. Carrapico (eds). *EU Borders and Shifting Internal Security - Technology, Externalization and Accountability*, (Cham: Springer. 2016), pp. 23-44.

[37] European Parliament, "Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 Establishing the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur)" *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 295/11. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1418993536491&uri=CELEX:32013R1052

new technologies that include AI were increasingly deployed and relied upon in border control.

Similarly, the EURODAC regulation that was established in 2003 is responsible for the EU asylum fingerprint database. The EURODAC facilitates Member States' law enforcement and Europol to compare fingerprints linked to criminal investigations with those contained in EURODAC.[38]The inability of the system to respond adequately during the 2015 crisis-the system was found inadequate to cope with the numbers of data to process- led the Commission in 2016 to propose to the Council and Parliament a reform package for the EURODAC.

The proposal includes the identification of migrants, refugees, or stateless persons by using biometrics that would include fingerprints and facial images that would improve the effectiveness of the EU return policy".[39]The proposal also includes the storage of fingerprints of children below 14 years who were earlier exempted from such exercise, retaining the fingerprint data for a longer period so that secondary movements could be adequately monitored within the EU and sharing of data with a third country for readmission could be made possible.[40] The increasing reliance on technology is therefore a response to global and regional events post 9/11where the EU's border control has expanded its scope and objectives to the domain of 'smart' borders. Like in the United States and Canada, the implementation of a series of security measures to make the border 'smarter', notably the implementation of biometric identity documents in passports and at ports of entry as well as surveillance by UAV Predator drones is well documented.[41] It is in the application of these very same technologies that the EU is

[38] European Commission, *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of 'Eurodac'.* COM(2016) 272 final. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_ institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2016/0272/COM_ COM(2016)0272_EN.pdf

[39] ibid

[40] ibid

[41] M. B Salter and C.E. Mutlu, "Psychoanalytic theory and border security. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 15(2), 2012, p. 184.

convinced that migration as a threat to European security can be mitigated only when its external border is secured and that new tools of surveillance technology for border controls would go a long way in protecting its external borders.

The transformation of European borders has further enhanced the resolution of the EU to secure its internal borders and to employ tools and techniques that to the best effect deter border crossing from across its external borders. The use of technology and Artificial Intelligence in migration studies is new and has gained pace in the last two decades that also coincided with the emergence of globalization and a liberal market economy. In studying disease transmission and its relations to human migration, the most definite instance of using AI and its algorithm in tracking migration in an epidemic situation was implemented during the ebola crisis of 2014 and COVID19 pandemic. In both cases, artificial intelligence tracked, reported and mapped information by scanning information from various sources like social media, news agencies, medical reports, etc in an attempt to trace the progression of the outbreak of the virus.[42]

In the EU, a project for AI in border patrol checkpoints was set up with the launching of the iBorderCtrl project in 2016. Luxembourg, Greece, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Germany, and Latvia are countries that participated in this project. According to this project, the program, which is an automated control, is to "enable a fast and efficient border control for third-country nationals crossing the land borders of EU Member States with technologies that adopt the future development of the Schengen Border Management".[43] The main objective of this project is to automate the EU's border

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[42] Larry Greenemeier, "Smart Machines Join Humans in Tracking Africa Ebola Outbreak". *Scientific American*, September 24, 2014, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/smart-machines-join-humans-in-tracking-africa-ebola-outbreak/

[43] L3S Research Centre, Leibniz University of Hannover, "iBorderCtrl", https://www/l3s.de/projects/iborderctrl

checking to counter irregular migration and terrorism.[44] To fulfil this objective, the project will depend on the 'lie detection' AI of the iBorderCtrl system to detect deception. As a sentinel, the AI analyses the micro-gestures of individuals to determine whether or not they are lying.[45] With the application of AI technology in migration screening and migrants' movements, a 'security continuum' is established where the distinction between domestic and external security is erased, leaving the state as an overarching actor that controls and decides on the status of a migrant and how their movement is controlled and stopped.[46] It is in the application of such technology that many refugee and immigration claims may be lost because of the complex nature of these technologies. Moreover, bias, discrimination and privacy issues are key concerns that come along with the application of such technology. In other words, real-life consequences for ordinary people who are fleeing for their lives are left at the mercy of machines. In such a scenario, with the emergence of new technology for border control, the EU is becoming an ever-thicker wall for migrants and refugees.

Conclusion

In Europe and elsewhere, the border as an exclusive territorial marker has been of particular significance. With the foundation and subsequent evolution of the EU from the 1950s onwards, there exists a clear delineation of the political and social boundaries between Europe and the others. Despite the idea

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[44] Umberto Bacchi, "EU's Lie Detecting Virtual Border Guards Face Court Scrutiny". *Reuters*, February 5, 2021. Also see, Johann Wagner, *Border Management in Transformation: Transnational Threats and Security Policies of European States*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)

[45] European Commission, "Smart Lie-Detection System to Tighten EU's Busy Borders". October 24, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/projects/success-stories/all/smart-lie-detection-system-tighten-eus-busy-borders#:~:text=An%20EU%2Dfunded%20project%20is,test%20using%20lie%2Ddetecting%20avatars

[46] Vladimir Kolosov and James Scott, "Selected Conceptual Issues in Border Studies: Questions Conceptuelles Dans les Recherches Sur les Frontières"¸ *Belgeo* (1), 2013, pp. 1-20, https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.10532

that globalization was meant to loosen border restrictions and facilitate the integration of national and regional economies into the global economy, within Europe, external boundaries exist and still operate within a fortress Europe. While borders between rich and developed countries are free or relaxed, this is not the case between rich and poor countries. Instead, borders in regions that intersect rich and poor countries are becoming more fortified and securitized. In the case of Europe, border control is developed to preserve and secure European citizens while sanitizing migrants and refugees who arrive from poor countries.

Throughout EU history, it has become clear that border control regimes are framed from the gaze of territoriality and citizenship. Most of the EU policies toward its neighbourhood have been framed from the perspective of European ideas and seemingly operated "for the EU" rather than "with the EU." As Europe weathered crises and with mainstream political parties failing to address these crises, right-wing and nationalist parties took advantage and rose to power on the platform of anti-immigration. Once in power, as in the case of Hungary and Italy, demand and bargaining for the EU's stringent border control policy and management became inevitable. The EU, which is founded on the ashes of the brutal experience of two world wars and on the idea of freedom and justice that welcomes migrants, is today, ironically, a zone of exclusion.

EMBRACING AGEING : A REVIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

-Anoop K A* & Sandhya R S**

Abstract

The positive ways to approach and live old age is the relevant concept of discussion among social scientists of the modern world. And it is seen that most of the aged people are finding their fulfillment and self-actualization in religious practices and attributes. For many, religion is making their life more positive and implanting positive attitudes as they live life ageing. Christianity is one of the prominent religions that, by its spiritual thoughts and teaching, understands ageing in an optimistic manner, and so many of its aged followers find their fulfillment and self-actualization in the same. The paper deals with the answers to the question of how Christianity as a religion and a community helps the elderly to live a positive and active ageing.

Concept of Ageing, Christian Concept of old age, Positive ageing, Role of religion in old age

Grey *hair is the crown of glory;*

It is found in the way of righteousness

(Proverbs 16:32)

Introduction

The concept of ageing is getting much attention in scholarly studies as the notion of positive ageing is taken by the world as the basis of the physical and mental well-being of old age. The positive ways to approach and live old age is a relevant concept of discussion among social scientists of the modern world. The Role of religion and connected aspects in making ageing positive and serene is not much discussed even though

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the same provides structure, meaning, and support at the time of tribulations and struggles for many elderly persons.[1] The concept of positive ageing is defined by the International handbook of Positive ageing (2017) as the attitude towards the changes of ageing in a positive manner so that individuals and societies approach old age happily and live it more productively with self-fulfillment[2]. And it is seen that most of the aged people are finding their fulfillment and self-actualization in religious practices and attributes. For many, religion is making their lives more positive and implanting positive attitudes as they live their life as seniors. Christianity is one of the prominent religions that, by its spiritual thoughts and teaching, understands the ageing process in an optimistic manner, and so many of its aged followers find their fulfillment and self-actualization in the same. The book of Proverbs, which is one of the fundamental sections of the Old Testament, speaks about the philosophy of life and the world and explains 'grey hair' (the sign of old age) as the crown of glory, illustrating the way the religion sees the aged life positively. According to Walter Gaffney & Henry Nouwen (1974) ageing for Christianity is simply hopeful and not a reality to be anguish about, it's not to be seen as a slow decline or decaying but the culmination of one's maturity and so it has to embraced with happiness[3]. This paper is an attempt to explore the concept of ageing in Christianity in both spiritual and social aspects. It also tries to evaluate how this aspect helps the elderly for positive ageing.

Role of Religion and Spirituality in Positive Ageing.

Religion and spirituality are, for many, a perspective on life, a way of seeing life positively, and many find their meaning and

[1] Rote, S., Hill, T. D., & Ellison, C. G. (2013). Religious attendance and loneliness in later life. *The Gerontologist*, *53*(1), 39-50.

[2] Docking, R. E., & Stock, J. (Eds.). (2017). *International Handbook of Positive Aging*. Taylor & Francis.

[3] Gaffney, W. J., & Nouwen, H. J. (1974). Aging: The fulfillment of life.

purpose in it, especially in old age.[4] Even though terms like religion, spirituality, belief, etc., have different implications in this paper, the nuances are the same; in this paper, all these words are used in their interconnectedness with religiosity. So, the paper tries to deal with how religiosity helps the elderly to be positive in their old age.

From ancient times, religion and spirituality have had profound and firm roots in the life and well-being of human beings. Recently, people have begun to depend on other sources for their fundamental needs and demands. Earlier, everything turned to religion. People were finding religion and spirituality in every aspect of their life. Even for physical and mental health and treatment, people depended exclusively on religion earlier. Education and other social structures were also connected to religious beliefs and concepts. And old age and its well-being were, in a way, perceived by the elderly in connection with religious beliefs and their attributes. And so we find many elderly becoming involved in religious practices and engaging themselves in religiosity as they step on into, and live through, old age. The elderly are seen to be more spiritual or start to involve in more religious practices than the young. People tend to make religious explanations the reasons and remedies for ill health and well-being issues. So, when human beings reach old age with health concerns and ailments, they may normally depend on religiosity as a refuge. Many elderly people testify that religious beliefs helped them recover speedily from health issues and other problems even though they are aware of the role and effectiveness of the medical systems and the other aspects of the world which substantially impact their life.[5]

Concept of Old Age in the Bible

Elderly people have 'grey hair,' so the word itself is spoken of as a sign of old age. In the Biblical interpretation, grey hair is the crown of glory (Prov: 16/32), and the advanced years of the

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[4] Park, C. L. (2007). *Religiousness/spirituality and health: A meaning systems perspective. Journal of behavioral medicine*, *30*(4), 319-328.

[5] Malone, J., & Dadswell, A. (2018). The Role of religion, spirituality, and/or belief in positive ageing for older adults. *Geriatrics*, *3*(2), 28.

elderly must teach wisdom (Job 32/7). So, the Christian concept of old age, primarily based on the Bible, is not just the useless or jobless period of a human lifespan but the most valuable and knowledgeable epoch of one's life. The Biblical tradition of Christianity is fairly divided into two- Old Testament and New Testament. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament treat and view life as a spiritual journey that begins with birth and ends not at death but at the life after death, the union with God.[6] The Old Testament is the collection of books written in the Hebrew or Jewish religious settings, which was the basic community from which Christianity evolved. So, the Christian religious themes and concepts are always based on both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament depicts the life span of many of its heroes as being more than a hundred years.

The Bible presents old age and the life of the elderly in three dimensions. Firstly, old age is the reward of God; secondly, the elderly must be respected in the community, and are the responsibility of the community. Third, while old age has its blessings it is also a time of vulnerability and ailments where God tests man.[7] The Old Testament considers old age as a span full of wisdom, and so they are teachers of the community[8]. The words used to speak about old age and the last days of life are 'aged,' 'very old,' 'stricken with age,' 'of great age,' 'autumn of life,' etc (2 Sam 19/32, Job 12/20, 15/10, 29/8, Jer 6/11, Luke 2/36, Titus 2/2, etc.) Bible itself accepts the temporal nature of life and in the book of Psalms we see as "life is a passing shadow" (Ps 103/15/16, 144/4). It also accepts that aging is inevitable and the process of draining strength and life is its part. The journey as a believer, of course, will help him or her to face the tribulations of old age and to transform the idea into a hopeful pleasant end. (Rom 14/7-9, John 15/1-8, 1Cor 15/26, Eph 2/8, Titus 2/13 etc).

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[6] Davies, J. (2008). A practical theology of aging: biblical perspectives for individuals and the Church. *Christian Education Journal*, *5*(2), 274-293.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Infante, M. A (2011) The Elderly as viewed from the perspective of the Bible and the Church's magisterium. *Anles,* Vol 119(3).

The first epistle to the Corinthians (15/19) and the second book as well (5/20) exhort that death is not an end but an opening to a new possibility that is real and original - heaven.

The Old Age and Elderly Heroes of the Bible

The characters seen as elderly and aged in the Bible can be taken as perfect examples of Christianity's concept of aging. There we find many elderly persons actively living their old age and engaging ardently in their God-given responsibilities and seen as living with the infirmities of old age.[9] Many of the Biblical heroes take up duties even in advanced age, and a few take up responsibilities at a young age and become more responsible and mature in old age. The lifespan of the first characters Adam and Eve, in the book of Genesis, is said to be 930 years, and this life span seems to decrease as the book moves across the biblical heroes that follow in sequence[10]. The transition of age is seen between the age of the mythical characters like Noah, Methuselah, and Terah, etc., to the historical characters like Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, etc. The word elder is seen in the scriptures and usually means that the oldest male takes the leadership of the flock or the family.[11] Most of the time, grey hair is associated with old age in the Bible.[12] These heroes are also seen in later old age suffering from various kinds of infirmities and deprivations of the period, as Jacob and Isaac suffer in the book of Genesis. In the book of Kings (1 Kings 15/21), we see David in his old age feeling the chills and a girl is assigned to warm him.

Good Old Days

For the Old Testament, long life is a gift and reward of God for which people aspire written The book of Exodus asks readers to respect their parents so that they will be rewarded with a long

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[9] Knight, D. A. (2014). Perspectives on Aging and the Elderly in the Hebrew Bible. *Interpretation*, *68*(2), 136-149.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Conrad, J. "*zdqen,*" in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 4 (ed. G. Johannes Botterweek and Helmer Ringgren; trans. David E. Green; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 122-24.

life (Ex 20/12). Thus, a long life is considered to be a gift and reward people aspire for. In the book of Genesis, Abraham's death is explained with the words "he died in his good old days" (Gen 25/8). The adjective 'good' explains the attitude of the Old Testament toward old age. Biblical tradition observed old age as a glorified period of life. The expression 'lived their full life' to refer to people who died of old age underscores the view that old age is a sign of life in fullness and perfection. This must be taken in the sense that they have lived their life in 'fullness of experience,' or at old age, they have the fullness of wisdom and knowledge, or they have the fullness of God's blessings which was promised to them. Living in fullness and reaching old age for the ancients of the Bible is a blessing of the lord.[13] According to Keil & Delitzsch (1950), in Biblical understanding, God's glory is magnified in old age, so people respect old age. As God gave them the opportunity to live in fulness of life in an era of high infant mortality, diseases, wars, and invasions, it was indeed a blessing to live long[14]. Hence the people respected those who survived all of those with the blessings of the lord.

In the Bible, we can even see people lamenting that they are not allowed a long life or offering prayers for a full life span (Psalm 102). In the book of Deuteronomy 5/6, we find the exhortation to respect the elderly so as to be honoured by God and receive the same full length of life. The book of 1 Kings also calls on people to obey the laws and commandments in order to be blessed with the glory of old age. In the New Testament also, respect towards the elderly parents is counted as a way of pleasing God (1Tim 5/3-4). Many instances in the Bible prohibit disfiguring or disrespecting the elderly. In the New Testament, we find Jesus speaking against the tendency of people to escape from the duty of caring for their elderly parents. He quoted the book of Leviticus 20/9, which pronounces the death penalty for those who dishonour elderly parents. In the book of Ephesians, too, the

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[13] Davies, J. (2008). A practical theology of aging: biblical perspectives for individuals and the Church. *Christian Education Journal*, *5*(2), 274-293.

[14] Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (2014). *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Titus Books.

benefit of honouring elderly parents is expressed as the blessing of God. In the Old Testament, a few verses clearly speak of the punishment or curses against those who curse or make fun of the elderly (Prov 30/17, Prov 20/20). So, in the Bible, old age is something that is worth aspiring for, and long life can be achieved only by striving for God's blessing. Also, acts against the elderly may invite curses and displease God.

Ageing from the Point of Suffering

The reality of suffering in life is a dilemma that is very hard to be explained. For Christianity, suffering is the way to salvation. Those who want to follow Christianity as Christ says (Mt 16/24) are to take up their Cross every day ('cross' always symbolically represents the sufferings of life) and follow Christ. Christian theology of today proclaims a God who suffers and dies crucified, who is the same as our being in most things.[15] The sufferings and tortures Christ suffered are also interpreted in Christian theology as the most excellent way to attain the salvation of the souls of this world.

Old age is viewed negatively only when it is interpreted as a time of troubles, discomforts, and health issues. It cannot of course be denied that the miseries and physical problems that accompany old age cause suffering to the elderly. The solitude and isolation, the continual pain and draining of strength and talents are always confusing and make a few desperate. But those who believe in the teachings of Christianity usually overcome them easily by relying on their religious beliefs and spirituality. The "cross symbolically represents the Christian understanding of suffering." According to the early Christians, the concept of the Cross was associated with the victorious triumph of the Messiah as promised in the Old Testament. So, sufferings are the only means to attain fullness and victory over sin and death. Therefore, Christians see the sufferings of life not as a curse or hindrance but as the way to salvation and victory.[16] So the

[15] Placher, W. C. (1994). *Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, theology, and scripture*. Westminster John Knox Press.

[16] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/The-problem-of-suffering

sufferings of life are considered to be the perfect opportunity to 'imitate Christ'.

If so, the ailments of old age and the pain and problems of the *Physic* (body) and *Psyche* (mind) are seen and conceived of as ways that make it possible for the believing Christian to enter into the sufferings of Christ himself and to be united with his salvific grace. Hence, the elderly engage themselves in the spiritual activities of Christianity, transforming the discomforts and worries of the body and the soul into hopeful means of attaining salvation. This helps the elderly to make their old age positive and optimistic. When life becomes more difficult and complicated, the elderly see it as the occasion that God uses to make them perfect instruments not only for their own salvation and but for that of others as well.[17] For them, the sufferings of old age are not valueless, but precious means to attain salvation, and hence they tune their mind according to this belief and turn their minds in a positive direction.

Ageing from the Point of Death

In Christianity, ageing is not the end of life, as death is not considered the culmination of one's life. The belief in life after death defines a person's physical demise as something positive. Death is not a wall or the last station of life's journey but a door and new beginning of the real and happy journey to heaven. Eschatology, the theology based on death, final judgment, and life after death, is the basis of Christian belief and way of life. This eschatology makes Christian life, especially the life of the elderly, a forward-looking and forward-moving reality, as the belief in life after death and expectation of the heavenly days pervades the life of the elderly.[18] This makes old age in Christian life more positive and optimistic. So ageing is treated in Christianity as the period when people realise the finite nature of humanity. Still, it also gives a more significant meaning for the period of old age in the sense that it serves as only a channel to unite oneself into

[17] Infante, M. A (2011) The Elderly as viewed from the perspective of the Bible and the Church's magisterium. *Anles,* Vol 119(3).
[18] Moltmann, J. (2013). *In the end, the beginning: The life of Hope*. SCM Press.

the ultimate reality, God.[19] According to Don Browning (1973), the Christian vision of ageing is described as 'an undialectical Progressive approach.[20]' The Christian understanding of death is so optimistic and hopeful, as it is explained as the peaceful waiting for the greater glory, so the elderly Christians do not confront death as something fearful but meet it with calmness and with an attitude of preparation. They are continuously helped by the ministries and ministries of the religion to be prepared for this pleasantly.

Moreover, the scriptures from the Old Testament to New Testament provide insights into the fragility of life and the eternity of life after death. In the book of Ecclesiastes, from the first chapter, life and the attributes of life in this world are presented as momentary and fragile. Everything in this world is presented and elucidated as meaningless. Later in the New Testament, there are also instances where it is spoken that life in this world is a journey towards something meaningful and eternal. And these concepts always motivate elderly Christians to be hopeful and relaxed in the face of life's perils. The second letter to the Corinthians tells one not to lose heart when the body and mind of this world are wearied out because the inner soul is being renewed daily. "For this light temporary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, so look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal (2 Cor 4/1618). This lasting conviction consoles the elderly Christians as they approach old age and live with the problems it brings. They continually tell themselves that these problems are momentary and something eternal awaits them after this earthly life is over.

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[19] Simpson Jr, W. C. Can We Speak of a Theology of Ageing. *The Living Pulpit*, *10*, 22-23.

[20] Browning, D. S. (1973). Erich Fromm: The Productive Personality and the Coming of the Messianic Time. *DS Browning, Generative Man: Psychoanalytic Perspectives, Philadelphia (The Westminster Press) 1973, pp. 105-144.*

Ageing from the Point of Christian Social life

In the light of a sociological perspective, Christianity also gives a good place for the elderly and the aged. The Dignity of the Elderly and their Mission in the Church, The Instruction of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, highlights the relevance of respecting the elderly and the role of the Catholic Church in safeguarding the fundamental rights of the elderly, in which society, the family, the community, the individual and all have responsibility. In 2007 the Pontifical Commission for Health and Pastoral care also emphasized the value of the experience and wisdom of the elderly and the significance of using them for the pastoral and administrative care provided by the Church.[21]   People in old age are not so much neglected in the religious and community structures of the religion. Religion itself gives primary concern and priority to the elderly in the family and in the religious arrangement. From the time of the Old Testament itself, leadership and coordination are recommended to be entrusted to the 'elder' who is considered to be a man full of wisdom and experience. The Old Testament admired old age in the family and the community; the elder is respected and exhorted to be respected by all. Many of the family and religious responsibilities and community leadership are entrusted to the aged people. There are many verses in the Bible about respecting the father and mother and the rewards and punishments connected to this. The fourth command legally forbids any action that is against the parents who are supposed to be aged.

In religious communities especially connected with the churches and parishes, the elderly are given respectable positions. Experience and age are counted more than any other elements in the leadership and coordination of the community. Many of the pious organizations and prayer groups of the Christian communities serve as the most excellent refuge and refreshment for the elderly to escape from their stress, depression, isolation, and mental problems. The pilgrimage organized by the community, the days for the elderly, and the spiritual retreats

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[21] Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care,2005

conducted at the parish level are helping many of the elderly always connect to the group and to feel that they are still a part of the group. Even the sick elderly who are bedridden and who are not able to go to community activities are also attended to by the visits of the priests and other community members as groups and individuals. All these rejuvenate and revive the mental conditions of the elderly at a great level and keep them thinking positively and optimistically. Through these activities, Christianity helps the aged people prepare themselves for a new journey instead of desperately waiting for the end of life. The words of Pope John Paul II to a number of elderly faithful gathered at the Vatican on March 23, 1984, articulates the attitude of the Church towards the elderly:

"Do not be surprised by the temptation of interior solitude notwithstanding the complexity of your problems. And the forces which gradually wear you down, and despite the inadequacies of social organizations, the delays of official legislation, and a selfish society's failure to understand, you are not and must not consider yourselves to be the margins of the life of the Church, passive elements in a word in excessive motion, but active subjects of a period in human existence which is rich in spirituality and humanity. You still have a mission to fulfil and a contribution to make"[22].

Conclusion

Christianity is a religion that believes in the 'plan of God revealed to humanity in ancient times and fully manifested In Jesus Christ'. And every follower shares the same benefits of that plan of God and the promise of eternal life. The Gifts and participation of everyone has a role in the salvation of the whole world and of oneself through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the presence of God in every living being. The responsibility to transmit the vision and mission of Christianity is in each and every one of its followers, and the elderly are considered to be the greatest element of this spiritual transmission. Being the reservoir of experience and wisdom, having lived the full

[22] John Paul II, audience with elderly, March 23, 1984

life at old age, the elderly are the dignified teachers of the faith and message. So, the elderly are respected and have a role with dignity in the community and in the spirituality of the religion. Elderly persons themselves are so motivated by Christianity and its teachings as to be inspired with a positive mentality towards life, suffering, and death. The positive elderly are the strength of the community as they are the 'elders' of the community who, with their experience and wisdom, are to transmit the knowledge of the religion. For Christianity, old age is the fruitful evening of life at the threshold a hopeful morning or the first stop on the awaited journey to a pleasant heaven. By the theology, spirituality, and social structures, elderly persons are continually inspired and motivated by Christianity and its scriptural teachings to be committed to this mission and concept. The Church's pastoral activities, community programs, social interactions in the gatherings, etc., also communicate this positive idea of old age and elderly life to the whole world and to the generations that follow. So religion is a beautiful platform for the elderly to experience positive ageing with an active ageing attitude.

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CINEMA AND CULTURE: ANALYZING THE DISCURSIVE PARADIGMS OF WOMEN IN MALAYALAM CINEMA

-Diya Jose*

Introduction

Art and literature are organized representations of what society wants politically. They are not politically innocent, but on the contrary, are very much loaded with the politics and ideology, conscious or unconscious, of the artist and the group to which he or she belongs. In the case of gender, within a patriarchal society most of the literary texts participate in the process whereby the dominant sex seeks to maintain and extend its power over the subordinate sex through the crucial role played by literature in the cultural construction of gender, which enforces unequal power relations based on sexual difference. This paper attempts to analyze the workings of gender ideology, patriarchy and social discrimination within Malayalam cinema and literature. And in particular the portrayal of women and their existence in Malayalam cinema.

Keywords: - Literature, Patriarchy, Culture, Cinema, Gender ideology

During the hundred years of its history, cinema has proved to be the most effective medium in portraying the human condition. From unravelling the age old tussle for survival against nature to depicting the horrors of war, from picturing the brutality of slavery and imperialism to delineating the intricate contradictions of the human mind, cinema has held a clear mirror to reality. Cinema has become an important part of our cultural discourse. Cinema can also work like a lantern lighting up the darker areas of our existence.

Cinema in Kerala made its first appearance in the 1930's. This was the period when the momentous socio-cultural and political

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changes of the Kerala Renaissance which began in the late 19th century reached their zenith. Social reforms powerfully initiated by Sree Narayana Guru had begun to change the social structure and social consciousness. Politically the offshoots of the freedom struggle led by Gandhian ideals had gained tremendous strength and contributed to the rising tidal wave of social and cultural change. Modern poetry that began with Kumaran Ashan led to efflorescence of Malayalam poetry. Prose fiction, which began with Chandumenon's *Indulekaha* directly reflected the social realities of the period. This literary form also popularized the printed word. Allied to this was the growth in journalism. The work of Kesari Balakrishna Pillai embodied the organic link that soon developed between creative writing and journalism. Though Malayalam cinema was seeded in this fertile ground of the Social and Cultural Revolution, it often fails to meaningfully relate to the situations of women and oppressed section in Malayalam cinema. This was because Malayalam cinema and the Malayalam film industry were themselves extensions of Tamil cinema and its song, dance and melodrama. The initial growth and development of Malayalam film industry was in Chennai. It was only in the 1950s that Malayalam films began to relate to social reality as already portrayed in our literature. *Neelakuyil* based on a story by Uroob, was the first major work in this direction. The film narrates the story of a low caste woman who is seduced by a high caste, school teacher after a chance meeting. She believes his feelings for her to be sincere. Though the school teacher is portrayed as a sensitive human being, the fear of the social stigma such an inter-caste relationship forces him to suppress his feelings. She is left pregnant and abandoned. Rejected by both worlds, her own and his, the woman gives up her life after delivering the child. The film ends with his high caste wife accepting this child. This is perhaps an indication of the change in values as far as the caste system goes. The apparently progressive story line, however disguises the terrible trauma of the woman whose life is seen as merely incidental to the logic of male dominated society. The noblest character of the film, the wife of the hero, who is willing to accept the child, is also unable to question her husband's actions, thereby succumbing to the logic.

In the works of the most sensitive film makers like Aravindhan and Padmarajan this incidental treatment of women is modified and taken in a somewhat more progressive direction. G. Aravindhan's *Chidambaram* focuses on the middle class clerk who seduces a poor working class woman. This leads to the suicide of the woman's husband. The narrative then goes on to represent the guilt pangs of the clerk and his wanderings. The denouement occurs when he meets a beggar woman at the steps of the Chidambaram temple, who he fears to be the same woman he wronged. The film ends with the camera moving towards a mystified world beyond. Neither the writer nor the film maker makes any attempt at deciphering the tragedy of the woman, which is more real. Here again, the woman is incidental. In *Nirmalyam*, M.T. Vasudevan Nair's celebrated work, the theme is the disillusionment of an oracle with the deity, and with the faith that has sustained his family for generations. In the climax the embittered oracle spits at the deity. This has led to the film being characterized as a revolutionary work. However, here again, the representation of women by the writer- director is quite disparaging. The wife of the oracle is initially shown to be a docile woman. Later, in a melodramatic moment, the woman is shown to betray her husband for mere monetary gain. The portrayal is such that it strikes at the very dignity of womanhood, and the character becomes a mere instrument to impart dramatic momentum to the story. The other female character in this film- a repeated motif in many a later Malayalam film- is the oracle's daughter who falls in love with a young priest. He however leaves her due to domestic compulsions. The girl is throughout shown to be cocooned in a dreamlike state, completely out of touch with the world around her. In a sense the attempt in the film is to reinforce certain conformist stereotypes about women which were entirely at odds with the ferment that prevailed in the Kerala of the 1970s. The 1960s witnessed a quantitative jump in the production of Malayalam films. Cinema is the primary source of entertainment of the people. Kerala had by then, proportionate to its population, the largest number of theatres in India. Major works of novelists like Thakazhi, Basheer, Kesava Dev, Pottekad and Uroob were made into films. Plays like those by Thoppil Bhasi, S.L. Puram Sadanandan and K.T. Muhammed were also

recreated in film. These novels and plays include several sharply drawn women characters. However, when portrayed on film these women became either mere shadows of the male dominated society or characters or symbols of sensuousness. Malayalam cinema gave importance to the celebration of masculinity at that time. The high watermark of the early period, *Chemmeen,* is a case in point. The characterization of Karuthamma, who is shown in the novel with many inner dilemmas, and as part of a complex of events, is reduced to an object of voyeuristic pleasure in the film. The abstract images and ideas suggestively drawn by these characters could not be fully translated when fitted into the straightjacket of formula cinema. The decades that followed witnessed a weakening and breaking up of the relationship of the so-called mainstream cinema with Malayalam literature. The trend was to copy popular films produced in other languages especially in Hindi and English. In these films the image of women was repeatedly one of soft headed ornamental and idealized models. The emergent reality in Kerala suggested entirely the opposite. Women's education and the emergence of the nuclear family led them to take the initiative with success in various fields from politics to sports. Indeed, they symbolized the new assertiveness of the Malayali identity, both nationally and internationally. Cinema, more than the other arts, tried to reflect this reality and contemporaneity. Attempts at serious cinema also failed to develop clear images of the Malayali woman. Lack of incisive socio-political understanding and psychological insight prevented these films, though superior in form, from developing profound and genuine female characterization, and in painting true-to-life pictures of the situation of Kerala womanhood. This may be in part due to the fact that there has not been any clearly developed ideology in relation to the issues that women face in Kerala. Nor has there been any ideologue. The few people who have attempted something in this direction have been Malayali women fiction writers including Lalithambika Antharjanam, Madhavikutty, K.Saraswati Amma, Sara Joseph, Rajalakshmi, K.R Meera and others. It is however, no accident that very few of the works of these writers have been adapted to the screen. The fact that cinema, though it evokes intense popular passions and attracts wide media attractions, has not done much to

problematize the age old suppression of half of our population is a good commentary on cinema.

With regard to more recent films in the Malayalam film industry like *How Old Are You* and *The Great Indian Kitchen* one finds a revolutionary change that has emerged over the years in our culture, cinema, women and their life. Women have become more efficient and have begun to give voice to their feelings and needs. Women centered roles and women directors have come to the fore in the Malayalam cinema industry. Some films point to the lacunae in our social consciousness and lack of proper perspective in artistic creativity. What we all need in future is a reappraisal of all the relevant aspects of the link between social awareness, patriarchy and creativity.

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BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS AND THE THEME OF SECULARISM AND CO-EXISTENCE IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S
MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN AND THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH

- S. Prabhakaran* & S. Boopathi**

Most of Salman Rushdie's novels are replete with mythological and religious themes. Myth is the narrative of a story. Rushdie relies heavily on religious mythologies for narrative and characters. He incorporates a number of mythical incidents in his novels as well. Veteran writers do this for the familiarity of the plot as told in classics. We see Mani Ratnam, a film director doing that in his movies like Thalapathi (1991) and Raavanan (2010). Both are most talented in their own ways and have left deep impression among readers and viewers. How these writers achieve novelty and newness through familiarity is a billion-dollar question. They use it as a platform or base to tell their stories. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie uses mythology deftly by drawing characters like Aadam, Sinai, Mary and Joseph. All these characters have the same roles and importance in the novel, as they do in the Bible. Rushdie borrows characters and events from each religion into his story, frequently using names and images from the Bible. His characters themselves embody a variety of theological ideologies. Vanitha's son Saleem, originally a Hindu, is brought up in a Muslim family, while Shiva, originally a Muslim, is raised as a Hindu. Saleem's governess, Mary, is a strong Catholic. *Midnight's Children* is an epitome of religious co-existence and Secularism.

Key words: Bible, myth, religion, plot, narrative.

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"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned" (John 15: 5-6)

Salman Rushdie is one of the most understood and misunderstood writers of the contemporary world. His novels are replete with religious, historical and contemporary political arguments. Readers would really be surprised to discover that he is a comic writer, capable of handling political, historical and religious issues with levity and irreverence. Rushdie's style of dealing with religious things without respect angered some Islamist groups. His fiction has been read widely in Europe and America because his novels suit Western readers' taste for the wonder, fantasy and the exotic. Indian readers perceive his book realistically almost as a history book. He is a born storyteller. The way in which he narrates the story, the use of language, unfolding narratives and excavation of the oral tradition are dazzlingly new and interesting.

Religion is one of major themes of Salman Rushdie's novels. Rushdie alludes to a number of mythological characters and incidents in the text. "Allusion is a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (Abraham 9). Religious characters and incidents are the driving force for the narrative for most of his novel. Saleem Sinai narrates the story of the novel *Midnight's Children*. He is born Muslim but brought up in Bombay, a city with a strong Hindu culture. Religion, multiculturalism, pluralism and secularism are the recurring themes in Rushdie's novels. There are a lot of mythological references to Musa or Moses as the last name of character Saleem Sinai suggest. The last name 'Sinai' is linked with Mt. Sinai and Moses. His nurse (ayah), Mary is an ardent Catholic. Saleem's sister eventually becomes a catholic nun. The character Abraham Zogoiby in *The Moor's Last Sigh* is also a direct reference to the Biblical character Abraham, who is known as the father of faith. "Abraham Zogoiby was playing the part of Moses" (MLS 88). In fact, Islam, Christianity and Judaism accept the first five books of Bible as their holy books.

One more incident that alludes to *Paradise Lost* is the love scene between Abraham and Aurora. They fell in pepper love, mixed with the smells of cardamom and cumin, so closely they moved. "Peppercorns and elaichees poured out and were crushed between legs and bellies and thighs. What they had was certainly hot and hungry. Mad love!" (MLS 90). Their body fluids tasted and smelt like what had been crushed into their skins, and they sweated pepper in delicious spices. Of what was inhaled during that heavenly fuck and had combined with their love-waters. They had more than just spice-scented garments when they descended from those tall stacks. They had nourished one another with great devotion.

Umberto Eco in his novel *The Name of the Rose* says: "1 discovered what writers have always known (and have told us again and again): books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (20) Sweat and blood and secretions of their bodies mingled. Intertextual pun, parody and postmodern play are very much witnessed in the description of love between Abraham and Aurora.

> Pepper love: that's how I think of it. Abraham and Aurora fell in pepper love, up there on the Malabar Gold. They came down from those high stacks with more than their clothes smelling of spice. So passionately had they fed upon one another, so profoundly had sweat and blood and the secretions of their bodies mingled ... (MLS 90)

This scene parodically alludes to the love scene between Adam and Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

The first act of sex is seen in Book IV of *Paradise Lost* and represents holy love. Before going into their bower, Adam and Eve make sure to praise God. This awe for their maker is seen when Adam and Eve "both stood, /Both turned, and under open sky adored/ The God that made both sky, air, earth and Heav'n" (IV. 720-2). Even the heavens are in unison with Adam and Eve's love. While Eve decorates their "nuptial bed," there are "heaven'ly choirs" singing the "hymnenean sung" (IV. 709, -10). This love of Adam and Eve's is not "loveless, joyless, unendeared" but instead is "loyal, just, and pure" (IV. 766, 755). After their sacred act of sex, Adam and Eve are enraptured with joy and peace.

They are lulled by nightingales and fall asleep naked, embracing one another.

Besides the Biblical allusions, Saleem often borrows his narrative pattern from other religious texts. Occasionally, he makes comparison himself to the prophet Mohammed, Moses, Lord Ganesh, and the Buddha. His magical birth reminds one of the prophesied birth of Jesus Christ, and his parents, Mary Pereira and Joseph D'Costa, have names similar to that of Jesus' parents. Saleem presents a case for his tale through his religious references. Moreover, he is coercing the readers to believe in his account of history, in spite of his inconsistencies.

In the multicultural background of pluralistic India, Rushdie's reference to religions includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. But he draws a lot of characters and incidents mainly from three major religions of India including Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. Given its complex history, nearly all major religions have had an impact on India, from Buddhism and Islam to Christianity, in particular Catholicism and Hinduism. The researcher has scrutinized the influence of the Bible and Christianity in his novels. Inspite of being surrounded by religion, Saleem does not actively practice Islam. He doesn't attend mosque nor engage in any other form of worship. Saleem, however, is unable to elude religion fully. As his story moves forward, he is the significant contributor to the civil upheaval that followed India's Independence. The new constitution of India upholds the freedom of religion, which was suppressed under British rule and has permeated society. The duality between religion and secularism is one of the central foci of the novel. There is also a religious tension witnessed between majority and minority within the Indian subcontinent. With Saleem's narrative as an example, Rushdie makes the case that religion has an impact on everyone's lives, whether they are ardent believers or agnostics. Unless it is addressed, it can become very dangerous. Rushdie skillfully employs religious hybridity as a metaphor for India's identity crisis during the period of independence.

The story of *Midnight's Children* begins with the grandfather of the narrator, Aadam Aziz, renouncing his Muslim faith. Aadam "hits his nose against a frost-hardened tussock of earth while

attempting to pray. Three drops of blood fall from his nose and he vows never again to kiss earth for any god or man" (MC 4). In spite of his loss of faith in religion, Aadam's name carries heavy religious connotations. His name symbolises the primeval power of creativity and refers to Adam and Eve of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament (or Adam and Hawwa in the Quran). His bloody nose also serves the same purpose. The Quran claims that human beings were created from clots of blood.

Throughout the novel, Aadam claims repeatedly that he is "not much of a Muslim," (MC 47) despite getting married to the intensely pious Reverend Mother. Aadam and his wife have a very troubled marriage since he does not view religion and morality in the same way as his wife does. Although Aadam goes against Reverend Mother's wishes and fires the tutor, she nevertheless insists that their children should have a religious education saying, "He was teaching them to hate, wife. He tells them to hate Hindus and Buddhists and Jains and Sikhs and who knows what other vegetarians. Will you have hateful children, woman?" (MC 50)

Aadam believes that the precepts of religion would teach them intolerance and it would be not safe for his children. After independence and the creation of a new country called Pakistan, Aadam is not interested in shifting to Pakistan in spite of his wife's demand, because that was a nation made especially for God. Aadam stays away from religion to the best of his ability throughout his life, but as he ages, he becomes senile, he "disgraces" himself "by stumbling into mosques and temples with his old man's stick, mouthing imprecations and lashing out at any worshipper or holy man within range." (MC 384)

Aadam is absolutely not happy at all with religion and the kind of the violence it brings into his life. In his religious avoidance, he personifies the newly independent and (allegedly) secular India. Religion is painted in both positive and negative lights throughout the novel. Saleem's ayah, Mary serves as the personification of Catholicism. She longs for Joseph D'Costa, a wanted fugitive and communist anarchist. Their names, of course, carry biblical connotations, and Mary relies heavily on her faith. However, her love for Joseph drives her to switch Baby

Saleem with Baby Shiva on the night of India's independence (a private revolutionary act, switching rich for poor) and she avoids church and confession for the rest of her life on account of her guilt and sin. Despite Mary's pious and forgiving nature, her crime taints her character — and by proxy, her religion.

Similarly, Saleem's father, Ahmed Sinai collaborates with Suresh Narlikar, a Bombay gynecologist and businessman who undertakes a new business and the business fails. At that point, Narlikar blames religion. Ahmed is heartbroken after his assets are frozen by the Indian government. Narlikar claims,

> These are bad times, Sinai bhai — freeze a Muslim's assets, they say, and you make him run to Pakistan, leaving all his wealth behind him. Catch the lizard's tail and he'll snap it off! This so-called secular state gets some damn clever ideas (MC 185).

Narlikar and Ahmed believe that the failure of their business was due to the fact that they are Muslims, and that the Indian government would prefer that they go to Pakistan, where they belong. Moreover, when Saleem and his family do relocate to Pakistan, they discover that the Pakistanis feel the same about India. General Zulfikar, Saleem's uncle and a senior member of the Pakistani military, frequently rants at his family, "Let's get organized! He would exclaim. Let's give those Hindus something to worry! We'll blow their invaders into so many pieces; there'll be no damn thing left to reincarnate" (MC 397). General Zulfikar is not tolerant of Hindus and he does not want any of them in Pakistan. He goes to the extent of ridiculing their beliefs system when he says there will be nothing left to reincarnate after he blows them up.

The dualistic nature of secular and religious values in postcolonial Indian society is shown through Saleem's story. Religion has significantly permeated society despite the fact that it is ostensibly a secular state, and this is understandable. At one point, Saleem says to live "in a country whose population of deities rivals the numbers of its people." (MC 431) Saleem, like his grandfather, doesn't believe in God and rejects religion, although his "head is full of all sorts of religions." (MC 431) Even worse, he believes the voices he hears, (which are actually the result of his telepathic abilities and a connection to the other

children who were born on Independence Day at midnight), are the voices of Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Religion has always played a significant role in Saleem's life, despite the fact that his parents believe he is mad and that he is punished after Mary accuses him of blasphemy.

The novel *Midnight's Children* attempts to strike a balance between secularism and religion in pluralistic and multicultural India. Saleem's story is far from optimistic when it comes to religious peace, but Rushdie does offer some hope. Saleem frequently uses religious imagery, particularly from the Bible, to elevate his story as well as to promote religious acceptance and tolerance. There are copious Biblical allusions in his novels. The biblical names such as Adam, Mary, Joseph, Abraham do really stand for Biblical references and even their characters typically reflect the original characters of the Bible. Tolerance for different religions requires knowledge, and *Midnight's Children* is certainly an example of this. It is certainly an epitome of religious warmth, co-existence and secularism in India.

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MISSIO PRAXIS: MISSION TOWARDS JUST AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

MISSION GUIDELINES FOR INDIAN CHURCHES AND MISSION MOVEMENTS*

The XVII Quadrennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches that met at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh from 22- 26 April, 2016 on the theme 'Towards Just and Inclusive Communities' created the NCCI-Unity and Mission department with an intention to accompany Indian churches to work for developing just and inclusive communities in their particular contexts. Therefore, the existing mission expressions were critically reviewed to set certain guidelines for mission praxis in India. The guidelines prepared were received and adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches in India on 1st March, 2019. An extract of the same has been given below.

General Introduction:

- The Church is missional. In many contexts mission has become one of the programmatic areas of the Churches and the Church related organizations.

- In many contexts mission is understood as 'evangelism' and in some contexts as 'diaconia' in a few contexts it is both.

- The mission of God, is to love each other as God loves the entire world without any stigma and discrimination and give life that too in fullness.

- The mission exists for the purpose to inspire, to motivate, to transform and to make disciples of Jesus towards building peoples' movements to affirm, promote and propagate the (Social) Justice.

- NCCI therefore defines "missions" as: God's purpose that affirms life 'OF' all - life 'FOR' all (John 10:10) by facilitating

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* The facilitation for developing these guidelines was initiated by Rev R Christopher Rajkumar, the then Executive Secretary of NCCI – Unity and Mission.

reconciliation among all peoples to each other by affirming the Gospel values of (Social) Justice, Peace and Hope that inspires through the LOVE of God.

- Mission is not to construct communities that exclude anyone on any basis.

Spectrum of Current demands of Mission and Evangelism:

- *Prokeryxi:* Mission is to facilitate the oppressed to *proclaim the reconciliation* by calling and challenging the oppressors to repent and get reconciled with fellow pilgrims in life journey and God's Creation as reconciling with God.

- *Kerygma: Preaching the gospel,* without the truth and message of (Social) Justice, Peace, Reconciliation has no meaning.

- *Didache:* The t*eachings* are to continuously *challenge and transform* the dominants to repent and give-up the practice of patriarchy and discrimination and facilitate them to be part of the process that includes all.

- *Diaconia*: Mission and Evangelism should construct the communities of God's people, rather than constructing (church) buildings, by '*doing the gospel*'.

- *Profitikos:* The message of God is liberative and prophetical. That challenges us to challenge others who exploit the rest though power and status with integrity, transparency, accountability and responsibility.

Code of Ethics:

- Commitment to work on the Gospel of Christ that affirms, promotes and propagates (Social) Justice, Peace and Hope based on the love of God that was bestowed to the world without any disparities.

- Be transparent, honest and do not knowingly misrepresent and misinterpret facts

- Divulge any potential conflicts of interest against other faiths and ideologies as soon as they are known

- Meet all requirements to maintain integrity of the called community named Churches.

Suggested Paradigm shifts in Indian Missiology:

1. Theology / Missiology

Great Commission - Great Commandment (Matt 22: 37 - 40)

Great commission mandated to go and make disciples and baptise. This mandate was conceptualized and understood differently by the church as if it is only to propagate or proclaim the love of God. The Mission practices this mode by propagating the love of Jesus Christ for proselytizing and adding more members to extend their geographical limits, rather addressing expressing God's compassionate love through our actions. This model proposes to move from 'preaching' to 'praxis' and 'word' to 'deed'. Therefore the mission has to necessarily take a great shift from Great Commission to Great commandment. Great commandment, with love as the mandate of the mission, urges the churches to practice the gospel and the love of God in the context. Great commandment itself a great commission indeed!

Conventional - Covenantal

Convention is transactional while covenant is transformative. Conventional mission is stagnant, lethargic exhausted and time bound without revising the mission models to the context. On the other side, Covenantal is action oriented and creative. Covenantal mission is eternal, enthusiastic and transforming as it appropriates the humanity of the context. Therefore it embraces all. In the journey with ever-renewing God in the changing context, our conventional mission needs to be transformed from conventional to covenantal.

Truth Claiming - Truth Affirming

Truth means justice. God of the Bible is Just therefore, the mission has to affirm the Truth rather claim the truth in the name of God. But faith communities giving the God component to truth made truth as god. And they try to defend their God as 'The Truth' or 'The God'. In this process they deny the essence of justice in truth. As truth is justice, and it sets us free and liberates us, other than defending god, affirming justice ought to be the mission of the church. The shift from truth claiming to truth affirming is mandatory to the mission of the church in Indian Pluri-faith context.

2. Witness and Respect

Intra-faith and Inter-faith Relations

Intra-faith relationship is nothing but socialising within the community, who acknowledges and follows our own faith. It is confined to one particular religion and denomination indeed! Mission is being blamed that, as if, it always looks other faiths and their adherents as 'low' or 'lesser' and such propaganda against the Christian mission indulging, Christian mission is only to convert and force them to denounce the relationship with their previous faiths or other faith communities. By which a 'hate-campaign' is waged against the Churches and Christian missions and perpetuating hostility against Christians. But interfaith relationship is blending with the other faith community by accepting them as they are without demonising their faith. With this, our mission needs a paradigm shift from intra faith to interfaith relations. Such understanding would facilitate a 'Transformative Koinonia' where everyone accepts each other as they are as Jesus demonstrated during his life and work.

Religious Ethics to Missional Goal

Christian Religious Ethics shows to the adherents a way of life to relate ourselves with God through our life, service and witness. Unfortunately, this ethics is influenced and assumed by the human made moral code(s) that has replaced the inclusive nature of God in religion. Those moral codes have become religious rules in contrast to missional goal of oikoumene and Koinonia. Religious ethics occupies the locus of the religion to promote the self as righteous and holy but stigmatizing others as sinners. It is sad that, even mission also has adapted the moral codes as the obligation to declare absolution and pronounce salvation. Moral code and God's punishment has became a tool to threaten the faith communities in the name of becoming holy. The religious ethics or human made moral code is always discriminatory in nature. Discriminations based on caste, class, gender, sexuality, ability and so on are rooted in the moral code set by the religion. Therefore a paradigm shift for mission from moral code to missional goal is mandatory. Because the missional goal assures a way of life that liberates and a life tuned with God. It gives us the courage to confront when things occur contrary to the Divine social order. It constantly makes us aware that exploiting a fellow being or a fellow creature is desecrating God.

Language and Respect

Mutual respect and inclusive language are the basic essentials of Mission. Language plays a vital role in the liberating mission, as it can be discriminatory to destruct the relations with others and other faiths in mission. Usage of the destructive and derogatory language on the other faith community such as 'heathens', 'idol worshippers', 'sinners', 'evil worshippers', 'demonic' and such are condemnable and we need to avoid such language. Christ being the Word of God, and the mission proclaims about that Word, we need to be cautious not to harm or discriminate anyone through our language in mission. Rather, let us use the language of Love and Respect which is benevolence and right. So our right affirming mission is called to give mutual respect to all faith communities.

3. Relationship - Responsibility:

Transparency and Integrity

Mission is relational. While we are doing mission, we relate with all especially with the people of another faiths. While we relate ourselves with in our missional journey, we need to be transparent and maintain integrity. These are vital parameters that demonstrate the virtue of Christian witness in mission. Our transparent relationship takes off the impression that conversion is the motif of our relationship. It creates a genuine bond and expects our integrity to maintain that relationship. Our integrity being in relationship with God serves as witness in our relationship with others.

Solidarity to Accompaniment

Solidarity in mission is standing in unity with the marginalized, victims, vulnerable and oppressed by supporting their cause to demand justice, equality, liberation and a peaceful survival. It could be peripheral. It is standing away and defending their cause. Therefore mission should take a shift from solidarity to accompaniment model in which the mission journeys along.

Accompanying mission demands us to journey with the need in their ups and downs, cry and joys and strengths and weakness. Becoming ourselves as Word become flesh with the excluded community by accompanying and pass through the struggles along with them in the process of liberation is necessary in mission in the context.

Responsible and Transparent Mission

Responsible mission is a genuine commitment to serve in the cost of self. Responsible mission is possible by being and becoming a disciple of Christ. The responsible mission involve in holistic transformation. It does not have any hidden agenda than transformation. This transformative discipleship journey takes shift according to the context to partake in the destiny of Christ and the suffering community in the context and it needs utmost sacrifice of our comfort.

6. Overcoming Minority-Phobia

Conversion as Life Affirming

Conversion is a transformation of perspective(s) and not necessarily a change of religion. The right to get converted and choose a religion and the right to convert is the freedom of choice of an individual and this was assured in the constitution of India. The motive of mission is indeed conversion, not necessarily to forego an old religion(s), instead a life affirming transformation.

Minority-Phobia:

The Indian Christianity often takes asylum under the minority rights. As long as this law is beneficial in terms of uplifting Christians socially with the schemes and programmes of the Government is acceptable. The converted Dalits to Christianity are refused to avail their schemes and benefits of reservations in education and employment due to the minority status. But we have to come out and affirm that we are Indians and eligible for all the rights bestowed to the Indian Citizens not just minority rights alone. Our mission must focus on declaiming the minority status as Indians and facilitates to overcome the minority-phobia,

which leads the mission to engage in conversion to increase the number.

7. Missio-Praxis

Constructing Communities of the Beloved i.e. reign of God

The very purpose of mission is to build the inclusive communities of the beloveds which is part of establishing the reign of God, whereas the mission is understood as to build the buildings for service and worships. The reign of God forms the democratic and transparent inclusive communities in entire cosmos. Constructing such a inclusive community, where the spirit of God moves around to affirm justice, peace and love should be the vision of any viable mission by DOING Gospel.

Conclusion

The mission of the Churches has been suspected or misunderstood as to ONLY convert people, and its place in its programme structure is not secure and assured. But among the major unit of the Christian communities Mission and Evangelism continues to be strong and popular. But that aspect of mission and evangelism in relation to its purpose and relevance need a greater clarification and elaboration.

In this context the NCCI considers, it is important to have mission guidelines like this document to give a better clarity in understanding mission biblically, theologically, socially and conceptually.

These guidelines are an offering to the Indian Churches and the organizations that involve in mission with an invitation and suggestion to re-evangelize ourselves while involving in evangelism as to renew our commitments to foresee the vision for a better world. Also, this document will help us to examine ourselves and our missional agenda and strategy while doing mission. The NCCI - Unity and Mission invites all people to probe discussion around the churches and its leaders, congregations, mission workers and leaders on the suggested paradigm shifts.

NCCI considers this an imperative in and through its missionary endeavours. This task we ought to do with utmost focus and passion until we are able to say, in Jesus' words "it is finished".

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BRUISED BUT WILL NOT BE BROKEN

"He Will Not Break A Bruised Reed Or Quench A Smoldering Wick Until He Brings Justice To Victory."

Matthew 12: 20

The Context

The text that is recorded here in Matthew's Gospel is in the context of the Pharisees spying on Jesus and his disciples, trying to trap them on the grounds that they were breaking the Sabbath law. Certain acts such as plucking grains and healing the man with a withered hand were seen as a violation of Sabbath by the Pharisees. When questions about his actions were raised, Jesus countered it by highlighting the scripture or by using common sensical arguments. They spoke of how it was a sin and unlawful to work on the Sabbath unless one was a priest. Jesus spoke in terms of upholding human dignity and human liberation. Verse 14 says that the Pharisees conspired against him with an intention to destroy him completely. In such a tense situation, Matthew says that Jesus withdrew himself so that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled. Then the gospel writer highlights the servanthood narrative of prophet Isaiah and establishes that which is about Jesus Christ.

For Isaiah the Servanthood is not submission to greater power but a subversion of multi layered hegemonic structures. The prophetic words mentioned in Mathew is from Isaiah chapter 42: 3; "*a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice*." Chapters 40-55 in the book of Isaiah, is believed to be the work of a prophet who lived with the Hebrew exiles in Babylonian captivity. The author is usually designated as Deutero- Isaiah or the Second Isaiah. During the exilic period, people questioned the role of God in the context of tyrannical rule, displacement and uprootedness

in their life. They thought that either God had abandoned them or God was a failure in comparison with the other gods of Babylonians. Those who suffered under the imperial rule of the Babylonian empire had all the more reason to grow skeptical about the act of God in their daily life, with the downfall of the state of Judah, the end of monarchy and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. It is said that the exilic situation provided them ample opportunities to grow and prosper, but for them it had escalated from a physical crisis to an identity crisis. It is in this situation that Deutero-Isaiah communicates the message of hope and restoration.

The Text

When Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees and the elites during his public ministry, he engaged with them quoting from the scripture. But for them faith was a matter of identity rather than devotion to God and God's word. The issue put at the center was Sabbath, a religious observation which had historically emerged to give relief to all the working people. Its social implication was overshadowed by the religious interpretation where religion became nothing but a bundle of customs and systems. The victims of such a transformation were common people. "*When disciples were hungry, they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat,*" but the Pharisees saw it as a violation of law. Similarly, they accused Jesus of healing a man with withered hand on Sabbath. When their anger towards Jesus rose up to the stage of wanting to annihilate him, Jesus withdrew from there. It is here that the gospel writer recalls and brings in the prophecy of Isaiah about servanthood leadership.

Servanthood, for Isaiah, was a new leadership paradigm. It was meant to bring transformation in the society based on justice. In a period of exile, where people were under the imperialistic rule, Isaiah prophesied about servant leadership with the intention to restore the distinctive identity of the subjugated. Isaiah was envisaging the emergence of such a leadership as an alternative to imperialistic rule and oppressive structures that always domesticated the destiny and living situation of the common masses. The common masses of Judah bore the marks of injury, rejection, hurt and humiliation on their bodies when they were in exile. They were bruised, but for Isaiah their story did not end

there. With the hope of God's authority over all nations and over all empires, Isaiah envisioned the restoration of the bruised ones.

This was the hope that the Matthean gospel finds in the leadership of Jesus. He was a servant to all, but he also never tolerated injustice. Through his subversive ministerial paradigms, he highlighted the significance of love and fellowship in our life. The nexus between Pharisees, Sadducees, high priests and Pharaohs could find fault in Jesus and in his disciples. They could file cases and threaten them. They could bruise his body but the resurrection event proves that he may be "bruised but will not be broken'.

Relevance Today

Bruised Bodies become Sacramental Bodies

The referred text and its Old Testament context remind us that in essence, it is an anti-imperial text that encourages victims of the Empire to be hopeful of God's intervention in their life situations. Although our bodies and minds are bruised, and we experience various difficulties, the God of life has won over the world and its authorities. On one hand, the prophet talks of the body bearing the mark of the imperial exile and its wounding experiences and on the other, it becomes a sacramental body by embracing the wounds of others and for others. With fervent hope in God's accompaniment to transcend the bruised state, the prophetic discourse in Isaiah is proposing possibilities that challenge imperialism and alter it to a sacramental space, where relationships can be celebrated devoid of any exploitation. This is the hope and power provided in the prophetic discourse.

Servanthood Alternate to Authoritarianism

Authoritarian leadership is the common paradigm currently before us, projected as an efficient model of administration and leadership. This text emphasizes that the servanthood model of leadership has the power to counter authoritarian regimes and their imperialistic transactions and expressions, which domesticate people and cause them harm. Hegemonic power structures always fear the servanthood model since it is prepared to bear wounds for the well being of others. This readiness to endure wounds has an innate power to challenge impositions of

brutality and therefore, the wounded can sing even in captivity. When the Israelites were in exile they sang by the rivers of Babylon. Similarly, even though Paul and Silas were in jail, they prayed and sung songs. (Acts: 16). Their songs are from their heart and nobody could stop it. The present leadership in the church and church related institutions should also have the courage to take inspiration from the servanthood ministry.

Conclusion

Altogether, 'bruised but will not be broken' is an affirmation based on the prophetic discourse and its echoes in the Matthean accounts in the Bible. This has to be an affirmation of every believer in today's context where victimization is vivid. The Church will do well to take heart and brave the situation in order to both survive and keep saving.

What is cited here in above, in the light of the resurrection experience through the cross, should give meaning to our struggles to have of soteriological imaginations.

Let us as an ecumenical community uphold each other as we lend our bruised bodies to be the sacrament of blessing to the society and our country. In God, let us receive the grace to stand up and affirm that 'we are bruised but NOT BROKEN'.   Amen.

Books and Articles Refereed:

James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, volume V (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956).

Manu Varghese, *Unfettered Power of the Word: Deutero Isaiah as an Alternative Discourse of Comfort,* Unpublished Bible study.

Walter Brueggemann, *Isiah 40-66*, Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett (eds.), (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998)

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NCCI NEWS

NCCI CONDEMNS ATTACK ON CHRISTIANS IN CHHATTISGARH – DEMANDS ACTION FROM STATE GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL BODIES

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) strongly condemns the recent violent attack on Christians in Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts in the Bastar region, Chhattisgarh. This brutal attack has left many women and children vulnerable along with the men, all of whom have been assaulted and chased out of their houses because they chose to follow Christian faith. There are reports of houses and churches demolished in the region.

This human right violation is an assault on the Constitution of India from which the Freedom of Religion and Belief is drawn equally by all citizens

Although such acts are interpreted as isolated attacks, in reality they are orchestrated attempts to malign the Christian community. It is understood to be the continuation of a series of attacks against Christians in Chhattisgarh state in recent years. The increase in violence against Christians all over India especially among the economically weaker sections of the society exposes the persecution meant to cleanse a particular religious community from all spaces.

It is to be noted that the term 'forced conversion' has been used as a tool to attack Christians, while at the same time persecution is used to FORCE them to leave Christianity and embrace another religion. Violent mobs are taking law and order in their hands to eliminate Christian minorities while police reportedly remain silent spectators. It is also noted in some cases that in spite of many complaints police are reluctant to file cases.

While acknowledging the precious little arrangements that has been made by the district administration, the overall political apathy towards such incidents is a shame to the country NCCI urges the state government to take appropriate action against

the perpetrators of such heinous acts against Christians who predominantly belong to Adivasi and Dalit communities.

We demand that the State should guarantee and ensure security to life and property of the Christian community under attack; compensation to those injured and for loss of life and property should be announced immediately.

The State Government should take responsibility for the untoward incidents and urgently restore all demolished church and house buildings in their expense.

We demand that the State government take appropriate action on the perpetrators of violence against women and children in the instant context.

The State should ensure a strong and visible presence of security forces in the region to build confidence and enable the Christian community to celebrate Christmas festival with the usual fervour.

The NCCI further urges the State Human Rights Commission and State Minority Commission as well as the National Human Rights Commission, the National Minorities Commission, National Commission for Women and the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights to take *suo moto* cognisance of the incident and pass appropriate stringent orders binding on the State and all concerned.

In an urgently convened meeting of the leaders and representatives of NCCI Member Churches in Chhattisgarh, decisions were taken to address the situation on the ground including providing humanitarian assistance to the affected families, facilitating visits to the affected villages to provide solidarity and moral support to the affected communities, provide for psycho social counselling for traumatised children and adults, arrange for legal support to the victim communities and to plan short and long term measures to empower the community to face any such unfortunate eventuality in the future.

Rev. Asir Ebenezer
General Secretary.

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COMMITTING TOWARD AN EMPOWERED CITIZENRY ENLIGHTENED BY THE CONSTITUTION

On the occasion of the 74th Republic day, we join fellow citizens of this great country in greeting each other a year ahead with the virtues of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity available to every individual, household, social group, ethnic community and the whole society.

On this august occasion we acknowledge the wisdom of the drafters of the Constitution which came into force on this day seventy-three years ago as the governing document of the ever emerging vibrant Indian Republic, particularly Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Despite the challenges that it has faced over time we concur with all others who believe that the Indian Constitution remains a largely sufficient document that provides sovereignty and security to all people in the country while affirming space for every expression.

It is our dream that the principles that govern our country as a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic Republic be further strengthened and realised in all spheres of the legislature, judiciary and the administration of the country.

It is our desire that the rights and privileges endowed and guaranteed by the Constitution be affirmed to all the citizens of the country particularly to the distressed communities including the christians, muslims, women, dalits, tribals, adivasis, persons with 'disabilities', those with different gender identities and sexual orientations, and the children and youth in all these contexts.

It is toward the realisation of this dream and desire that we as the Churches of the Orthodox and Protestant traditions in the fellowship of the National Council of Churches in India, as well as Christian and Ecumenical Agencies, Organisations and Councils associated with the NCCI, through the power of Jesus our Lord

who when singled out braved death on the cross and was raised to life on the third day in the community of the faithful, dedicate our every endeavour to uphold and protect the Constitution at all cost, and to ensure dissemination of the contents of the same for the empowerment of the fellow citizens of the country.

It is our ardent hope and fervent prayer that the priority accorded to the rule of law, based on the primacy of the Constitution that we have given to ourselves, will end prevailing targeted hostilities against Dalits, Adivasis, Christians, Muslims and such other marginalised and vulnerable communities in the country.

Indeed – an empowered citizenry, enlightened on its constitutional rights and responsibilities as well as on its privileges and prerogatives, will surely see the nation through to many more years to come.

Jai Hind!

Rev. Asir Ebenezer
General Secretary.

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BETHEL BIBLE COLLEGE

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