Richard Fafara
Adler-Aquinas Institute, USA

Migration, Islam, and de Tocqueville*

I. The Current Situation

A recent world forum of experts from business, academia, civil society, government, and international organizations identified the recent, large-scale, involuntary, international migrations as the top global risk in the coming decade.[1] An international migrant is defined as someone who has been living one year or longer in a country other than the one in which he or she was born. Statistics on the total number of migrants alive as of 2010 indicate that about 3% of the world's population has migrated across international borders. While this may seem small, the number of migrants, if counted as one nation, would constitute the fifth most populated country on earth. Christians comprise nearly half of the world's 214 million international migrants followed by Muslims almost 60 million people. Since 2010, because of conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, migrations have increased dramatically, with Christians and Muslims continuing to be the two largest groups of migrants and much of the migration being involuntary. Since last summer, Europe has experienced a profound immigration crisis with hundreds of thousands of refugees, mainly Muslim men fleeing from strife in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan unleashing

---

* My thanks to Dr. Michael Dechert for suggesting this topic.

[1] January 21, 2016, Pew Research Report, "Refugee Crises, Climate Change are Top Risks in Next 10 Years, Experts Say," http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/21/top-global-risks-wef/ (accessed 7 June 2016).

mayhem from the Greek isles to Calais. An estimated 1.1 million asy-lum-seekers entered Germany in 2015 alone. Many attribute much of the threat migrations pose to the groups of migrant Muslims who follow "radical" Islam, but many also have begun to question whether Islam itself accounts for Muslims not assimilating or being assimilat-ed into their destination countries and perpetrating violence both with-in, and outside of, their own countries.[2] Fear and concern about Islam remains high throughout the world, especially in the West since Islam is, in fact, the only civilization which ever threatened the survival of the West and did so more than once! The nineteenth-century, French, political thinker, historian, and moralist, Alexis de Tocqueville, helps define the precise risk that Islam poses.

II. De Tocqueville on Islam

Tocqueville, one of the most penetrating theorists in political his-tory, is best known for his two-volume *Democracy in America*, the most quoted work on America ever written. He presented the new Americans with a degree of understanding no one had accomplished before, or has since. The religious atmosphere of the United States made a strong impression on Tocqueville upon his arrival in America in 1831. This was the first thing that struck Tocqueville in a coun-try where no one had a position secured by birth or aristocratic title. Unlike aristocratic societies, where people are rooted in a hierarchi-cal social structure, in democratic societies all social links (including the political and economic) are broken. Tocqueville never defined "equality"; he used both "democracy" and "equality" interchange-

---

[2] Richard Wike, "Widespread concerns about extremism in Muslim nations, and little support for it," February 5, 2015, Pew Research Center; James Bell, et alii, "Be-liefs About Sharia," *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*, Pew Research Center, April 30, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-re-ligion-politics-society-beliefs-about-sharia/ (accessed 7 June 2016).

ably.[3] He considered the Christian religion, especially Catholicism, and the care Americans had taken to separate Church and State to be the primary reason why Americans were able to avoid the pitfalls of democracy--selfish individualism, consumerism, conformity, a disregard for the past and future, and, ultimately, the establishment of a despotic state.[4] Religion serves as the essential inhibitory ingredient in democratic self-restraint. Tocqueville depicted Americans as being constrained by an all-pervasive spiritual power without a state-controlled religious establishment.[5]

There is only one brief reference to Islam in Tocqueville's first volume of *Democracy* (1835), but by the time he made his second reference to Islam in volume two of *Democracy* published in 1840 he had read significant portions of the *Koran*. Due to his political involvement with France's colonization efforts, Tocqueville traveled to Algeria in 1841 and 1846 and wrote two reports in which he tried to understand that country and the religion of its inhabitants. The practical, political, and social effects of different forms of spirituality, in particular the relationship among religion, democratic society, and freedom, fascinated him. He considered religion as necessary to democratic societies for three reasons: 1) the relationship between religion and materialism; 2) the psychological relationship between religious belief and freedom; and finally 3) the relationship between religion and the state. He used these relationships to evaluate particular religions, including Islam.[6]

---

[3] American democracy and it's attempt to destroy or modify the great inequality of man and woman which "seemed…to have its eternal foundation in nature" by putting their different faculties and talents to use in different spheres where both march in equal step but always along different paths and without denying that the "natural head of the conjugal association was the man" favorably impressed Tocqueville. See Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T. Schleifer (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012), pp. 1063-1067.

[4] Ibid., pp. 467-488, 945-947, 954-57.

[5] Alexis de Tocqueville *Œuvres complètes* (henceforth OC), ed. J. P. Mayer (Paris: Gallimard, 1951-), I (1), pp. 304-305.

[6] I follow the interpretation of Alan S. Kahan, *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion: Checks and Balances for Democratic Souls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 182-9.

A. Religion and Materialism

For Tocqueville, human beings had an innate desire for religion and for freedom. Religious belief was an essential safeguard of human freedom. It served as a psychological barrier against the danger of social disintegration unleashed by democracy's potentially unlimited horizon: "How," Tocqueville asked, "could society fail to perish if, while the political bond grows loose, the moral bond does not become tighter. And what to do with a people master of itself, if it is not subject to God?"[7] The human spiritual faculty present from birth could be extinguished by stronger passions such as materialism. Tocqueville did not think economic and educational progress would eliminate religion; however, he also maintained that the existence of democratic society did not necessarily imply the persistence of religion. Since both spirituality and materialism could be carried to the extreme, Tocqueville advocated finding a middle road between the two that would be suitable for humanity at large.[8]

Tocqueville's evaluation of Islam finding that middle road is mixed. In 1838, Tocqueville wrote a friend praising Mohammed as "an able man amid all his divagations. It is difficult to strike a more able bargain between spiritualism and materialism, the angel and the beast. The Koran is nothing but this."[9] Tocqueville no sooner implied that the *Koran* might be the important middle path between spiritualism and materialism when he wrote to another friend that the *Koran* is vastly inferior to the Gospels. He granted that the clear and true notions of divinity in the *Koran* represent progress over polytheism and that the Koran "embraces certain general duties of humanity with a more extensive and clearer vision. But it also arouses passions and,

---

[7] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, p. 478.

[8] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, p. 960k.

[9] "Ce prophète…c'est un habile homme au milieu de toutes ses divagations. Il est difficile de faire une transaction plus habile entre le spiritualisme et matérialisme, l'ange et la bête. Le Coran n'est que cela." (Correspondance d'Alexis de Tocqueville et de Francisque de Corcelle, in Tocqueville, OC, 15 (1), p. 98.

in this respect, I do not know if it has not done more harm to men than polytheism." Tocqueville complained that "the *violent* and *sensual* tendencies of the *Koran* are so striking that I don't see how they can escape a man of common sense." Tocqueville was disturbed by the *Koran* dictating that: "*the first of all religious duties is blindly to obey the prophet*" and "*holy war is the first of all good works*." Mohammed," Tocqueville wrote, "has exercised an immense power over the human species that I think, all in all, has been more harmful than beneficial."[10]

A similarly balanced, but negative appraisal appeared in the notes Tocqueville made on the *Koran*. It includes "almost all the general principles of morality that all religions contain" and a special emphasis on charity, but Tocqueville concluded that "Mohammed is much

---

[10] "Je ne conçois pas comment Lamoricière a pu dire que ce livre-là était un progrès sur l'Evangile. Il n'y a nulle comparison quelconque à faire suivant moi....Le Coran ne me paraît être qu'un compromis assez habile entre le matérialisme et le spiritualisme.... La doctrine que *la foi sauve*, que *le premier de tous les devoirs religieux est d'obéir aveuglément au prophète* ; que *la guerre sainte est pa première de toutes les bonnes oeuvres*...toutes ces doctrines...se retrouvent à chaque page et presque à chaque mot du Coran. Les tendances *violentes* et *sensuelles* du Coran frappent tellement les yeux que je ne conçois pas qu'elles échappent à un homme de bon sens. Le Coran est un progrès sur le polythéisme en ce qu'il contient des notions plus nettes et plus vraies de la divinité et qu'il embrasse d'une vue plus étendue et plus claire certains devoirs genéraux de l'humanité. Mais il passionne et sous ce rapport je ne sais s'il n'a pas fait plus de mal aux hommes que le polythéisme....Tandis que Mahomet a exercé sur l'espèce humaine une immense puissance que je crois, à tout prendre, avoir été plus nuisible que salutaire" (Tocqueville to Louis de Kergorlay, 21 March 1838, in Tocqueville, OC, 13 (2), pp. 28-9). See Mike Konrad, "The Greatest Murder Machine in History," *American Thinker*, May 31, 2014, http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2014/05/the_greatest_murder_machine_in_history_comments.html (accessed 7 June 2016): "Islam is the greatest killing machine in the history of mankind, bar none....Credit is given to the 20th-century totalitarians as the worst species of tyranny to have ever arisen. However, the alarming truth is that Islam has killed more than any of these, and may surpass all of them combined in numbers and cruelty....Unlike the 20th-century totalitarians whose killing fury consumed themselves, reducing their longevity, Islam paces itself. In the end, though slower, Islam has killed and tortured far more than any other creed, religious or secular. Unlike secular tyranny, Islam, by virtue of its polygamy and sexual predations, reproduces itself and increases."

more concerned with making people believe than with giving rules of morality. And he employs terror more than any other motivation." Tocqueville cited Mohammed's violence towards idolaters and Jews, the injunction to Jihad, and the killing or conversion of infidels by force.[11]

B. Religious Belief and Freedom

For Tocqueville, the balance between religious belief and freedom was needed both in a moral sense to temper the democratic tendency for materialism and also in a political role as a necessary accompaniment to a durable freedom:

> "For me, I doubt that man can ever bear complete religious independence and full political liberty at the same time; and I am led to think that, if he does not have faith, he must serve, and, if he is free, he must believe."[12]

According to Tocqueville, a religious faith arrived at independently, on one's own, is insufficient to preserve political freedom since it would be incompatible with political liberty. For Tocqueville political independence surpassed religious independence in importance.[13] Belonging to an organized religion and subordinating one's individual judgment in religious matters is needed to preserve the open psychological space necessary for freedom and democracy.[14] Trying to

---

[11] "Le Coran contient à peu près tous les principes généraux de morale renfermés dans toutes les religions," "La foi constamment au-dessus des bonnes œuvres," "Les violences du langage de Mahomet principalement dirigées contre les idolâtres et les Juifs," "Il accable sans cesse les Juifs et ménage les chrétiens," "Mahomet s'occupe bien plus à se faire croire qu'à donner des règles de morale," "Encouragement, Permission et commandement de tuer les infidèles" (Tocqueville, "Notes sur le Coran," OC, 3 (1), pp. 154, 156, 160).

[12] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, p. 745.

[13] Ibid., pp. 714-716.

[14] "A religion is an association in which you give up your liberty in a permanent way.

answer all questions by oneself can quickly lead to despair and acceptance of the first despotic authority that will remove this terrible burden: "Men cannot do without dogmatic beliefs.... among all dogmatic beliefs, the most desirable seem to me to be dogmatic beliefs in the matter of religion."[15] Thus, humans make choices in some areas by surrendering having to make them in others. Islam's compromise between the material and spiritual which is needed in a religion in a democratic society, and Islam's fundamental nature as "submission" (the meaning of the word "Islam") to the will of God, would seem to meet Tocqueville's approval.

C. Religion and the State

Tocqueville disapproved of Islam not so much because of any particular aspect of the *Koran* but rather with Islam's relationship to political freedom. For Tocqueville, "[a]longside each religion is found a political opinion that is joined to it by affinity. Allow the human spirit to follow its tendencies, and it will regulate in a uniform way political society and the holy city; it will seek, if I dare say so, to *harmonize* earth with heaven."[16] Tocqueville considered Islam as having a natural affinity with despotism due to the lack of any separation between Church and State. Interestingly, the reason Tocqueville offered for the lack of separation of Church and State in Islam is the absence of a priesthood which, according to Tocqueville, is, in principle, good. This absence was "a good amidst all the evils to which the Muslim religion has given birth. For a priestly body is in itself the source of much social malaise, and when a religion can be powerful without the aid of such a means, one must praise it for that."[17]

---

[15] Ibid., p. 743.

[16] Ibid., p. 467.

[17] "Cela a été un bien au milieu de tous les maux que la religion musulmane a fait naître. Car un corps sarcedotal est en lui-même la source de beaucoup de malaise social, et quand la religion peut être puissante sans le secours d'un pareil moyen, il faut s'en louer (Tocqueville, "Pourquoi on ne recontre pas de sarcedoce chez les Musul-

Tocqueville proffered two reasons for why Islam had no priests. First, since early Islam was organized for war it had only minimal ritual that was simple, without any need of a priest to perform it. More important was Islam having "most completely combined and intermixed the two powers [civil and religious]."[18] Without a separation of Church and State, there was no need, and for that matter no means, of distinguishing the clergy from other educated people. Tocqueville's primary critique regarding Islam is that the separation between Church and State, so laboriously acquired in Europe, never occurred in Islam.[19] The *Koran* regulated both the general moral and religious duties of humanity and provided specific rules of civil and political law.

Politically, Islam combined civil and religious authority "in such a way that the high priest is necessarily the ruler, and the ruler the high priest, and that all the acts of civil and political life are more or less regulated according to religious law." Socially, "since the *Koran* is the common source from which issue religious law, civil law and even in part secular science, the same education is given those who want to become religious ministers, doctors of law, judges, and even scholars. The sovereign takes indiscriminately among this educated class the ministers of religion or imams, the doctors of law or muftis and the judges or Cadis." The result is that the secular and the sacred were constantly intermixed. Tocqueville did not say if this intermix-

––––––––––––––––––––

mans," *Notes prises avant le voyage d'Algérie et dans le courant de 1840*, OC, 3 (1), p. 174).

[18] "Mohamet a prêché sa religion à des peoples peu avancés, nomads et guerriers; cette religion avait elle-même pour but la guerre; de là, petit nombre de pratiques et la simplicité de culte....Mais il y a une raison plus puissante pour expliquer l'absence presque complète de sarcedoce régulier parmi les musulmans....Le mahométisme est la religion qui a les plus complètement confondu et entremêlé les deux puissances; de telle sorte que le grand-prêtre est nécessairement le prince, et le prince le grand-prêtre, et que tous les actes de la vie civile et politique se réglent plus ou moins sur la loi religieuse" (Ibid., pp. 173-4).

[19] "La religion et la justice ont toujours été mêlées dans les pays musulmans, comme les tribunaux ecclésiastiques avaient essayé de le faire dans l'Europe chrétienne du Moyen Age." ("Religion and justice have always been combined in Muslim countries, like the ecclesiastical courts tried to do in Christian Europe") (Ibid, p. 181).

ture was detrimental from a religious point of view, but he thought it catastrophic from a political perspective:

> "This concentration and confusion established by Mohammed between the two powers has on the one hand produced this particular good [absence of a priesthood], and on the other hand, it has been the first cause of the despotism and especially of the social immobility which has, almost always, been characteristic of Muslim nations and which finally made them all fall before the nations which have embraced the opposite system."[20]

Similar reasoning lies behind Tocqueville's negative judgment of Islam found in volume two of *Democracy* (1840), a more knowledgeable and hostile judgment than that found in volume one:

> "Mohammed made not only religious doctrines, but also political maxims, civil and criminal laws, and scientific theories descend from heaven and placed them in the *Koran*. The Gospel, in contrast, speaks only of the general relations of men with God and each other....That alone, among a thousand other reasons, is enough to show that the first of these two religions cannot long dominate during times of enlightenment and democracy, whereas the second is destined to reign during these centuries as in all others."[21]

---

[20] "[C]ette concentration et cette confusion établies par Mahomet entre les deux puissances a produit ce bien particulier, d'une autre part, elle a été la cause première du despotisme et surtout de l'immobilité sociale qui a, presque toujours, fait le caractère des nations musulmanes et qui les fait enfin succomber toutes devant les nations qui ont embrassé le système contraire" (Ibid., p. 174). A few years later, Tocqueville's evaluation of Islam was even more severe: few religions were more disastrous to men than Islam which is the principle cause of decadence in the Muslim world, and, although less absurd than polytheism, Islam is a decline rather than progress vis-à-vis paganism. See Tocqueville to Arthur de Gobineau, 22 October 1838, Tocqueville, OC, 9, p. 69: "J'ai beaucoup étudié le Coran….Je vous avoue que je suis sorti de cette étude avec la conviction qu'il y avait eu dans le monde, à tout prendre, peu de religions aussi funestes aux hommes que celle de Mahomet, Elle est, à mon sens, la principale cause de la décadence aujourd'hui si visible du monde musulman et quoique moins absurde que le polythéisme antique, ses tendances sociales et politiques étant, à mon avis, infiniment plus à redouter, je le regarde relativement au paganisme lui-même comme une décadence plutôt que comme un progrès."

[21] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, pp. 746-7.

III. Tocqueville's Optimism

Because Tocqueville's reports on Algeria seem to lack coherence and negate the ideas of an ordered liberty that characterized his work *Democracy* they baffle many of his commentators. On the one hand, Tocqueville did not think that despite Islam's problems it could, nor should, be replaced. Islamic religious education should be encouraged, for fear that otherwise ignorant and fanatical leaders would take the place of a more educated and presumably moderate class.[22] But one also could easily imagine that if Tocqueville were a Muslim he surely would support elements in Islam that lead to a separation of Mosque and State.

At the same time, Tocqueville criticized the assimilationist model of colonization the French adopted. Instead, he preferred the British model of indirect rule, which didn't mix different populations together. Tocqueville went so far as openly advocating racial segregation between the European colonists and the "Arabs" through the implementation of two different legislative systems.[23] And while Tocqueville criticized the use of martial law in governing French citizens, he defended its use against native Algerians.

On the other hand, we find a guarded optimism in his analysis of Islam because it potentially meets many of the needs of a democratic society. As a middle path between materialism and spiritualism, as

---

[22] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, p. 745 ; "Rapports sur l'Algérie (1847)," OC, 3 (1), p. 326.

[23] "Il peut donc et il doit donc y avoir deux législations très distinctes en Afrique parce qu'il s'y trouve deux sociétés très séparées. Rien n'empêche *absolument*, quand il s'agit des Européens, de les traiter comme s'ils étaient seuls, les régles qu'on fait pour eux ne devant jamais s'appliquer qu'a eux." (There should therefore be two quite distinct legislations in Africa, for there are two very separate communities. There is absolutely nothing to prevent us treating Europeans as if they were alone; the rules established for them will only ever apply to them.") (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Travail sur l'Algérie* (Octobre 1841), OC, 3 (I), p. 275). In 2008 Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury drew criticism for predicting that it was "unavoidable" that elements of Islamic sharia law would be introduced in Britain.

possessing suitable dogmatism in matters of faith and a vigorous emphasis on charity, as well as the absence of a priesthood, Tocqueville saw in Islam the latent potential for reform and the support freedom needs to endure.

> "Individual property, industry, and sedentary habitation are in no way contrary to the religion of Mohamed. Arabs have known or know these things elsewhere; they have been appreciated and sampled by some Arabs in Algeria itself. Why should we despair on making them more familiar to a greater number of Arabs? Islam is not absolutely impenetrable to the light?"[24]

The *Koran* may not provide the means to separate Mosque and State but, in Tocqueville's view, it was the course of medieval history -- not Gospel verses such as "render to Caesar what is Caesar's…" -- that effected this separation in the West. The *Koran*'s affinity with freedom might be much less than that of Christianity, but it might, in some respects, be adequate to the needs of a modern democratic society and bring to an end the long decadence of the Muslim world.[25]

IV. Tocqueville's Relevance for Today

Some experts have argued that Tocqueville's treatment of Islam is superficial because he knew nothing of Shi'a Islam or of the vast

---

[24] Tocqueville "Rapports sur l'Algérie (1847)," OC. 3 (1), p. 325 : "La propriété individuelle, l'idustrie, l'habitation sédentaire n'ont rien de contraire à la religion de Mahomet. Des Arabes ont connu ou connaissent ces choses ailleurs; elles sont appréciées et goûtées par quelques-uns d'entre eux en Algérie même. Pourquoi désespérions-nous de les rendre familières au plus grand nombre?...L'Islamisme n'est pas absolument impénétrable à la lumière."

[25] Kahan, *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion*, pp. 187-8. Recent research data bear out Tocqueville's position: "In 31 of the 37 countries where the question was asked, at least half of Muslims believe a democratic government, rather than a leader with a strong hand, is best able to address their country's problems." "Religion and Politics," Bell, *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*, http://www.pew-forum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-religion-and-politics/ (accessed 7 June 2016).

traditions of Islamic law and commentary. And many political pundits today argue that an appreciation of Islam's current threat to the world requires a profound understanding of this religion. Both may be correct, but one cannot deny that Tocqueville has raised questions and important issues whose legitimacy, due to political correctness, is widely denied, or purposely overlooked, by many today. Tocqueville's analysis of Islam brings a number of central questions to the foreground:

Is Islam itself the primary cause of the despotism and the social immobility which has, almost always, been characteristic of Muslim nations? And is it not Islam which made the Islamic nations fall before others which embraced an opposite system?

Is not Islam's affinity with despotism rather than freedom due to its lack of any separation between Mosque and State and, consequently, having all acts of civil and political life more or less regulated according to religious law (Sharia)?

Is not the injunction to Jihad, and the killing or conversion of infidels by force, and the view that world peace is unattainable until religious Muslim law, Sharia, governs everyone, the root cause of the inability of Muslims both to be assimilated into non-Muslim countries and the inability of those countries to assimilate followers of Islam?[26]

Tocqueville defined the main challenge still confronting the West, i.e., how to develop and foster courses of action to be executed within Islam that foster enlightenment and democracy and that lead to a separation of Mosque and State. Today, many have advocated that Islam allow or, better yet, choose to undergo self-critique to test its religious validity and open itself up to a close analysis. This would include: a theological, philosophical, and philological analysis to understand

---

[26] Even though it may be true that Muslims have varying views about the usefulness of violence, significant percentages of Muslims favor making Islamic law the official law in their country and believe that it should be applied to non-Muslims. See James Bell, et alii, "Beliefs About Sharia," *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*, Pew Research Center, April 30, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-beliefs-about-sharia/ (accessed 7 June 2016).

how its texts came into being, an assessment of the interpretations of these texts, in-depth research into their actual religious history, etc.[27]

The counterview put forth by its proponents maintains that Islam constantly reflects on itself, cultivates internal debate and critique, and identifies problems and shortcomings, which it then struggles to address. This seems questionable since there is no critical edition of the *Koran*.[28] Also, unlike for Christians joined by revealed truth, in Islam (and in Judaism) reconciling religion and revelation is a political problem. Islam has no authority in the intellectual domain.

The counterview also argues that urging "Islam" to engage in the same or similar kind of self-critique and revision that Christianity underwent during the Reformation and Enlightenment translates into an imperative that one tradition would impose on another and something Islam experiences as alien to its own history, precepts, and sense of integrity -- something it associates with Western or European claims of cultural superiority.[29] Thus, one rapidly arrives at the philosophical

---

[27] Jean-Luc Marion, "After the "Charlie Hebdo" Massacre: Islam Must Open Itself to Critique," University of Chicago Divinity School, https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/after-charlie-hebdo-massacre-islam-must-open-itself-critique-jean-luc-marion (accessed 7 June 2016).

[28] ["W]e have, curiously, no critical edition of the Quran, its origins, its texts. The reason for this lack of investigation is, in Muslim terms, due to the nature of the text. It is said to come directly to Mohammed in Arabic. The Quran was not compiled for at least a hundred years after Mohammed's death. Earlier versions of it seem to have been destroyed. Still, critically to examine the Quran is considered to be blasphemous. It implies human judgment on an unchangeable divine text. But technically, Mohammed is not "inspired" in the Christian sense. For the Quran is said to exist verbatim in Allah. Thus, it supposedly antedates the Old and New Testaments. These "latter" writings are thus said to be corruptions of the Quran, not vice versa, which the real case is." James V. Schall, S.J, "'What is Islam?' Revisited," *The Catholic World Report*, January 08, 2015, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3617/What_is_Islam_Revisited.aspx (accessed 7 June 2016).

[29] Bruce Lincoln and Anthony C. Yu, "A Reply to Jean-Luc Marion's 'After 'Charlie Hebdo,' Islam Must Critique Itself," University of Chicago Divinity School, https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/reply-jean-luc-marion%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cafter-%E2%80%98charlie-hebdo%E2%80%99-islam-must-critique-itself%E2%80%9D-bruce-lincoln (accessed 7 June 2016).

question of what criteria Islam could follow to test its religious valid-
ity. One wonders what methodological approach might be acceptable
given the voluntarist theological/philosophical underpinnings of Islam
where Allah as pure will transcends all rules of reason such as the
distinction of rational and irrational or good and evil. Right is not
right because it is right, but because Allah wills it to be right. The God
of Islam can command that what is good to be evil or what is evil to
be good. God's laws and actions do not have to be reasonable; they
simply have to be obeyed. No obligation flows from reason or from
moral philosophy but from Sharia. The elimination of any notion of
truth within Islam transforms all discussion into simply a temporary
pragmatic stand-off, a balance of interest and power.

Tocqueville had confidence in human reason even though he was
not inclined to engage in fundamental, philosophical thought.[30] He
may not have gone as deeply into the theological, philosophical, and
historical underpinnings of Islam as some today are convinced is nec-
essary for a meaningful critique of Islam's legitimacy, but there is no

---

[30] Tocqueville viewed "metaphysics and all the theoretical sciences" as nothing
but voluntary torment that man has consented to inflict upon himself" (Tocqueville,
Letter to Charles Stoffels (22 October 1831), cited in Peter Augustine Lawler, *The Rest-
less Mind: Alexis de Tocqueville on the Origin and Perpetuation of Human Liberty*
(Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 93). While Tocqueville did not
engage in foundational thought and resisted too theoretical a life, his texts by have been
included in the syllabus for the French *Aggregation de philosophie*. See Pierre Manet,
"Tocqueville, Political Philosopher," trans. Arthur Goldhammer in *The Cambridge
Companion to Tocqueville*, ed. Cheryl B. Welch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 2006), pp. 108-120). Nor was Tocqueville, the moralist, a relativist: "Good and
evil exist apart from the blame or the praise of certain men and even of humanity….
How, moreover, to define evil, if not what is harmful to humanity, and good what is
useful to it?" (Tocqueville, *Democracy*, pp. 1095-96e). For example, Tocqueville con-
demned the homosexuality stemming from the widespread polygamy permitted in Is-
lam which allows men four wives and leaves others without women as "against nature":
"La polygamie existe-t-elle en fait sur une grande echelle? Oui, beaucoup d'hommes
ont les quatre femmes premises. Il en résulte naturellement que beaucoup d'hommes
n'ont pas de femmes. Aussi le vice contre nature est-il fréquent" (Tocqueville, "Notes
du voyage en Algerie de 1841," *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de
la Pléiade, 1991), I, p. 683.

denying Tocqueville's incisive delineation of central problematic areas in Islam are those that cause many to view it as a global, civilizational threat today.

Migration, Islam, and de Tocqueville

Summary

The Author points out that Tocqueville had confidence in human reason even though he was not inclined to engage in fundamental, philosophical thought. He may not have gone as deeply into the theological, philosophical, and historical underpinnings of Islam as some today are convinced is necessary for a meaningful critique of Islam's legitimacy, but there is no denying Tocqueville's incisive delineation of central problematic areas in Islam are those that cause many to view it as a global, civilizational threat today.

Key words: migration, islam, Tocqueville, civilization, United States of America, Christian religion, materialism, state.