

MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICA: SOME HAVE FORSAKEN, WHILE OTHERS PRESERVED THEIR IDENTITY

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Abstract

This article explores the challenges that immigrant Muslims faced in pre-1965 America in their efforts to find acceptance within the American host society. To understand this phenomenon I have used the ethnographic methods of research and collecting data focusing on a Palestinian Muslim family (Abukhdeir) who came to America in 1910 and settled in Provo, Utah as Kader family and adopted Mormonism. As such, this article demonstrates that the identity crisis of early generation Muslim immigrants resulted in the following consequences: (1) Who assimilated to the prevailing American melting pot culture of mainstream society, including converting to American religions; (2) Who did not assimilate, rather escaped the pressure of assimilation by returning to their home countries and resettled there without coming back to live in America; and (3) Who both assimilated and preserved their Islamic identities, as they were the children of returnees, which coincided with the wake of multiculturalism in America in the late 1960s. These grown-up children of the returnees then shared the new process of assimilation into the multicultural America, replacing melting pot culture, and affiliated with the fastest growing Muslim communities.

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Artikel ini membahas tantangan yang dihadapi imigran Muslim di Amerika pra-1965 untuk diterima oleh masyarakat Amerika. Untuk memahami fenomena ini, penelitian ini menggunakan metode etnografi dan mengumpulkan data yang berfokus pada keluarga Muslim Palestina, Abukhdeir, yang datang ke Amerika pada tahun 1910 dan menetap di Provo, Utah sebagai keluarga Kader lalu mengadopsi Mormonisme. Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa krisis identitas imigran Muslim generasi awal menghasilkan konsekuensi berikut: (1) Berasimilasi dengan budaya Amerika, yang berlaku di masyarakat mayoritas, termasuk beralih ke agama-agama Amerika; (2) Tidak berasimilasi, keluar dari tekanan asimilasi dengan kembali ke negara asal mereka dan bermukim di sana tanpa harus tinggal di Amerika; dan (3) Berasimilasi dan mempertahankan identitas Islam, sebagai keturunan dari para imigran yang kembali, bersamaan dengan menguatnya multikulturalisme di Amerika pada akhir 1960an. Keturunan dari para imigran yang kembali ini kemudian membentuk proses asimilasi baru dalam budaya multikultural Amerika, menggantikan budaya peleburan “melting pot”, dan berafiliasi dengan komunitas Muslim yang berkembang dengan cepat.

Keywords: American culture; assimilation; Islamic identity; multiculturalism; Muslim immigrant; uniculturalism.

Introduction and Conceptual Framework

This study² is about the plight of Arab Muslim immigrants and their identity struggles in pre-1965 America (see Haddad 1994, 61–84) in the context of the American diaspora.³ The find-

² This article is the summarized version of my doctoral dissertation, Middle East Center, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³ In a dinner party at the home of a friend in Salt Lake City in the summer of 2007, I met a Kader family member, Jeanie, along with her husband, Eric Hyer and son, Jihad Hyer. Jeanie’s husband, Eric Hyer, is a professor of political science at the Brigham Young University. Jeanie’s actual name is Jamila, an Arab Muslim name as is her son’s name, Jihad, an Arab Islamic name that means to strive. Both the husband and wife chose the name Jihad for their son. The name felt like a symbol of support for the sufferings of

ings of this study conforms to the sociological model established by Ibn Khaldun, known as the father of sociology, who concluded that in the process of cultural conflict the dominant culture wins over the dominated; hence, the vanquished assimilate and adapt to the dominant culture at the expense of their own heritage, as Ibn Khaldun once stated:

The vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive characteristics, his dress, his occupation and all his other conditions and customs. The reason for this is that the soul always sees perfection in the person who is superior to it and to whom it is subservient. It considers him perfect, either because it is impressed by the respect it has for him, or because it erroneously assumes that its own subservience to him is not due to the nature of defeat but to the perfection of the victor (Khaldun 1989, 116).

While Ibn Khaldun's comments are more relevant to cultural interactions in terms of military dominance, the crisis faced by immigrant Muslims in pre-1965 America conforms to the spirit of his observation concerning the conflict between dominant and minority cultural groups. As this study shows, many of the Kaders, who have been living in Provo, Utah for about a century now, fully imitated and adapted to the dominant culture. Indeed, the findings of this research reveal that while the immigrant parents were devout Muslims, their children converted out of Islam.

their extended family in Palestine. In the course of conversation, Jeanie revealed her unique background. Her parents, Moses and Ayesha Kader, were Palestinian Muslims and lived as such for more than half a century in the city of Provo located 40 miles south of Salt Lake City. From Jeanie I was able to collect copies of articles published in local newspapers about her parents. I also interviewed her husband, Eric Hyer, and her brothers (Ayub, Dean, Ghazi and Omar) over the phone and email. I acquired a copy of an unpublished paper written on the "Biography of Moses Kader" by Eric Hyer when he was an undergraduate student at the Brigham Young University (Hyer, 1978). Quotations from my interactions with the Kader family are provided throughout this chapter.

Yet, it also demonstrates that for the subsequent generation of Muslim immigrants, the situation in America was dramatically different because of progressive changes in cultural norms and social philosophy. American culture of the 1960s witnessed the transition into a new era of multiculturalism and a greater abandonment of unicultural melting pot ideals (Kivisto and Rundblad 2000, xxv–xxvi).

Early Muslim Immigrants in the Literature

At the turn of the last century, William James introduced the concept of cultural pluralism in his book, *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909). Unfortunately, his views did not garner much attention. As such, Horace M. Kallen is regarded as the one who pioneered the concept of “cultural pluralism” in American society between 1906 and 1915 as a solution to an ideological conflict over the “Americanization” process. He was regarded the most important advocate of America’s “cultural pluralism” (see Buenker and Ratner 2005, 265). At this time, the uniculturalist fear was of losing the fabric of Western culture resulting from the syncretization of foreign cultures and values with Western society. This might signify a give and take phenomenon of American culture that the proponents of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (henceforth WASP) ideals were not prepared to accept (see Eck 2002, 222–30). Until the late 1960s, American culture and values were dominated by the melting pot norm of assimilation preserved and protected through immigration and culture policies adopted by the country’s lawmakers (Kaufmann 2004, 35). Thus, migrants would either be of European background or, if different, they would have to conform to the dominant WASP culture, following a melting pot process of assimilation to the host society. Having no alternative to this reality, many would give in and fully assimilate, while only a few would resist it at

the cost of isolation and dissimilation, leading at times to the consequence of returning to their home countries. Understandably, a good number of returnees were the devout Muslims who failed to compromise their original positions on religious and social issues. According to Elkholy, many devout Muslims even refused to come to America for fear of losing their Islamic identity (Elkholy 1966).

WASP culture was upheld through the measures of political resolutions over a series of immigration policies. For instance, the Immigration Act of 1924, known as the Johnson-Reed Act, set quotas that favored immigrants of European descent and severely limited the immigration of non-Europeans into the United States (“American History Documents II” 2010). This Eurocentric immigration policy was in place until the repeal of that policy in 1965. The new law, known as the Immigration and Nationality Act or Hart-Celler Act, opened the door for increased numbers of people from all over the globe, including Muslims to migrate to America.⁴ It also marked the beginning of a new era of cultural pluralism in the American landscape. That was a significant turning point in defining the American dream and the ownership of the nation. While in the earlier period it was almost impossible for Muslim immigrants to maintain a dual identity of being “Muslim” and “American”, in the post-1965 era the maintenance and promotion of such dual identities became almost natural; hence, the rise in Muslim immigration and the promotion of a Muslim-American identity.

The assimilation of other non-European immigrants was part of the academic discourse of the 1980s and 1990s, a signifi-

⁴ The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 law was enacted on June 30, 1968 that changed the way quotas were allocated by ending the National Origins Formula that had been in place in the United States since the Emergency Quota Act of 1921. Retrieved from <http://library.uwb.edu/Static/USimmigration/79%20stat%20911.pdf> .

cant period of immigration in America (Bean and Stevens 2005). It was the time when Muslim people emerged as a distinguishable community in a multicultural America (Haddad and Smith 1994) and an era when America was beginning to emerge as a society of ethnic and cultural diversity with laws passed against discrimination based upon race, religion, or ethnicity. Previously it was difficult for a Muslim to join mainstream American society while maintaining his/her Islamic identity, especially in small and remote cities where one could hardly find a Muslim family for the purposes of socialization and congregational prayers, daily as well as Friday prayers.

Eventually, since the 1980s a group of scholars on Muslims in America emerged. Among them were Yvonne Haddad, Jane Smith, Kathleen Moore, Earle Waugh, Baha Abu-Laban, Regula Qureshi and others. The focus of their studies was predominantly on the demography and growth of Muslim communities in North America. In the 1990s, however, a new trend of research on “new immigrants” emerged and was led by the scholars examining the sociology of religion, such as Stephen Warner and Judith Wittner (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000).

This group of “new immigrants” scholars conducted an in-depth study on the inner dynamics of Muslim-American communities and concluded that Muslims are now one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in America because of the liberalization of immigration policies in 1965. They assert that the structural shape of American society has also changed from a monocultural and monoethnic to a multicultural and multiethnic America, and they argue that new immigrants are adapting to and participating in the Americanization process progressively. New immigrants, upon arrival, find their respective communities and religious institutions that provide cultural and ethnic guidance, and tend to associate with these communities for the

rest of their lives, indicating an “adhesive and selective assimilation” to the host society (Warner and Wittner 1998). This phenomenon characterizes Muslim immigrants, especially those who moved to America after 1965. The Palestinian Muslim family, which is the focus of this case study, will serve to demonstrate how it has become progressively easier for Muslims to Americanize due to the growing acceptance of multiculturalism.

Palestinian Arab Muslim Families

The Kader family story in America begins with their family name. In the process of migration to America the family name split into two: one that is Anglicized, Kader, symbolizing a movement away from their Arab-Islamic origins; and one that is Arabized, *Abukhdair*, symbolizing the preservation of their identity as Arab-Muslims in the American diaspora. Literally, the Arabic word *Abukhdair* is a compound name of ‘*abu* and *khdair*’ meaning “father of Khdair.” When compounded, it usually means that “*Khdair*” was the first child of the parents. Evidence suggests that the original name of this family was Anglicized by US government officials upon their arrival at the port of Ellis Island.⁵ Between 1915 and 1944 Provo became the destination of six members of the Kader/Abukhdair family: four males and two females. They were Darwish and his wife, Zahra, Moses, his wife, Ayesha, and brother-in-law, Hassan, and Ismael. The first of the Kaders, Darwish, arrived in Provo in 1915, the second brother, Moses, arrived in 1920, while the last of them, Ismael, arrived in 1925. The Kader brothers and their respective families can be divided into two groups: the Moses unit represents a process of as-

⁵ However, there is no record of Musa’s first arrival on the shores of America, which was either in 1910 or 1912. Moses went back to Jerusalem in 1921 to get married and came back in 1923, which was recorded in the Ellis Island passenger record registry of arrival as “Moses Kader” Retrieved from <http://www.ellisland.org/>

similation in which he and his family members assimilated into mainstream society in pursuit of the American dream; whereas the Darwish and Ismael unit embodies a process of dissimilation in which their families lived in isolation as outsiders for decades before they finally returned to their home countries.

Born in 1896, Moses came to the United States as a young man and joined the US military in 1917. After fighting until the end of World War I, he moved to Provo in 1920, where his elder brother Darwish was living since 1915. Moses lost his hearing due to extreme artillery fire and bomb blasts in the war zone and came back as a wounded war veteran. According to sources, he lived in Provo as a farmer, growing fruit and producing dairy products, until he died in 1976, having raised a large family (Hyer 1978b). In 1922, Moses returned to Palestine to marry his cousin, Ayesha. In 1923, he returned to Provo leaving his newly-wed wife behind, where she waited 10 long years before she was able to travel to Provo in 1933 to join her husband. Since then, Moses and Ayesha permanently settled in Provo where they parented all 10 of their children. Two of whom were daughters, Maryam and Jamila, and the rest were sons.

The eldest of Moses' children, Kamel, was born in Provo in 1933, the youngest, Jamila (now Jeanie), in the early 1950s. Two children died in infancy and two others in adulthood ("Obituary: Kamel Moses Kader" 2000). Two of the Kader siblings, Jeanie and Ayub, known as Abe, are still living in the same region. Jeanie's daughter is married and her son, Jihad, also moved out after finishing his first degree from the University of Utah in 2008. Abe (who identifies himself as a Muslim) and his Mormon wife have two children, who are also Mormons and are still living in the Provo area. In fact, many of Moses' descendants have been fully assimilated as Mormon-Americans. The family's inability to retain its Muslim identity initially posed several

questions about assimilation, identity, and the development of Muslim-American communities. However, I found the children to be very proud of their father's patriotism and his thankfulness to his adopted country for granting him opportunities to succeed financially, socially and professionally. One of the children states:

My father was a very proud American. When he came home from the war injured he was not forgotten. He was given land, followed up on his medical condition; he was deaf, provided a pension and given hearing aids whenever he needed one or a new model was developed (Interview with Omar Kader, 2010).

Both parents and children were proud of being American and grateful for the support and fortune they received from America since the initial days of their migration. Significantly, Moses and all his six sons served in the American military. Some joined the military voluntarily and others were drafted. Regardless, they felt honored and proud of themselves for their service. Moses attempted to maintain Muslim practices while serving in the U.S. military. Hyer states that in the military Moses was known for keeping a copy of the Quran with him at all times, even in combat situations. He was respected for faithfully performing his daily prayers, as well as for avoiding meals containing pork or pork products. He would eat a vegetarian dish if necessary or even go hungry on a day that had pork on the menu (Hyer 1978a).

The *Daily Herald* of Provo reprinted an article about the life and religiosity of Moses' wife, Ayesha Kader. The article states, "every day of the year, five times a day, she [Ayesha] places the small rug on the floor, kneels and faces to the east, touches her forehead to the floor and prays" (*The Daily Herald* 1975). This quotation explains well the religiosity and punctuality of Ayesha, as a Muslim mother – a mother who is expected to play a vital

role in raising her children and training them in Islamic rituals and practices. The children observed Islamic dietary standards by never eating pork products, including at the school lunch. One of the Kader siblings stated:

To avoid pork in all its forms we took our own lunch from home when mother could prepare it. With [so] many of us in school at the same time that was not always possible. However, even with no home lunch, we would go hungry for a few hours rather than eat pork products and remain that way today (*The Daily Herald* 1975).

Such adherence to Islamic precepts is also illustrated by the family's attempts to keep up with the celebration of the main festivals such as *eid al-fitr* (post-Ramadan) and *eid al-adha* (affiliated with the Hajj) festivals despite their isolation in Utah. As one of the Kader siblings notes: "we celebrated *eid* every year. My father would buy 50 bags of flour, oranges, and baklava and have us distribute it to all the neighbors." These festivals are socially very relevant in Islamic culture and tradition, especially for the children, who look forward to them because they get *eid* presents. More importantly, these were times for family celebrations in which the Kader households could get together in recognition of Islam. The area lacked, however, a communal place of worship. When summarizing the beliefs of their father, Moses' children commented:

He was an orthodox Muslim. He would always pray five times a day. Even if he was traveling, he would stop on the way and perform the prayer. He always wanted to build a mosque in Provo, but he did not succeed. He was indeed unhappy for not being able to see or build a mosque in the area during all these years of his life in Provo from 1915 until his death in 1976 (*The Daily Herald* 1976).

Children typically practice the religious traditions taught and demonstrated by their parents, however, this was not so

with the Kader family. The children appreciated the religious commitments of their parents and believed that their parents were truly devout Muslims, but they faced a significant amount of pressure to conform religiously to the dominant sect in the area.

From the start, Moses and Ayesha made an effort to engage with neighborhood organizations, including church and government agencies. Moses used to donate fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products to different religious, social and governmental departments, including the police department during the harvest seasons. The family eventually became very liberal towards Mormonism, partly because the church, community leaders, and literature expressed high regard for Islam, its Prophet, the Quran, and Muslims. When I asked about the main reasons behind their decision to adopt Mormonism, the answer came like this:

Part of it may be that Mormons respected Mohammed as a prophet and early Mormon leaders wrote of their respect for Islam. The only Muslims we met growing up as children were Iranian students at BYU and traveling salesmen. It was hardly a thorough exposure. Did it occur to you that it may have appealed to us because it was closer to Islam than Catholics or other Protestants? Mormons are a lot like Muslims, they practice their religion as a social and religious custom, a way of life. They are to this day confused about separation of Church and State. It is a shortcoming in both religions (Interview, 2009).

Yet, the Mormons were also untiringly aggressive promoters of Anglo-Mormon conformity. This situation must have influenced the Kader siblings to affiliate themselves with Mormonism. One of the Kader siblings stated:

There were far more people hostile to Islam and Arabs than friendly people. Remember this is a very conservative Republican community where racism was a major attribute of public opinion. We were not like lambs going to slaughter. We mostly

became democrats and opposed 98% of the political views of the community (Interview, 2009).

Thus, while the Kaders were experiencing hostility and racism, they were missing the spirit and practice of the Islamic discipline of life, especially in the absence of an organized Islamic community.⁶ Mormonism found a place in their hearts, winning them over, and provided them with a new sense of community. Out of the eight children, six boys and two girls, all but one became involved, directly or indirectly, with Mormonism. They had nowhere to turn for support except the Mormon Church. Moses made one last attempt to salvage his children from a total loss of identity by relocating his family back home to Shufat, Jerusalem. In 1961, Moses and Ayesha took with them their daughters⁷ and younger sons back to Jerusalem with a plan to resettle and to get their daughters married there. They arranged for their elder daughter, Maryam, to marry her cousin, but the marriage was a bitter experience and short lived. Moses also tried to arrange a marriage between his brother's daughter, Masada, and his 18-year-old-son, Omar. Omar, however, could not be convinced to marry his first cousin, who at the time was 16. He soon arranged a flight back to the United States with the help of his uncle Ismael and "escaped." These failed efforts exemplify the desperate desire of the Kader parents to preserve the familial

⁶ Not until the beginning of this century did Muslim professionals start to settle in the Provo area due to their employment in scientific and educational fields. In 2004 local Muslims rented a house space in the city of Orem, 4 miles North of Provo, to use it as a mosque for their daily and Friday prayers.

⁷ According to Islamic principles a Muslim female cannot be married to a non-Muslim man because of the complexities such marriage would cause in the family both religiously and socially. The Islamic policy towards a male to marry a non-Muslim female is much more flexible. A Muslim male is allowed to marry a non-Muslim female as long as she is from among the 'People of the Book,' Christian or Jew, considering certain circumstances that must precede.

and cultural links between their children and the extended family in Jerusalem. Their children returned to the United States within months. Their mother, Ayesha, returned in 2 years in 1963. Moses, himself, finally came back following his performance of Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, in 1968. That was their first and only attempt to resettle in Jerusalem. This experiment with the American born children trying to live in the home country of their parents failed measurably.

The children became absolutely convinced that Jerusalem, the Arab society and its culture, were good for their parents, but not for them. The experience also helped them discover that it was almost impossible for them to change from the American to Arab-Muslim tradition and heritage. For them it was all American. They had already been Americanized and fully adapted to American culture. Therefore, upon returning, they became fully assimilated into American society with no reservations and no plans to retain their parents' heritage. Nevertheless, one child, Ghazy, did not fully assimilate, mainly because he married a Muslim woman, and hence remained Muslim.

Even until the 1990s, the self-identified Muslim siblings regularly visited the Mormon Church along with their spouses. All their children were affiliated with the religion of their Mormon and Christian mothers and went to church with them. Currently, out of four brothers and two sisters, who are now alive, only one sister, Jeanie, is an active Mormon. The rest are in the process of re-discovering their original Arab identities, regenerating their Islamic past, not by active participation in Islam but by claim of heritage.

Thus, the Moses Kader family's way of life went through a process of change from Arab-Muslim to Mormon-American, with the parents still clinging to their tradition, yet unable to block the process of assimilation. They were incapacitated to

resist the trend of “Mormon-conformity” (Luther 2009), and to promote their own cause of self-identity in Arab-Islamic culture and tradition. In this predicament, Moses and Ayesha were not able to do any better than observe the changes and accept the inevitable (Haddad 2001).

The experiences of the Moses Kader family illustrate the cultural costs of those early efforts to assimilate into the mainstream society and culture of America. For the Kaders, Islamic faith and values became irrelevant in the context of the American diaspora, although they did continue to observe some cultural aspects of their Arab-Islamic past. Many scholars of Islam in America believe that Muslims who wanted to adopt America as their home experienced a similar fate in the country, e.g., in Detroit, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio. Elkholy found that Muslims, on the one hand, abandoned their own religion and values and, on other hand, adopted new religions and lifestyles in order to assimilate fully into the dominant American culture (Elkholy 1966). In contrast, the Kader siblings are of the view that they “adopted additional values but never abandoned Islamic values” (Interview 2009). One may consider this view of the Kader siblings as an attempt to ease the family’s loss of original culture in light of their own conversion to Mormonism, including one member reaching the status of bishop.

Returnees of Kader Family

By contrast, the Kader households of Darwish and Ismael dissimilated from pre-1965 American culture. As mentioned earlier, Darwish was older than Moses and was the one who first arrived in America, possibly in 1910. The youngest of them was Ismael who came in 1925. However, they came to America as economic migrants and lived for decades before they returned home to Jerusalem, subsequently in 1946 and 1947. Both of

them refused to assimilate, for fear of running the risk of losing their original Islamic identity in the dominant melting pot norm of American culture. Reportedly, their main fear was about the future of their children and their inability to raise them as Muslims, marry them to Muslim spouses, educate them about Islam, etc. They found it difficult to practice the basics of Islam, such as congregational prayers and consuming *halāl* (permissible) food. Interestingly, the children of Darwish and Ismael Kader, who were raised in Jerusalem as Muslims, eventually migrated to America later in the 1960s and 1970s and became American citizens. They have lived here in America ever since without any difficulty, mainly because of favorable changes in cultural and societal norms. The Muslim sense of belonging to Americanism and American social norms began to take shape since the early 1980s, probably influenced by the changes that had taken place in Europe. The French law of October 9, 1981 repealed the earlier law of 1939 that barred foreigners from forming any kind of identity organization or association while living in the country (Devine and Waters 2004). In America also, the formation of foreign religious and cultural organizations began to mushroom since the mid-1980s. For instance, the first Islamic Society of Salt Lake City was formed in 1981 and the first mosque in the same city was established in 1985. Even in other cities, mosques and Muslim community organizations were formed since the 1980s. This marked a significant turning point as per the plight of Muslim immigrants in the United States.

Darwish Kader, like Moses, was a farmer. He had a good background in farming while in his village, Shufat. In fact, for a Palestinian man, Provo was almost like his home village, very suitable for farming, irrigation and raising cattle. After his arrival in Provo, he purchased 30-50 acres of farmland and settled down. Darwish found that he could easily establish an agricul-

tural and dairy farm to produce pears, cherries, grapes and dairy products, which he did quite successfully. His farmland was in the west of Rock Canyon below where the Provo LDS Temple stands. Darwish was already married but left his young wife, Zahra, behind in Jerusalem.

After establishing his business, Darwish built a house in Provo then went back to visit his family in Jerusalem at least 10 years after he left home in 1913. That was a long time for a Muslim man to stay away from his wife. Yet, both brothers, Moses and Darwish, parted from their newlywed wives for about 10 years. The difficulties of traveling across oceans, availability of resources and the savings that one would like to secure before traveling were the main factors for such a long separation. Darwish returned with the intent of bringing his wife Zahra with him to begin their new lives in Provo, Utah. *The Daily Herald* reports that initially Zahra had difficulty conceiving, but eventually she gave birth to a daughter, Maryam Kader, who was born in Provo, Utah in 1933.⁸ The arrival of the baby girl was a joyous event for Darwish and his wife. The newborn, however, also brought with her a concern for the parents about the future of the daughter. Raising a Muslim daughter and giving her in marriage to a Muslim groom was a challenge that Darwish and Zahra were foreseeing in every moment of their lives in Provo. Culturally Muslim parents are more meticulous in raising their daughters and they are more particular in marrying them

⁸ Another source says that Darwish and his wife had three children who were born prior to his departure from Palestine. Unfortunately, all three of their children died of plague while Darwish was living in America. They probably died of this contagious disease without treatment, since the father was not home and the mother was short of means to treat her ailing children. Losing her children, Zahra was extremely depressed and emotionally disturbed. Since Darwish had no prior knowledge about the death of his children, to find his wife all by herself with none of the children alive shocked him deeply and he decided to take Zahra with him to his adopted home of America.

to the right spouse, more so than they are for their sons. Of course, sons also need serious parental guidance and support, but girls especially receive a great deal of attention. These were the concerns that eventually prompted Darwish and Zahra to leave Utah for Chicago and then America for Jerusalem to resettle there in 1946. They felt that America was neither a Muslim country nor was it willing to welcome the presence of Muslims any time soon. Therefore, Darwish and Zahra did not want to wait and see what might happen to them and their child. They wanted to take a precautionary measure before it would be too late.

In those days of pre-1965 America, the question of how a second generation male or female would adapt and assimilate into the American melting pot culture was a serious matter for some Muslims, if not all Muslims. Darwish, however, literally failed to resolve this question in his mind. He was determined to give his daughter in marriage to a good Muslim man. As Elkholly demonstrates, this dedicated father of a daughter must have learned about the plight of many Muslim parents who lost their girls in marriage to non-Muslims in Detroit, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio (1966). The situation in a small city like Provo was even more precarious, especially where Mormons were actively proselytizing. Darwish might have even observed the children of Moses, who might have already been under the influence of Mormonism due to their free interaction with their neighbors and churches. Darwish realized that time was running out for him. Eventually, Darwish relocated to Chicago, leaving his younger brother and his family behind in Provo.

After living 28 years in Provo, Darwish decided to sell his property and move to Chicago, Illinois in 1943. By then Chicago had attracted a good number of immigrant Muslims, apart from the members of the Nation of Islam. They were mainly

from the Middle East and South Asia. Evidence suggests that Muslims in Chicago established their first mosque in 1893 (Mujahid, 2005). With a substantial Muslim community, Darwish, the traditional minded Palestinian, may have thought that his relocation to Chicago would alleviate his situation and improve the upbringing of his daughter, Maryam. With the amount of money he received from the sale of his property and all other belongings in Provo, Darwish was able to begin a new business that he knew he would do better in. Soon Darwish purchased a clothing store in a good shopping area of Chicago and did very well. Despite his success in business and the existing community support system, Darwish did not remain in Chicago. The future of his daughter had always been on his mind no matter where he lived as if America was not suitable for his daughter. He also had another concern.

According to the *Daily Herald* Darwish had a plan that could not be executed in America because of social and legal factors. He was not at all at peace about not having a son who could succeed him. Culturally, Arabs prefer to have a male heir not only to inherit their wealth and property but also their name. He could address this situation by marrying again, but only if he moved abroad. His first wife, Zahra, never conceived again after Maryam. Understandably, Darwish's deep-felt desire was limited by the civil law and cultural factors in America where polygamy has not been permissible. This apparently intensified his desire to return back home. Accordingly, he sold his store and property, as he had done earlier in Provo, and after 31 years of living in America, Darwish prepared for his final departure and made his way back to Jerusalem in 1946 (Anderson 1975, 27).⁹

⁹ Financially Darwish did very well in Chicago, such that his net capital increased from \$16,000 in 1943 to \$50,000 in 1946, just in 3 years time. At that time \$50,000 was a lot of money to establish a business anywhere in the

Upon his return, Darwish immediately married his second wife and was soon blessed with a son, Mansur Kader, in 1948. Darwish died a sudden death, leaving behind both of his wives and children in 1954. Although Mansur was fascinated by the stories he heard from his stepmother, Zahra, about America and Provo, he never showed any interest in moving to the land where his father once lived for over three decades. In 1975, at the age of 27 Mansour came to visit Provo and spent about two weeks there roaming around the city, before returning to Jerusalem. He was very happy to be able to visit Provo but never came back again. His half-sister, Maryam, however, who was American by birth and spent all her childhood in Provo and Chicago, immigrated with her husband and four children in the early 1960s. They first settled in Baltimore, Maryland and then in 1986 moved to Tampa, Florida, where their children are still living. Maryam and her husband passed away subsequently in 2003 and 2004.

Maryam's previous experiences in America gave her a good understanding of both the East and West and helped her maintain a balance between the two cultures. She became a cultural bridge builder, especially for the next generation of Muslims, with which I had an interesting interaction while in Tampa where I was working as principal of the Universal Academy of Florida, a K-12 grade Muslim school. One of Maryam's daughters, Amena Abukhdair (the Arabic version of Kader) was the K-4 teacher. All her children were also going to the same school. She was a dedicated Muslim teacher and maintained Islamic dress code, including wearing the *hijāb*. Although I was not able to interview Amena and her children personally for this research project, I had a telephone conversation with her brother Zaki

Middle East.

Abukhdair, whom I found well adjusted with both Islamic and American culture as a Muslim-American.

As for Ismael, he came to America in 1925 to join both of his elder brothers, Darwish and Moses, living in Provo. Thus, three Kader siblings were living in Provo. Ismael lived in America for approximately 22 years and then went back to Jerusalem in 1947. During his stay in America, he followed the model of his eldest brother, Darwish, instead of Moses, in terms of preserving his Islamic identity vis-à-vis assimilating into the American mainstream society. Like Darwish, he remained isolated. Thus, the narrative of Ismael's family is similar to that of Darwish's. Ismael's descendants also came back to America and settled permanently as Muslim-Americans preserving their original identity while assimilating to post 1965 American society.

In the initial years, Ismael lived with his brothers, Darwish and Moses. He ran his own business, a men's clothing store, first in Provo, Utah and then in Chicago, Illinois, but he did not appear to follow the traditional bond of family relations as Darwish and Moses did in the context of the American diaspora. Both Darwish and Moses had purchased land in the same suburban area of Provo and built their houses, barns, and orchards nearby, living as a close extended family, yet independently insuring Islamic privacy and modesty. They had remained together until Darwish's concerns as a father overrode the bond. Being a bachelor, Ismael did not have to worry about running the risk of losing his next generation as Darwish did about his daughter. However, following the departure of his eldest brother, Ismael stayed only one more year before leaving America in 1947.

Upon returning to Jerusalem, Ismael married and had six children: four boys and two girls. Ismael lived the life of a wealthy person in Jerusalem and was respected by the people of the town. He died in 1969 and all of his children are now settled

in different parts of America. The eldest son, Fahmi, came to America for higher education, and eventually became an American citizen, settling in the Atlanta area. Fahmi has five children who maintain their Arab-Islamic and American identities. They are assimilated into American society as Muslim-Americans. They are natural citizens of multicultural America with strong ties to their relatives living in Shufat, Jerusalem. Fahmi's eldest daughter, Kefah, married a Palestinian man, who is a distant relative. The newlywed couple settled in Marietta, Georgia for several years, until they decided to go back to Jerusalem to look after their family business, which is where they now reside. Recently, one of Fahmi's three sons, Hisham graduated from Georgia Tech in Engineering and similarly married a bride from within the extended family living in Jerusalem. Thus, unlike their cousins from Moses' family unit who had fully assimilated and converted out of their Arab-Muslim identity, the descendants of Darwish and Ismael Kader now maintain their identity both as Americans and Palestinian Muslims, living as part of mainstream American society.

Conclusion

The Kader family biography, which spans almost a century involving three generations, shows the complex tensions faced by early Muslim immigrants to the United States (see Naff 1993). Some chose to abandon their Islamic heritage in order to find greater acceptance within the dominant culture, while others removed themselves from the threat of assimilation by returning to Palestine only to have their descendants re-immigrate to a more multicultural United States. The narratives of both units of a single family demonstrate that a minority group remains submissive to the norms of mainstream society, despite the fact that Islamic culture is quite adaptable to foreign cultures. That is

because the Islamic religion provides detailed guidance on how to adapt to a foreign context based upon the simple principle of not violating any ruling that is clearly prohibited by Quranic and Hadithic injunctions (Weiss 1998).

Even the observation of those basic obligations could also be altered as the situation dictates, but only on a short-term basis. For instance, the *salāt al-Qasr wa al-Jam'* is the shortening of ritual prayer and the combining of two prayer times into one, especially while traveling to a distant destination. Such alternatives cannot be allowed for an extended time longer than two weeks. In fact, other than certain specific restrictions, Muslims are virtually free to adapt to a new culture, social habits and traditions, which may be considered morally neutral and socially decent, which are called *al-ʿurf* in Islamic *fiqh* orthodoxy. Thus, one has the permission to assimilate to other cultures as long as one observes the basic aspects of the Islamic way of life. Nevertheless, even implicit societal pressure to conform to non-Islamic practices can adversely affect immigrant Muslim communities.

In the United States the dominant Anglo-Eurocentric-Trinitarian culture competed with certain aspects of fundamental Islamic principles, precepts, and ritualism, such as the five daily prayers, Islamic education for children and adults, *halāl* (permissible) and *harām* (not permissible) food options, modesty, and gender-based relationships. Pre-1965 American secularism, spiritualism, and sexuality contradicted with fundamental Islamic beliefs and behavioral restrictions that some, if not most Muslims, could not compromise (Khan 2003, 208). In Utah, several Muslims who came before the liberalization of immigration policy in 1965 found the only way to fit in was to melt into and assimilate with American society at the expense of their Islamic heritage. This phenomenon illustrates the impact of the dominant culture's social norms and political leadership on immi-

grant families. It was simply not possible to pursue the American dream without conforming to the Anglo-Mormon norm.

The returning children of Darwish and Ismael have been able to retain their dual identity as Muslims and Americans because their return to the States coincided with the change from uniculturalism to cultural pluralism following the laws of 1965. In the past, the pressure from the host society to conform and assimilate fully to the norm of Mormon society was so high that a single Muslim family, the Kaders, could not but give in to the prevailing notion of “Anglo-Mormon” conformity that existed in Provo, Utah. Ethan R. Yorgason characterized this location as an “unusual place” for people of minority faiths and cultures (2003), and while Muslims still face pressure to convert to any of the Christian denominations that dominate mainstream religious America, the survival of a minority culture and faith in the mid-twentieth century Mormon society of Utah was almost impossible (Yorgason 2010).

The parental ability to articulate and explain issues of faith to children in order to guide them to what they know and believe as right is an important element in the transmission of religiosity. Yet, neither Moses nor Ayesha was educated and intellectually trained enough to teach and guide their children about the perceived importance of the Islamic faith as opposed to Mormonism or mainstream Christianity. Their knowledge about the religion of Islam was based on what they had learned from the practices of the tradition, not so much from textual study. This ignorance hampered their ability to raise their children in the faith, and the Kaders lacked a significant Islamic support network in Provo to assist in the process of training Muslim youth. These factors were compounded by the fact that all of the children participated in the Utah public school system, which was Mormon-centric. Hence, the children were taught better at

schools about Mormonism than they were at home about Islam.

For the Moses Kader family, there were important similarities between these two faiths. Most importantly, Mormons recognize several truths inherent in Islam and the Muslim way of life. But for the Kaders to be fully accepted, something they wanted very much, the conversion was the option chosen by many members of the family. Rather than live isolated lives like their counterparts in Michigan (Elkholy 1966), most of the Kader children assimilated by marrying non-Muslim spouses. Joining Mormonism was perceived as the only way to earn respect and acceptance by society (Leonard 2003).

According to the Kader siblings, their parents were devout and conservative Muslims, who practiced their Islamic faith and rituals with full commitment and stayed away from things un-Islamic, but it is unclear as to whether their conversion to Mormonism went against their parent's wishes, or if the parents purposely allowed their children to adapt to "Anglo-Mormon" conformity as a survival mechanism. Reportedly, Moses and Ayesha allowed the children not only to socialize with Mormon friends but also to go out with them to church functions. Moses is remembered as having considered all religions as good, and for his favorable regard for Mormonism, in particular. In his estimation, Mormons showed much respect for Islam, its prophet, people, and scripture.

For any minority group, the Americanization process can cause a moral predicament in how to assimilate and integrate into the dominant culture (Gordon 1964). Like their Jewish counterparts (Goldstein and Goldscheider 1968), Muslims in America have faced profound difficulties—there are fundamental and externally noticeable differences between Islamic and Western lifestyles—such as in the areas of cleanliness, dress code, and social interactions between the sexes. Stephen Warner (1998) argues

that this situation improved through the 1980s and 1990s when religious, cultural and ethnic differences began to be perceived as legitimate. The Muslim immigrants of post-civil war America came with enthusiasm and high hopes of having a better life without necessarily realizing the potential difficulties they would face trying to maintain their Islamic heritage, especially with regard to their children and grandchildren. Some felt they had to leave America for their native home after several decades of floundering in the American diaspora, while others adopted more normative lifestyles to conform to the dominant culture, just as Ibn Khaldun observed in the quotation provided at the start of this study. The families of Darwish, Moses, and Ismael Kader followed this pattern of flight or conformity due to the isolation they experienced as Muslims in pre-1965 America.

Glossary

Hajj: Muslim pilgrimage to the house of God named *Ka'ba* in Mekka, Saudi Arabia.

Halāl: Lawful or permissible things and actions, such as meat to consume and the legal way to earn money and wealth.

Hadithic: Literature based on the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam.

Mormon Conformity: The promotion of Mormon ideals, beliefs, and rituals in total disregard of other ethnic and religious principles and practices. The pressure to conform to Mormonism is strongest in Utah, where Mormonism has come to dominate the area since the religious group migrated to the area in the mid 1800s, following the founding of the faith by Joseph Smith in the mid 1930s.

Kader: An adapted Palestinian Mormon family name in America, which in Arab Islamic origin is *Abukhdair*.

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