

Makalenin Türkçe çevirisini
sayfa 43'den itibaren okuyabilirsiniz.

One Hundred Years of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding: For a Türkiye that Welcomes a New Century of Peace!

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A visitor approaching Türkiye, seeking to learn from others and offering in return the modest ability to reflect that he developed, sees, over time, numerous images come before his eyes. These images chase each other, compose, decompose, and recompose like in a kaleidoscope. Each of them shows different aspects of human society's life. Some images speak to the intellect, others to the heart. There are images from the distant past, such as the Hittite deities in Yazılıkaya. The coexistence and joint movement of these images demonstrate the ancient Anatolian humanity's effort to unite with others by embracing the diverse deities of each group. This significant effort towards the development of inclusive democracy, unity in diversity, is engraved in stone.

It constitutes a call that, from the heart of Anatolia, is directed to present-day Türkiye and the entire world. Another image is that of the Ottomans, who, demonstrating organizational, strategic, and tactical prowess, managed to conquer Constantinople. The ingenuity of Ottoman culture had thus

rendered futile the attempt begun over 1000 years earlier by Diocletian to make the conquests of Roman civilization governable. Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror, opened the door to addressing a second major political problem, namely the governance of vast spaces. This problem had been addressed by Roman civilization through the division of the empire into two. The result of this division highlighted a diversity of cultural approaches, but they rested on a common foundation: Christianity. The division of the empire did not help the two parts to support each other. The western part of the empire, which spoke Latin, succumbed to the pressure of peoples who wanted to migrate to the empire attracted by economic well-being. The cities in Northern Italy, more affected by the pressure of the Goths, failed to consider welcoming those knocking at their doors, and eventually succumbed to their own lack of initiative and organization, descending into chaos.

The Eastern Roman Empire, which managed to maintain internally coherent and efficient organization, after producing the codification of Roman law, experienced significant development. However, the Eastern Roman Empire could not escape the relationship between development and war. Just as in the case of ancient Greece, which, while fighting with the Persians, weakened and could not defend itself from Roman conquest, the Byzantine Empire faced a similar fate. The war with the Persian peoples was a fundamental cause of both the decline of the Byzantine Empire and the Persians themselves. In their place, the star of the Ottoman Empire emerged. However, even the Ottoman Empire could not escape the development-war dichotomy.

However, despite submitting to Western nations that had built empires based on colonization and maritime foundations, the Ottoman Empire maintained a characteristic that continued the tradition of Constantinople and the Arab tradition: the creation of cultural bridges. This feature was particularly important within the Ottoman Empire because it allowed for the gathering of bright minds from across the empire in the educational centers of Istanbul. The ensuing cultural communication can be considered a virtuous example, contrasting with European culture, which, instead of focusing on the national element, can be deemed a virtuous example. In Europe, culture, philosophy, and technology enabled the development of impressive national systems capable of sustaining wars of previously

unthinkable magnitude. This period, spanning from the beginning of the First World War (the assassination in Sarajevo) to the end of the Second World War (the bombing of Hiroshima), brought Europe to the brink of genuine economic suicide; this involved colonized countries and demonstrated its ability to pose a real threat to human civilization.

Türkiye, on the other hand, relying on profound wisdom derived from communication, has, despite various disastrous errors, been able to understand its role in the Euro-Asian continent, pragmatically choosing a path founded on peace. The fundamental contribution of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was precisely to have participated in this deep reflection on Ottoman identity and its transformation, choosing the path that would ensure peace and stability. In this sense, he is considered one of the greatest leaders in the history of humanity. He enabled Türkiye to escape the tragedies of World War II and maintain a coherent identity even in the complexity of the Middle East. This achievement has particularly enriched society, as it spared human lives that were ready to defend their country. This is the third image that comes to mind when thinking about Türkiye. It is that of a society sensitive to art, the heart, and the life of others, capable of refined thought and art, of sacrifice, of working silently and humbly. This image, speaking to the heart, is a call for all of Türkiye.

Secularity, understood as the inclusion of everyone and every part of society, has not only been a foundation for the rebirth of the state led by Atatürk but is also a path that has been undertaken for a hundred years and is now at a crucial moment within Turkish society and in Türkiye's relations with the rest of the world. The path of secularity is a journey that does not deny any human, cultural, or spiritual dimension. Instead, it seeks to share the good in each. Therefore, within Türkiye, this path must be realized through social dialogue. Neither technocratic integration nor conflict can be the basis for dialogue. The ethical dimension of dialogue tends to seek common elements. It is closely linked to the concept of secularity because it encourages not judging based on apparent differences but appreciating each contribution to the common good.

The call for social dialogue within Turkish society is all the more important because it holds a significant international dimension. At this moment, the European Union, due to an excessive attachment to its principles, and Russia, due to an excessive attachment to its identity, have failed to move

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beyond the geopolitical perspective that divides them. The relationship between secularity, sharing, and dialogue, if implemented by Turkish society, can become a moment of genuine transcendence in the Middle East, overcoming differences that currently seem irreconcilable. One hundred years of secularity pave the way for one hundred years of dialogue, and this success will be engraved in the stone of universal history.

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