

**RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL CHANGE
IN REVELATION PERIOD: THE CIRCULAR LOOP APPROACH***

Vahiy Dönemi Sosyal Deęişmeye Din Sosyolojik Yaklaşım:

Dairesel Döngü Yaklaşımı

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Abstract

Since foundation of sociology of religion, many subjects have been examined with this regard and one of the most important subject is religion and social change relations. Sociology of Religion has placed special emphasis on examination of social change subject since mid of twentieth century, examination of social change process has taken up a lot of room in religion sociology literature of the last fifty years. Social change which is one of the important study fields of sociology necessitates the presentation of models to be explained. Whereas models may differ from society to society. As each societal structure has characteristics of its own, taking a model as an example may not provide an explanation of the social change in that society. What needs to be done in this situation is to exemplify the principles of a new model, a new denotation and model. This article is a social change model study to put forth relation between religion and social change and it comprises 23 years of Muhammad The Prophet. The change which occurred in the society in 23-years period which is referred to as the revelation period in the article has been explained through the circular loop model and the principles of this model has been stated conceptually.

Keywords: Social Change, Circular Loop, Integration, Adaptation, Religion.

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Özet

Din sosyolojisinin kuruluşundan günümüze pek çok konunun incelendiği ve en önemli konulardan birinin ise din ve toplumsal değişme ilişkileri olduğu görülmektedir. Din Sosyolojisi yirminci yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren sosyal değişme konusunun incelenmesine özel bir önem vermiş, son elli yılın din sosyolojisi literatürü içerisinde sosyal değişme süreçlerinin incelenmesi konusu fazlaca bir yer tutmuştur. Sosyolojinin önemli çalışma alanlarından birisi olan sosyal değişimin açıklanması için modellerin sunulmasını gerektirmektedir. Modeller ise toplumdan topluma farklılaşabilmektedir. Her toplumsal yapının kendine ait özellikleri bulunduğu için bir modelin örnek alınması o toplumdaki sosyal değişimin açıklanmasına olanak sağlamayabilir. Bu durumda yapılması gereken yeni bir model, yeni bir isimlendirme ve modelin ilkelerinin örneklerle açıklanmasıdır. Bu makale, evrensel bir din olarak İslam'ın Hz. Muhammed döneminin 23 yılını kapsayan vahiy dönemine yönelik din ve sosyal değişme ilişkisini ortaya koyacak bir sosyal değişme modeli örneğidir. Makalede vahiy dönemi olarak ifade edilen 23 yıllık süreçte toplumda oluşan değişme dairesel döngü modeliyle açıklanmış ve bu modelin ilkeleri kavramsal olarak ifade edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Değişme, Dairesel Döngü, Bütünleşme, Uyum, Din.

1.Introduction

Sociology of religion which has been introduced to the scientific world in the nineteenth century is of Western origin. Sociology of religion whose areas of interest have diversified since its birth has been subjected to a divide as classical period and modern period over time. The classical period has an important effect on the modern period. When the studies of the classical period sociologists -Comte, Durkheim and Weber- are examined, it is observed that both general studies have been carried out and the methodology of sociology as a new field of science and sociology of religion have been tried to be established. It can be stated that the systemized and methodic sociology of religion has laid the groundwork to the studies which have been degraded to local over this methodology in the modern period.

Local studies which have increased their importance gradually after the Second World War are mostly seen to include current events to their area of research. What is particularly striking in these studies are the explanation efforts for rapid social change. Even though the existence of social theories which explain social change is important in explaining the modern day, they are insufficient in explaining the change of a society which lived in a certain time and region. The most important reason behind this

insufficiency arises from the cultural difference between the pre-modern and post-modern periods. Another reason is due to the lack of theories aimed towards explaining social change processes through the change created by religious influence in societies.

The theories sociology has formulated on social change are mostly fuelled by the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century and the societal developments which have emerged as a result of class conflict and insurrections of the early 19th century. In this context, the Philosophy of Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution and French Revolution shed light on radical changes of Western societies. Remarks state that a process of conflict experienced due to the class struggle emerged in this process, the society went through a crisis and, as a result, social anomaly was experienced stand out.¹

Social Change which is considered as one of the study fields of the sociology discipline in this day and age has laid the groundwork to the emergence of sociology as a field of science. Religion as an institution which reveals social change deserves to be explained sociologically. Undoubtedly, Islam deserves explanation even more as the engine of social change in the period it emerged. Despite this deserving status, however, sociologists are criticized for their inadequacy of interest in Islam. Furthermore, the fact that there is a need for studies on Islam, History of Islam and its societal structure is particularly emphasized.²

Western researchers have begun studies on sociology/sociology of religion at a very early period and have gravitated towards the research of different societies. Despite this fact, the situation towards Islam is at a junction where classic moulds cannot be surpassed and studies on our social reality/socio-cultural structure are not at a sufficient level. The current situation leads to the inability of reaching a certain conclusion about the output expected from the sociology of religion.³

Considering that one of the predominant elements in the development process of the sociology of religion is Christianity, we are faced with the fact that theories of

¹ Ergun Yıldırım, *Değişen Din Anlayışının Sosyolojisi*, Bilge Yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p. 37-38.

² Bryan S. Turner, *Max Weber ve İslam*, translated by Yasin Aktay, Vadi Yayınları Ankara 1997, p. 18-19.

³ Mehmet Bayyığıt, *Din Sosyolojisi*, Palet Yayınları, Konya 2013, p. V.

religious sociology mostly explain the societies where Christianity is the predominant component. For instance, Structural-Functionalists have examined religion as one of the may institutions in a society. Durkheim has dealt with religion by degrading it to a totem statue. As conflict theorists see religion as inherently bad and opium of the masses, religion is a social structure which serves as an instrument for imperialists to increase their dominance over the poor and the weak. Whereas the interactionist approach mostly focuses on issues such as piousness, religious conversion process and self-perception of people in different religions.⁴

Islam's revelation period waits to be explained scientifically in terms of social change. Considering Islam has been studied historically rather than sociologically by both Orientalists and Muslims, it is observed that studies which have focused on Islam are horizontal studies explaining what has happened and, hence, approaches in the light of sociological data are needed to explain the vertical part of the issue.

The religion-based social change which occurs in the revelation period suggests a method of change which needs to actualize both individually and collectively in a traditional society. As individualism is in the foreground in a modern lifestyle, the collective dimension holds no significance. Revelation period needs to be researched to make explanations on the extent of social change paradigm in Islam in the face of positivism's creation of a new faith circle by prioritizing experiment, in other words its efforts to push and replace religion out of the social sphere and its establishment of a social change paradigm accordingly. This article involves an attempt directed towards how the social change which occur in a revelation process can be explained as an approach. Social change principles are explained according to Circular Loop Model and examples related to these principles are given.

The article is aimed towards forming a sociological approach to explain the social change occurred in the period when Islam first arose. Therefore, the case of revelation period social change is intended to be presented as the *Circular Loop Approach*. This approach has the potential to explain the evolution and revolution named as internal formations, and assimilation and invasion which are named as

⁴ İlyas Ba-Yunus, Ferid Ahmed, *İslam Sosyolojisi Bir Giriş Denemesi*, Bir Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1986, p. 35-36.

external factors in the social order. Another aim of the article is attempting to make a theoretical contribution to the sociology of religion field through the circular loop approach to social change regarding the revelation period.

2. Religious Sociologic Attempts at Explaining the Revelation Period

The revelation period of Islam is an approximately quarter-century period when the pace of social change was extremely rapid. The absence of a study which sociologically emphasizes the social change in this period confronts us as a significant deficiency. The studies carried out on this issue have been mostly dealt with-in the context of shaping of Islam society⁵ or the fundamental factor/factors which played a role in this shaping and transformation.⁶ In another study, the related period is dealt with as corresponding to the concepts of power and value and it is argued that the revelation period society which is referred to as the Society of Bliss cannot be an ideal society considering the fact that it is a transition society.⁷ On the other hand, a sociologic study has been completed about subject recently. In this work, it is emphasized that Muhammad the Prophet has given an importance to contractual culture by entering into agreement with other religious groups and this is also a successful example of religious socialization experiment.⁸

Another study where the fact that change is inevitable according to Islam is emphasized has examines the social change in Islam under the headings of destiny and change, tradition, revolution and Islam, fiqh (Islamic law) and social change, religious reform. Sociological interpretations of Islam, instead of the social change which occurred in a certain process, are mostly included in the study. Therefore, these assessments are not dealt with on the basis of facts.⁹ Whereas the specific studies conducted on the issue are more problem-oriented and these studies need to be collected together for a sociological assessment.

⁵ Mustafa Aydın, *İslam'ın Tarih Sosyolojisi*, Pınar Yayınları, İstanbul 2001.

⁶ Hayati Yılmaz, *Toplumsal Dönüşümde Sünnet*, Rağbet Yayınları, İstanbul 2004.

⁷ Ramazan Uçar, *Güç ve Değer İlk Dönem İslam Toplumu Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Çözümleme*, Berikan Yayınevi, Ankara 2014, p. 137.

⁸ Mustafa Arslan, *Sözleşme Kültürü ve İlk Müslüman Toplum*, Pınar Yayınları, İstanbul 2014.

⁹ Yümnü Sezen, *İslam'ın Sosyolojik Yorumu*, İz Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, p. 377-401.

3.Theory and Islam

Theories constitute the lifelines of sociology and sociology of religion. When the theories which have emerged in the history of sociology are examined, it is observed that the first theories were grand theories, i.e. large-size theories. The existence of grand theories depends on the experience of big changes. Despite the fact that Islam's revelation period was a time when rapid change occurred, it is observed that approaches which explain this change have not been produced. This is particularly related to theoretical collapse the field is in as well.

In the subject of Islam, established religions are born and developed as a type of protest movements in the leadership of a charismatic religious leader against the traditional belief and predominant social order especially in societal crisis environments which is stated by Weber as well. We can state that this sociological development model is supported by the sociological examination of the phenomenon of Islam's emergence and development. From this perspective, Islam was indeed born and developed as an existence movement in the region of Arabia where the domain of Sassanid and Byzantine Empires intersected, in accordance with the example of the emergence of big religions on the fault lines of strong empires, and as a type of reaction to the traditional religion and social beliefs, implementations and deviancies.

Lapidus searches for reasons such as human groups and loss of personal interests and statuses behind the resistance to change. However, none of these is dealt with as an element which provides social change.¹⁰ In this context, the issue which is taken as a basis to change is how conservative the elite, who direct social change in the society of the era, are in the face of change. Accordingly, the article demonstrates how those who seem conservative and cannot be dissuaded from their decisions lose their sociological partisanship in the face of change. Therefore, it is observed that it is quite difficult to take a stand against change.

The revelation period social change contains within itself many of the phenomena modern age sociologists are interested in. It is possible to find the examples

¹⁰ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1999, p. 25.

of almost all phenomena such as peace and conflict, fraternity and competitiveness, organization and disintegration, guilt, adaptation, order and change in the revelation period social change. In this context, criticism voiced against the explanation of the revelation period social change with the social change concepts of the modern area will be unfair criticism.

4.Circular Loop Model

The circular loop approach is the model we use in explaining the revelation period social change. This model starts social change from a certain place (Mecca), accelerates social change in terms of momentum (Medina) and eventually returns it back to where it started (Mecca). The circular loop approach also makes the circle it contains the center and explains the expansion from this center. While explaining social change, circular loop strongly opposes the use of force towards religion, melts individuals in its own pot within this circular loop, presents them with the promise of being brand new individuals in the fields of renewal, mental, cultural and social fields.

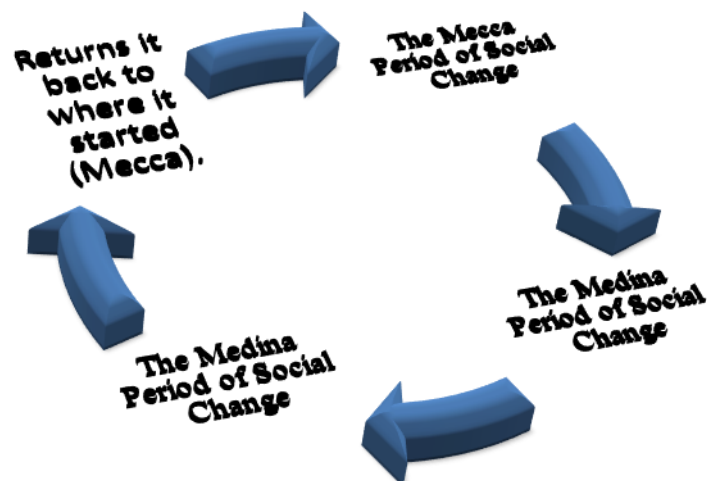


Table 1: Circular Loop Model

In this context, the circular loop approach cleanses social change from violence completely and emphasizes that the social change Islam brings about is based on

societal peace and integration. In this realization process, it aims for individuals to be actively patient and an atmosphere of interest, love and knowledge to be ingrained in the social terrain with active struggle. On the other hand, as the circular loop represents zero as an image, it reminds individuals to relegate their own egotism to zero in an order based on the understanding of collectivity and social welfare should not be missed with the sense of egotism.

Circular loop is an approach which contains tensions, discrepancies, uncertainties and indecisions in an atmosphere where the divine interferes with what is social. As the existence of a society free from all these is not possible, the approach wants to explain a social change understanding by trying to eliminate the negativities in question. The approach which establishes the differences between those who are open and close to change argues that the period's desires of change contributes to social integration in a sense and are incorporated into a religion. In this context, the study demonstrates the incorporation to religion is achieved through circular loop.

The circular loop approach emphasizes that as the elites who resist in the face of change are vested with authority in a traditional society, they have significant influence in the decision-making mechanisms of the society. As this elite class aspire to change and social transformation mechanisms for their own interests, they do not want to allow this interest to be lost. In this framework, the sociological explanation of the limited expansion of Islam in its early period and hejira (immigration) is as such.

4.1. Basic Principles of the Circular Loop Approach

The Basic Principles of the Circular Loop Approach are explained below with the examples of social change which occurred in the revelation period. The circular loop approach focuses on seven basic principles while explaining social change. These principles are integration, universality, secrecy-openness, liberalization, progressiveness, guidance and the harmony between what is divine and what is social.

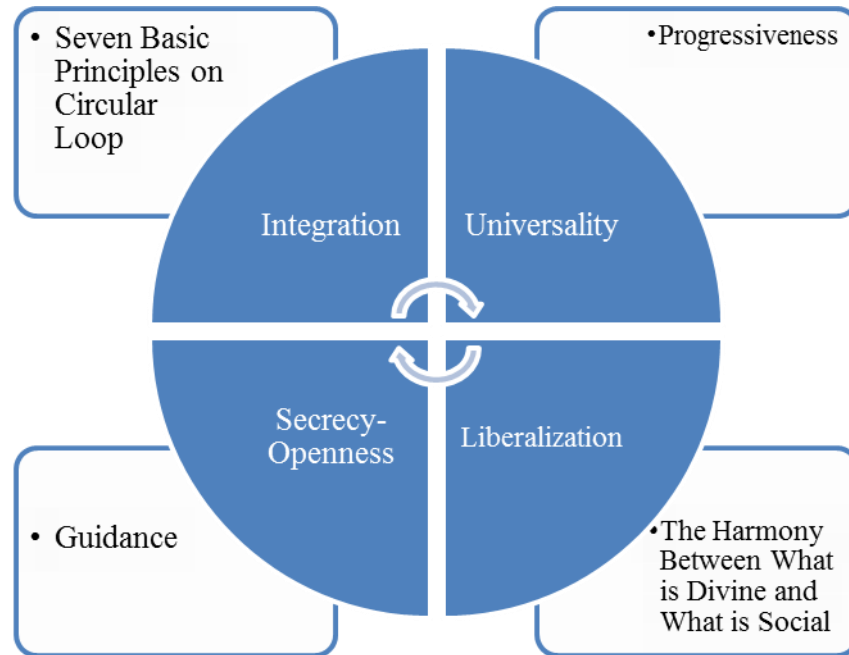


Table 2: Seven Basic Principles of the Circular Loop Model

The first circular loop approach principle is *integration*. The main objective of social change is to ensure the progress of a society by securing its integration.

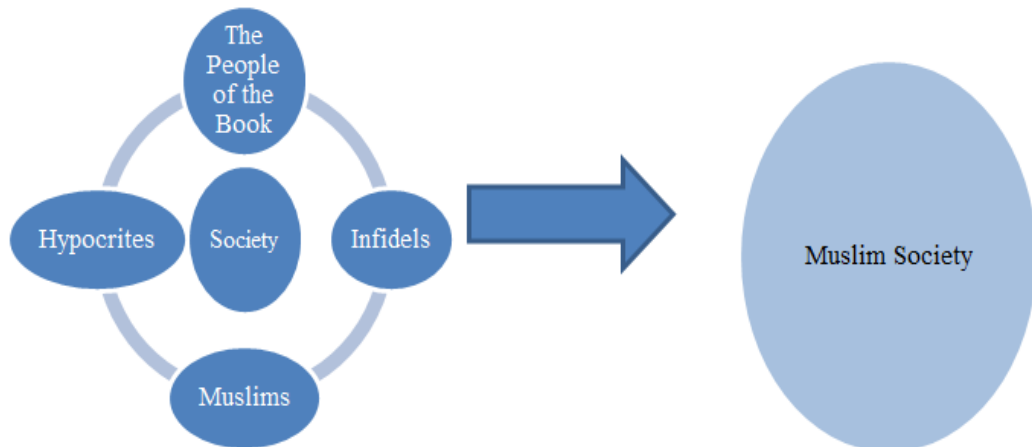


Table 3: Society Becoming Integrated on the Basis of Belief

Religious communities who were fundamental components of the social structure throughout the Revelation Period constitute the society. In the period when revelations were sent, the religious social class who were the People of the Book lived

predominantly in Medina. It is known that before the hejira to Medina, a dense Jew population used to live in Medina and this number was stated to be almost the same as the Arabs.¹¹ According to this data, the society of Medina was not homogenous in terms of religion. This continued to be the case up to a certain point after the hejira.

In terms of their structural features, the infidels were composed of the individuals who constitute the aristocracy of Mecca society.¹² These individuals were prominent members of the society in fields such as administration and trade. From this perspective, the Infidels were individuals with power and influence. This community who guided the society of Mecca and had a strong element of oppression was primarily a source of serious conflict for the Muslims. This community had important effects on the slowness of the Mecca period social change. So much so that the main factor which needs to ranked first among the factors prohibitive to social change is the sociological existence of the infidels.

As the word of Hypocrite explains the faith of the individual from an external perspective as a religious term, his/her denotation as a Muslim has the meaning of only concealing its blasphemy on the inside. It is important in terms of being an indicator of social change as a concept which has emerged after Islam¹³, especially after hejira. In this context, the concept is not used as a religious denotation or the name of a society in the Mecca period of Islam. The concept has emerged in the Medina period and has been referred to as a society/individuals in the Koran as well.¹⁴ In this framework, many verses indicate the Hypocrites as a society and their actual aspects in the society.

While the society was a fragmented society in terms of faith, it has achieved its integration at the end of the revelation process. The fact that the society became integrated on the basis of religion actualized due to certain implementations aimed towards integration. Among these implementations is the fraternity project named Muâhât.

¹¹ Muhammed Hamidullah, *İslam Peygamberi I*, İrfan Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1993, p. 183.

¹² İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, thk. Mustafa es-Sakka, İbrahim el-Ebyarî, Abdulhafız eş-Şelebî, Şirketü Mektebe, Mısır 1955, v. I, p. 265.

¹³ İbn Manzûr, *Lisânu'l-Arap*, Dâru'l-Maarif, Kahire 1699, p. 4509.

¹⁴ Tevbe, 9/56-57.

Muâhât which has derived from the Arabic word of uhuvve means being siblings with someone or considering someone as a sibling.¹⁵ Sociological reflections of Muâhât, which has a narrow meaning in the dictionary, and especially its place in the circular loop approach are of utmost importance. In this context, Muâhât is the name of an institution which was sociologically applied in practice as an actual example in the period referred to as the Era of Bliss and has succeeded, and has existed theoretically as an applicable objective for each individual in the post-Muhammad the Prophet societies.

The fraternity project in social change is not a theoretical or sloganic discourse like “we are all brothers, why fight at all?”. The discourse is within the life itself and has been reflected in practice. The Medina society has not only opened its doors for the immigrant Mecca muslims but they also donated houses, estates, lands and date palm fields to them.¹⁶ Early Islamic society has demonstrated the response to this attitude which was the complete opposite of the capitalist spirit of modern ages by putting into practice in the historical process. It is difficult for social conflict to happen in such a society in terms of social change. In this context, the society consolidates both its spiritual dynamics and its material dynamics.

When Muslims immigrated to Medina, one of the biggest threats awaiting them was the problem of adaptation. Because cultural background, habits, traditions, and customs of the new lands might have been different and the locals’ acceptance of the outsiders might have led to social concerns. In this framework, Muhammad the Prophet established a fraternity (Muâhât) between the Ensâr and Muhâcir (the locals and immigrants) to prevent possible threats and to achieve social integration. This was indeed a sociological solution aimed towards the locals’ acceptance of the immigrants and the adaptation problem of the immigrants. When the foundations of this fraternity are examined, sociological foundations such as material and spiritual cooperation and the Ensâr and Muhâcir’s being heirs to one another before their children, as well as

¹⁵ Hüseyin Algül, “Muahat”, *DİA*, c. XXX, p. 308.

¹⁶ Belâzürî, *Ensâbu'l-Eşrâf*, thk. Muhammed Hamidullah, Dâru'l-Maârif, Mısır 1959, v. I, p. 270.

religious fellowship, are observed.¹⁷ The most important reflection of the fraternity, which we can refer to as sociological embracement in terms of eliminating the problem of adaptation and providing social integration, to social change has exhibited itself as the social force arising from the unity and solidarity of the Muslims.

The Muâhât institution is also seen as an application which replaced hilf, one of the traditions of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance. Muhammad the Prophet abolished the tradition of ignorance by stating that there is no place for hilf in Islam and gave rise to change after putting religious fellowship in its place.¹⁸

The Muâhât institution has also had economic reflections in terms of social change. In this framework, it is seen that problem of accommodation and nourishment were also eliminated with Muâhât. In the social change which occurred in time, Medina Muslims came to have a say in financial activities by throwing off the Jew influence. We see that an inheritance application which used to have no place among Arabian traditions begun to be created due to the realization of this social change. As the inheritance provision of this established fraternity is based on Muâhât, it is an important social change. It is observed that the inheritance provision based on Muâhât was not long-term as a consequence of this social change as well. In this context, the status of heirship as a result of Muâhât was abolished in line with the 75th verse of the Al-Anfal surat which was sent after the battle of Badr.¹⁹ Therefore, the provision preserved its validity with completely sociological conditions/social conditions and was limited to fraternity, help, feeding and advice as a result of the disappearance of the sociological condition.

The assertion that the revelation period social change is also social integration, which is one of the basic arguments of the study, is observed in the people's attainment of unity on the basis of faith due to the social change which returned to Mecca. The fact

¹⁷ İbn Sa'd, *Kitabü't-Tabakâti'l-Kübra*, Mektebetü'l-Hancı, Kahire 2001, v. I, p. 204; Ebü'l-Abbas Takıyyüddin Ahmed b. Ali b. Abdülkadir Makrizî, *İmtâü'l-Esmâ' bimâli'n-Nebî Mine'l-Ahvâl ve'l-Emvâl ve'l-Hafede ve'l-Metâ'*, Dâru'l-Kütübi'l-İlmiyye, Beyrut 1999, v. I, p. 69.

¹⁸ Kasım Şulul, *İlk Kaynaklara Göre Hz. Peygamber (A.S.) Devri Kronolojisi*, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, p. 434.

¹⁹ İbn Sa'd, *Tabakât*, v. I, p. 204.

that the society of Mecca obeyed Muhammad the Prophet and Islam²⁰ indicates both the realized social change and a social structure which unified on the basis of faith.

Situations which could be considered as new types of social integration begun to emerge after the Conquest. Differentiation which is aimed towards dividing the settled social structure uncovers new integration models as well.²¹ The social change which occurred in the ninth year of the hejira accounts for a social integration on the basis of this differentiation. According to this, the Kaaba was not to be circumambulated naked and the Muslims and infidels were not to come together. Under these circumstances, the infidels were not allowed to enter Mecca and make pilgrimage.²² This development which indicates that there was now a complete unity of faith in Mecca was able to realize the objective of social integration on the basis of faith.

The most clear example of the society's integration as a result of social change is included in the sentence of Muhammad's last sermon which we name as social order: "A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim and, hence, all Muslims are brothers. Neither the blood or the property of a Muslim's brother is halal (lawful) to him. However, if he gave them with his own consent, then that is different matter".²³ As the circular loop approach considers the concept of social order with social integration, it deals with social status as an integrative role. In this context, discourse prevents actions which will allow for the disturbance of social peace and social change is emphasized to integrate the society on the basis of religion regardless of the status of individuals.

The second principle is *universality*. As it is not possible to deny social change, the fact that the social change which occurred is a benchmark for future societies should not be forgotten with reference to the exemplariness of the period as society in the historical process. The fact that we have not been able to form a social change approach in the age we live in while the social change approach of the modern era has set the west

²⁰ Taberî, *Tarihu'r-Rusül ve'l-Mulûk*, Dâru't-Turâs, Beyrut 1967, v. III, s. 61.

²¹ Anthony D. Smith, *Toplumsal Değişme Anlayışı*, translated by Ülgen Oskay, Gündoğan Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, p.108.

²² Buhârî, Hac 67.

²³ İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. II, p. 604.

as a benchmark brings us closer to the phenomenon of the revelation period social change. The universality principle emphasizes that revelation period social change needs to be taken into consideration in the social change process of all future societies.

The peace environment after Hudaibiyyah is significant in terms of the change Islam underwent from locality to universality. In this framework, the letters of invitation which were sent all over the world indicates the realized social change. When the Muslims went beyond their local boundaries and particularly when Muhammad the Prophet sent letters all over the world, they became visible/recognized in different places of the world. This recognition has also led Muslims to pay certain prices in social change. For instance, sources mention the beheading of the ambassador Haris b. Umeyri, who brought Muhammad's letter to Damascus to the Greek Emperor, in Mu'te by Şurahbil b. Amr.²⁴ Steps which are taken towards universality after going beyond ordinary boundaries in terms of social change lay the groundwork of the battle to be fought against external forces. In the circular loop model, universality principle transforms a closed society into an open one. The expression of open society of the period does not symbolize liberalism and democracy²⁵ in the modern sense. Even though both liberalism and democracy were unused concepts in that period, the social contact of a religion which went beyond its boundaries with different states transforms a society which used to be closed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance into an open society.

Another indicator of the universality principle in the circular loop model is Muhammad the Prophet. In social change, Muhammad is in fact a subject of social phenomenon as a historical individual. This subject firstly internalizes the values of the religion he is the prophet of as an actor who brings about social change and then presents them to society. In this context, the addressee of the message is society. The prophet articulates the principle of universality discursively as the actor of the message. In this framework, the statement that "I have been sent to all people as the prophet. I

²⁴ Vâkıdî, *Kitâbu'l-Meğâzî*, thk. Marsden Jones, Dâru'l-A'lemi, Beyrut 1989, v. II, p. 748.

²⁵ Gordon Marshall, *Sosyoloji Sözlüğü*, translated by Osman Akınhay, Derya Kömürcü, Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, Ankara 1999, p. 2.

shall give my message to the Arabs and if they do not accept to the Quraysh and if that fails to Benî Hâşim and if all fails to my self”²⁶ indicates universality discursively.

The third principle is *secrecy-openness*. This principle evokes the necessity of carrying out social change in secrecy from time to time. It indicates that actions which are taken before reaching a certain level of strength in power relations are faced with the danger of destruction in the social sphere. Whereas the principle of *openness* necessitates taking the action’s time and space components into consideration. In this framework, it is observed that status of secrecy becomes prominent at the beginning and the principle of openness is taken into consideration afterwards. For instance, the Muslims who witnessed a period of secrecy until Islam became visible in Mecca may have ensured their unity until they could at least form a community with this secrecy. Subjects of Muhammad the Prophet continued their gatherings in secrecy until the moment this status of secrecy would be removed. It is impossible to expect the realization of a social change in this status of secrecy. However, the fact that every social change will begin with an individual/individuals should not be disregarded. The verse which states “so long as a society does not change a condition it has, Allah undoubtedly does not change the status of that society”²⁷ in Koran demonstrates that the individual is placed on the foundation of desire to change in society. In this context, it is emphasized that what is in force depends on the expectation of the society. It is stated that expectation of change must be internalized firstly; in other words, expectation or wait of social change would never end so long as it does not occur in individuals.²⁸ Therefore, the subject of change is actually the individual himself. The individual is to wait for secrecy to end to witness social change.

After receiving signs that they would become visible in public, Muslims made themselves apparent. Various sources report that secrecy was maintained for 3 years

²⁶ İbn Sa’d, *Tabakât*, v. I, s. 162.

²⁷ Ra’d, 13/11.

²⁸ Cevdet Said, *Bireysel ve Toplumsal Değişmenin Yasaları*, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul 1994, p. 13-14.

from the moment revelations were first started to be sent.²⁹ The sociological interpretation of these mysterious years is based on the necessity of maintaining secrecy until the moment they were able to defend and protect themselves or until they became a force to be reckoned with. This secrecy made a community of limited number of people even closer.

Another example of the Secrecy-Openness principle is the emergence of the principles in accordance with social conditions. The Medina counterpart of the opposition put up by the elites in Mecca are the Hypocrites. However, the elites of Mecca did not leave the Muslims unattended after Hejira either. At this point, they wanted to add the Hypocrites to their ongoing actions. In this context, the only difference between Mecca polytheists and Medina Hypocrites is about the secrecy and openness of the hostile discourse. While Mecca elites expressed their hostility openly, Medina Hypocrites tried to be seen like Muslims by hiding their hostility. The Prophet's warning against³⁰ the threat of Hypocrites from Medina coming together to fight against the Muslims after the letter of the Mecca elites sent to the leader of Medina Hypocrites Abdullah b. Übeyy b. Selül before the battle of Badr eliminated this possibility.

The fourth principle is *liberation*. This principle of the circular loop approach recognizes the right of every society to freely choose and live what they believe in. The freewill of the individuals is not limited as long as they do not behave and act to disrupt social integration. For instance, the Charter of Medina is the first written legal agreement of all time which was signed between the Muslims, Infidels and Jews, i.e. all social strata which form the society, and foresees political participation on the basis of equal rights. The most significant characteristic of this agreement was the fact that it developed a pluralist model and included a religious, legal and cultural autonomy. This autonomy and pluralism were guaranteed under the law.³¹

²⁹ İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. I, s. 262; İbn Sa'd, *Tabakat*, v. I, p. 168-169; Belâzürî, *Ensâbu'l-Eşraf*, v. I, p. 115.

³⁰ Muhammed b. Muhammed Avâcî, *Merviyâtü'l-İmam ez-Zühri fi'l-Megâzi*, el-Câmiatü'l-İslâmiyye, Medine 2004, v. I, p. 313.

³¹ Ali Bulaç, *İslam ve Demokrasi*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1995, p. 11.

The most important change revealed by the Charter is the change of regime. Medina had been an environment where tribalistic regime was dominant until the charter. The tribal chieftaincy which was elected by aristocratic votes based on power³² ended with the charter and a social peace was achieved in Medina under the leadership of Muhammad the Prophet.

The charter which was put in order³³ for the first time by the orientalist Wellhausen³⁴ in forty-seven articles³⁵ is a constitution which brought all communities living in Medina together and made Muhammad the Prophet the only authority in the solution of social problems. In this context, Muhammad became the only source of power in Medina.

The concept of ummah (community) included in the second article of the charter changes the Arabian order based on the tribalistic regime in terms of social change and takes the society to a further dimension within a traditional period. The ummah is considered as the advanced social order in the achieved level of progress and is also referred to as a political organization based on mutual agreement.³⁶

The Charter of Medina reveals a reform in Medina. Evs and Hazreci who had fought against one another until that day and had not formed a unity came together under Muslim identity. It serves an important purpose in the provision of social integration by including all other religious stratas to the agreement.

The Charter of Medina establishes a discourse as an agreement text and allows for the fulfillment of social demands by going into action. With this characteristic, the charter forces participants to get involved in society and ensures consensus in the

³² Mustafa Kelebek, "İslam Hukuk Felsefesi Açısından Medine Vesikası", *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, issue 4 (2000), p. 337.

³³ İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. I, p. 501-504.

³⁴ Hamidullah, *İslam Peygamberi I*, p. 190.

³⁵ For a discussion on the problematic nature of the forty-seven article systematization of Wellhausen see Mehmet Erdem, "Medine Vesikası'nın Maddelendirilme Şekli ve Türkçe Çeviriler Üzerine Bazı Mülâhazalar", *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, v. V, issue 8 (2012), p. 528.

³⁶ Ali Bulaç, *Târîh, Toplum ve Gelenek*, Yeni Akademi Yayınları, İzmir 2007, p. 132.

solution of encountered problems. In this context, the charter itself is binding sociologically.

The Charter of Medina is a step taken for the realization of social change in a warless environment, in peace and tranquility. It is a text written to prevent the chaos which might have emerged internally due to external threats from the get-go and ensure the implementation of social behaviour on the basis of benefaction. In terms of its content, the charter is of an exemplary quality which can offer effective solutions to coexistence problems in modern day societies where globalization prevails.³⁷

The Charter of Medina constitutes a character which presents a social change opportunity where the atmosphere of peace and tranquility would continue so long as its provisions are adhered to and also allows for different social changes if these provisions are not abided by with the stipulations it contains towards other belief stratas.

The Charter of Medina is an indicator of social change in terms of bringing an introductory approach of state concept to a society who did not what state order was until that period. It implies a kind of liberation in terms of bringing religious freedom completely to society which was deprived of religious freedom with the other religious stratas in the society. The militaristic characteristic of the Charter is striking in terms of demonstrating a social aspect which was not usually seen in the Arabian society as well. In this context, charter establishes minimum benchmarks in the protection of a country and ensures the collective action of Medina citizens in case of militaristic defence³⁸.

The Charter of Medina should be considered as a consequence of horizontal social change. The social change which occurred with the Charter is also horizontal. It is not vertical. Rather than being an agreement text which is imposed from top-down, it is a text based on the change which occurred on an individual level after Islam's becoming a power in Medina as a result of a horizontal change and then emerged as the consequence of the formation of a society.

³⁷ Ahmet Güneş, *Medine Vesikası ve Ehl-i Kitab, Kur'an-ı Kerim'de Ehl-i Kitab- Tartışmalı İlmi Toplantı* (2007), p. 253.

³⁸ Muhammed Hamidullah, *İlk İslam Devleti*, translated by İhsan Süreyya Sırma, Beyan Yayınları, İstanbul 2007, p. 65.

The fifth basic principle is *progressiveness*. While explaining the social change of the circular loop approach, the fact that horizontal social changes contain progressiveness should not be forgotten. The state of progressiveness which is seen in the theoretical and practical dimensions of the religious experience is considered as a part of social change.

The Mecca period social change involves a phase in which the theoretical aspects of religion were tried to be embedded in society. In this period, religion included issues about faith to create some mental changes in society. The issues which were tried to be embedded in the social area in this framework were Tawhid and polytheism, prophet and afterlife. The religion which tried to create a change in the behaviour patterns of the society worked on embedding the moral principles such as being good towards parents, looking after relatives, valuing poor and travellers, not wasting, not killing children, not committing adultery, not killing anyone unjustly, not infringing on the rights of those who are helpless, keeping promises, not manipulating measurements and weighing scales and not becoming arrogant.³⁹ in the Mecca period.

The Medina period comprises an era in which the changes about the practical dimensions of the religion took place in social change. In this framework, it is observed that religious services such as salah, pilgrimage, fasting and alms were not embedded in the social environments all at once and that they were ordered to the society on a horizontal timeframe. The fact that some arrangements constituting social change had not come to the agenda in the Mecca period but were discussed in the Medina period is related to the progressiveness principle of the circular loop model. In this context, the prohibition of alcohol, for instance, has been very significant. Firstly, the fact that alcohol and food obtained from date palms and grapes was emphasized⁴⁰, then alcohol was stated to be harmful by conducting a benefit-loss analysis⁴¹ and it was ordered not

³⁹ Muhsin Demirci, “Kur’ân’ın Nüzûl Sürecinde Tedricilik”, *Din Eğitimi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, issue: 9 (2002), p. 176-185.

⁴⁰ An-Nahl, 16/67.

⁴¹ Al-Baqarah, 2/219.

to perform salah when drunken.⁴² Ultimately, alcohol was emphasized to be a foulness invented by the devil himself and it was prohibited indisputably.⁴³ The existence of progressiveness in social change is particularly evident here. Muslims did not object to this change even though they were in the habit of drinking alcohol. When recounting this situation, resources state that alcohol flowed in the streets of Medina like water.⁴⁴

The sixth basic principle is *guidance*. What is meant by this guidance is determining a target for the society. This guidance was carried out in the initial phases of the revelation period social change. The underlining of the points Islam would reach and the provision of the society's operational motivation with both material and moral discourses are the indicators demonstrating guidance.

Muhammad the Prophet's efforts which went beyond any ordinary human's to communicate the revelations to the society in Mecca where he spent thirteen years after he became a prophet were witnessed. In these efforts, people were tried to be guided towards religion. However, Muhammad the Prophet's individual guidance efforts were not usually accepted at first among Arabian tribes except for individual acceptances added to the new religion. Muhammad the Prophet's statement "Is there anyone among you who would invite me to your country and listen to me? Because those who would listen to me shall soon be the master of Byzantium, Iran" to the tribes in Mina⁴⁵ is an incredible statement for that period in terms of social change. The realization of such a statement which was considered utopic by many did not take long. Considering this statement, however, the new religion is observed to have brought a discourse of world dominance in social change by uttering the names of the two superpowers. This demonstrates that the prophet factor has developed a discourse in line with the world's trajectory and has guided the society. In addition to bringing a new world of meaning to the society in emotion and thought, the Prophet presented an earthly factor like world dominance to material minds with revelations and set a target.

⁴² An-Nisa, 4/43.

⁴³ Al-Ma'idah, 5/90-91

⁴⁴ Müslim, Musakat 67; For a detailed evaluation on the subject, please see Necdet Ünal, "Kur'an'ın İçki Yasağı Tedriciliği Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Kelam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, v. IX, issue II (2011).

⁴⁵ Muhammed Hamidullah, *İslam Müesseselerine Giriş*, 2007, p. 34.

Another example of guidance is the asabiyet (group feeling) which may cause regression in the society. This concept which was used by Ibn Khaldun to refer to the attainment of strength, might and superiority by those who come from the same family upon agreeing on a mutual ideal⁴⁶ indicates a society consisting of relatives who have blood relations on their father's side.⁴⁷ The concept of asabiyet is also interpreted as the sense of social devotion. According to this interpretation, social devotion ensures cooperation and solidarity among the members of a society, group or community. Asabiyet is also a feeling which encourages resistance to the enemy and provides for progression and development.⁴⁸ As a result of this feeling, members of the tribe defend their tribes, attack other tribes and charge against them. Each tribe member reaches the security of life and property due to asabiyet. In that case, asabiyet becomes the source of unity, solidarity, renunciation and sacrifice.⁴⁹

When the implementations of Muhammad the Prophet on asabiyet are examined, we are faced with two different approaches. The first is the evaluation of asabiyet as a heritage of pre-Islamic days of ignorance. Muhammad condemned those who followed asabiyet as a heritage of ignorance and tried to keep the faithful community out of its harmful influence. The second is the inclusion of the *silâ-ı rahim* application (keeping close bonds and communication with relatives) in the basic principles of the religion against asabiyet. Hence, the sense of asabiyet from the days of ignorance has been rendered ineffectual, reformed and made use of when necessary. The concept of revenge which is a very strong feeling in asabiyet has been tried to be diminished to the lowest level with Islam's crime-punishment, retaliation-blood money applications and the principle of state execution.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Kirman, *Din Sosyolojisi Terimleri Sözlüğü*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ İbn Manzur, *Lisanu'l-Arab*, p. 2964.

⁴⁸ Kirman, *Din Sosyolojisi Terimleri Sözlüğü*, p. 26.

⁴⁹ İbn Haldun, *Mukaddime*, p. 94.

⁵⁰ Adem Apak, *Asabiyet ve Erken Dönem İslam Siyasi Tarihindeki Etkileri*, p. 85.

Asabiyet is observed to have been kept under control in the revelation period social change. Attitudes and behaviours which might have disrupt social solidary were not given credence to. The most clear example of this is evident in the following event.

At the end of the success reached as a result of the fight against the Müstalikoğulları, spoils were shared.⁵¹ An environment of conflict which could be characterized as being individual action was formed between people on the return path after war. The individual conflict transformed into a social conflict upon the call of the parties to their asabiyes. As a result of the struggle between Cahcah and Sinan, Cahcah's strike on Sinan and Sinan's call on the Muhâcir (immigrants), the Ensâr (locals) and the Muhâcir (immigrants) confronted each other for the first time.⁵² The most importance reason of this event's being characterized as a social conflict lies in the confrontation of Muslim societies (Muhâcir-Ensâr). Drawing out of weapons suggest a social change in terms of the regression of the society. The intervention of the charismatic authority into the situation and his definition of the confrontational attitude (asabiyet) as a case of ignorance⁵³ indicate the guidance principle of social change in the circular loop approach.

The seventh principle is the *harmony between what is divine and what is social*. The revelation period social change demonstrates this fact to us on numerous points as is indicated in the study. For instance, when the names of the surats sent are examined, it is observed that the names of religious social stratas are included in the Koran. Surats Al-Mu'minun, Al-Munafiqun and Al-Kafirun demonstrate that social stratas of the period have become the subjects of revelations. This also indicates the harmony between what is divine and what is social.

The second example is the relationship between the verses sent and the social environment. When this relationship is examined, it is observed that what is divine (revelations) and what is social are in harmony. For instance, the Infidels are not mentioned in the verses sent in the Mecca period. As the Infidel faction is a

⁵¹Vâkıdî, *Kitâbu'l-Meğâzî*, v. II, p. 407.

⁵²Ibn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. II, p. 290.

⁵³Ahmed b. Hanbel, *Müsned*, v. XXII, p. 469.

characteristic of the Medina society, this faction is not faced with in the civil verses. Another important point is the fact that the 60th verse of the Surat Ali Imran is about the Battle of Uhud. When asked for information of the Battle of Uhud, Abdurrahman b. Avf told them to read 120th and following verses of the Surat Ali Imran, and that one can feel as if he is in Uhud after reading the related verses.⁵⁴

The third example is the statement of Abdullah b. Übeyy b. Selül from the Infidel section who said after the Müstalikoğulları Gazve that “If we return to Medina, those with the most honour and strength shall certainly drive out the honourless and weak from there”. As a result of Zeyd b. Erkam’s communication of this statement to Muhammad the Prophet, Abdullah b. Übeyy b. Selül denied what he said.⁵⁵ However, the Surat Munafiqun which was sent despite his denial⁵⁶ enlightened an individual event which occurred in a social environment.

The fourth example is the accusation of adultery. The environment of social conflict did not happen in terms of drawing swords only. The clash of ideas led to the emergence of social disagreements as well. As regression, deterioration and collapse are types of social change as well, an inducement which may occur in the perception of the society shall give rise to a change. At this point, the operational character of the Infidel faction who were the secret opponents of the Medina period stands out. Muhammad the Prophet, who was in the habit of taking one of his wives with him when going on a campaign, took his wife Aisha with him on the campaign to Müstalikoğulları.

Aisha’s lagging behind the army as a result of her loss of time when searching for a necklace she lost on the return journey⁵⁷ and her and Safvan b. Muattal’s, who was the army’s rear guard, catching up with the army just when the army was camping were transformed into a lie of adultery and slander with the influence of the Infidels and

⁵⁴ Belâzürî, *Ensâbu 'l-Eşrâf*, v. I, p. 327.

⁵⁵ Vâkîdî, *Kitâbu 'l-Meğâzî*, v. II, p. 416-417.

⁵⁶ The eighth verse in the Surat itself refers to the statement of Abdullah b. Übeyy b. Selül. They say “If we return to Medina, the more honoured shall surely expel therefrom the humble.” And to Allah belongs all honour, and to His Messenger, and to the believers. But the infidels do not know this. *Munafiqun*, 63/8.

⁵⁷ Vâkîdî, *Kitâbu 'l-Meğâzî*, v. II, p. 426.

became a social upheaval.⁵⁸ The issue was extensively discussed in the mescid⁵⁹ which can be considered as the parliament of the modern age. Muhammad met with the different addressees of the issue (Berire, Ali, Zeynep binti Cahş, Zeyd b. Harise, Üsame b. Zeyd, Ümmü Eymen⁶⁰) as well as the society, and finally consulted his wife Aisha⁶¹. An individual incident became a public issue with slander and the problem was deepened over a family. Social change was transformed into a dynamism which was directed against social peace and, in addition, made people question the family of the charismatic leader when a perception based on lies and slander was created.

The grand scale of this social indignation is evident from the platform of discussion which occurred in an atmosphere which is incomparably small in terms of the population of modern cities. Whereas medical and legal facilities which allow for the detection of such an incident exist today, only one way was available at the time which could solve this social issue. That solution was the reflection of what is divine. When the issue was clarified, Aisha's innocence was established and how the society must behave when faced with such a situation⁶² was stated, we want to draw attention to the harmony between what is social and what is divine which is one of the fundamental arguments of our thesis once again. From the perspective of change, the society was sifted through a divine evaluation in terms of its attitude towards events and incidents and the attitude which needs to be adopted towards these types of incidents was embedded in society.

The fifth example is the Hudeybiye Agreement. The harmony between what is social and what is divine is evident in the Hudeybiye Agreement. The Koran defines this agreement as a conquest despite its negative aspects and the disappointments which occurred in the Muslim society.⁶³ This event is significant in terms of revealing the unexpected results of a social incident. Because change comes to a conclusion which is

⁵⁸ İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. II, p. 299.

⁵⁹ İbn Hişâm, *es-Sîretü'n-Nebeviyye*, v. II, p. 300.

⁶⁰ Vâkîdî, *Kitâbu'l-Meğâzî*, v. II, p. 430-432.

⁶¹ Avâcî, *Mervîyyâtü'l-İmam ez-Zührî fi'l-Meğâzî*, p. 465-467.

⁶² An-Nur, 24/11-23.

⁶³ Al-Fath, 48/1-2.

contrary to expectations. The Muslim society is in a state of shock as the cannot see the result in face of the agreement's definition as a conquest.⁶⁴

The last example occurs as a result of a divine-social harmony action which is individual but involves the whole society. For instance a man's oath to his wife which states "you shall become like my mother's back to me" was termed "zihar" and meant divorce.⁶⁵ Lady Havle who was faced with such a situation brought the issue to Muhammad the Prophet and the revelation which was sent as a result⁶⁶ resolved the issue. This command was amended and got embedded in the society in its amended state. This also demonstrates the harmony of the relationship between what is social and what is divine.

5.CONCLUSION

Social change is a strong wind. It is very difficult to resist against change and insist on not changing. This situation is the expression of a fact which is valid for both modern and pre-modern societies. Religions are important instruments of social change. As the relations of religion and social change are reciprocal, religions can be the basis of social change.

The circular loop approach which establishes principles for how a religion programmed to change the revelation period society as a pre-modern society changes the social sphere divides social change into three phases and states that social change begun in Mecca, continued in Medina and returned to Mecca after the conquest throughout the revelation period.

The approach which is referred as circular loop in the three phases of social change emphasizes that the main aim of social change is to integrate the society. The integration in the revelation period social change was ultimately ensured on the basis of faith by melting all religious social stratas in the pot of Islam.

⁶⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Kitabü't-Tabakâti'l-Kübra*, v. II, p. 100.

⁶⁵ Ahmet Yaman, "Zihar", *DİA*, v. VLIV, p. 387.

⁶⁶ Mücadele, 58/1-4.

The principle of universality in the circular loop approach emphasizes that a religion which goes beyond the boundaries it is born in transfers social change beyond these boundaries as well. The secrecy-openness principle of social change underlines the fact that as change can take time, this time may depend on power.

The liberation principle of the circular loop approach refers to the right to vote an live of individuals in social life. The progressiveness principle states that change cannot occur suddenly and takes place on a horizontal level with examples on the theory and application of religion. The guidance principle presents a development target to the society in social change. In this context, the revelation period social change is not easy or accidental.

Lastly, the divine-social harmony underlines that divine interventions happen with revelations aimed for the society during the revelation period social change. In this context, some conditions which may lead to unrest and instability in the social sphere are brought to order with divine guidance.

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