

On the Nature of 'İlahiyat' as a Higher Religious Education Institution in the course of Transition to Modernity*

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Çeviri

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There was a conscious effort of the Muslim community, which started from the very early days, to transfer the knowledge of the Islamic religion to the next generations. In a short time, there emerged source texts, methods for their interpretation and disciplines that interpret them. The education and training of the basic disciplines that constitute the content of the religion of Islam were carried out by an advanced *madrakah* institution for many centuries. Those who run those institutions and transfer the Islamic values into life was *ulama*. The ulama also undertook a crucial position in the social structure between the government and the people. In a world where modernity has been increasingly dominant, the role of religion has changed, and the ulama responsible for learning, teaching and applying it is no longer visible in the social structure. Parallel to the social change in the process of modernity, religious education and training and institutions have been shaped according to the new situation and were contended with different purposes from earlier times. During this period, the content of 'İlahiyat' as a higher religious education institution has been determined according to this last situation.

Keywords: Basic Islamic Sciences, İlahiyat, Madrasah, Ulama, Modernity.

Abstract

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Modernliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Bir Yüksek Din Öğretim Kurumu Olarak İlahiyatın Neliğine Dair

İslâm dinine ait bilginin sonraki nesillere aktarımına, Müslüman toplumunun daha ilk zamanlarından başlayan bilinçli bir çabası olmuştur. Kısa süre içinde kaynak metinler, bunların yorumuna dair yöntem ve bunları yorumlayan disiplinler oluştu. Uzun yüzyıllar boyunca İslâm dinini içeriklendiren temel disiplinlerin eğitim ve öğretimi, gelişkin bir medrese kurumu tarafından yapıldı. Bu kurumu işletenler ve İslâm dinine ait değerleri hayata aktaranlar ulemâ oldu. Ulemâ, ayrıca toplumsal yapıda da yönetim ile halk arasında anahtar bir konum işgal ediyordu. Modernliğin giderek egemen olduğu bir dünyada ise dinin sahip olduğu konum değişti ve onu öğrenmek, öğretmek ve uygulamakla yükümlü ulemâ da artık toplumsal yapı içinde görünmez oldu. Modernlik sürecindeki toplumsal değişime koşut olarak, din eğitim ve öğretimi ile dinî kurumlar, yeni duruma göre biçimlendi ve öncekinden farklı amaçlarla yetindi. Bu dönemde yüksek din öğretimiyle görevli ilâhiyat kurumunun içeriği de bu son duruma göre belirlendi.

Özet

Anahtar Kelimeler: Temel İslam Bilimleri, İlahiyat, Medrese, Ulemâ, Modernite.

Introduction

In the Islamic tradition, the history of education is carried back to the Prophet Muhammad(pbuh). He(pbuh) is the first person to teach Islam. The first institutionalization of Muslims in education was initiated by the Prophet Muhammad(pbuh) with *suffah* in Medina. The verses sent down to him, the explanation and interpretation of the verses and what he(pbuh) did as the first Muslim were the subjects of his education here. Thus, the first institutional example that would enable the transfer of Islamic knowledge to future generations was achieved. In the Islamic tradition, other educational institutions developed over time to meet the knowledge needs of society and the human resources that know Islam and can lead people in this regard, that is, the need of scholars(alim). In the Islamic world, education took place in mosques, masjids, kuttabs(elementary school), scholars' homes, foundations and even palaces in the first centuries. By the 10th century, madrasas(madrasahs) with a certain curriculum and teaching staff started to emerge. The madrasah, founded by the grand vizier of the Seljuk State, Nizam al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), in the 11th century emerged as a new educational institution on its own. Madrasahs opened in many parts of the Islamic world were founded on this model. *Nizamiyya Madrasah* was first established in Baghdad as an institution providing education, according to the Shafii law school. Later, other Nizâmiye Madrasahs, which were educated according to the Hanafi school, were also opened. Thus, producing knowledge according to the needs and transferring the knowledge from the past to the new generations, meeting the needs of the society for education, training, administrative, legal and religious services and raising human resources for this purpose were met by the madrasah, which has completed its institutionalization.

1. Founding Texts and Method

In addition to the development of educational institutions, the formation and development of the primary source texts and disciplines that will provide the content and purpose of education and training in these institutions took place within a certain period. The Quran, which gives life to Islam, comes first among fundamental texts. Muhammad(pbuh), the last messenger of Allah, conveyed the incoming revelation from Allah between 610-632 to his followers as it was. It was first recorded in the memory of the Prophet(pbuh) and then the first Muslims. The verses were also recorded in writing simultaneously with the available writing materials. This process acquired an institutional character with the wahy scribes. The Holy Quran, which was preserved on disbanding pieces, took the form of a book (*mushaf*) between two covers during the time of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq, and an official text was formed and reproduced for various capital cities during the time of Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan. We also know that Zayd ibn Thabit (d. 45/665) presided over the work that took place during these two caliphs. Thus, the book was passed on to the next Muslims as a divine word, recorded as a *mushaf*.

The collection of the words and actions of the Prophet(pbuh) and their classification meant that one of the fundamental texts constituting Islam was formed. The Prophet's transfer of the verses into his life and continuing the example he showed to the first Muslims in behaviour as well as verbal narration, the narrations of the Companions who witnessed the revelation of the Quran and saving them in memories and notebooks enabled the creation of *sunnah*, another informational foundations of Islam. Muslims also learned the Quran through the interpretive determinacy of the *sunnah*. In this respect, recording the narratives and classifying them according to their authenticity constituted one of the basic scientific efforts of the early Muslims. Muslims learned the implementation of the orders of the Quran from the Messenger of Allah, for example, how the prayer is performed. This information was passed on to the next generation as behaviour and narration and became a written source in *hadith* works, *siyar*(the life of the Prophet) and history books.

The beliefs and behaviours with which the first Companions of the Messenger are unquestionably agreed as a society constituted the first example of the *ijma*, which is another source of religion. The first Muslims learned how to apply the word of Allah and its interpretation made by the Prophet directly from him and transferred this knowledge to their lives. The first Muslims set an example for the implementation of Islam as a society. The life of the Companions and the understanding and behaviour they regarded as Islam was followed and developed by the later Muslims altogether and formed the *ijma*, which is one of the sources of Islam. As a founding society, this understanding and behaviour of the first generation was also recorded as narratives and was kept alive by later generations.

The limited written resources put an extra task in front of the Muslims. Life created countless new situations that required Muslims to answer every day. While the Messenger(pbuh) was alive and the revelation(wahy) was continuing, he informed the Muslims about the answers to be given to these

new situations and the ways to be kept through wahy or his wisdom. However, how would the Muslims meet and respond to these new situations after the wahy ended with the death of the Prophet(pbuh)? Here, the method of *qiyas* was used to make new decisions in the light of revelation, that is, the book, the sunnah and the understanding and behaviour of the first Muslims. According to this, new decrees were produced as a result of the *qiyas* based on the revelation conveyed in written sources and the similarity of reasons between the examples of the first Muslims' lives and the new events. Thus, Muslims applied to *ijtihad* to answer the new developments that emerged as a fourth source and method based on the first three main sources, namely *the kitab, the sunnah and ijma*.

Creating and defining the sources of *sunnah and ijma*, together with the *kitab*, constitute the important development stages of Islamic sciences. Recording all the knowledge that constitutes Islam, determining and listing the evidence that Islam is built on as the *kitab, sunnah, ijma and qiyas-i fuqahâ*, defining their values and their relationships between each other, and the method of processing and transferring this information to live have had a vital importance for Islam. We know that there were long discussions in this process. For example, the work of Imam Shafi'i (d.204 / 820) called *Al-Risâla* gives important clues about the discussions held at that time. In the following centuries, the discipline of *usûl al-fiqh* handled and developed the process and practice we mentioned in detail.

2. Basic Disciplines of Islam: Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh and Kalam

In parallel with the formation and definition of resources, the disciplines that carry out the processing of these resources have also developed. These sciences aimed to explain, interpret and apply the basic texts of Islam, which were recorded, collected together and finally classified according to their informational value.

All the information about Islam, in other words, the whole knowledge of the Prophet, the first generation and the next generation, was passed on to the later generations in the form of narrations. This includes the Quran as well. Because the Quran is a word that was pronounced for the first time by the Prophet(pbuh) and recorded as a text that the first generation conveyed it to the next, together and in agreement on it. The evaluation of all source texts was made with the discipline of *hadith* first including the Quran. According to this, the revelation of the Quran was reported by the first generation as *mutawatir*. With this feature, the Quran is the primary, most valuable and reliable source of Islam. The words and actions of the Messenger of Allah(pbuh), which are reported as *mutawatir*, have the same informative value in Islam. The discipline of *hadith* carried out collecting all the narrations about Islam starting from the Prophet(pbuh), the Companions and the next two generations and classifying them according to their value of authenticity. Therefore, the *hadith* collections created over time constitute the most important resources together with the

Quran. With this feature, these sources constitute a source for all Islamic disciplines.

Tafsir(exegesis), another discipline, aims to tell the next generations what the verses of the Quran mean at that time they are revealed, must first be based on narrations. Because the Prophet(pbuh) and his Companions witnessed the revelation of the verses, and they had seen for what, in what situation and whom they were addressing. They experienced the events that caused the verses to come down for 23 years and the conditions of that time; they had been even causes of many of them to be revealed. Here, *tafsir* tries to reach the first generation as much as possible and to obtain the information they conveyed about the verses in order to ensure that the senses meant by the verses are known correctly by later generations. The events that caused the revelation of the verses, the people who were there at that time, their reactions, and the effects of the verses on them are important in understanding the verses correctly. These were also recorded as narrations. The discipline of *tafsir* aims to bring the Qur'an together with the environment in which it was revealed with these narrations and in this way to present the meanings that the verses meant to their first addressees to later Muslims. In this regard, these narrations are inevitably determining our understanding of the Quran correctly. *Tafsir* also included the information that reflected the language of that time, for example, *Jahiliya* poetry, in order to understand the Qur'an that was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh. With this feature, *tafsir* is a *descriptive discipline* that is not expected to produce any judgments but only aims to reveal the meanings of the verses when they are sent down.

Further interpretative studies had to be done other than the *tafsir* in order for transferring Islam into life by processing the sources of Islam. For this, the comments that proceeded to the point of the application were made by *fiqh*. The deeds and behaviours that a Muslim should and should not do in his life were determined by the discipline of *fiqh* through the *ijtihad* on the basis of the written sources of Islam and were created as a *normative* knowledge that the Muslim should follow. Since the inferences put forward by *fiqh* in areas other than the field of worshipping are obtained as a result of an interpretation process, they are not *qat'i(absolute)* as *mutawatir* knowledge. Although it is accepted in Islam as long as it fits to the accepted sources and method, the knowledge here is *dhanni*. Another *mujtahid* can also reach a legitimate and *dhanni* different result through legitimate sources and means. This explains the existence of different but legitimate sects (*madhhabs*) based on the same sources and even different *ijtihad*s within the same sect.

On the interpretations and practices produced by Islamic disciplines, there was a need for a definition of a worldview that set out how Muslims viewed the world around them, the afterlife, the relationship between people and creatures, different from other religious and moral traditions. This task was fulfilled by the *kalam*. Based on Islam's basic sources of knowledge on all these important issues, *kalam* has been a discipline that defines our belief principles, the attributes of the Creator, the beginning and the end of the creation, the life of the hereafter, and the position of the Muslim in the world with respect to other people and their place. *Kalam* is a *normative* discipline like *fiqh* and

presented the things that a Muslim person should obey and avoid in the form of a set of rules.

We can define the religious tradition that we call Islam, almost for 1500 years, as the knowledge of revelation and the whole of beliefs and behaviours developed and shaped by Muslims on the foundations of Islam which was formed by the example of the Prophet(pbuh) and the first generation. In other words, Islam is a way of life created through basic disciplines such as hadith, tafsir, kalam and fiqh on the fundamental sources of the *book(Quran)*, *sunnah*, *ijma* and *qiyas al-fuqaha*. It should be noted that any of these sources do not constitute Islam alone. It can be said that Islam is a combination of all of them. This composition has been provided by *qiyas al-fuqaha* based on the source texts. For example, the revelation of the Quran, which is the reason for the emergence of Islam, does not mean Islam alone. Because, as we tried to explain above, it is not possible to understand the Quran, which is a spoken word, correctly without the narration that conveys the interpretation of the Prophet(pbuh) and the first generation. This is more of a scientific necessity than a subject of dogma or faith. Because, in order for the divine word descending into a certain time and place to be understood correctly, the testimony of those who witnessed the environment at that moment, it was uttered is a necessity. The person closest to this environment has always been the Messenger of Allah. Therefore, it is an undeniable scientific fact that his interpretation with his words and behaviour will be the most appropriate interpretation of the verses. So, Islam cannot be content only with the text of the Quran. The effort to create Islam by excluding the sunnah and based solely on the text of the Quran will result in detaching it from the first and correct interpretation and sentencing it to the interpretation of every other reader. Likewise, the sunnah alone does not constitute Islam. The existence of sunnah will remain baseless and meaningless without the Quran. In addition, for example, the content and values of Islam cannot be transferred to new situations without *qiyas al-fuqahâ*. Ijmâ expresses the unity of the Muslim community over its sources and interpretations. We know how the efforts to create Islam by disrupting the integrity of these originals throughout history and today led to false conceptions of Islam. Therefore, the integrity of Islam can be achieved as a result of the interpretation of these sources of Islam together with correct methods without being separated from each other.

3. Classical Period, Post-Classical Period and Social Transformation

In classical Muslim societies, the sources of knowledge of Islam, whose definitions we have given above and whose history we have summarized, and the disciplines that enable the processing of these resources were studied and developed by the *'ulamâ* (scholars) who undertook to produce knowledge and transfer this knowledge into life in various ways. The resources and disciplines were taught by the *'ulamâ* in the *madrasah*, the society's need for knowledge was met and passed on to new generations. With the equipment they acquired in the madrasah, the *'ulamâ* ensured the functioning and running of many other

institutions in the classical Muslim society. Law comes first among these. Law, which was developed on the basis of Islamic sects (madhhab) formed by correct methods and different interpretations of the genuine sources of the religion in Muslim societies, was a civil institution led by the 'ulamā with its theory and practice. While the primary and ultimate aim of madrasahs, which usually implement a twelve-year education and training curriculum when it is completed in all stages, is to train the *qādīs* (judges)¹ who ensure the operation of this civil legal system, the madrasahs have also trained the *mudarris*, *muftis* and religious officials who constitute the 'ulamā class and are other human resources. In this regard, the imams and preachers who served in mosques, mudarris and muftis were members of the 'ulamā as well as the qādīs. The ulamā also ran *waqfs* (foundations) that provided social solidarity, and the economic support needed to run institutions such as education, law and religious service in society. Many works were carried out under the responsibility of the ulamā in Muslim societies, such as the establishment of foundations, their operation, the creation and collection of revenues, and the spending of the revenues on the required areas. If we summarize the service areas undertaken by the ulamās, we encounter four important areas in the social structure. These were law, social services, education and religious services.

The ulamā, who came from all levels of society, was also a class that provided communication between the rulers and the people, with the important position they gained because of their knowledge.² The high position of the ulamā in society was also recognized and protected by the rulers.³ Qādi and muftis also participated in the state administration.⁴ The administrators always sought the advice of the ulamā while ruling the country.⁵ In this position, the ulamā could also lead and act as the spokesperson of local groups in front of the rulers.⁶ Therefore, the ulamā became a bridge between the society and the administration, and when necessary, they could even form opposition to the government.⁷

The ulamā will gradually lose its position with the modern period in Muslim countries and societies, which it has preserved for centuries, and even such a group will remain dysfunctional. The radical social, mental and cultural transformations will take place when Renaissance and Reform movements and movements such as rationalism, positivism and secularism, which are effective

¹ Salih Zeki Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna Türkiye'de Yüksek Din Eğitimi*, Adana: Karahan Yayınevi, 2009, 10.

² Daphna Ephrat, "Religious Leadership and Associations in the Public Sphere of Seljuk Baghdad", *The Public Sphere in Early Muslim Societies*, ed. Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Nehemia Levtzion, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002, 32.

³ Afaf Loutfi El-Sayed, "The Role of 'ulamā' in Egypt during the Early Nineteenth Century", *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, ed. P. M. Holt, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, 265.

⁴ Sayed, "The Role of 'ulamā'", 265.

⁵ Ephrat, "Religious Leadership", 32.

⁶ Sayed, "The Role of 'ulama'", 265.

⁷ Sayed, "The Role of 'ulama'", 265.

in the West and cause transformations in every field of life, gradually force to change the thought, culture and education of the Muslim countries as well. The removal of religion from the centre of life and the relocation of religion and the sciences that interpret religious resources, but this time in a less important place among the sciences, naturally led to a fundamental change in the social positions of those who carry out religious institutions and those who work in religious disciplines. To compete with Europe, modernization with the reforms initiated by Selim III (d. 1223/1808) and carried out by Mahmud II (d. 1255/1839) started to yield certain results in culture and administrative institutions over time. However, even when the reconstruction period began, the high position of the ulamā was preserved for a while. Despite the opposition of the middle-class ulamā⁸, the upper-class ulamā developed many projects realizing that some reforms should be carried out in the state institutions in order to increase the competitiveness of the state and supported the will of the sultans in this direction.⁹ However, when the modernization process accelerates in Istanbul and Cairo and gains the ground for social restructuring, the traditional social structure would fundamentally transform, and the ulamā would inevitably and ultimately move away from the fields of education, law and administration. They would be replaced by public officers and administrators trained in new schools.

In the classical period, the areas held by the ulamā began to fall out of his hands, and the areas in which they were active and functional began to narrow. When it came to the Tanzimat period in the Ottoman Empire, this function of the ulamā, who provided human resources to the high bureaucracy of the state, especially the legal system, was weakened with increasing speed. Efforts to adapt to new conditions in the field of law and to remain in the state bureaucracy were not very effective. For example, the name of Muallimhâne-i Nuvvâb, which gave education after the madrasah and aimed to train qâdi, would be changed to Mekteb-i Nuvvâb in 1883 with new regulations. Naming this institution as a school meant that it was accepted among the new educational institutions established by the Tanzimat. However, in this period, the jurisdiction of the judges, who previously had broad powers and responsibilities in the administration, would remain limited to the Shari Courts. In 1840, when the secular Nizâmiye Courts were established to deal with the cases according to the criminal and commercial laws taken from the French system, the need for human resources trained by the madrasah had really decreased.

4. Towards Today's 'İlahiyat'

The first steps in the shaping of today's İlahiyat faculty and its curriculum came with the efforts to give a new identity to higher religious education in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, where modernization and innovation

⁸ Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulemâ and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II", *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization: Scripta Hierosolymitana* (1961), 9/72.

⁹ Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulema," 64.

constituted the agenda. Mehmed Es'ad Safvet Pasha, who prepared a report on the improvement of madrasahs during the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), stated in his study that madrasahs could not fulfil the teaching of Arabic, which is the main purpose of madrasahs, as well as some other sciences. According to a document dated in 1884, it was proposed to open a college with a curriculum of fiqh, usûl al-fiqh, tafsir, usûl al-tafsir, hadith, usûl al-hadith, kalam, and Arabic translation and composition, which are largely the first examples of today's Ilahiyat curriculum. In 1846, it was decided to open a higher education institution with a new mentality, separate from the madrasah, in the process of modernization in education that started in the first years of the Tanzimat. Darulfunûn was opened in 1863 with the construction of separate buildings, the writing of new textbooks and the training of academic staff. In this case, Darulfunûn was the first university which is aimed to train people who were suitable for the transformation envisaged in the society and the state structure, apart from the aims of the madrasah, and to ensure the continuation of the transformation.¹⁰ In this initiative, higher religious education was not included initially on the grounds that it was covered by the programs of other institutions. . Because religious education was already given in madrasahs at various levels.¹¹ However, in Darulfunûn, which was reopened when it came to the 25th anniversary of Abdul Hamid's enthronement in 1900, the branch of Ulûm-i Aliye-i Diniye was also included as a faculty.¹² The graduates of the branch of Ulum-i Aliye-i Diniye would be assigned as teachers in high schools and colleges¹³ The lessons of Darulfunûn to be taught at the branch of Ulûm-i Aliye-i Diniye were: Tafsir, hadith, usûl al-hadith, fiqh, usûl al-fiqh, ilm al-kalam, history of religion.¹⁴ In the next programs of Darulfunûn, for example, the tafsir course will be a course taught from the first year. However, this course was taught in the madrasah in the last years of education.¹⁵

Higher religious education, which was previously carried out entirely within the madrasah system, was now included in the modern higher education program with the initiative of Darulfunûn.¹⁶ According to the new regulation put into effect by Emrullah Efendi in 1913, the names of the branches were determined as follows: The Branch of Tafsir and Hadith, the Branch of Kalam, the Branch of Philosophy, the Branch of Fiqh, and the Branch of Religious Morality and Sirah. The lessons under the Tafsir and Hadith branch were as follows: General tafsir, applied exegesis(tafsir), usûl al-hadith, hadith-i sharif. The students had to pass the lessons of all the branches in order to graduate from the Department of Ulum-i Aliye-i Diniye. The Ulum-i Aliye-i Diniye Department was closed in 1915 as a result of the conflict between *maktabs*(modern schools) and madrasahs, on the grounds that the madrasah

¹⁰ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 16.

¹¹ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 18.

¹² Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 21.

¹³ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 40.

¹⁴ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 45.

¹⁵ Zengin, *Religious Education and Teaching in Formal Education Institutions in the Period of Abdülhamit II: 1876-1908*, Adana: Baki Bookstore, 2003, 141.

¹⁶ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 16.

trained the necessary personnel for religious education and there was no need for another institution.¹⁷ However, this controversy was resulted in the reduction of the influence of the madrasah and eventually its closure.

In addition to the formation and development of the maktab after Tanzimat, efforts were also continuing to reorganize the madrasah according to the new conditions. While the educational reforms outside the madrasah were continuing, madrasahs continued to remain as the institutions affiliated to the Sheikh-ul-Islam, which was the head of the ulama.¹⁸ In 1914, *Islah-ı Medâris Nizamnamesi* (Regulation for Reforming Madrasahs) was published. The constantly repeated statement in such reform projects has been that the content of education in madrasahs is outdated and that a solution must be found.¹⁹ Therefore, it was recommended that an *Ulûm-i Diniye Mektebi*, which would be more suitable for developments, be opened instead of the madrasah in such documents. With a decision that would lead to the loss of the civilian character of education in the classical period, this school will be given directly under the auspices of the Sultan with a centralist approach, not to Sheikh-ul-Islam.²⁰ In addition, it was seen that the madrasah curriculum was brought closer to the maktab curriculum in every madrasah improvement project developed on the grounds that it did not provide sufficient education. For example, in 1917, a new program designed under the name of *Medresetu'l-Mutehassisîn* as an institution providing graduate education was shaped with the type of classification as in *Darülfünûn*. One of the three departments in the program was *Tafsir and Hadith*. There were intense tafsir and hadith courses. Other departments were *Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh Department, Kalam, Tasawwuf (Sufism) and Philosophy Departments*.

What happened after the Tanzimat was actually more than a reshaping of educational institutions that provide religious education and training and a curriculum study. In this process, Ottoman society was differentiating from the classical Muslim social structuring and gradually fulfilling the requirements of the deep and powerful tendencies of the age. The Ottoman social structure was evolving more towards the social structure of a nation-state during this period. This process actually meant the end of the Imperial period. Therefore, it would be an incomplete view to take the formation process of today's *Ilahiyat* faculties and curriculum only as a result of educational restructuring. It is necessary to consider today's *Ilahiyat* curriculum as a result of the Turkish social structure change, which had a classical Muslim society structure and has been reshaped according to a modern nation-state structure after the Ottoman Empire, as all institutions had been shaped accordingly. While in the Ottoman Empire, law, education, social services and religious service were carried out by the ulama, who managed to remain mostly civil as in other Muslim societies, these fields have been removed from civilian status with the nation-state structure and have been given to the central state structure. Thereafter, the field of law will

¹⁷ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 76.

¹⁸ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 23.

¹⁹ Zengin, *Period of Abdülhamit II*, 141 etc.

²⁰ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 34 etc.

be carried out by the Ministry of Justice and the field of education by the Ministry of Education. At the beginning of this process, for example, raising more qualified people in the field of family law, which was regarded in the sphere of religious law, came to the agenda and during the era of Sheikh-ul-Islam Meşrebzâde Arif Efendi, an educational institution called Muallimhâne-i Nuvvâb was established around the Suleymaniye Mosque in 1854. However, the working opportunities of these graduates were limited due to the changing legal system.²¹ Foundations (*awqaf*), which provide social assistance and solidarity services and provide resources from their income to other institutions run by the ulama, were left under the auspices of the Sheikh-ul-Islam in this process and finally emerged as an institution that was nationalized with the establishment of the Directorate General of Foundations. Today, this institution still exists under the administration of *muftis* or ministries of religious affairs in some Muslim states. Regarding the execution of religious service, the Directorate of Religious Affairs is also under the administration of the state today.

Another consequence of this matter was that there would no be a class called ulama. The madrasah, run by the ulama, was training new members of the ulama, and this class had social ground. The ulama was an important element of the classical Muslim social structure. However, it is no longer possible to talk about this social structure. Even if we think for a moment that an institution that raises ulamas has been established today, we have to admit that it has no social ground. Again, the ulama, who were supposed to have been raised from such an institution, will remain non-functional today, just like after the Tanzimat. After the Tanzimat, the ulamas, who were competent in the religious sciences, eventually shared the same fate with the knowledge they learned and taught, and a new class of servants, lawyers, and journalists took over their functions.²² When the structure of the ruling elite changed, the elite scholars would no longer have a place in the administration.²³ With the abolition of madrasahs at the last stage, an institution of sixteen thousand people, as determined in Sebîlurreshâd, would withdraw from the scene of existence, never to be seen again.²⁴

5. Faculty of 'Ilahiyat' and Its Function

What is the function of the Faculty of Ilahiyat, which provides higher religious education today? The answer to this question will be, Ilahiyat Faculties as the institutions of the nation-state structuring, to meet the need for religious officials by the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the need for teachers to teach religion courses in schools managed by the Ministry of

²¹ Zengin, *Medreseden Dârülfünuna*, 25.

²² Sayed, "The Role of 'ulamâ'", 265, 278

²³ Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Justin Wintle (series ed.), London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1988, 46.

²⁴ Falih Rifki, "Ocak Söndürmek de Meziyet İmiş", *Sebilurreshad*, 9 Teşrin-i Evvel 1340, 24:620 (1925), 348.

National Education on the basis of the Law on Tevhîd-i Tedrîsat. In other words, due to today's social structure, the curriculum of the Faculty of İlahiyat does not aim to raise new individuals of the ulama, who, as in the past, are wholly responsible for the fields of religion, law, education and awqaf. Having these employment goals, higher religious education has a curriculum that is limited to providing information about the resources and basic Islamic disciplines rather than being equipped for transferring the religious resources into life. For this reason, the historical background of these disciplines is included in the İlahiyat curriculum as much as possible. It can be said that the İlahiyat curriculum gained this feature in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire during the efforts to establish a contemporary higher religious education institution separate from the madrasa. On the other hand, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology courses aim to make the student acquainted with the the humanities and their relevance to religion. Accordingly, the employment of the graduates of the Faculty of İlahiyat is concentrated in the fields of religious service and religious teaching. Within the Directorate of Religious Affairs, these graduates can start their religious duties from being imam up to preacher, mufti, members of the High Council of Religious Affairs and finally, the President of Religious Affairs. In addition, in the last decades, these graduates have been able to undertake religious services, as attache and consular which have a diplomatic aspect in order to provide religious service to our society, other Muslim communities and minorities living abroad. In recent years, duties such as religious guidance and counselling have been added to these positions. Depending on the Ministry of National Education, they can teach religion lessons and also teach vocational lessons in Imam-Hatip High Schools under the Directorate General of Religious Education. In the field of Higher Religious Education, subject to the regulations of the Council of Higher Education, an İlahiyat graduate can start as a research assistant, earn academic titles and rise to the highest level of the academic professorship. In addition, these academicians can take part in the management of the faculty they are in and the university they are affiliated with. Apart from this, since the graduates of the Faculty of İlahiyat are four-year university graduates, they can take office in many other areas, like other four-year higher education graduates.

The following question that is always asked for an educational institution should also be asked for the faculties of ilahiyat: Are the curriculum of the İlahiyat Faculty and the teaching methods followed capable of training human resources with the qualities needed today? In other words, when their employment areas are taken into consideration, do graduates graduate with the knowledge and skills required by their jobs? Today, while the competence of the Faculty of İlahiyat as an institution that trains religious course teachers at different levels is not discussed much, its competence as an institution that trains religion officer and academic career has always been discussed. In the field of religious service, deficiencies in matters that require practice and skills are the subject of complaints. The recitation of the Quran and insufficiency in Arabic, which is necessary for accessing and examining religious information inside and outside the mosque, is another point that is always mentioned. In addition, it is expected that graduates of ilahiyat faculties, who work at various

levels of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, will have leadership qualities in accordance with the said duties. Given that they fulfil a religious, social duty in the mosque, the maintenance and management of mosques as religious and social spaces are left to the personal abilities of the official. It is expected from the officials to have a higher level of leadership in the following years of the duty done at home and abroad. For this reason, the Directorate of Religious Affairs takes Ilahiyat graduates, which it recruits, to long-term training in order to ensure that they provide services in accordance with its needs. Efforts to develop a new curriculum to overcome these problems in Ilahiyat teaching seem to have failed to achieve the necessary development in the its curriculum and teaching methods, which have largely preserved the shape it has gained since the Tanzimat. These efforts were often limited to increasing the hours of a course or changing the class or semester in which the course was taught, and there was no radical improvement beyond changes that could be considered limited and superficial. From time to time, attempts have been made to add more religious sciences courses to the curriculum in favour of basic Islamic sciences, removing some others from it, and even in some faculties naming themselves as '*Islamic Sciences*' instead of 'Ilahiyat' by reflecting the intention of change in the name of the institution. These efforts could not change the character of the Ilahiyat curriculum, which is mainly based on transferring the knowledge that Islamic sciences have produced in the course of history and can provide this at a certain level. In conclusion, it should be kept in mind that the current Ilahiyat curriculum is basically shaped in parallel with the social structure we live in and that radical changes in the curriculum and its aims can also take place in parallel with the social structuring.

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