

BOOK CLUB in a bag

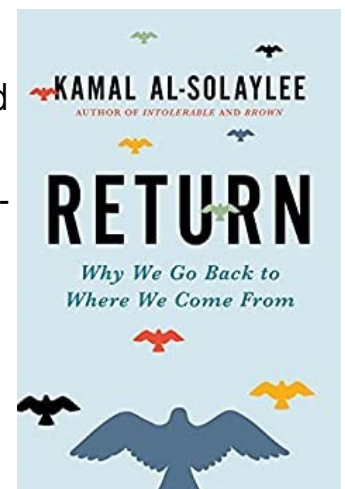


Return: Why We Go Back to Where We Come From

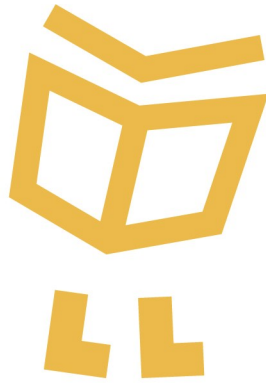
Kamal Al-Solaylee

Discussion Questions

1. If you have left your home country (or province/town), where would you like to “return” to?
2. Discuss this statement: “A homeland is a place where one culture must dominate in order to stop the return of an earlier one” (72).
3. In Chapter 3, the author talks about Jamaica and the unforeseen hardships that many returnees face when they return to the country (i.e., high crime rates). Yet many still choose to return after living away for decades. Why do you think this is?
4. “Sometimes when you find what you’re looking for, it gives you the opportunity to realize how much you have and how much you’ve had to give up” (145). Discuss this quote and the desire of LGBTQ+ individuals to return home, despite a refusal of their homeland to accept their sexuality, mentioned in chapter 5.
5. Consider chapter 6 and the discussion of ABCs and CBCs who return to Taiwan, having been born or lived for a long period outside of the country. The author notes that many of them maintain their Canadian (or American) citizenship despite having no plans to leave Taiwan. What do you think of this?
6. Part 3 of the book discusses ancestral homelands. Discuss the mass migration of people back to their homelands and motivating factors for their return.
7. In chapter 8, the author speaks with Ivy, who appears to regret her return and cautions potential returnees to start their journey with a visit of a few weeks before making the big move. Do you think many people who return to a country come to regret this decision? Do the pros outweigh the cons like in Ivy’s case?
8. Which returnee featured in the book did you enjoy reading most about? Who did you wish we had gotten to learn more about?



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About the Author

Kamal Al-Solaylee is the author of the national bestseller *Intolerable: A Memoir of Extremes*, which won the 2013 Toronto Book Award and was a finalist for CBC's Canada Reads, as well as the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. His second book, *Brown: What Being Brown in the World Today Means (to Everyone)*, was hailed as "brilliant" by the *Walrus* magazine and "essential reading" by the *Globe and Mail*. A finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award for Non-fiction as well as the Trillium Book Award, *Brown* won the Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing. A two-time finalist for the National Magazine Awards, Al-Solaylee won a gold medal for his column in *Sharp* in 2019. He holds a PhD in English and is director of the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at the University of British Columbia.

Via Harper Collins Canada (<https://www.harpercollins.ca/author/cr-176336/kamal-al-solaylee/>)

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