Shared Memories and Oblivion: Is Israeli Jews’ Nostalgia for Morocco Shared by the Muslims in Morocco?1

by Emanuela Trevisan Semi

Abstract
In this article we debate whether nostalgia for an idyllic past such as that left in the memory of Israeli Jews of Moroccan origin, a past denied by official Jewish narrative and now resurfacing in the creativity of second generations, is shared by the Muslims who have stayed in Morocco. In the face of Morocco’s post-colonial historiographical silence, it has been questioned how much has remained in the collective memory of Morocco, given a Jewish presence evidence of which continues to be found in Morocco in the form of spaces, objects and places of ritual. The article discusses the results of research carried out in 2005-2009 in the city of Meknes, in the course of which were interviewed both those who frequented Jews, especially until the 1960s-70s, when Jews were still numerous, and also young people who had barely the opportunity to meet them. In particular we highlight the aspects of such memories shared by both Jews and Muslims as well as the divergences.

The Morocco “Paradise”, the Jews of Morocco in Israel and the End of Auto-Censorship

I would like to stress that the Jews of Moroccan origin in Israel, those who have become over the years a group with no history, no past and also Orientalised because they have been included in the mizraḥi/oriental category,2

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1 This article takes its cue from research conducted in Meknès with Hanane Sekkat Hatimi (begun in 2005 through to 2009) and leading to the publication of Mémoire et représentations des Juifs au Maroc: les voisins absents de Meknès (Publisud: Paris, 2011). The research is based on a survey carried out using interviews of various sectors of the Meknès population (both men and women). Elderly people were interviewed who had met Jews and young people who had not, including students, high school pupils, university students and young workers in the souk. In all 180 people who had met Jews were interviewed: artisans and traders in the souk, inhabitants of the medina (old and new), artisans who had learnt their trade from Jews or persons who had worked for Jews (maids, seamstresses), big and small traders, civil servants, free-lance professionals, high-school teachers and university intellectuals. Sixty-four university students and twenty-eight people from the Meknes Jewish community (more than a third) were interviewed. Other interviews were conducted, exclusively by the author of this article, of Jews originally from Meknes but emigrants to France (10) and Israel (14), in particular intellectuals, artists, writers and association representatives.

2 The category of mizraḥim (Orientals) includes widely different Jewish groups, from Jews from North-Africa to those of Iraq and Yemen but also Indian Jews. It is a category which serves to define particularly those who do not belong to the Ashkenazim and cannot be incorporated among the Sephardim. For an analysis of the origin and development of this category, see Ella Shohat, “The Invention of the Mizrahim”, Journal of Palestinian Studies 29/1 (1999): 5-20.
experience strong feelings of nostalgia for the “Eden Paradise” past enjoyed in Morocco. Their past is one which began to re-surface especially among those belonging to the second generation, starting at the end of the 1980s and in many different ways, ranging from new creative forms, like the re-running of works from the Jewish-Moroccan tradition and to the presence of Morocco in Israeli public space.

In literature similar feelings of nostalgia can be found, above all in the work of Sami Berdugo and in particular in *Zeh ba-devarim*, the last novel by the writer of Moroccan origin. This work may be considered a clean break from the background of *mizraḥim* literature insomuch as this author was able, as few other writers have succeeded in doing, to restore a voice to a generation, that of the fathers, which had been deprived of one. Similar nostalgic sentiments can also be found in the poems of Shimon Adaf, who sings of the world of Israel’s outskirts where most Moroccans were forced to go and live. What is more, in developing cities there are active theatre groups who put on works in Hebrew-Moroccan, drawing also on classical repertory and orchestras, with concerts of Andalusian-Moroccan music. In today’s Israel it is possible to listen to musicians who, having been able to benefit from meeting Muslim Moroccan artists (thanks to periods spent learning in Morocco), play the classical repertory of Andalusian-Moroccan music, even succeeding in introducing innovations. For example, Shelomo Bar, a singer-song writer and musician who left Morocco for Israel at five years of age, has succeeded in renewing traditional ethnic music and has brought on new generations of singers.

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5 S. Berdugo, *Zeh ba-devarim* (That is to Say) (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz ha-meuhad, 2010). In Berdugo's latest novel the protagonist decides to go and fetch his illiterate mother who is in a retirement home and bring her back to the old house where they had lived together; here the protagonist wishes to teach her mother the Hebrew alphabet so that she can finally integrate into Israeli society and become partially independent. The mother accepts, on the condition that the time they must share together will be equally shared between the learning of the Hebrew alphabet by the mother and the son’s listening to her story, from her time as a Jewish child in Morocco until her arrival in Israel. A handful of letters of the Hebrew alphabet are taught by force but set against the lure of a narration in the original, broken and hybrid Hebrew language of an immigrant from Morocco, rich in authenticity and suspense. The son’s narration alternates with and is set against that of the mother, an illiterate immigrant from Morocco. She forces her son to listen to her story so that he can become aware that the world is much bigger than that “little country” which is Israel and which he believes mirrors the whole world.

Morocco in Israeli Public Space

In Israeli public space feelings of nostalgia towards Morocco have found various forms of expression, starting as early as 1986, when a statue was unveiled to Mohammad V in Ashkelon, a city with a significant Jewish-Moroccan presence. However, it was in the year 2000 that Israeli public life began to set up places of remembrance connected with Morocco. André Levy has written that it is as if the Jews had never left Morocco, at least as far as the unbreakable bonds binding them to the king of Morocco are concerned. The Moroccan flag flies next to the Israeli flag in the pamphlets published by the National Committee for the Memory of Hassan II, a body formed three days after the king’s death (on 23rd July, 1999) and whose office is in Jerusalem. The committee has set up an association whose aim is to further the memory of the king of Morocco in Israel by giving the name of Hassan II to seventy Israeli public places such as squares, roads, shopping centres, parks and gardens. The museum of the Jews of Morocco (Centre mondial du Judaïsme d’Afrique du Nord-David Amar) located in the middle of an Oriental/Andalusian garden (in the ancient Moghrabi quarter of Jerusalem) is in strict Morocco style. The “Moroccanisation” of Israeli public life continues with the re-establishment of the worship of those saints already celebrated in Morocco by Jews and Muslims together. Netivot, the place of residence of the charismatic leader Baba Sali, has become a new centre of Moroccan religiosity while Baba Sali’s son has had a sanctuary built in memory of his father’s death in Moorish style. Netivot has then became one of the country’s principal religious centres, a place where genealogies of Moroccan saints have been revived.

The Memory of a Jewish-Muslim Past in Morocco

The first question we may ask is whether the memory of a Jewish-Muslim past exists, a memory characterised by relationships based on shared solidarity with Muslims in Morocco even if such relationships were clearly not without ambivalence. Further to this, we should ask how much of that memory has been conveyed to young Moroccan generations. We know that memory of the

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9 In honour of Hassan II there is a street in Kyriat Ekron (near Rehovot), a park in Bet Shemesh and in Ashdod (where out of 200,000 inhabitants, 70,000 are Moroccan), a square in Sderot and in Petah Tiqva, and a promenade in Kyriat Gat (where out of 51,000 inhabitants, 25,000 are of Moroccan origin).
past is read in the light of present-day events and in this particular case it can be interpreted through the prism of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, we may ask whether there is nonetheless some trace of an influence of what has been cemented in collective memory.

We may also ask how much of that past finds expression in the official narrative. This is a complex question which Aomar Boum, who has dealt with Jewish-Muslim relations in southern Morocco, has tried to answer by speaking of a post-colonial historiographical silence. Boum denounces the silence of official Moroccan narrative concerning the Jewish presence in southern Morocco which has been justified by the fact that both local narrations are absent and that other sources are biased as they come from colonial narrations. He claims that not only is it possible but only right to use all kinds of narration available, including travelogues of the 19th and 20th centuries dripping with colonial attitudes and certainly biased, stating that these, if properly decoded and critically appraised, represent in any case usable information: “I consider that all sources written on Jewish-Muslim relations in rural and urban Morocco can provide an explanatory piece of the puzzle, no matter how biased the writer is.” In particular, Boum points out how in his great work of reconstructing the social history of the Sous region (part of the Souss-Massa-Draa region), Muhammad al-Moukhtar al-Susi has totally ignored the Jews of Souss and their relationships with the Arabs and Berbers. Therefore, if we hypothesise that the memory of and perhaps nostalgia for that past have in any case left traces beyond the silence of official historiography, traces which somehow linger, might these be a useful tool in retaining the awareness of the distinction, which we know to be so difficult even where there are no conflicts, between the Jews of Morocco and those of Israel? In other words, can the memory of shared daily life, just as Jewish Muslim life appeared to be in Morocco, today still represent a useful starting point for further interpretations or at least grant us greater independence from those media influences which so greatly affect contemporary representations, especially in the Arab-Islamic world? To put it yet another way, do we still today perceive the absence of such an important part of Moroccan history as the Jewish one has been and, if that should prove the case, how is such an absence experienced? We need to clarify a few points before beginning to answer the issues that have been raised above.

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13 Ibid., 87-88.
14 See Mark R. Cohen, “Modern Myths of Muslim Anti-Semitism”, in Muslim Attitudes to Jews and Israel, ed. Moshe Ma'oz (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 31-47.
Doing Research in Meknes

The research on which this study is based was carried out in an urban environment, in Meknes, a city in Morocco situated on the hills in the south of the Rif and whose university contains a large number of amazigh (Berber) students coming from the south-east of the country. The differences between urban and rural settings in Morocco are great, as are those between coastal cities and those of the interior, and indeed between the various coastal cities which underwent Spanish or British influence. Meknes is a city which counted 15,842 Jews in 1947\(^{15}\) (out of a population of 122,522 Muslims\(^{16}\)) and now has around eighty (in Morocco there were 258,141 Jews in 1947 or 270,000 according to other sources\(^{17}\)). It is unusual in that it has two mellah (the Jewish quarter), one old (from 1682) and one new, built in the 1930s and lying outside the walls but next to the old mellah. The building of a new mellah during the colonial period can be explained by the fact that the Jewish community of Meknes was very traditionalist and observant of rites and during French colonisation it did not wish to leave the old mellah in order not to run the risks of assimilation and loss of social cohesion, which is what happened to the wealthy Jewish classes of other Moroccan classes who moved to the ville nouvelle. In Meknes, the preference was for a modern new Jewish quarter to be built alongside the old. This is an important factor because it meant that when the Jews left their dwellings in the old mellah, these were occupied by rent-paying Muslim tenants who then found themselves living in the same courtyard and in the same tenement as working-class Jews and hence there was a much greater sharing of open space than elsewhere. However we must remember that not all Moroccan cities had a mellah and that a certain degree of residential segregation, which gave rise to the existence of the mellah, was not the rule in Morocco, above all in the South and in rural settings. A further important sharing of space was offered by the area of the souk, the place where artisans and shopkeepers, Jews and Muslims, spent most of their days and most of their lives.

The research was conducted chiefly through interviews of members of the Jewish community who stayed in Meknes and of the Muslim population, both young people who had never met Jews and that part of the population which had known the Jews when they made up a large community. Other interviews


\(^{17}\) There were 258,141 according to Chouraqui, *La condition juridique*, 211 while there were 270,000 according to Daniel Rivet, *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve de la colonisation*, (Paris: Hachette, 2002), 53.
were conducted in Israel and France among Jews who emigrated from Meknes.\textsuperscript{18}

It should be noted straightaway that while on many points Jewish and Muslim memories coincide or contain few discrepancies, on one issue in particular the gulf between the two memories is wide and that concerns the reasons lying at the heart of Jewish emigration.\textsuperscript{19} We must not forget that the great waves of people leaving Morocco took place in 1948, the birth of Israel, and in 1956, the date of Moroccan independence\textsuperscript{20} and then between 1961 and 1964 when Mossad was active.\textsuperscript{21} Other significant waves of emigration occurred after the Six-Day War.\textsuperscript{22}

While historians concur that in the years 1940-1950 political, social and religious factors were less important when deciding if to leave than economic or nationalist concerns, the debate surrounding the following decade remains open and its history has still to be written. Zionism, a religious-messianic Zionism, brought its influence to bear particularly on the rural population in the years 1940-1950, as Yaron Tsur has pointed out.\textsuperscript{23} This trend accelerated when the interaction between national identity and religion became problematic and when distinctions between Zionism, Israel and indigenous Jews became less clear with uncertainty about the future growing.\textsuperscript{24} From 1960 to 1970 the influence of Zionism slowed (Mossad was active until 1964) while the difficulties facing the integration of Moroccan Jews into Israel were becoming common knowledge. While a part of the Jews who left Morocco was made up of the poor and the marginalised, it is nonetheless true that from that time the elites too began to emigrate. Michael Laskier has picked out three groups of Jewish-Moroccan elites in the post-independence period: the Jews influenced by French culture, those educated in the Alliance schools and partially influenced by Zionism, and finally those believing in a Jewish-Muslim

\textsuperscript{18} See note 1.
\textsuperscript{20} Between 1948 and 1956 90,000 Jews left Morocco, see Mohammed Kenbib, Juifs et musulmans au Maroc 1859-1948, 708.
\textsuperscript{22} There were 60,000 Jews before the Six-day war in July 1967 and 53,000 in November 1967, see Victor Malka, La mémoire brisée des Juifs du Maroc, (Paris: Editions Entente, 1978) 71.
entente, among whom there were left-wing Jews, communists and others more moderate. Of these three groups, the first emigrated to France or Canada, the second to France or Israel and the third stayed in Morocco.

Jewish and Muslim Memory of the 1960s and 1970s

In the Jewish memory of those who left in the 1960s and 1970s, there remain inklings of fear, the recollection of single events (from the murders of Petit Jean/Sidi Kasem in 1954 to those carried out in Meknes in 1967), daily harassment and casual violence, uncertainty about the future and about the individual's role in a new society (more Arabized and Islamized than before) and the sensation of being caught up in a historical process too strong for individuals alone to resist. In contrast, the Muslim recollection of those who stayed behind retains the idea that the Jews left because they were too scared, because they were victims of Zionist machinations, because the men were tricked by their own wives or children, or else because they were either simply ungrateful or else traitors, devoid of national sentiment. The fault line between the two collective memories surrounding this issue grows fairly wide and forgetting becomes widespread, to the extent that we may think of this as a traumatic experience yet to be overcome and as a mourning yet to run its course. However, we shall return to this point below.

One feature of Morocco compared to other Arab-Muslim countries is the continuity of past Jewish presence both in terms of place (synagogues, schools, museums, cemeteries, tombs of saints and the conservation of mellah houses once inhabited by Jews and kept intact by their new Muslim residents in terms of their Jewish character) and of items (Jewish ritual items still sold in

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26 According to note 2 of Yolande Cohen and Martin Messika in this issue, 20,000 North-African Jews emigrated to Canada, mainly of Moroccan origin and 55,000 from Morocco settled in France.
29 Yaron Tsur has pointed out that the riots and the murders in Petit Jean caused the suddenly departure of 200 people for Israel, see Yaron Tsur, A Torn Community: the Jews of Morocco and Nationalism, 1943-1954, (Tel Aviv: Am oved, 2001), 399-400 [Hebrew].
markets, music, food, liqueur, sayings, proverbs, handicrafts and goldsmith’s working). Even demons, the Jewish jinn, still circulate in Morocco and are still present in people possessed (in exorcist practices the last demon to abandon the one possessed is always the Jewish jinn).

What is more, every year thousands of Jews of Moroccan origin from Israel, France and Canada come to attend the hillula, the pilgrimage to the tombs of the saints, the visiting of cemeteries or friends and relatives still living in Morocco. This tradition allows a historical memory to be cultivated and thank to this to be constantly updated through the streams of memory stemming from and involving these visitors, as Halbwachs has ably shown. These features are specific to Morocco and have contributed to the uniqueness of the country.

Shared Nostalgia

Shared nostalgia pivots around the memory of socialisation, beginning with food. Even though it is remembered that the Jews ate different foods and had dietary rules to follow – still known among Muslims as kasher – the dishes of traditional Jewish cuisine were in any case customary to Muslims and there was the sharing of meals (still today there are Muslims in the souk who can recite the prayers said before meals and this bears witness to the sharing of food). One celebration, the Mimuna, demonstrates this shared partaking of food. During Mimuna, which closes the week of Pesah, Muslims offered Jews those foods, such as bread and wheat, that were denied them in the previous seven days, while Jews gave Muslims the unleavened bread and dried fruit they had left over. The Muslim authorities would visit families who were either wealthy or well-connected and orchestras played Andalusian-Moroccan music. Celebrations contained typical carnival features such as the exchange of roles – the Jews dressed up as Muslims and men as women. Muslim disguises played a role in eliminating every difference between Jew and Muslim so that they could celebrate, at least for one day, a time of shared conviviality and exchange of food.

Still today people remember details of vegetables known to have been introduced by the Jews and also ways of preserving fruit and vegetables which the Moroccans recall learning from the Jews, while the memory of the delicacy of Jewish cake-making remains a leitmotiv. The mahya, the liqueur once produced by the Jews, continues to be made by Muslims, although they admit that it cannot reach the heights of that produced in the past by the Jews. The handicraft talents in the fields of clothing and goldsmith working still crops up in daily conversation and people recognise that the Jews were unbeatable in

this field and lament the disappearance of the products and the Jews who made them. Memory has also persisted of mutual connivance, with Muslims able to drink mahya in the mellah and in Jewish houses and Jews being able to smoke on Saturdays in Muslim houses.

People still regret today not being able to indulge in those light-hearted verbal exchanges which characterised daily relationships between Jews and Muslims. In Meknes irony and invective were widespread in inter-personal relations and this was a way of re-jigging asymmetrical power relationships. Jews, for example, took the liberty (thanks to variations in Arabic pronunciation or their own way of pronouncing the “s”) of insulting or railing against Muslims, all dissembled as parody and clearly shared by both parties under a banner of jest and of the relief afforded by laughter, which serve to discharge tensions between the two communities.

The act of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish saints with recognised miraculous powers is still practiced. However, the attribution of magical powers to the Jews extended to other events, such as the expectations attached to the powers of Jewish prayers during the Sukkot celebrations to grant rain at the end of summer. There were also expectations of ritual Jewish objects, such as the kippah, which was said to have the power to re-establish family harmony in Muslim families, and in amulets made by Jews with special powers. There is also nostalgia for the great devotion to and observance of Jewish religious practices. Indeed Jewish attachment to their religion’s rites was recognised, respected and admired. However praises are chiefly sung of the mellah when it was still a Jewish quarter. In the collective memory it was the place where one could buy the best goods at the lowest prices and where the shared living when it was inhabited by both Jews and Muslims was a model of harmony, where female solidarity found concrete expression in the mutual breast-feeding of babies when the mother could not be present.

**Hostility versus Nostalgia**

Certain sectors of the population, however, do not fit into this framework of shared nostalgia but rather nurse feelings of hostility or blatant antisemitism. This is especially the case of those women who in reality had no opportunity to frequent Jews in the past and who consequently have only experienced ideological representations of Jews. Another sector of the population sharing the same attitudes is the upper-middle classes, particularly business people who did not frequent the souk (where the stalls of Jews were cheek by jowl with those of Muslims) or the world of the mellah. This stratum of the

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33 For example, when they were forced in an ingratiating tone to turn to a Muslim and supposed to say sidi ‘l-muslim (My Muslim Master), they would actually say jdi ‘l muslim (Billy-goat of a Muslim).
population had not even been influenced by that other source of socialisation *par excellence*, school life, because Jews generally attended the Jewish schools of the Alliance. The social strata of the upper-middle classes underwent to a greater extent the anti-Semitic influence of French colonialism and, what is more, saw in the Jewish Moroccan bourgeoisie a formidable economic competitor, given the networking and international contacts at the latter’s disposal.

Memories of the past are missing in recent generations. There has been no communication of the past between generations and the young (both the young workers of the souk and university students) hardly even know where the mellah is, given that Moroccan Jews make up an ephemeral and superficial presence in Morocco today. The young think that Jews abandoned a country heedlessly, making themselves seem ungrateful and craven. The stereotypes evoked when the Jewish presence in Morocco is spoken of lead us to dwell on the influence that the media and Islamist-leaning popular literature has been able to wield on this sector of Moroccan society, devoid of any direct experience of the Jewish presence in Morocco.

One exception to this are the Berber students attending Meknes University. Given the fact that inter-generational information transfer in a rural context (such as that of the Berbers in south-east Morocco) and in a culture where an oral tradition like the Berbers’ is greater than in a non-Berber city environment subject to greater mobility, students have held on to a greater memory of the Jewish presence in the south of Morocco. Through their words and memories handed down by their families, there emerge still well-preserved proverbs, traditions, events and stories, together with feelings of nostalgia for a time which has now become a myth. These are memories that are also reinforced when Moroccan Jews make pilgrimage to the tombs of the saints, attend the cemeteries where the members of their own families are buried or when they go to see the houses they have abandoned. These students, often belonging to radical Berber associations, also seem to admire and identify with those Jews who left for nationalist reasons.

A Fracture in the Sharing of Memory

If so far we have drawn a picture of a generally shared nostalgia, with the exception of young people, Arab students, women who had no opportunity for contact with the Jews and lastly the wealthier classes, memories do not coincide and are no longer shared when we refer to the reasons why the Jews of Morocco departed. This removal from memory concerns in particular the killing of two youths in the new mellah of Meknes at the outbreak of the Six-
Day War,\textsuperscript{34} murders which the Jews who stayed and those interviewed in France and Israel remember well but which have fallen into oblivion for Muslims. This occurrence, as has been very well explained by Avishai Margalit, is understandable, for reasons of personal implications in the processes of memory. In this regard, Margalit has quite rightly pointed out that blacks in the United States have a detailed memory of the killing of Martin Luther King while the opposite is true when it is a question of remembering the assassination of John Kennedy.\textsuperscript{35}

There is a clear fracture in memory when the time comes to recall why the Jews left. The narration of those events differs according to whether it is performed by Jews or Muslims, although for everyone in any case we are talking of memories marked by trauma, whether it be on the part of those Muslims remaining, those Jews who left but also of those Jews who stayed. The latter are often denied a specific narrative, one taking into account the particular trauma of seeing most of one’s own family and a whole community disappear. Families have split up and dispersed, and over the years have developed a kind of regret surrounding their inability to resist what at the time was considered an unavoidable event.\textsuperscript{36} It has been remembered that

Since Independence they knew that they could not and would not be able in the future to stay in Morocco. However, with all their strengths and with all the power of their secular memory, they resisted the idea of the departure. ...Shaken and terrified by what they called “the events”, those of them who were able made some exploratory trips...\textsuperscript{37}

For Muslims, it is a trauma due to the sudden and essentially unexpected disappearance of a component of their own history, a sort of unforeseen bereavement still to take its course. The “Muslim” narrative of the Jews’ departure denies their bearing responsibility for Jewish emigration, a fact which can be traced back to a number of causes: the responsibility of Mossad and

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{34} They were Joseph Elhyani, 18, and Elie Torjman, 28, both buried in Meknès cemetery. On their graves, sited beside the area where lie the six victims of the massacre of Petit Jean (Sidi Kassem) in 1954, it is specified that they were murdered. The adjacency to the Petit Jean massacre victims' graves is both concrete and symbolic, revealing the clear intention of the Jewish community to include the two latest victims in the same category as victims of massacre.

\textsuperscript{35} Avishai Margalit, \textit{L’etica della memoria} (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), 50.

\textsuperscript{36} See Nicole Elgrissy Banon, \textit{La renaicendre : mémoires d’une marocaine juive et patriote} (Casablanca: Afrique orient, 2010).

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Zionists more generally, the economic crisis and the greater competition of those times, migratory patterns linked to years of crisis, the essentially unpatriotic attitudes of Jews who were to leave at a time of crisis in the country, the weakness and lack of virility of men forced to depart by their own wives, who in turn thought only to follow their offspring. In the interviews importance was attributed to the theme of weakness and obstinacy of the men who should always have been the last to leave (cases were also related of husbands who had returned to Morocco but were then forced to leave for ever under family pressure). In the Moroccan film Où vas-tu Moshé, by Hassan Benjelloun (2007) there is again the same kind of model insomuch as the protagonist, Moshe, tries to resist the pressure of his wife and initially gives up the idea of leaving, preferring that only his wife and daughter depart. It may be that the action of *aliyat ha-noar* (Youth Aliyah, the organisation for youth emigration, fairly active in Morocco), which organised departure to Israel’s kibbutz of 12- to 16-year olds, who were only joined much later by their parents, had a particular effect on those Muslims seeing buses depart loaded with young Jews whose parents stayed behind. Although there can be no doubt that the young were first in line for emigration and that in Israel in the 1950s there was a policy favouring emigration at a young age, we must remember that many husbands were the first to leave so as to find lodgings and a job, to be joined subsequently by their families. There were even incidents of departing husbands who abandoned their former wives. These cases tally with the fact that from the 1950s onwards the *ketubbah* (the Jewish marriage contract) of the Moroccans carried the photos of the spouses in order to stop the man emigrating to Israel with a new wife who was not his rightful one (a custom which has no equivalent in other communities).

Yet in the Muslim narration we hear only and obsessively of the reluctant husband, as if to say that anyone wishing to leave belonged to a weak, feminised community lacking virility; this is done so as to remove Muslims from all responsibility for what happened and to hinder a critical appraisal of events.

In the “Jewish” narrative, however, we find reference to a climate of fear and uncertainty, to constant minor harassment, to the fear of an increase in mixed marriages and conversions to Islam as well as the difficulty of seeing one’s own future projected onto a society which was becoming more nationalist and heading towards ever-greater tendencies towards Arabization and Islamization.

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38 The role of this organisation in recruiting in India children and young Jews to be sent to Israel and on the obstacles placed in the path of parents wishing to join them subsequently is dealt with by Maina Chawla Singh, *Being Indian, Being Israeli*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 2010), 90-118. In this regard it would be interesting to compare the policy of *aliyat ha-noar* with regards the case of Morocco and that of India.

with little room for self-expression and sense of representation granted to a non-Muslim minority. The background to all this was a feeling of unavoidability which brooked no resistance to events perceived as world-changing and standing above the choices made by mere individuals, often making those choices obligatory. According to the definition given by a number of interviewees, everything was *maktub*, already decreed by destiny.

In the “Jewish” narration of those emigrants to Israel, the decision to leave also meant difficult living conditions in the initial years, a denial of their own past and history, reduced to a few pages in school textbooks, as well as the devaluation of their own language and culture. This lack of recognition led to the trauma of their former identity being erased but which has nonetheless given rise to a recovery and re-affirmation of their own past over a number of decades, as we pointed out at the beginning and which goes on today against a background of great nostalgia.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the shared memory of a past, recalled in everyday detail, continues still today both in Israel, where it gave birth to the myth of an idyllic past experienced in Morocco, and in Morocco itself. In the latter country, memory has been preserved untouched by the influence of the media, particularly so within the closed walls of the *souk*, where Muslims enjoyed shared space and festivities with their Jewish neighbours, in contrast to the middle and upper classes who experienced less daily life with Jews, were possible commercial rivals and had been more greatly influenced by anti-Semitic colonial circles, by colonial policy and by media discourse. A different argument needs to be enlisted on the subject of women. There is significant difference between women of the *bourgeois* class who were friends or had contact with Jewish women (the former still today regret the departure of their female Jewish friends and acquaintances) and those who never had the opportunity to associate with Jewish women. Middle-class Jewish women had in fact had access to education before their Muslim counterparts and were the first agents of emancipation in patriarchal Moroccan society, opening a door to the possibility of changing the status of Moroccan women as early as the 1950s and 1960s; their departure was regretted by their female Muslim contemporaries. On the other hand, Muslim women who had no contact with the Jews formed an image filtered through radical Islam and make up that part of Moroccan society most influenced by ideological and fanatic Islamic discourse and by anti-Semitism. They show no feelings of nostalgia (in fact they were the only ones who even refused to be interviewed on this subject).

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40 The inhabitants often remained ignorant of the media’s claims because the Arabic used in the media was unintelligible to them because the language they spoke, *derija*, is far removed from the media code.
Here we are dealing with memories shared within a society which, although greatly differentiated in its constituent parts and spaces, allows us nonetheless to see a close network of relationships between Jews and Muslims. Even though these relationships have been ignored by official historiography, they still remain and intersect with fractured memories referring to issues removed or biased or to loss of memory. These serve to cover the trauma caused by the departure of the Jews, a fracture in the social history of Morocco which still requires analysis and re-consideration.

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