

# Genocide Victim Gazans Arriving in Turkey: A Qualitative Study on Their Trauma, Religious Coping Experiences and Future Prospects

*Türkiye'ye Gelen Soykırım Mağduru Gazzeliler: Travmaları, Dini Başa Çıkma Deneyimleri ve Gelecek Beklentilerine Dair Nitel Bir Araştırma*

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## Genocide Victim Gazans Arriving in Turkey: A Qualitative Study on Their Trauma, Religious Coping Experiences and Future Prospects

### Abstract

This study explores the traumatic experiences, religious coping strategies and future prospects of Palestinian individuals affected by Israeli attacks on Gaza started in October 2023. A qualitative methodology was used and semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight war-affected participants from Gaza. In this research, purposive sampling was used to select participants who were directly affected by Israeli occupation in Gaza and had personally experienced war-related trauma. This research explores the psychological consequences of such traumatic experiences and the role of religion in serving as a coping mechanism. In the analysis of the data set obtained in the study, the themes of "Scars of War" and "Connecting to Life with Faith" were reached. The "Scars of War" theme includes the codes "Deep Wounds" and "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder". In the theme of "Connecting to Life with Faith", there are the codes of "Leaning on and Trusting God", "Trial" and "Looking to the Future with Hope/Not Looking to the Future with Hope". Participants reported severe psychological distress, exhibiting symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including intense fear, sadness, and hopelessness. Subjects' experiences included bereavement, injury, devastation, and exposure to constant threats. Despite the obvious challenges faced by the subjects, religious beliefs and practices emerged as important coping mechanisms. Perspectives on the future varied. Some participants had a positive outlook, expressing a strong belief in the imminent recovery of Gaza and the possibility of being reunited with their relatives. Others expressed feelings of uncertainty and hopelessness shaped by ongoing trauma and instability. The findings emphasize the dual impact of trauma and faith in the aftermath of war. It is clear that religious coping strategies have been identified as important sources of resilience. Furthermore, future expectations, particularly belief in a hopeful future, have been shown to have a significant impact on the healing process.

**Keywords:** Psychology of Religion, Religious Coping, Gaza, Trauma, War Victims, Future Expectations

## Türkiye'ye Gelen Soykırım Mağduru Gazzeliler: Travmaları, Dini Başa Çıkma Deneyimleri ve Gelecek Beklentilerine Dair Nitel Bir Araştırma

### Öz

Bu çalışma, İsrail'in Ekim 2023'te Gazze'ye düzenlediği saldırılardan etkilenen Filistinli bireylerin travmatik deneyimlerini, dini başa çıkma stratejilerini ve gelecek beklentilerini araştırmaktadır. Araştırmada nitel bir metodoloji kullanılmış ve Gazze'de savaştan etkilenen sekiz katılımcı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Gazze'deki İsrail işgalinden doğrudan etkilenen ve savaşla ilgili travmayı kişisel olarak deneyimleyen katılımcıları seçmek için amaçlı örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırma, bu tür travmatik deneyimlerin psikolojik sonuçlarını ve dinin bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak hizmet etmedeki rolünü araştırmaktadır. Araştırmada elde edilen veri setinin analizinde "Savaşın İzleri" ve "Hayata İnançla Bağlanmak" temalarına ulaşılmıştır. "Savaşın İzleri" temasında "Derin Yaralar" ve "Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu" kodları yer almaktadır. "Hayata İnançla Bağlanmak" temasında ise "Tanrı'ya Dayanmak ve Güvenmek", "Deneme" ve "Geleceğe Umutla Bakmak/Geleceğe Umutla Bakmamak" kodları yer almaktadır. Katılımcılar yoğun korku, üzüntü ve umutsuzluk gibi travma sonrası stres bozukluğu (TSSB) ile uyumlu semptomlar sergileyerek ciddi psikolojik sıkıntı yaşadıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Katılımcıların deneyimleri arasında yas, yaralanma, yıkım ve sürekli tehditlere maruz kalma yer almaktadır. Katılımcıların karşılaştığı bariz zorluklara rağmen, dini inançlar ve uygulamalar önemli başa çıkma mekanizmaları olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Geleceğe ilişkin bakış açıları çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Bazı katılımcılar Gazze'nin yakın zamanda iyileşeceğine ve akrabalarıyla yeniden bir araya gelme ihtimaline dair güçlü bir inanç ifade ederek olumlu bir bakış açısına sahiptir. Diğerleri ise süregelen travma ve istikrarsızlığın şekillendirdiği belirsizlik ve umutsuzluk duygularını ifade etmiştir. Bulgular, savaş sonrasında travma ve inancın ikili etkisini vurgulamaktadır. Dini başa çıkma stratejilerinin önemli bir dayanıklılık kaynağı olarak tanımlandığı açıktır. Ayrıca, gelecek beklentilerinin, özellikle de umutlu bir geleceğe olan inancın, iyileşme süreci üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu gösterilmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Din Psikolojisi, Dini Başa Çıkma, Gazze, Travma, Savaş Mağdurları, Gelecek Beklentileri

## Introduction

Since the offensive began in October 2023, Gaza has been experiencing a serious humanitarian crisis.<sup>1</sup> Israeli military operations, including extensive airstrikes and ground operations, causing widespread damage and destruction, have severely affected the civilian population and infrastructure in Gaza.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that children, adolescents and adults living in war and conflict zones are at high risk of developing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress.<sup>3</sup> As individuals' behavioral and emotional responses to events vary, so do their reactions to trauma<sup>4</sup>.

In the aftermath of the Second Intifada (Second Uprising, which refers to the second Palestinian uprising following the first one that took place between December 1987 and 1993), a significant number of Palestinian youths living in the Gaza Strip experienced serious psychological problems such as PTSD, depression and anxiety. Many of them exhibited negative coping responses during this process.<sup>5</sup> Palestinian adolescents exposed to the war in Gaza experienced various traumatic events, such as watching mutilated bodies on television and hearing heavy artillery bombardments. Research has shown that girls show more symptoms of anxiety and PTSD than boys.<sup>6</sup> Such traumatic experiences severely disrupt children's sleep and cause uncontrollable fears among infants and children, leading to anxiety, panic attacks and impaired concentration.<sup>7</sup> In 2012, the long-term effects of the war in the Gaza Strip on the psychological state of children were investigated.<sup>8</sup> The findings suggest that greater exposure to war trauma is associated with higher levels of behavioral and emotional disorders, neuroticism and PTSD symptoms. Problem-focused coping methods were found to contribute to a more positive mood, but emotion-focused coping strategies were associated with higher levels of behavioral and emotional disorders.<sup>9</sup> A study by Elbedour<sup>10</sup> on traumatic reactions to the first uprising (Intifada) between 1987 and 1993 showed that the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder ranged from 12 to 18%. Garbarino<sup>11</sup> reported a similar rate of PTSD in the same population. In a study of the long-term effects of the First Intifada, Thabet and Vostanis<sup>12</sup> reported an even higher rate of PTSD.<sup>13</sup> Religious and cultural coping mechanisms played a significant role in how Palestinians processed the trauma of war and occupation. In a study conducted by Afana et al.<sup>14</sup>, adult Palestinians were found to use various coping strategies such as creating cultural and religious meaning, developing a sense of individuality, normalization, habit formation, belonging, acceptance, expectation, preparedness, and seeking social support. In another study conducted with Palestinian refugees living in various camps in Lebanon, a significant negative relationship was found between PTSD and psychological

<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Nijim, "Genocide in Palestine: Gaza as a Case Study", *The International Journal of Human Rights* 27/1 (02 Ocak 2023), 165-200.

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Buheji, "Avoiding Resilience Fatigue- Navigating 'Collective Pain' and 'Collective Happiness' in Gaza (War of 2023/2024)", *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences* 14/1 (2024), 22-33.

<sup>3</sup> Abdel Aziz Mousa Thabet vd., "Trauma, PTSD, Anxiety, and Coping Strategies Among Palestinians Adolescents Exposed to War on Gaza", *The Arab Journal of Psychiatry* 25 (2014), 71-82.

<sup>4</sup> Carla L. Storr vd., "Childhood Antecedents of Exposure to Traumatic Events and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 164/1 (2007), 119-125.

<sup>5</sup> Salman Elbedour vd., "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, and Anxiety Among Gaza Strip Adolescents in the Wake of the Second Uprising (Intifada)", *Child Abuse & Neglect* 31/7 (2007), 719-729.

<sup>6</sup> A. A. Thabet vd., "Exposure to War Trauma and PTSD among Parents and Children in the Gaza Strip", *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 17/4 (Haziran 2008), 191-199.

<sup>7</sup> Thabet – El-Buhaisi – Vostanis, "Trauma, PTSD, Anxiety and Coping Strategies among Palestinians Adolescents Exposed to War in Gaza", 71.

<sup>8</sup> J. J. Ghaddar, "Palestine as Provenance: Archiving against Genocide from Gaza to South Lebanon (Jabal Amil)", *Archival Science* 25/3 (Eylül 2025), 1-39.

<sup>9</sup> Vivian Khamis, "Coping with War Trauma and Psychological Distress among School-Age Palestinian Children", *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 85/1 (2015), 72-79.

<sup>10</sup> Elbedour vd., "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, and Anxiety Among Gaza Strip Adolescents in the Wake of the Second Uprising (Intifada)", 152-170.

<sup>11</sup> James Garbarino, "Challenges We Face in Understanding Children and War: A Personal Essay", *Child Abuse & Neglect* 17/6 (Ocak 1993), 787-793.

<sup>12</sup> Thabet vd., "Exposure to War Trauma and PTSD among Parents and Children in the Gaza Strip", 191-199.

<sup>13</sup> Elbedour vd., "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, and Anxiety Among Gaza Strip Adolescents in the Wake of the Second Uprising (Intifada)", 152-170.

<sup>14</sup> Abdelhamid J. Afana vd., "Coping with Trauma and Adversity Among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: A qualitative, Culture-Informed Analysis", *Journal of Health Psychology* 25/12 (2020), 2031-2048.

resilience — as resilience levels increased, symptoms of PTSD decreased.<sup>15</sup> In this study conducted with 511 participants, the traumatic events experienced included raids, torture, airstrikes, forced displacement, imprisonment, bombings, sniper attacks, kidnapping, suicide attempts, participation in warfare, and sexual violence.<sup>16</sup>

According to Lazarus and Folkman<sup>17</sup> coping is the process of managing demands that exceed an individual's internal and external resources.<sup>18</sup> Traumatic life events are considered as a dynamic process. Psychological, emotional and behavioral reactions brought about by living in a world shaped by war, widespread torture and violent political conflicts have universal characteristics.<sup>19</sup> However, social representations of traumatic experiences and the meanings attributed to them vary according to social, cultural and political contexts and individual biographies.<sup>20</sup>

As of early 2024, several academic studies—particularly in Turkish—have begun addressing the events in Gaza through the lens of genocide.<sup>21</sup> One of the earliest examples is the article by Arı and Turan<sup>22</sup> titled “A Crime of Humanity and the Tragedy of Genocide: An Assessment of the Need for Israel to be Prosecuted for the State Terrorism it Inflicted on the Palestinians”, published in December 2023. Although a comprehensive systematic review is still lacking, existing literature in Turkish academic circles increasingly conceptualizes the Gaza attacks as genocide, often framed within international law and human rights discourse.<sup>23</sup> In total, only one article was published in the field of Sociology of Religion and another in the field of Psychology of Religion. In the field of Psychology of Religion, Orhan Gürsu wrote an article titled “Ordinarisation of Evil: A Psychological Analysis in the Context of the Gaza Genocide” was published in June 2024.<sup>24</sup> In the field of Sociology of Religion by Yılmaz Arı “Destruction in the Shadow: A History of Israel's State Sponsored Terror and the Tragedy of Genocide” published in September 2024.<sup>25</sup> While scholarly interest in the Gaza crisis has recently increased, especially after the events of October 2023, academic studies examining the issue from a theological or psychosocial perspective remain limited. The current study aims to fill in this gap by examining the psychological and religious coping experiences of Gaza war victims and their perspectives on the future.

In line with the feedback and suggestions of experts, the interview form was revised and finalized after a pilot application. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do individuals affected by the Gaza attacks describe and interpret their traumatic experiences, and in what ways do these experiences influence them emotionally and psychologically?
2. What coping mechanisms, particularly spiritual and religious strategies, do participants employ in dealing with the traumatic events they experienced?
3. What are their expectations and hopes for the future despite the traumas and uncertainties they have faced?

<sup>15</sup> Alean Al-Krenawi vd., “Mental Health and Violence/Trauma in Palestine: Implications for Helping Professional Practice”, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 35/2 (01 Mayıs 2004), 185-209.

<sup>16</sup> D. Erdemir, *Lübnan'daki Filistinli Mültecilerde Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu, Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Dini Başa Çıkma* (Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2024).

<sup>17</sup> Richard S. Lazarus - Susan Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 1984), 334-376.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Creamer vd., “Psychometric Properties of the Impact of Event Scale—Revised”, *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 41/12 (Aralık 2003), 1489-1496.

<sup>19</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Genocide in Gaza and the End of Settler Colonialism”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (17 Mayıs 2025), 1-16.

<sup>20</sup> Afana vd., “Coping with Trauma and Adversity Among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: A qualitative, Culture-Informed Analysis”, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Buheji, “Avoiding Resilience Fatigue- Navigating ‘Collective Pain’ and ‘Collective Happiness’ in Gaza (War of 2023/2024)”, 22-24.

<sup>22</sup> Yılmaz Arı - Mustafa Turan, “A Crime Against Humanity and the Tragedy of Genocide: An Evaluation That Israel Should Be Sued for State Terrorism Against Palestinians”, *Uluslararası Dörlion Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1/2 (2023), 445-465.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth I. Pargament vd., “Methods of Religious Coping with the Gulf War: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56/4 (1994), 519-543.

<sup>24</sup> Orhan Gürsu, “Kötülüğün Sıradanlaştırılması: Gazze Soykırımı Bağlamında Psikolojik Bir Analiz”, *Burdur İlahiyat Dergisi* 8 (28 Haziran 2024), 130-149.

<sup>25</sup> Yılmaz Arı, “Gölgede Kalan Yıkım: İsrail'in Devlet Destekli Terörü ve Soykırım Trajedisi Tarihi”, *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11/2 (15 Eylül 2024), 639-665.

4. How have their perspectives on life, death, and their relationship with faith or God been influenced by the war and violence?

## 1. Method

### 1.1. Research Design

This research was conducted using qualitative research method and interview technique as a data collection tool. Qualitative research method was preferred in order to examine in more detail the psychotraumatic situation experienced by Palestinian individuals who were directly exposed to the occupation in Gaza and the religious methods they used to cope with this situation.<sup>26</sup>

While preparing the interview form, open-ended, non-leading, and clearly worded questions were developed in line with qualitative research principles.<sup>27</sup> The questions were designed to allow participants to freely express their experiences without being influenced by the researcher's expectations. For instance, rather than asking "Did you feel hopeless during the war?", the form included neutral questions such as "How did you feel during and after the events you experienced?". Additionally, expert opinion was sought to ensure content clarity and cultural appropriateness. The draft interview form was sent to four academics specialized in the field of Psychology of Religion and two academics experienced in qualitative research methods. In line with the feedback and suggestions of the experts, necessary arrangements were made in the questions and order. After the pilot application, the 6-questions interview form was applied.

### 1.2. Sample

In this research, purposive sampling method was used to select participants who were directly affected by Israeli occupation in Gaza and had personally experienced war-related trauma. A total of eight participants were included in the study. Although reaching volunteers among war-affected individuals posed practical challenges, the primary criterion for determining the sample size was data saturation, which was achieved during the study. The Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form that also included socio-demographic questions such as age and gender. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in the Table 1.

Two of the participants were between the ages of 10-20, two were between the ages of 21-30, and four were between the ages of 31-40. 6 of the participants were female and 2 were male. In order to ensure confidentiality, participants were coded as P1–P8. Within these codes, demographic information was analyzed. "P" denotes the participant and the number refers to the participant's order in the sample. The additional code in parentheses (e.g., A32) indicates the participant's age. These codes are used throughout the findings section when quoting participants' statements.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>	10-20 years old	2	25
	21-30 years old	2	25
	31-40 years old	4	50
	<b>Total</b>	8	100
<b>Gender</b>	Female	6	75
	Male	2	25
	<b>Total</b>	8	100

<sup>26</sup> John W. (Creswell) *Araştırma Deseni* (Ankara: Eğiten Kitap, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Ali Yıldırım – Hasan Şimşek, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 8. Basım. 2011), 61-124.

### 1.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to data collection, ethics committee approval (Approval No: E.88656144-000-240016363) was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Atatürk University. The research was conducted through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with eight Palestinian individuals who had been brought to Ankara for medical treatment after being injured during the Israeli attacks on Gaza. The data collection process took place between January and February 2024. The interviews were conducted in Arabic with the help of a professional interpreter, as the participants did not speak in Turkish. Two trained researchers carried out the interviews in a quiet and safe hospital consultation room in Ankara, ensuring privacy and minimizing external stressors. To prevent re-traumatization, several precautions were taken: the participants were informed that the interview could be paused or terminated at any time upon their request, and they were encouraged to share only what they felt comfortable with. In addition, a multidisciplinary team consisting of psychologists, social workers, spiritual counselors, doctors, and nurses was present in the hospital setting to provide comprehensive support. This team-based approach ensured that participants' physical, psychological, and spiritual needs were addressed, thereby safeguarding their well-being throughout the data collection process.

In the analysis of the data set obtained in the study, the themes of "Scars of War" and "Connecting to Life with Faith" were reached. The "Scars of War" theme includes the codes "Deep Wounds" and "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder". In the theme of "Connecting to Life with Faith", there are the codes of "Leaning on and Trusting God", "Trial" and "Looking to the Future with Hope / Not Looking to the Future with Hope":

### 2. Scars of War

"Scars of War" one of the main themes that emerged in this study, covers the lasting emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physical effects of armed conflict on individuals. The scars of trauma are felt intensely on both the physical and psychological levels, and these effects are strongly expressed in the narratives of the participants, especially through the memories that "affected them the most". Participants emphasized the deep wounds inflicted by the war by expressing not only the physical damages they suffered, but also the loss of their hopes for the future. For example, one participant (P3, A32) expressed the widespread destruction caused by the war and its impact on life expectations as follows: *"Dreams were destroyed, dreams are no more. There is a great pain left behind. Hospitals and schools were destroyed. Lack of education, disease started to spread... This war left a great pain."* Similarly, another participant (P7, A28) expressed the deep helplessness and emotional breakdown she experienced during the shooting of her child in the following words: *"My daughter Meryem fainted when she was shot, I thought she was a martyr. I was 9 months pregnant, I didn't know what to do. I can never forget that moment, it was very difficult."* This narrative reveals how traumatic the war has left a mark on individual memories and the intensity of trauma experienced through the mother-child relationship. Another participant (P1, A31), focusing on the impact of the war on children, drew attention not only to trauma itself, but also to deep impact of witnessing the pain of others: *"What affected me the most was the pain of children. There are so many wounded children, many of them lost their hands and feet. For example, my niece Nur lost her leg. Many of them lost their parents, so far there are more than 25,000 orphans in Gaza... Dreams have been destroyed, there are no dreams anymore. We are back 100 years."* This statement points to collective aspect of trauma and the secondary traumatization process that the pain witnessed creates on the individual. Finally, another participant (P8, A31) conveyed the deep burden of conscience created by her own injury and not being able to help her children as follows: *"When I was injured, my children were lying on the ground covered in blood and I couldn't do anything. I couldn't help them. Especially my daughter's internal organs were outside, she was asking me for help but I couldn't do anything. I couldn't even go to her because I was injured too."* This example reveals

that the feelings of helplessness, guilt and powerlessness that war creates in the psychological world of the individual leave deep and lasting traumatic effects.

Participants' accounts reveal that they experienced intense anxiety, constant fear, insomnia and restlessness in the post-war period. These psychological symptoms largely overlap with the classic symptoms described in the literature as post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD.<sup>28</sup> One of the participants (P2, A31) described the mental breakdown she experienced as follows: *"I couldn't sleep, I was going to the cemetery at night so that my daughter wouldn't be scared. My hair was falling out all the time, I was vomiting blood."* Similarly, another participant (P8, A31) stated that the moments of helplessness she experienced during the war were constantly replayed in her mind, which caused intense fear and insomnia: *"I couldn't help my children while they were lying in blood... Every time I think about it, I get very tired, I can't sleep."*

### 3. Connecting to Life with Faith

The second theme identified in this study, "Connecting to Life with Faith", reflects how participants used religious faith as both an emotional refuge and a framework for interpreting traumatic events. Rather than perceiving their suffering as meaningless or random, many participants saw it as a divine or spiritual test. This helped them regain a sense of control and meaning after the war, helping to reduce existential distress and promote psychological resilience. Faith not only served as a coping mechanism, but also strengthened their sense of hope and purpose, especially for the future. Participants frequently mentioned practices such as prayer, dhikr and religious contemplation as tools for managing emotional pain. Many emphasized that trusting in God gave them inner strength and patience. The idea that suffering is a test from God provided comfort and a sense of spiritual elevation. However, a divergence emerged in future expectations: while some participants remained faith-based hopeful about Gaza's recovery and family reunification, others - particularly those who had experienced deeper personal losses - expressed continued fear, despair and doubt. This theme therefore reveals how faith mediates the tension between trauma and hope, offering both stability and, for some, limitations or even obstacles in coping. In this sense, it is noteworthy that the main basis for surviving and maintaining psychological integrity despite severe trauma is the belief in God. This belief points not only to a metaphysical acceptance but also to a source of psychological resistance. By referring to a Qur'anic verse (Al-Inshirāḥ 5-6) one of the participants stated, *"First of all, our belief in God kept us alive and we know that after every difficulty there is an ease and God will remove the sadness"* (P1, A32), demonstrating the impact of belief on individual resilience in this context. Similarly, it is also understood that worship and prayer practices are used as a coping strategy in the face of trauma. In this regard, P2 explains the difficult process she went through in the following words: *"I was always doing dhikr, reading the Qur'an and praying a lot, 'God, give patience to my heart.' This was a prayer that increased my patience"* (P2, A31). This statement shows that religious practices are not only a statement of belief, but also a support mechanism that provides inner balance. P7 expressed the religious justification of patience by comparing the difficulties he experienced with the example of the Qur'an and the Prophet as follows: *"If we did not have faith in Allah, if we did not have the Qur'an, we could not be patient... [He recited verses 97, 98 of Surah al-Ḥidjr] We have known since we were children that we will live in this world for as long as Allah gives us and we believe that there is a better and more permanent afterlife for us"* (P7, A28). Such expressions show that individuals interpret the difficulties they experience from a transcendental perspective and in this way engage in a kind of meaning-making process.

Participants consider the wars and losses they have experienced as a divine test (imtihan) and make sense of this experience within the framework of the understanding of fate. In this context, the following words of participant 1 (P1) are noteworthy: *"We believe that it is God's destiny and a test that He has given us and maybe He has given this test to know who will pass and how"* (P1, A32). This statement shows that

<sup>28</sup> Haspolat, *Travma Sonrası Stres Belirtileri ve Travma Sonrası Büyüme: Temel İnançlardaki Değişim, Ruminasyonlar ve Bilgece Farkındalığın Rolü* (Ankara: Başkent Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2019).

events are approached not only from a worldly perspective but also with an afterlife meaning. Similarly, P2 interpreted the process as an experience that reinforced her faith: *"It increased my faith in Allah even more because I was saying to myself that of course Allah is testing my patience, testing me and praise be to Allah, I have always been patient in every test"* (P2, A31). This shows that the individual does not only passively accept the trauma experienced, but on the contrary, integrates this process with faith and transforms it into an active mental resilience and spiritual growth. In this way, trauma becomes not only a source of psychological endurance but also an opportunity for deeper spiritual maturity and meaning-making. Participant 7 (P7, A28) makes sense of the traumatic process she experienced through both the verses of the Qur'ân and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and reinforces her resilience with religious references. In this context, she uses the verse from Surat al-Bakara: *"And certainly We shall test you with a little fear, a little hunger, and loss of property, lives, and produce; give glad tidings to those who are patient"*<sup>29</sup> to interpret the difficulties she faced as a test. In the following verses of the same Surah, *"When a calamity befalls them, they say, 'Surely we belong to Allah and to Him we shall surely return'"*<sup>30</sup> and *"For them is the forgiveness and mercy of their Lord. It is they who are on the right path"*<sup>31</sup> legitimizing the attitude of patience in the face of this test. The participant further deepens this religious perspective by referring to following hadith of the Prophet: *"Whoever is content with calamities, Allah's pleasure and reward are for him; whoever is angry, Allah's wrath is upon him."* In line with this religious framework, despite the heavy losses - *"We lost our house in this war, my husband lost his job, I lost my brother and now we have been away from our loved ones for 5 months."* - P7 states that he tries to maintain an attitude of patience and consent and hopes that this attitude will be rewarded in the sight of Allah: *"We ask Allah to give us the reward of those who are patient."* (P7, A28). These excerpts reveal the effectiveness of the religious meaning-making process behind the individual's patience and resignation in the face of great losses.

While some participants tried to preserve their hopes by considering the war and suffering as a test; others seem to have lost all vision of the future due to the impact of the trauma. P1's statement contains hope: *"I want everyone there to live in safety and peace... what I want most is to be reunited with my children"* (P1, A32)- This statement reflects the desire for collective peace along with individual expectations. On the other hand, P2 almost completely lost his sense of hope after losing his children: *"After losing my children, I have no dreams and hope for the future. There is no future for me"* (P2, A31)- This statement shows the deep despair caused by trauma and clearly demonstrates the need for psychological support. P4, on the other hand, while accepting that he cannot make up for what he has lost, is trying to develop a kind of optimism in order to survive: *"We try to be optimistic, but I don't have a clear view of the future. I don't know, I have no hope either... I just want my surviving loved ones to be well"* (P4, A23). This attitude points to a state of mind oscillating between hopelessness and the desire to live. Some of other respondents (e.g. P7 and P8), for example, construct their hopes for the future more around religious and national symbols: *"May Allah grant us the honor of returning to Al-Aqsa Mosque and seeing it liberated from the filth of the usurpers..."* (P7, A28); *"My dream is for Gaza to be like it used to be... I hope to return to our old days inshallah"* (P8, A31). These expressions show that the sense of hope is intertwined with expectations for social and sacred values rather than individual well-being.

Additional insights were also drawn from the observational notes of the spiritual counselor who was present during the interviews. The counselor reported that, despite profound grief—such as one participant crying upon receiving news of a sibling's death—participants rarely verbalized despair or protest. Instead, their responses were often framed within the religious meaning attributed to martyrdom (shahāda), which was regarded as both honorable and spiritually fulfilling. This perspective, deeply rooted in their cultural and religious upbringing, appeared to provide participants with a sense of resilience and acceptance in the

<sup>29</sup> Kur'ân-ı Kerîm Meâli, çev. Halil Altıntaş - Muzaffer Şahin (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2011), el-Bakara 2/155.

<sup>30</sup> Ali Özek, Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meal (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 27. Basım, 1993), el-Bakara 2/155.

<sup>31</sup> Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meal, el-Bakara 2/156.



face of trauma. Such observations highlight how religious belief systems can shape coping mechanisms, reinforcing the theme of "Connecting to Life with Faith."

In conclusion, while the findings reveal the devastating effects of war on individual mental health, they also show how faith plays a functional role in the process of making sense of and enduring this devastation. In this context, while the theme "Traces of War" is an expression of traumatic reality, the theme "Connecting to Life with Faith" reflects the effort of individuals to recover, generate hope and hold on to life.

## Conclusion

If the stress caused by traumatic events is intense and persists over an extended period, it can lead to the development of a psychological condition known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).<sup>32</sup> PTSD has been formally recognized in every edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) since its third edition, and today it is one of the most widely acknowledged trauma-related disorders. Individuals diagnosed with PTSD often exhibit a range of traumatic stress reactions.<sup>33</sup> These may include re-experiencing the traumatic event as if it were happening again, experiencing intense psychological distress when confronted with reminders of the trauma, or conversely, emotionally distancing themselves from such stimuli and people.<sup>34</sup> Other common symptoms include diminished energy and daily functioning, difficulty falling or staying asleep, reduced frustration tolerance, distractibility, and heightened aggression.<sup>35</sup>

In the findings of our study, it was determined that most of the participants exhibited PTSD symptoms such as hyperarousal, reliving, hypersensitization, inability to accept, sleep disturbances, numbness, and difficulty falling asleep. Although people often want to forget the painful experiences caused by traumatic events, they may remain under their intense psychological impact for a prolonged period.<sup>36</sup> These symptoms are recognized as post-traumatic stress disorder when they persist for more than one month and significantly impair an individual's social, emotional, or occupational functioning.<sup>37</sup> In line with our findings, Lindsay and Kline<sup>38</sup> revealed that individuals' PTSD symptoms increased and their subjective well-being decreased following an earthquake, demonstrating how exposure to traumatic events can erode psychological resilience.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Uchida et al.<sup>40</sup> found a negative and statistically significant relationship between individuals' well-being levels and post-traumatic stress symptoms. These findings are consistent with our results, which indicate that the people of Gaza—exposed to Israel's intense, violent, and disproportionate attacks for over a year—have experienced a significant decline in well-being and an increase in trauma-related symptoms. Supporting this, the study by Veronese et al.<sup>41</sup> conducted with children exposed to war and political violence in Palestine highlighted the importance of subjective well-being dimensions in coping with post-traumatic stress. Likewise, Afana et al.<sup>42</sup> emphasized the ongoing psychological toll of political violence in the region.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Tuğba Özyanık - Sultan Tarlaci, "Toplumsal Travma Döneminde Travma Sonrası Gelişim ve Temel İnançlardaki Sarsılmalar", *Gelişim ve Psikoloji Dergisi* 3/6 (28 Şubat 2023), 121-142.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammed Kızılgeçit, *Din Psikolojisinin 300'ü* (Ankara: Otto Yayıncılık, 2020).

<sup>34</sup> Bilal Hamamra vd., "The Anxiety of Death and the Loss of Loved Ones During Genocide in Gaza", *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, 29, (15 Nisan 2025), 119-136.

<sup>35</sup> Steven Taylor vd., "The Structure of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms", *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 107/1 (Şubat 1998), 154-160.

<sup>36</sup> Mücahit Öztürk, *Çocuk Psikiyatristi* (İstanbul: Uçurtma Yayınları, 2021), 352.

<sup>37</sup> Gül Esra Atalay, "Şiddeti Haber Yapmak: Gazeteciler ve Travma", *Marmara İletişim Dergisi* 2/28 (2017), 21-32.

<sup>38</sup> HJ. Burton vd., "Social Support as a Mediator of Psychological Dysfunctioning and a Determinant of Renal Failure Outcomes", *Clin Exp Dial Apheresis* 7/4 (1983), 371-389.

<sup>39</sup> Burton vd., "Social Support as a Mediator of Psychological Dysfunctioning and a Determinant of Renal Failure Outcomes", 372-376.

<sup>40</sup> Yukiko Uchida vd., "Changes in Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being After a Severe Nationwide Disaster: The Case of the Great East Japan Earthquake", *Journal of Happiness Studies* 15 (2014), 207-221.

<sup>41</sup> Afana vd., "Coping with Trauma and Adversity Among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: A qualitative, Culture-Informed Analysis", 2.

<sup>42</sup> Afana vd., "Coping with Trauma and Adversity Among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: A qualitative, Culture-Informed Analysis", 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ed Diener vd., "New Measures of Well-Being: Flourishing and Positive and Negative Feelings", *Social Indicators Research* 39 (2010), 247-266.

In the findings of our research, which explores how the current situation of individuals affected by the Israeli attacks is reflected in their outlook on the future, the theme of "attachment to life through faith" has distinctly emerged. A significant number of participants reported that, despite experiencing profound trauma, losses, and uncertainty, they seek psychological strength through their religious beliefs. It was observed that they developed coping mechanisms such as belief in God, submission to fate, finding solace from verses, prayers, and belief in the existence of another world.<sup>44</sup>

Research Question first explored how individuals affected by the Gaza attacks described and interpreted their traumatic experiences. The findings indicate that participants suffered profound psychological wounds, expressed as "Deep Scars" and PTSD-like symptoms. Loss of family members, injuries, and destruction of homes left them with shock, fear, and hopelessness. These experiences disrupted their emotional well-being and created lasting psychological effects, highlighting the severe human cost of war.

All participants developed positive spiritual thoughts in the face of the trauma they experienced. This situation is related to a secure attachment to Allah as the attachment figure.<sup>45</sup> The participants used patience, surrender, fortitude, trust, prayer, and gratitude as positive religious coping methods to manage the effects of the stressful situation. Numerous studies have shown that these positive religious coping strategies are associated with better psychological health outcomes.<sup>46</sup> In our research, data supporting this result were obtained. In studies on this subject, patience is defined as a value that supports physical health, psychological and subjective well-being, positive coping and the development of personal values.<sup>47</sup> In addition, patience increases the quality of life of the individual and helps him/her to get away from negative thoughts.<sup>48</sup> Yavuz<sup>49</sup> found a positive correlation between patience and life satisfaction in his study with patients and determined that patience is a factor that increases life satisfaction.<sup>50</sup> In line with the second research question of the present study, the participants reported that they developed spiritual strategies based on their religious beliefs to cope with the traumatic events they experienced. According to the findings, they relied on religious concepts such as "trusting in God," "trial (imtihan)," and "consent (rıza)." These strategies enabled them to demonstrate patience in the face of difficulties, to accept their fate, and to maintain hope despite everything. In this sense, religious beliefs function as a source of spiritual support and psychological resilience in coping with trauma.<sup>51,52</sup>

Frazier et al. (2001) found that victim participants stated worship and prayer increased their resilience and intrinsic motivation to be patient with the events they experienced.<sup>53</sup> Large masses of people often refer to religious references when interpreting life events. Therefore, they feel the need to establish a connection with the religious, spiritual, transcendent or sacred in both troubled and joyful moments.<sup>54</sup> Religious practices such as tawakkul, contemplation, worship, patience, prayer and gratitude are known to be good for individual in difficult life conditions.<sup>55</sup> Pargament et al.<sup>56</sup> reported that religious coping methods

<sup>44</sup> Muhammed Kızılgöçer - Muhammed Berat Gecit, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Dindarlık (Ağrı Örneği)", *Bozok Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 24/24 (2023), 117-144.

<sup>45</sup> Fatma S. Demirkan, "Organ Kaybı Yaşayan'ın Manevi Yaşam Olguları Üzerine Nitel Bir Araştırma", *Din Psikolojisi:Teori, Güncel Araştırmalar, ve Yeni Eğilimler* (İstanbul: Dem Yayınları, 2020), 75-137.

<sup>46</sup> Gene Ano - Erin Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: a Meta-Analysis", *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 4/61 (2005), 469-473; Burcu Uysal (ed.), *Travma ve Psikoterapiler* (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2023), 109-149.

<sup>47</sup> Robert A. Emmons, *Teşekkür Ederim (Mutluluğun Anahtarı Şükretmek)*, çev. Neslihan Kül (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009), 12-15.

<sup>48</sup> Sarah Schnitker, "An Examination of Patience and Well-Being", *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 7/4 (2012), 263-280.

<sup>49</sup> Tuğba Yavuz, *Hemodiyaliz Hastalarında Sabır ve Yaşam Memnuniyeti İlişkisi* (Sivas: Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020), 82.

<sup>50</sup> Behlül Tokur, *İmtihan Psikolojisi: Var Olmanın Hakını Vermek: İmtihan* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2018), 139.

<sup>51</sup> Ayşe Bilge Selçuk, *Psikolojik Sağlamlık* (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2023), 113.

<sup>52</sup> Dilruba Uğurluoğlu - Ramazan Erdem, "Travma Geçiren Bireylerin Spiritüel İyi Oluşlarının Travma Sonrası Büyüme Üzerine Etkisi", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 21/3 (2019), 833-858.

<sup>53</sup> Patricia Frazier vd., "Positive and Negative Life Changes Following Sexual Assault.", *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 69/6 (2001), 1048-1055.

<sup>54</sup> Zuhal Ağılkaya Şahin, *Psikoloji ve Psikoterapide Din* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2024), 30.

<sup>55</sup> Kızılgöçer - Gecit, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Dindarlık (Ağrı Örneği, 2023), 120-121.

<sup>56</sup> Pargament vd., "Methods of Religious Coping with the Gulf War: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses", 519-523.

such as praying for a miracle significantly reduced psychological distress in university students during the Gulf War crisis. Similarly, Fadilpašić et al.<sup>57</sup> found that religiosity and positive religious coping contribute to higher perceived quality of life among survivors of war trauma, with particular importance placed on their impact on social behavior and resilience.<sup>58</sup> In the same vein, Ai et al.<sup>59</sup> showed that religious-spiritual coping promotes positive attitudes among adult Muslim refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia, while optimism and hope further support positive religious coping. By contrast, negative religious coping has been shown to undermine positive coping strategies.<sup>60</sup> In line with the findings of the present study, participants similarly drew upon such positive religious coping resources, particularly emphasizing concepts such as patience, imtihan (trial), and rıza (consent), which helped them to endure traumatic experiences with resilience and hope.<sup>61</sup>

There were also participants who stated that they were grateful by comparing their own situation with those who were in a worse situation or with the negative situations that happened to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and that they found strength in showing patience. Grateful individuals are more satisfied in their lives, more accepting and less depressive since they are more flexible.<sup>62</sup> However, comparative gratitude expresses the feeling of gratitude arising from the fact that the person has not experienced these disasters by looking at pain and disasters experienced by other people. Individuals who experience gratitude in a comparison-orientated way may find some consolation from this kind of gratitude, but when they encounter the painful situation for which they are grateful, they remain in contradiction with their previous gratitude and may become unhappy.<sup>63</sup>

According to findings the victimised participants are divided into two groups in terms of looking to the future with hope and not looking to the future with hope due to their current situation. This might be due to the fact that the trauma they experienced spread over a long period of time. As a matter of fact, traumatic events have two periods: acute period and post-traumatic period.<sup>64</sup> The acute period covers the first thirty days after the individual is exposed to a traumatic event. These acute symptoms are expected to disappear within thirty days.<sup>65</sup> The post-traumatic period is the period that lasts longer than one month and includes reactions such as exaggerated reactions of the individual, being alert at all times, difficulty in focusing, sleep disorders, anger outbursts, inability to focus, frequent dreaming of the event, negative thoughts about oneself and others. However, in contexts where individuals are exposed to continuous threats—such as those living in war zones like Gaza—the conventional PTSD framework may not fully capture their psychological reality. In such cases, the concept of Continuous Traumatic Stress (CTS) has been introduced to describe the ongoing experience of conflict, danger, and uncertainty. Unlike PTSD, which typically refers to the aftermath of a single traumatic event, CTS emphasizes that trauma is ongoing and part of daily life. It reflects the continuous stress responses that arise when individuals are subjected to persistent insecurity and threat.<sup>66</sup> Including CTS in discussions about trauma in conflict zones allows for a more accurate and context-sensitive understanding of the psychological burden faced by affected populations. Although the concept of Continuous Traumatic Stress (CTS) provides valuable insight into the

<sup>57</sup> Fadilpašić Senadin vd., "Relationship of Religiousness and Religious Coping with Quality of Life among War Trauma Survivors", *Psychiatria Danubina* 3/29 (2017), 291-301.

<sup>58</sup> Senadin vd., "Relationship of Religiousness and Religious Coping with Quality of Life among War Trauma Survivors", 291-293.

<sup>59</sup> Amy Lee Ai vd., "The Effect of Religious-Spiritual Coping on Positive Attitudes of Adult Muslim Refugees From Kosovo and Bosnia", *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 13/1 (2003), 29-47.

<sup>60</sup> Mehmet Vehbi Polat, *Tükenmişlikle Başa Çıkma Maneviyatı* (Ankara: Son Çağ Yayınları, 2022), 97-99.

<sup>61</sup> Ai vd., "The Effect of Religious-Spiritual Coping on Positive Attitudes of Adult Muslim Refugees From Kosovo and Bosnia", 244.

<sup>62</sup> Ali Engin Uygur, *Değerler Sisteminin (Dini Başa Çıkma, Affedicilik ve Emmons Şükür Ölçekleri Açısından) Anksiyete Duyarlılığı Üzerindeki Yordayıcı Etkisi: Metakognisyonların Aracı Rolü* (İstanbul: Üsküdar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2016), 41.

<sup>63</sup> Öznur Özdoğan, "Pastoral Psikoloji", *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 47/2 (2006), 127-141.

<sup>64</sup> Ferhat Kardeş - Fuat Tanhan, "Van Depremine Yaşayan Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Travma Sonrası Stres, Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Umutsuzluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi", *Van Yüzüncü Yıl Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 15/1 (2018), 1-36.

<sup>65</sup> Seda Bayraktar, *Psikolojik Travma* (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2016), 22-27.

<sup>66</sup> Mihaliyevic Sanea vd., "Hopelessness, Suicidality And Religious Coping İn Croatian War Veterans With PTSD", *Psychiatria Danubina* 3/24 (2012), 294-295.

experiences of populations living in ongoing conflict zones, it falls outside the scope of the present study. Future research could explore how CTS may intersect with faith-based coping mechanisms in such contexts.

According to research question 3: In terms of expectations for the future, a significant difference was observed among the participants. Some individuals, despite the traumas they have experienced, have a hopeful outlook on the future and believe that everything will be alright. These participants imagine a positive future for both themselves and Gaza. However, other participants felt hopelessness and uncertainty about the future due to intense traumas and losses they have experienced. This is due to the fact that individuals have lost optimism about their future due to the long-term effects of the traumas and the ongoing uncertainty.

This aligns with the findings of Tarhan and Bacanlı<sup>67</sup>, who emphasized that hope involves positive expectations for the future, the pursuit of meaningful goals, and is influenced by factors such as self-efficacy, social support, and religious beliefs. Kardaş and Tanhan<sup>68</sup> found that hopelessness negatively affects posttraumatic growth. As a result of Nearchou and Douglas's (2021) research, it was observed that in case of an increase in hope, COVID-19 traumatic stress decreased and psychological resilience, anxiety and hope mediated the relationship between COVID-19 traumatic stress and depression<sup>69</sup>. On the other hand, the results of some studies examining the relationship between trauma and hopelessness support the fact that some participants have no hope for the future. As a result of the research conducted by Kardaş and Tanhan<sup>70</sup> it was observed that there was a negative and significant relationship between hopelessness and posttraumatic growth. At the same time, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between hopelessness and posttraumatic stress<sup>71</sup>. Similarly, Dürü<sup>72</sup> found a negative predictive relationship between hopelessness and posttraumatic growth variables.<sup>73</sup>

According to the fourth research question, the participants reported that the war and violence profoundly shaped their perspectives on life, death, and their relationship with God. Many individuals emphasized the temporary nature of worldly life and expressed that their faith provided a framework to make sense of suffering. They described the war as a divine test, highlighting patience, acceptance, and trust in God as central to their coping process. For some, these experiences reinforced their spiritual commitment, while others expressed ambivalence or struggles in reconciling their faith with the intensity of loss.

High levels of hope and well-being are considered to be important factors in reducing negative symptoms after trauma in this study. In further studies, it may be recommended to increase hope and well-being, which can be shown among the positive resources of individuals, in intervention studies to be organised to reduce post-traumatic symptoms of individuals affected by war. Preparation of psycho-education programmes aimed at increasing hope and well-being in curative and preventive intervention studies can be recommended to researchers. Developing problem-oriented coping skills should have an important place in psychotherapies. In addition, re-evaluation of thoughts and emotions such as shock, helplessness, hopelessness, anger and coping with these emotions should be among the goals of therapy. In therapy processes, supporting post-traumatic development over time, strengthening the person in general

<sup>67</sup> Sinem Tarhan - Hasan Bacanlı, "İlkokuldan Üniversiteye Umut Kavramının Tanımlanması Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma", *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi* - 4/2 (2016), 86-112.

<sup>68</sup> Kardaş - Tanhan, "Van Depremi Yaşayan Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Travma Sonrası Stres, Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Umutsuzluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi", 28.

<sup>69</sup> Finiki Nearchou - Ellen Douglas, "Traumatic Distress of COVID-19 and Depression in the General Population: Exploring the Role of Resilience, Anxiety, and Hope", *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 18/16 (2021), 8485.

<sup>70</sup> Kardaş - Tanhan, "Van Depremi Yaşayan Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Travma Sonrası Stres, Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Umutsuzluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi", 25.

<sup>71</sup> Kardaş - Tanhan, "Van Depremi Yaşayan Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Travma Sonrası Stres, Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Umutsuzluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi", 27.

<sup>72</sup> Çağay Dürü, *Travma Sonrası Stres Belirtileri ve Travma Sonrası Büyümenin Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi ve Bir Model Önerisi* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2006), 136-138

<sup>73</sup> Dürü, *Travma Sonrası Stres Belirtileri ve Travma Sonrası Büyüme*, 136.

and instilling hope for the future should be among the primary goals.<sup>74</sup> Özdoğan developed a "Value-Focused Spiritual Care Programme" on the basis of Pargament's "Religious Coping Theory" for spiritual care practices. Özdoğan, applied a "Value-Focused Spiritual Care Programme" to prisoners and patients undergoing oncology treatment. The results of these applications, it was seen that spiritual care supports physical and psychological health and provides spiritual empowerment.<sup>75</sup> Considering that individuals who suffered physical and psychological wounds in the Gaza attacks have developed positive spiritual thoughts based on their beliefs, support should be received from such spiritual care programmes to ensure their healing and well-being.<sup>76</sup>

This research was conducted on adult individuals who were exposed to and affected by Israeli attacks. In future studies, different researches can be carried out with experimental or longitudinal models, including other segments of the society such as children, adolescents, elderly and disabled people. Positive character strengths, psychological resilience, problem solving skills, coping skills can be added as variables in future studies.<sup>77</sup>

## Declaration

**1. Finance/Incentives:** The authors declare that no financial/subsidy was used in this study.

**2. Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the study.

**3. Ethical Statement:** The authors declare that research and publication ethics have been followed in this article. For this study, ethical approval was obtained from the Atatürk University Social and Humanities Sciences Ethics Committee on May 20, 2024, with approval number E.88656144-000-240016363. The research was conducted through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with eight Palestinian individuals who were brought to Ankara for treatment after being injured during the Israeli attacks on Gaza. The data collection process took place between January and February 2024.

## 4. Authors' Contributions to the Article

Author	Title	Type of Contribution to the Article	Contribution (%)
Muhammed Kızılgeçit	Professor	Coordination	15
Fatih Kurt	Associate Professor	Conclusion and discussion	10
Kemal Şamlıoğlu	Associate Professor	Data analysis	10
Fatma Betül Toprak	PhD	Themes and coding	10
Arzu Tacer	Expert	Findings and Method	10
Muhammed Berat Gecit	Expert Psychologist	Literature review and responsible authorship	15
Mine Bektaş	Expert Spiritual Advisor	Interviewing participants	10
Tuba Acar	Expert	Transcribing the data	10
Ümran Güler	Graduate Student	Literature review, Abstract, Introduction, Conclusion and adaptation of the article to the template	10
<b>Toplam</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>100</b>

<sup>74</sup> Nuray Karancı vd., *Psikolojik Sağlığını Nasıl Koruruz?-II* (Ankara: ODTÜ Geliştirme Vakfı Yayınları, 2007), 22-28.

<sup>75</sup> Özünur Özdoğan, "Değer Odaklı Manevi Güçlenme ve Bakım Programının Geliştirilmesi ve Uygulanması", *5. Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı içinde* (Üsküp, Makedonya: Sageya Yayınları, 2019), 913-918.

<sup>76</sup> Muhammed Kızılgeçit vd., "Gazze Saldırıların Türkiye'deki Yankıları: Psikososyal ve Dinî Başa Çıkma Stratejileri", *darulfunun ilahiyat* 36/1 (09 Mayıs 2025), 235-269.

<sup>77</sup> Aynur K. Çelik, "Deprem Sonrası Travma Belirtileri, Umut ve İyi Oluş Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi", *TRT Akademi Dergisi* 8/18 (2023), 574-591.

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