
SMRT IN ŽALOVANJE V BEGUNSTVU: BOŠNJAKI, BOŠNJAKINJE V SLOVENIJI

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Ključne besede: žalovanje, (kulturalna) ovdovelost, Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje, begunci, begunke, Slovenija

Uvod

V pričujočem članku se nameravam osredotočiti na smrt in žalovanje Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj, ki so v Sloveniji v begunstvu. Po mojem mnenju je njihovo življenje težko razumeti, če se izognemo njihovemu srečanju s smrtjo, ki so ga doživeli kot grozno svojemu lastnemu življenju, saj so bila v domovini njihova življenja pogosto ogrožena ali pa so jim v vojni umrli sorodniki in prijatelji. Prav tako ne moremo razumeti ljudi v begunski situaciji, če se ne soočimo z različnimi simbolnimi smrtmi, ki so značilne za vse begunce in begunke, ki sem jih spoznala. Vsi so namreč doživeli več naslednjih izgub: izgubo domovine s socio-kulturnim okoljem, jezika, zaposlitve, šolanja, drastično so se jim spremenile socialne mreže, doživeli so padec standarda itd. Trdimo lahko torej, da so procesi žalovanja za življenje v begunstvu značilni in da potekajo na osebni in kolektivni ravni.

Šege Bošnjakov ob smrti so zelo specifične. Razlikujejo se od slovenskih. Moja teza je, da odsotnost integracije beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji povzroča negativne posledice tudi v procesih žalovanja beguncev in begunk. Bošnjaki lahko v Sloveniji šege ob smrti v skladu s svojo tradicijo izvajajo v večji ali manjši meri. Na nekaterih pokopališčih jim ne dovolijo končati pogrebih šeg v skladu z njihovo tradicijo, kot bom pokazala v sklepnem delu članka. Menim, da bi jim možnost dokončanja pogrebnih šeg v skladu s tradicijo omogočila, da bi procese žalovanja bolj učinkovito predelali, poleg tega pa to za slovensko državo ne bi pomenilo dodatnih stroškov.

V tem članku bom predstavila nekaj statističnih dejstev o beguncih in begunkah v Sloveniji, opisala metodologijo, analizirala literaturo o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti, ki je vplivala na istovrstno literaturo v begunstvu, analizirala literaturo na omenjeno temo v begunstvu in na kratko opisala šege Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj v Slove-

niji ob smrti. V besedilu bom poskušala dati tudi napotke za izboljšanje politike reševanja begunskega vprašanja v povezavi s sfero smrti, zlasti za primer Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v Sloveniji. Pisala bom tudi o kulturni ovdovelosti, ki jo Eisenbruch (1990) opredeljuje kot izgubo kulture in družbe in obsega procese kolektivnega žalovanja. Nanaša se torej na različne simbolne smrti in na izkustvo begunstva kot celote.¹

Begunci, begunke v Sloveniji in metodologija

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Prvi begunci, begunke so bili Hrvati in Hrvatice, ki so začeli prihajati v Slovenijo kmalu po njeni neodvisnosti v juniju 1991. Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje so se jim pridružili, pridružile leta 1992. V septembru 1993 je bilo v Sloveniji 35.000 beguncev in begunk in nekaj tisoč tistih, ki niso bili evidentirani.² Status bosanskih beguncev in begunk je bil in še vedno je začasen. Po slovenskem Zakonu o zatočišču iz leta 1997 jih imenujejo iskalci začasnega zatočišča. V Sloveniji smo status begunca po Ženevski konvenciji o statusu begunca iz leta 1951 podelili le trem osebam. Po omenjenem zakonu se lahko zaposlujejo le osem ur na teden. Repatriacija iz Slovenije poteka prostovoljno, ne prisiljeno. Aprila 1999 je v Sloveniji približno 3500 beguncev in begunk iz Bosne in Hercegovine, približno 80 % je Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj. Približno polovica jih živi v desetih begunskih zbirnih centrih, drugi pa v zasebnih namestitvah. Poleg njih je v Sloveniji še 2500 beguncev in begunk s Kosova brez ustreznega pravnega statusa. Niso namreč niti begunci, begunke po Ženevski konvenciji o statusu begunca iz leta 1951 niti iskalci začasnega zatočišča po slovenskem Zakonu o začasnem zatočišču, temveč tuji.³

Za Slovenijo je značilna odsotnost integracije beguncev in begunk. Otroci in najstniki obiskujejo šole in se na ta način v večji meri integrirajo v slovensko družbo kot druge socialne skupine. Na ta način imajo možnost, da se naučijo slovenščine, medtem ko večina njihovih staršev ostaja v begunskih zbirnih centrih in nima toliko možnosti vključevanja v kulturo države gostiteljice. Begunci in begunke v Sloveniji ostajajo torej v negotovosti svojega začasnega statusa in v "praznini" čakajo na repatriacijo. Njihova situacija spominja na Beckettovo čakanje na Godota, saj so njihove hiše v Bosni in Hercegovini uničene ali pa so jih zasedli Srbi (zlasti tiste v Republiki srbski). Možnost vrnitve je nejasna, postavljena nekam v daljno bodočnost.

Metoda mojega raziskovanja je bila etnografska. Od avgusta 1992 do decembra 1994 sem opravljala terensko delo v Celju, od januarja 1995 do zdaj v Ljubljani. Obiskala sem tudi begunski zbirni center v Mariboru.

¹ angleško: cultural bereavement

² Zahvaljujem se Uradu za priseljevanje in begunce za statistične podatke.

³ V aprilu 1999 se je Slovenija odločila, da bo sprejela še dodatnih 1600 beguncev in begunk s Kosova, ki postopoma prihajajo v Slovenijo, in da bo reaktivirala Zakon o začasnem zatočišču tudi za kosovske begunce in begunke.

Smrt, žalovanje in ovdovelost v medkulturni perspektivi: študije, ki so vplivale na tiste z isto temo v begunstvu

Zaradi omejenega prostora, ki mi je na voljo za pričujoč članek, se bom osredotočila le na glavne avtorje in avtorice, iz katerih so črpali tisti in tiste, ki so pisali, pisale o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti v begunstvu. Eden izmed najzgodnejših in še vedno eden izmed najpomembnejših je bil nedvomno Freudov esej *Žalovanje in melanholija* (1917). V njem Freud uporablja izraz melanholija za to, kar danes imenujemo depresija. Eden izmed najpomembnejših Freudovih doprinosov je, da je posvečal pozornost intrapsihičnim procesom, ki se dogajajo ob izgubah. Po Freudu je žalovanje proces, ki ga je potrebno predelati, da bi se lahko končal, postopen umik libida ali emocionalne energije od izgubljenega objekta je potreben, da bi se lahko ta emocionalna energija vezala na nov objekt. Freudov esej je za begunske študije pomemben zaradi naslednjih ugotovitev:

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1. Žalovanje je normalen proces, za katerega je potreben določen čas, da se tako imenovani posli žalovanja lahko predelajo. Torej ni patološka reakcija. Freud poda tudi zelo dober vpogled v situacije, v katerih so procesi žalovanja ovirani. Dejstvo, da ljudje, in še zlasti begunci in begunke, potrebujejo čas za žalovanje (poudarek N. V.), so omenjali in omenjale tudi kasnejši avtorji in avtorice kot, na primer Englund (1998), Eisenbruch (1984), Harrell-Bond in Wilson (1990). Po njihovem mnenju bi morali to upoštevati zlasti tisti zdravstveni delavci in delavke, ki so se usposabljali na Zahodu, in ne bi smeli patologizirati reakcij, kot se to še vedno prepogosto dogaja. Dojemanje žalovanja kot bolezni je zlasti prisotno med psihologi in nekaterimi psihiatri, kot, na primer, pri Engelu (1961), Sandersevi (1989) in drugih. Sanderseva opredeljuje čustva žalovanja kot simptome, in na žalost ni edina, ki ima tak pristop.
2. Po mnenju Freuda je depresija "na določen način povezana z izgubo objekta, ki ni v sferi zavednega, v nasprotju z žalovanjem, kjer izgube so v sferi zavednega" (1917: 245). V begunski situaciji, kjer veliko izgub nastopi naenkrat, je zelo verjetno, da nekatere, in zlasti način njihovega prepletanja (prim. z Malkki 1995), lahko begunčevemu, begunkinemu zavednemu ostajajo skrite in jih zato težje predelajo.

Da bi pojasnili stopnje pri procesih žalovanja, veliko avtorjev in avtoric posega po psihologiji. Baškauskas (1981) piše o beguncih, begunkah iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike in sledi Marrisovim stopnjam v procesu žalovanja, ki so konzervativem, ovdovelost in inovacija. Po psihologinji Sandersevi (1989) so te stopnje naslednje:

1. šok
2. zavedanje
3. konzervativna stopnja - umik
4. zdravljenje - preobrat
5. obnovitev.

Ne glede na to, da je takšna analiza občasno uporabna, moramo biti previdni, da je ne posplošujemo. Te stopnje se namreč od kulture do kulture in tudi od posamez-

nika do posameznika razlikujejo (prim. z Stroebe, v: Firth 1997: 9/10). Vsak posameznik v vsaki družbi doživlja v svojem življenju izgube, ki so posledice izgube objektov, na katere smo bili čustveno navezani. Torej je žalovanje značilno za vsako kulturo. Ne glede na to pa je v procesih žalovanja veliko medkulturnih razlik. Prav tako različni so načini izražanja čustev žalovanja.

Rosenblatt, Walsh in Jackson so delali raziskave v 78 kulturah na podlagi etnografskih opisov. Ena izmed njihovih ugotovitev je, na primer, da imajo potlačitev čustev v nekaterih kulturah za normalno (Bali), medtem ko se v nekaterih drugih kulturah zdi pomembno, da se vezi z umrlimi ohranjajo (Egipt).

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Večina literature se osredotoča na vlogo obredov pri žalovanju. Flammov pregled daje teoretsko ozadje te problematike in se osredotoča na antropološko in psihološko literaturo (1994 a).

Eden izmed pogosto citiranih avtorjev je Hertz, ki je pojmoval "šege ob smrti kot refleksijo socialnega reda, ki pa je objektivni izraz konceptov in vrednot družbe" (citirano v Flamm 1994 a: 4). Bloch in Parry pa, na primer, trdita, da obredi ustvarjajo družbeni red, in gledata na te rituale kot na politično dejanje, ki pomaga legitimizirati obstoječo avtoriteto v družbi (1982, citirano v Flamm 1994 a: 6).

Rosenblatt, Walsh in Jackson se opirajo na Van Gennepa. Po njihovem mnenju šege ob smrti omogočajo statusni prehod, tako za mrtve kot ovdovele. Skozi cikel šeg ob smrti se mrtva oseba preseli iz zemlje živih v zemljo mrtvih, ovdoveli osebi pa preneha status žalujočega in dobi status tistega, tiste, ki ne žaluje več" (1976: 7).

Leach je bil mnenja, da obstaja prepričanje, da je obred univerzalno dejstvo. Na obred gleda kot na socialni fenomen, ki posreduje temeljne koncepte in vrednote dane družbe. Pogrebne šege pomagajo žalujočim, da se ponovno reintegrirajo v družbo in omogočajo širši družbeni skupini, da vzdržuje kontinuiteto in znova utrdi svoje vrednote in verovanja (v: Flamm 1994 a: 8-9).

Mnogi avtorji opozarjajo, da pomanjkanje šeg ob smrti, ko so pogrebne šege končane, na Zahodu ustvarja nadaljnje probleme za ovdovele, saj ni sklepnih obredov, ki bi določili časovno mejo žalovanja. Na ta način se žalovanje podaljšuje (Rosenblatt, Walsh & Jackson 1976, Firth 1997 itd.).

Drugi pomembni avtorji in avtorice so: Van Gennep (1908), Durkheim (1915), Goody (1962), Radcliffe-Brown (1964), Gorer (1965), Turner (1969), Munroz (1984), Bloch in Parry (1982), Bloch (1988), itd.

Medkulturna literatura o žalovanju in (kulturni) ovdovelosti v begunstvu

Začela se je pojavljati v osemdesetih letih, ko so se begunske študije uveljavile kot samostojna akademska znanstvena disciplina. Dejstvo, ki ga pogosto omenjajo, je, da odsotnost obredov žalovanja v begunstvu podaljšuje žalovanje. Za nobeno kulturo namreč ni znano, da bi imela posebne obrede za kulturno ovdovelost. Zdi se, da je med-

kulturno dejstvo, da drugih šeg pri procesih žalovanja kot zgolj tistih za umrlimi osebami, ni.

Eden izmed glavnih avtorjev je nedvomno Eisenbruch, ki je psihiater in antropolog. Opozoril je, da so procesi žalovanja beguncev in begunk, ki nimajo možnosti izvajanja primernih obredov ob smrti, lahko ovirani (1990). Po njegovem mnenju je vzdrževanje tradicionalne kulture pomemben prilagoditveni mehanizem v begunstvu. Eisenbruch je raziskoval begunce in begunke iz Kampučije v Združenih državah Amerike in Avstraliji in ugotovil, da je "zdravstveno stanje beguncev in begunk izboljšano, kadar imajo možnost uporabljanja svojih verovanj skozi obrede, skladne z njihovo kulturo in vedenjem" (1990: 193). Šege ob smrti imajo torej, poleg drugih obredov, pomembno vlogo v procesih žalovanja beguncev in begunk. Pomembno je tudi Eisenbruchovo opozorilo, da morajo vsi, ki se ukvarjajo z begunsko problematiko, razumeti "kulturno konstrukcijo realnosti beguncev in begunk". Veliko beguncev in begunk namreč upa, da se bodo vrnil, in želijo živeti v preteklosti ter nočejo zgubiti stika z, na primer, domovino (1990: 200). Na ta način "življenje v preteklosti" zelo pogosto ponovno vzpostavi občutek identitete, ki ga je razrvala vojna.

Mnogi avtorji in avtorice poudarjajo potrebo po tem, da se šege ob smrti izvajajo in končujejo v skladu s kulturno tradicijo beguncev in begunk, in opozarjajo, da v mnogih predelih sveta ni tako. Harrell-Bondova in Wilson poročata o takih primerih v Afriki. Po njunem mnenju je umiranje tisti del socialnega življenja, pri katerem so se ljudje manj pripravljeni prilagajati novim vzorcem (1990: 230). Zatorej se avtorjema zdi pomembno proučevati, kako humanitarni programi določajo, na kakšen način se ljudje soočijo s smrtjo, in dajati predloge za izboljšanje teh programov. Zdi se, da je medkulturno dejstvo, da humanitarna pomoč ne vsebuje hrane za srečanja ljudi po pogrebu in drugih šegah ob smrti. To je značilno tako za Slovenijo kot tudi za Afriko, kot poročata Harrell-Bondova in Wilson. V Sloveniji večino stroškov za pogreb prispeva vladni Urad za priseljevanje in begunce, v mnogih krajih po svetu ni tako - na primer v Afriki. Harrell-Bondova in Wilson (1990) predlagata tudi, da bi humanitarne organizacije, ki pomagajo beguncem in begunkam, sponzorirale vojne spominske svečanosti v begunskih centrih in naselbinah, če te obstajajo v njihovih državah.

Ker begunci in begunke najpogosteje bežijo zaradi sociopolitičnega in militarnega preganjanja, je tradicionalna kultura v njihovi domovini pogosto zadušena in ogrožena. V medkulturni literaturi o smrti, žalovanju in ovdovelosti v begunstvu najdemo primere, kjer je begunstvo pomenilo edino možnost nadaljevanja tradicionalne kulture. Takšen primer so, na primer, begunci in begunke iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike po drugi svetovni vojni. Medtem ko so bili za Sovjetsko zvezo po drugi svetovni vojni značilni procesi rusifikacije, so imeli begunci in begunke iz Litve v Združenih državah Amerike priložnost izvajanja in ohranjanja njihove tradicionalne kulture (Baškauskas 1981). Podoben primer so razseljeni Kampučijci v Avstraliji in Združenih državah Amerike, ki so bežali pred Pol Potovim režimom v sedemdesetih letih.

Tradicionalni zdravitelji in religiozni inštruktorji imajo pomembno vlogo pri ohranjanju tradicionalne kulture v begunstvu. Tradicionalni zdravitelji izseljenih Kampučijcev se imenujejo *kruuji*. Ljudem pomagajo predelati kulturno ovdovelost in

funkcionirajo kot "viri kulturnega znanja" (Eisenbruch 1991: 2). Delujejo kot posredniki med ovdovelimi posamezniki in družbo. Poleg tega, da pomagajo ovdovelim, da se ponovno integrirajo v družbo, nadzirajo tudi javno artikulacijo osebnih čustev žalovanja. Tudi Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje v Sloveniji imajo religiozne inštruktorje, ki opravljajo to vlogo, kot bom pojasnila kasneje v besedilu.

Zgoraj navedeni primeri nam dokazujejo, da so procesi žalovanja v begunstvu lahko tudi konstruktivni, rezultat katerih je lahko, na primer, tudi ohranitev v domovini ogrožene tradicionalne kulture. To je še en dokaz, da so čustva žalovanja normalne reakcije in jih ne moremo patologizirati. Pridružujem se besedam Malkkijeve, ki pravi, da "... čeprav je mnogo beguncev in begunk preživelo nasilje in izgube, ki dobesedno presejajo predstave večine ljudi, ne smemo predvidevati, da begunski status sam po sebi pomeni prepoznavno psihološko stanje, ki ga lahko posplošimo" (Malkki 1995: 510).

Nekateri drugi avtorji in avtorice, ki se ukvarjajo s problematiko žalovanja in (kulturne) ovdovelosti v begunstvu, so: Eastmond (1988), Flamm (1994 a, b), Woodcock (1991) itd.

Šege ob smrti bošnjaških beguncev in begunk v Sloveniji

Pogrebi Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v Sloveniji so podobni tistim v Bosni in Hercegovini, razlikujejo pa se v sklepnih stopnji pogreba. Vendar na različnih slovenskih pokopališčih dopuščajo Bošnjakom in Bošnjakinjam, da v večji ali manjši meri končajo pogrebni obred v skladu s svojo tradicijo, kot bom opisala na koncu besedila. Poudariti moram tudi, da tisti Bošnjaki, ki niso preveč religiozni (zlasti komunisti, komunistke), niso pokopani v skladu z bošnjaško tradicijo. Med njimi so pogosti zlasti tisti, katerih otroci so živeli v Sloveniji že pred vojno v Bosni in Hercegovini, in želijo, da bi njihove starše pokopali po slovenskih šegah. Sorodniki umrlih določajo, po kateri kulturni praksi bo potekal pokop. Prav tako nekateri begunci in begunke, ki so se že akulturirali v slovensko družbo, sprejemajo njene šege ob smrti.

Večina Bošnjakov, Bošnjakinj v begunstvu v Sloveniji pa pri pokopu upošteva naslednje obrede: Ko umre moški ali ženska, ostane telo v hiši en dan.⁴ Za pripravo telesa umrlega in za same pogrebne šege je značilna delitev dela po spolu. Če umre moški, njegovo truplo pripravita *hodža*, religiozni učitelj v srednji šoli, ali *imam*, prav tako religiozni vodja. Oba opravljata enake naloge.⁵ Če umre ženska, njeno telo pripravi *bula*, religiozna inštruktorica za ženske. Telesa umrlih umijejo in ovijejo v *čefin*, tkanino. Pomen *čefina* je v tem, da pridejo vsi enaki, vse enake pred boga. Žalujoči ne nosijo črnine. Včasih so ženske nosile ruto, danes jo le nekatere. Po bošnjaški tradiciji na grobove ne nosijo rož, saj menijo, da so dejanja Muslimanov tista, ki so najpomembnejša. Pod vplivom slovenskih pogrebnih obredov nosijo rože na grobove tudi nekateri Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje.

⁴ Pomanjkanje prostora v begunskih centrih je včasih preprečilo navado, da je umrla oseba ostala doma en dan.

⁵ Beseda *imam* izvira iz arabščine, beseda *hodža* pa ima nacionalno, politično konotacijo.

Pogreb imenujejo *dženaza*. Udeležujejo se ga lahko le moški. *Hodža* uči koran na grobu, vsi molijo, na primer, *kabursko dovo*, ki je posebna molitev za to priložnost. Ženske včasih počakajo ob pokopališčih ali pripravljajo hrano doma. Ko se moški vrnejo po pogrebu, imajo *tevhid*, to so po opredelitvi Bringe "islamske kolektivne molitve za duše umrlih" (1995: 256). Zraven pijejo sokove in jedo. Sedem dni po pogrebu je še en *tevhid*, enako po štiridesetih dneh. Končni obred po štiridesetih dneh se imenuje *četeresnica* in označuje konec intenzivnega procesa žalovanja. Ženskam je po tem dnevu dovoljeno, da gredo iz hiše, moškim pa tako in tako ni bilo potrebno ostati v hiši 40 dni. Po tem času se moški lahko spet poročijo, zlasti če imajo otroke. Za ženske pravijo, da se jim ni treba ponovno poročiti, čeprav včasih se. Po letu dni je proces žalovanja končan.

Ponovni pokopi so se začeli kmalu po koncu vojne, takoj ko je bilo spet varno potovati po Bosni in Hercegovini. Vendar pa prekopavanja niso prav pogosta. Večino beguncev in begunk, zlasti starejših, ki so umrli v begunstvu v Sloveniji po koncu bosanske vojne, so pokopali v njihovi domovini. V pogovorih, ki sem jih imela s pripadniki, pripadnicami te socialne skupine, so pogosto izrazili, izrazile željo, da ne želijo biti pokopani, pokopane v tujini. V okupiranih območjih Bosne in Hercegovine, kot je, na primer, Republika srbska, Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj še vedno ne morejo pokopavati v njihovih vaseh in mestih, zato jih pokopljejo v krajih, ki so najbližji njihovim domovom.

Glede na religijo muslimanov se po smrti začne večno življenje. Tisti, ki je delal dobra dela, bo šel v *dženet*, nebesa, tisti, ki pa je delal slabe stvari, bo šel v *džehenen*, pekel. Sojenje bo potekalo pred bogom, ki bo presojal o dobrih in slabih delih. Na sodni dan bodo mrtvi spet oživel. Smrt je božja volja, zato se moški ali ženska proti njej ne moreta boriti. Ker pa je smrt le pot na drugi svet, naj je ne bi jemali preveč dramatično, zato preveč čustveno izražanje žalosti ni kulturno zaželeno. *Hodža*, *bula* in *imam* običejejo žalujočega po pogrebu. Spomnijo ga, da je smrt posledica božje volje. Njihova naloga je tudi, da nadzirajo čustva žalosti in spomnijo žalujočega, da je življenje večno in je smrt le prehod na drugi svet. Naslednji govor, katerega namen je povezati življenje in smrt, včasih govorijo pred ali po *dženazi*:

"Dragi bratje! Danes smo se zbrali, da pospremimo našega brata ali sestro, in vsi tukaj prisotni moramo to razumeti kot sporočilo, da smo vsi smrtniki in da bo za vsakega od nas prišel čas smrti. Danes se naš brat (sestra) vrača svojemu Stvaritelju. Vsak je kdaj grešil in potrebuje *halal*⁶, zato dragi bratje, ali ste pripravljeni *halaliti* našemu bratu vse? Alah je z njim zadovoljen."

Begunski zbirni centri v Sloveniji funkcionirajo kot prostori kolektivnega žalovanja. Kar nekaj ljudi se je preselilo v zbirne begunske centre iz zasebnih namestitev, da so lahko delili izkušnje vojne in begunstva in dobili socialno podporo. To je bilo še zlasti značilno za obdobje vojne v Bosni in Hercegovini, ko so se čustvene vezi v skupnosti okrepile. Solidarnost so izražali, izražale na različne načine. V enem izmed begunskih zbirnih centrov v Ljubljani, na primer, ženi niso povedali, da ji je na fronti v Bosni in Hercegovini umrl mož, saj so menili, da fizično in psihično ni dovolj močna, da bi lahko sprejela žalostno novico. Počakali so, da postane močnejša in sposobnejša prenesti izgubo.

⁶ *halal*: oprostiti komu

Sklep

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Največja razlika med tradicionalnim pokopom v Bosni in Hercegovini in v Sloveniji je, da morajo Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje v slednjem uporabljati krsto namesto *tabuta*, ki je, če si spet sposodim opredelitev Bringe, “krsta brez pokrova, ki jo uporabljajo Bošnjaki, Bošnjakinje, ko nesejo telo umrlega h grobu” (1995: 256). Na nekaterih pokopališčih, kot na primer na ljubljanskem, ne smejo obrniti *kaburja*, groba, in *mejta*, trupla, z desno stranjo proti Meki. Na nekaterih pokopališčih jim dovolijo, da dajo nekaj zemlje pod krsto, v Ljubljani, na primer, jim to ni dovoljeno. Mesto Maribor je lahko v tem primeru za zgled, saj tam Bošnjaki in Bošnjakinje lahko dokončajo pogrebne obrede v skladu s svojo tradicijo, izjema je le obvezna uporaba krste. Prav tako je Maribor eno izmed redkih mest v Sloveniji, v katerem so grobovi Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj skupaj, kot to določa njihova tradicija. Multikulturni pristop tega mesta v smislu pogrebnih obredov Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj dokazuje, da upoštevanje kulturne različnosti ni grožnja ‘homogenosti’ družbe, temveč pomeni korak bližje k enakopravni civilni družbi.

Upam, da sem tudi s svojim pisanjem dokazala, da upoštevanje kulturne različnosti ni ekonomski problem (in tudi, če bi včasih bil), temveč problem razumevanja, tolerantnosti in spoštovanja tujih kulturnih praks.

Sklepne šege ob smrti Bošnjakov in Bošnjakinj nas lahko marsikaj naučijo o obredih, ki olajšujejo procese žalovanja. To pa je nekaj, kar bi bilo vredno iskati v naši na pol izgubljeni tradiciji, ki bi jo bilo mogoče potrebno na novo izumiti – zlasti, kot se zdi, v mestih.

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DEATH, GRIEF AND MOURNING IN EXILE: BOSNIAN MUSLIMS IN SLOVENIA

Natalija Vrečer

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Key words: *grief, mourning, (cultural) bereavement, exiled Bosnian Muslims, refugees, Slovenia*

Introduction

For the purpose of this article I decided to focus on death, grief and mourning of Bosnian Muslims in exile in Slovenia. I think that any understanding of people in exile in Slovenia would be incomplete, if we do not take into account their encounter with death, whether as a threat to their own life which was very often present when they escaped from their home-country, whether the encounter with death was in a loss of relatives and friends or whether we decide to face various symbolic deaths that were characteristic for all the refugees that I met, as all of them suffered many of the following losses: the loss of the home-country with its sociocultural environment, the language, employment, school, drastically changed social networks, decrease in standard etc. Therefore, we can say that mourning processes are characteristic for the life in exile and they occur on personal and collective levels.

The mortuary rituals of the Bosnian Muslims are very specific, they differ from the Slovenian ones. My thesis is that the absence of integration of refugees in Slovenia causes some negative consequences also for the mourning processes of refugees. Namely, Muslims in Slovenia can perform the mortuary rituals more or less according to their cultural tradition, but in some cemeteries they are not allowed to complete those rituals in accordance with their tradition as I will explain in the concluding part of my paper. I argue that the completion of funeral rituals in accordance to their tradition would enable them to work through the grieving processes more effectively and besides, it would not represent additional costs for the Slovenian state.

In this paper I would like to present you some statistical data on refugees in Slovenia, to describe methodology, to give definitions of the concepts used, to analyse literature on death, grief, mourning and bereavement, which influenced literature of the same topic in exile from the cross-cultural perspective, to analyse literature on death,

grief, mourning and cultural bereavement in exile and to describe briefly mortuary rituals of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia. Through the text I will also try to give some recommendations for the improved policy toward refugee question regarding the sphere of death, especially regarding the situation of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia.

Refugees in Slovenia and Methodology

First refugees (Croats) started to come to Slovenia soon after its independence in June 1991. Bosnian Muslims joined them in 1992. In September 1993 there were 35.000 refugees in Slovenia and a few thousand of those whose status was illegal.¹ The status of Bosnian refugees was and still is considered temporary. In legal terms, according to the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum from 1997, they are considered asylum seekers, namely, Slovenia has only three refugees according to the Geneva Convention about a Status of Refugee from 1951. The Law of Temporary Asylum allows them to be employed only eight hours per week. Repatriation from Slovenia is gradual, it is not forced. Nowadays (April 1999), there are about 3500 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in Slovenia, approximately 80% are Bosnian Muslims. Approximately half of them live in ten refugee centres, the rest of them live in private arrangements. There are additional 2500 refugees from Kosovo without a legal status yet, namely, they neither have a status of refugees according to Geneva Convention from 1951, neither of asylum seekers according to the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum, but of foreigners before deportation.²

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The absence of integration of refugees is characteristic for Slovenia. Children and adolescents attend schools, therefore, they integrate into the Slovenian society more than other social groups. Thus, they have the opportunity to learn Slovene, while most of their parents remain in the refugee collective centres and do not have many opportunities to mix with the host population. The refugees in Slovenia are left in the uncertainty of their temporary status, in the so called "limbo" and wait for the repatriation. Their situation resembles Waiting for Godo's story as their houses in Bosnia-Herzegovina are destroyed or occupied by the Serbs (especially in the Republika srbska) and the prospects for the return are unsure, fixed somewhere in the distant future.

The method of my research was ethnographic. From August 1992 to December 1994 I did the fieldwork in Celje, from January 1995 until now in Ljubljana, I also visited refugee camp in Maribor.

Definitions

Let me first define the concepts *grief*, *mourning*, *bereavement* and *cultural bereavement* that I use in the paper. The concepts grief, mourning and bereavement are often used interchangeably. However, there are differences in meaning. By *grief* I mean

¹ I would like to thank the governmental Office for Immigration and Refugees for the statistical data.

² In April 1999 Slovenia decided to accept another 1600 refugees from Kosovo who are entering the Slovenian state gradually and to reactivate the Slovenian Law of Temporary Asylum which will be valid also for the refugees from Kosovo.

different emotions that arise from the response to loss. Among these emotions Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson (1976: 9) enumerate sorrow, anxiety, guilt, loneliness, anger, fear, numbness and general tension. According to Firth, *mourning* is the way in which such emotions are expressed, “often in a culturally determined ways, and often for a specified time in a particular society” (1997: 9). To define *bereavement* I will use Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson’s definition: bereavement is ... “the period of time following a death, during which grief occurs, and also the state experiencing grief” (1976: 2). Eisenbruch defines *cultural bereavement* as a loss of culture and society (1990). In this way cultural bereavement encompasses collective grief and refers to various symbolic deaths and to the experience of exile as a whole.

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Death, Grief, Mourning and Bereavement in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Studies that Influenced those with the Same Topic in Exile

For the purpose of this article I will mention only the main authors who influenced the literature on death, grief, mourning and bereavement in exile. One of the earliest and still one of the most important was definitely Freud’s essay on Mourning and Melancholia (1917). In this essay he uses the word mourning interchangeably with grief and melancholia refers to what is now called depression. One of the main contributions of Freud’s work is that he paid attention to the intrapsychic processes which occur during the losses. According to Freud grieving is a process that has to be worked through in order to be completed and gradual withdrawal of libido or the emotional energy is needed from the lost object in order to be reinvested into a new object. The main implications of Freud’s work for the refugee studies are the following:

1. Grieving is a normal process and certain lapse of time is needed for this the so called grief work to be worked through, therefore it is not a pathological reaction. However, Freud also gives a very good insight into situations in which the inhibited grief would appear. That **people and particularly refugees need time to grieve**³ is a finding which is echoed later also by many authors as, for example, (Englund: 1998, Eisenbruch: 1984, Harrell-Bond and Wilson: 1990) who emphasized that especially western trained health professionals should give time to the refugees to work through the grieving and mourning processes and not to pathologize their reactions as it is still too often the case. However, the belief that grief is an illness, is still present, especially among psychologists and some psychiatrists as, for example, Engel (1961), Sanders (1989) etc. Sanders describes the emotions of grief as symptoms and, unfortunately, she does not seem to be the only one who approaches normal reactions as symptoms.
2. In Freud’s opinion depression is “in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious” (1917: 245). In refugee situa-

³ The emphasis is mine.

tion when many losses occur at the same time, we can suspect that some of them and the way of their intertwining (cf. to Malkki 1995) might be hidden from refugee's consciousness and therefore even more difficult to work through.

In order to explain the stages of the grief processes, many authors draw on psychology. Baškauskas (1981) writes about the Lithuanian refugees in the USA and follows Marris's stages in grief process which are conservatism, bereavement and innovation. According to the psychologist Sanders (1989), these stages are the following:

1. shock
2. awareness
3. conservation-withdrawal
4. healing-the turning point
5. renewal

In spite of the fact that such analysis is sometimes useful, we have to be careful not to apply these generalizations universally. They differ from culture to culture and we can expect that also from one individual to another (cf. to Stroebe, in: Firth 1997: 9/10). Every individual in every society experiences losses during his life time as consequences of lost attachments, therefore grief is present in every culture. However, there are many differences in mourning processes in different sociocultural environments. There are also differences in the emotional expressions of grief as well.

Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson did the research in 78 cultures on the basis of ethnographic descriptions. One of their findings is also, for example, that the repression of feelings is in some cultures considered normal (Bali), while in some other cultures it is important to retain ties with the deceased (Egypt).

Most of the literature focuses on the role of ritual in mourning. Flamm's review gives a theoretical background of this topic and focuses on the anthropological and psychological literature.

One of the most frequently quoted authors is Hertz who saw "mortuary rites as reflections of the social order which in turn is the objective expression of the concepts and values of a given society" (quoted in Flamm 1994 a: 4). However, Bloch and Parry claim that the rituals bring about the social order and view these rituals as a political exercise used to legitimate the existing authority within a society (1982, quoted in Flamm 1994 a: 6).

Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson drew on Van Gennep and viewed mortuary rituals as "providing status passage, both for the dead and for the bereaved. A dead person, over the cycle of death ceremonies, is passed from the land of the living to the land of the dead; a bereaved person is passed from the state of the mourner to the state of the nonmourner" (1976: 7).

Leach wrote that there seems to be an agreement that ritual is an universal feature of human societies. According to him, ritual is a social phenomenon which communicates the basic concepts and values of a given society. Funeral rituals also help the mourner to re-integrate into society and enable the wider social group to maintain its continuity and to re-affirm its own values and beliefs (in: Flamm 1994 a: 8-9).

Many authors also emphasize that the lack of mortuary rituals once the funeral is over in Western societies creates further problems for the bereaved as there is no final ceremony which would put a time limit on the bereavement period and in this way grief is prolonged (Rosenblatt, Walsh & Jackson 1976, Firth 1997 etc.).

Other important authors are Van Gennep (1908), Durkheim (1915), Goody (1962), Radcliffe-Brown (1964), Gorer (1965), Turner (1969), Munroz (1984), Bloch and Parry (1982), Bloch (1988), etc.

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It started to appear in the 80's, when refugee studies were established as a special academic discipline. A fact that is very often mentioned is that the absence of the institutionalized mourning processes in exile prolongs the duration of grief as no culture is known to have special rituals for cultural bereavement. Namely, it seems to be a cross-cultural fact that there are not known any mourning practices other than those regarding death of relatives.

One of the key authors is definitely Eisenbruch, a psychiatrist and an anthropologist, who warned that refugees who are deprived of adequate mortuary rituals might experience arrested grief (1990). He considers the culture maintenance an important adjustment mechanism in exile. Eisenbruch researched Cambodian refugees in the USA and Australia and found out that "the well-being of refugees was improved when they were allowed to validate their beliefs through culturally appropriate rituals and behaviour" (1990:193). Mortuary rituals, beside other rituals, therefore, play a very important role in the grief processes of refugees. Eisenbruch's another important point is his plea for all involved in refugee matters to try to "understand the refugee's cultural construction of reality", namely, many exiles nurture a hope of return and wish to live in the past and do not want to loose their attachment to, for example, homeland (1990: 200). Thus "living in the past" very often reconstitutes the sense of identity which was disrupted by war.

Many authors emphasized the need for mortuary rituals to be performed and completed according to the cultural tradition of refugees and that in many parts of the world it is not so as, for example, Harrell-Bond and Wilson report for Africa. According to these authors dealing with dying is an area of social life in which people are less willing to adjust to new patterns (1990:230). They, therefore, consider it important to investigate how refugees cope with death under assistance programmes in order to help to implement them. It seems to be a cross-cultural fact that there is no food given by humanitarian aid for social gatherings around funeral and other mortuary rites. This is true also for Slovenia and also, for example, Africa as Harrell-Bond and Wilson report. In Slovenia refugees get almost all the costs of the funeral covered by the Slovenian Office for Refugees and Immigrants, but in many places in the world they have to pay themselves (Africa). Harrell-Bond and Wilson (1990) also suggest that refugee assisting agencies should sponsor war memorials in refugee camps and settlements if they exist in their country.

As refugees most usually escape from sociopolitical and military persecution, the traditional culture in their home country is often suppressed and endangered. In the cross-cultural literature on death, grief and bereavement in exile we find examples, where the exile represented the only possibility for the continuation of traditional culture. Such an example are the Lithuanians exiled in the USA after the second world war. While in post second world war Soviet Union intensive processes of rusification were occurring, the Lithuanians in the USA had a chance to practice and preserve their traditional culture (Baškauskas 1981). Another example are resettled Cambodians in Australia and the USA fleeing from Pol Pot regime in the seventies.

Traditional healers and religious instructors play very important role in preserving traditional culture in exile. The traditional healers of exiled Cambodians are called *kruus*. They help people to overcome cultural bereavement and function as “repositories of cultural knowledge” (Eisenbruch 1991: 2). They function as mediators, brokers between the bereaved individual and the society. Beside helping the bereaved to become integrated into the society, they also control public articulation of private emotions of grief. Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia also have religious instructors who perform that role, which I will explain later on in the text.

The above-mentioned examples show us that grief processes in exile can also be very constructive processes that result, for example, in preserving the endangered traditional culture. This is another proof that the emotions of grief are normal reactions and can not be pathologized. I would echo Malkki’s words that “...although many refugees have survived violence and loss that are literally beyond the imagination of most people, we must not assume that refugee status in and of itself constitutes a recognizable, generalizable psychological condition” (Malkki 1995: 510).

Some other authors who dealt with the theme of grief, mourning and (cultural) bereavement in exile are: Eastmond (1988), Flamm (1994 a, b), Woodcock (1991) etc.

Mortuary Rituals of Bosnian Muslim Refugees in Slovenia

The funerals of Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia resemble those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but very often with the exception of the final stage of the funeral. However, in some Slovenian cemeteries, they allow Bosnian Muslims to finish their funeral practices according to their tradition to a greater extent and in some to a lesser extent as I will explain at the end. I also have to emphasize that those Muslims who are not very religious (especially communists) do not practice all of the traditional practices. Among them are also children of some refugees who lived in Slovenia for decades before the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and want to have their parents buried near them and sometimes according to the Slovenian practices. Namely, the relatives of the deceased decide which cultural practices will be followed at the burial. Some of those refugees who have already acculturated to the Slovenian society sometimes accept its mortuary practices.

However, most of the Bosnian Muslims in exile in Slovenia follow the following mortuary rituals. When a man or a woman dies, the body stays in the house one day.⁴ A gendered division of labour is characteristic for the preparation of the dead body and also for the funeral. If a man dies, *hodža*, a religious secondary school teacher or *imam*, who is also a religious leader, prepare the body for the funeral. Their roles are interchangeable.⁵ If a woman dies, *bula*, who is a female religious instructor, prepares her body. Bodies are washed and wrapped in *čefin*, a shroud. The meaning of *čefin* is that everybody will come in front of god the same. Those who mourn do not wear black, it was a tradition that women wore scarf, nowadays only some women wear it. According to the Muslim tradition, flowers are not to be put on the grave as it is believed that the deeds of the Muslims are the most important. However, because of the influence of the Slovenian mortuary rites, some Bosnian Muslims also bring flowers on graves.

The funeral of Bosnian Muslims is called *dženaza*, only men are allowed to attend it. *Hodža* teaches Koran on the grave and they tell prayers, as, for example, *kaburska dova*, which is a special prayer for this occasion. Women sometimes wait outside the cemetery or prepare food at home. When men return home after the funeral, they have *tevhid*, which are, according to Bringa's definition, "Islamic collective prayers for the souls of the dead" (1995: 256). They also drink juices and eat. Seven days after the funeral there is another *tevhid*, as well as on the 40th day and very often after a year. The final ceremony forty days after the burial is called *četeresnica*, which marks the ending of the intensive mourning process. Women are allowed to go out of the house now, however, it was not necessary for men to stay in the house for 40 days. After that time men are allowed to remarry, especially if they have children, women, they say, do not need to remarry again, although they sometimes do. After one year the mourning process is supposed to end.

Reburials started to occur soon after the end of war, when it became safe to travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, reburials are not very frequent. Many refugees who die in exile in Slovenia after the Bosnian war are buried in their home country, especially the elderly. In our conversations the members of this social group frequently expressed a wish that they do not want to be buried in a foreign country. In the occupied places of Bosnia-Herzegovina as it is the Republika srbska, for example, they still can not be buried in their villages and towns, therefore they bury them in the places which are nearest to their real homes.

According to Muslim religion the eternal life starts after death. The one who did good deeds will go to *dženet*, heaven, the one who did bad deeds will go to *džehenen*, hell. Judgement will occur in front of God, where good and evil deeds will be judged. When the judgement day will occur, all the dead will become alive again. Death is god's destiny, a man or a woman can not fight against death. As death is only the way to the other world, it should not be taken very dramatically, therefore too many emotional expressions of grief are not culturally appropriate. *Hodža*, *bula* and *imam* visit the bereaved after the burial. They remind the bereaved that death was a consequence of

⁴ The lack of space in refugee centres sometimes prevented the custom that a dead person stayed at home for a day.

⁵ The word *imam* derives from Arabic, while the word *hodža* is a national notion, with a political connotation.

god's will. It is the task of *hodža*, *bula* and *imam* to control the emotions of grief and to remind the bereaved that life is eternal and death is merely a passage to another world. The following speech, the intention of which is to connect life and death, is sometimes spoken before or after *dženaza*:

“Dear brothers! We have gathered today to see our brother or sister off and all of us present here should take that as a message, that we are all mortals and the time of death will come for us, too. Today our brother (sister) is returning to his (her) Creator. Everybody has once sinned and he (she) needs *halal*⁶, so dear brothers, are you willing to *halal*⁷ our brother for everything? Allah is satisfied with him”.

Refugee collective centres in Slovenia function as places of collective grief. Quite a number of people moved to the centres from private arrangements in order to share their war and exile experiences and get social support. This was especially characteristic during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina when the feelings of community were strengthened. Solidarity was expressed in different ways. In one of the refugee collective centres in Ljubljana, they, for example, did not tell a woman that her husband died on the front in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because they considered her physically and psychologically too weak. They waited that she would get stronger and would be able to face the loss.

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Conclusion

What differs from the traditional burial from Bosnia-Herzegovina is that in Slovenia they have to use coffins instead of *tabut*, which is, if I borrow Bringa's definition again “a lidless coffin used by Muslims for carrying a dead body to the grave” (1995: 256). In some towns as, for example in Ljubljana, they also can not orient *kabur*, the grave and *mejt*, which is the body of the dead person with their right sides towards Mecca. In some cemeteries they are allowed to shovel the earth underneath the grave themselves, not in Ljubljana, for example. Maribor can set an example, because refugees there are allowed to complete all the mortuary rituals according to their cultural tradition, the only exception is the obligatory use of the coffin. Maribor is also one of the rare towns in Slovenia, in which the graves of Muslims are together as their tradition demands. This city's multiculturalist approach regarding mortuary rituals of Bosnian Muslims proves that acknowledging cultural diversity is not a threat to the ‘homogeneity’ of society, but a step toward more egalitarian civil society.

I hope that I have proved once again that acknowledging cultural diversity is not a financial matter (and even if it would sometimes be so), but a matter of understanding, tolerance and respect for foreign cultural practices.

The final ceremonies of Bosnian Muslims can also teach us about very appropriate mortuary rituals for working through the grief and this may be something important to search for in our half-forgotten tradition, maybe to reinvent it again, as it seems it would be needed at least in the cities.

⁶ *halal* = that we forgive him

⁷ in original: *halaliti*

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