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ALIENATION AND RELIGIOSITY

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Publication Principles

Urgent Existential Call: Let's Run to Update Divine Eternal Essence!*

Sadık KILIÇ**

Abstract

The rapid flow of world history has created a gap between yesterday and today. Muslims are obliged to undertake important roles in order to convey this flow into a meaningful base. One of them is to ensure the conscious awakening that would fulfil God's mission for human beings as "the most favorable ummah chosen" by deepening the materialist perspective that deducts humans into a single dimension. The second one is to get rid of the western paradigm, knowledge, and stereotypes and to raise the Quran and the authentic Prophetic traditions as the unchanging essence.

Keywords: Quran, existence, modernism, truth, alienation

The history of the world, which seems very short compared to the history of the universe and the adventure of existence, is subjected to very rapid and diverse changes, transformations and syntheses; and in a sense, there is no common code between yesterday and today and today and tomorrow. In order to place this temporal and phenomenal flow, which consists of periods that are considered nothing against the cosmic existence that feels infinite, into a meaningful and beatific frame, there is no doubt that there are responsibilities incumbent on humans, the focus of the universe, and especially Muslims, as the believers of the truth.

We will try to present these human and existential responsibilities in two stages.

Acil Varoluşsal Eylem: İlahi Ebedi Öz'ü Güncellemeye Koşalım!

Özet

Dünya tarihinin hızlı akışı, dün ile bugün arasında bir kopukluk yaratmaktadır. Bu akışı anlamlı bir zemine oturtma konusunda Müslüman bireyler de önemli roller üstlenmek durumundadır. Bunlardan biri insanı tek boyuta indirgeyen maddî bakış açısını

* This paper is the English translation of the study titled "Acil Varoluşsal Eylem: İlahi Ebedi Öz'ü Güncellemeye Koşalım!" published in the 3th issue of *İlahiyat Akademi*. (Sadık KILIÇ, "Acil Varoluşsal Eylem: İlahi Ebedi Öz'ü Güncellemeye Koşalım!", *İlahiyat Akademi*, sayı: 3, 2016, s. 1-8.) The paper in Turkish should be referred to for citations.

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derinleştirek, Allah Teâlâ'nın kendilerine yüklemiş olduğu "*insanlık için çıkarılmış en hayırlı ümmet*" misyonunu yerine getirecek bilinçsel uyanışı sağlamaktır. İkincisi ise Batı'nın paradigmasından, bilgiye bakış açısından ve düşünce kalıplarından kurtularak, değişmeyen asıl olarak Kur'ân ve sahih nebevi gelenek çerçevesinde kendi hakikat dünyalarını yükseltmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kur'ân, varoluş, modernizm, hakikat, yabancılaşma

a) Stage One: Conscious Awakening!

Today's human social case, in which our problems are becoming increasingly complex and the pile of unsolvable problems is growing day by day, naturally leads us to seek solutions.

The source of all problems, which can be summed up in one word, began by looking at the world and events and the human-meta relations from a single, matter-sized perspective. When the universe and all existence, which is for man and has attained a depth of meaning with it, are isolated from the dimension of metaphysical transparency and infinity, all that remains is a dull and finite model of a covered universe, society, and humanity that shows us no horizon for the future.

Since the enlightening sources of knowledge and wisdom was abandoned with the movement of "I revolt and deny therefore I am!", a new line of growth, which is not a 'vertical' one that 'heading towards the peak', or '*Sidrat-al Muntaha*' (Lote-Tree of the Utmost Farthest Boundary) but a 'horizontal' one, originating at human and ending at the same point. This state of mind (the Poverty of Historicism), in which Karl R. Popper reveals his incapacity and inadequacy to the claims of rational positivism, is far from the accepted belief of transcendence, which flows into a linear and fanciful '*Myth of Progress*' that has harnessed man and all his institutions to its blind and unintended. Therefore, it is a *profane* bundle of time.

This perception of history, which has its roots parallel with the sources of the universe and existence; which is alien to the wealth of man who perceives himself in the past, present and future, the most obvious of which is in the dimension of the '*Hereafter*', has locked us, human beings, the most favorite of Allah, the abstract and the gem of the universe, between the two figures of a barren time perspective. The misconception here is: The human secret cannot be solved by starting from it and reaching it again! In symbolic terms, as an open universe with many unknowns, the main sources to be applied in the analysis of man are the truth of the Supreme Power, the Creator being, the Lord, and the God, which transcends man and fills the realm of beings with meaning. If we leave the development and expansion of existence and existence to the impervious and transient waves of ideas and thoughts of the human mind, instead of the divine prism, then, in Guénon's words, the rule of '*quantity over quality*', '*matter over meaning*' will be experienced, which, as

observed today, means the elimination of human layers of spirit and meaning, and the reduction of its branch, leaving only a 'single dimension' behind.

Then who will take over the future of man? Which hand will say 'Stop!' to the bossy, intolerant, and cold humming of the profane and secular perception of history that alienates man from himself? Who is the one that will correct the wrong altered scissors (Muhammad Aziz Al-Lahbabi) in the realization of the manifestation of being? However, every human problem, every subject that overwhelms and alienates man from himself and the inner order of the universe, is in the limits of the universe because the human interest is directly related to the future of the universe. So, it is the man's own creator and the resolver will on which hopes are set. Without discrimination, all people, either in one or in a community, must seize the source of their problems, the '*disengagement of man, society and the universe from the divine and the human*'. This is what is expected of man's will to guide history and time!

On the other hand, despite the age-old time intervals, there is not much qualitative difference between the present and the past of humanity. *Unlike yesterday, the poverty of the soul, the infertility of ideas and ideas, the helplessness of man, the inadequacy of cultures and the lack of satisfaction, and the deceit of civilizations are on the agenda today.* Yes, in retrospect, the human life has now grown longer, the level of life has risen, but the 'history of man' has tended to turn into an empty frame and a short memory. Every victory over matter and every scream turned into an arrow of loneliness and desolation, like a *boomerang*, stabbed to the existence of man.

Setting a starting point for reaching solutions must now be an action that cannot be delayed! This is 'human', under *the gaze of transcendence, or the divine supervision.* It is the order, the system that this human profile will exhibit, developed by love and the highest discipline, running towards the limitless horizons of feeling and knowledge. In the same way that the societies of yesterday achieved this order and harmony in their future, the people of today will also be able to find the holistic happiness. Especially for those of us who have the mission of being 'the most auspicious society ever created for humanity', this should be the case.

"كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ"

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." (Ali 'Imran, 3/110)

b) Stage Two: Raising Our World of Meaning/Truth!

It is a well-known fact that words are the building blocks of thought and concepts and the noose that form their weaves. Because of this fundamental relationship, every thought and every order impose the words that are its

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representative and *signifiant*, and then takes it as an agent and an active element to the individual and community fronts where the struggle of thoughts, ideologies, and beliefs takes place.

Thus, a word follows a philosophy of life and on a larger scale, trails a whole perspective of existence. "*Language is the house of being*" (Heidegger) was said as an emphasis on the fact that the perception and design of the being will manifest through 'language' and will 'emerge into the realm of reality'; in other words, "the being appears in the language and reveals itself"(...) Where the word runs out [that's why] nothing happens."¹ The word chosen for such a purpose now becomes a very terse symbol of the paradigm of life perception and existence of the social structure and cultural world from which it emerges. By using this symbolic side of the word, a civilization that imposes an almost talismanic charm on its own society and on other civilizations also begins to dominate people by means of words laden with connotations. In this context, '*modernism*' is one of those 'eloquent' words that has put the whole world on its trail.

A tornado blowing from the West... A radical opposition to the exoticism of the East, its perspective of existence, based on traditions, division, production for need, metaphysical values that transcend the system of objective values... And full of anger... An "*anti-thesis*" in favor of linear growth, which is, in its essence, can be characterized with individualization, rationalism and pragmatism, which is favoring the new and the one that brings material benefits, and thus converts the idea of more production and consumption to the greatest extent into a modern mythos... A "*historicism*", which is in line with the Hegelian dialectic that sets forth a historical development which refers to an alienation from "rationalism", which recognizes the *ratio* as a primary source of value, as well as the religious traditions and values and the moral-metaphysical 'beings'... And two vessels feeding this historicism... Accordingly, Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), a Thomasian philosopher of the 20th century, takes the culture into consideration and states this fact as follows: "*The spread of this so-called atheist culture and of scientific modernism, which is a declaration of damnation, around the world has only succeeded in draining the world from its life-giving powers and moral-spiritual resources!*"²

Modernism is a militant outcry. Modernism has prepared the mental, social, and economic basis for this in an idiotic way, before being presented as a perception of being and followed by a cheeky lifestyle. In this context, societies far from the Western mentality have been cast into doubt about their existence perception and schemes, and in the process have been alienated from their own existence identities. The paradigm of modern existence rising on the pillars of worldly wealth, consumption as it pleases, unlimited freedom, continuous progress and

¹ Latif Tokat, *Varoluşçu Teoloji*, Elis Yayınları, Ankara 2013, p. 73, 74.

² <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/modernisme>

development, etc., has turned into a *Mephisto* that can no longer be resisted in the eyes of depressed societies with a sense of rootlessness.

Therefore, we have to say that: *Modernism*, which leads to an identity crisis of the adventure of man and existence, certainly has positive aspects! In general, these are technologies that facilitate human life and make greater use of natural raw material resources; on the other hand, the technologies that increase information cumulatively and make it more common for people's use. Here, eventually, these epistemological/scientific and technological data, which have been fed through the common veins of humanity since ancient times, are presented to the benefit of all mankind. On the other hand, it is the purpose and intention of use that will grant information and technology the quality of being '*exclusive*'. For this reason, there is no way for different mathematics, physics, geometry, etc. but there can be different labs that use physics or geometry for different purposes, and civilizations on a broader spectrum.

The attitude to be adopted regarding information and its use can be defined as an open individual and an open society. In other words, an implicit attitude that sanctifies the past with everything it touches and seeks to maintain the same historical tradition by turning its back on the unknown of the future will raise the fence of death around itself, not just any other. The first years of Islam are a living example and prototype for all societies looking for ways of such budding and glorification as the ages of crowning and flowering! There has been no other belief system that bases faith on knowledge with infinite confidence, and which considers ignorance the seedling and bridge of denial!

This means that, since history will only be experienced once, or as the philosopher Kierkegaard put it, since 'history will be understood towards the past and lived towards the future', it is not possible to reconstruct information and technology by turning back time according to our moral and aesthetic measures. On the contrary, what should be done is to divert the history that surrounds us by staying away from the emotional reactions that lack objective confirmations in the light of the consciousness that Allah presents the whole universe to man with its laws. Let our own intentions and ideas, which give color to information and technology, be our religious social elements. Let's ask passionately that the huge units that produces information and the wheel of technology that uses and processes it serve to our moral and human hopes and accompany our concerns, without ignoring the perceptions and the models of truth and falling in an unreachable and rigid *entegrist* attitude.

If we do not leave the strict *Zealot* [excessively reactionary, egocentric and opposite] attitude and become the closest followers of the universal knowledge and wisdom, we will fall into an ossified and backward-functioning cycle, which is criticized by Quranic thought. Therefore, in the world of the Quran, which is open

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to man, society, the universe, and the whole world of being, solutions and suggestions that are self-renewing and that grant its character and traits to the souls and minds keeping them always alive and energetic ("And say, "Ours is the religion of Allah", (Al-Baqarah, 2/138)) must be pursued because failure and insolubility will be the result of emotional, epic and thus rejectionist, 'impatient' and 'narcissist' reactions, which are far from analysis and eventual composition and do not address the case in its processes of formation.

As a general approach, you must respond to any thought or action that tries to establish itself with something of its own kind, but something stronger and more effective:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided. (An-Nahl, 16/125; and see Al-Isra, 17/53). To do this, first, you have to know and understand the phenomenon that you face. For your reaction to be accurate, you have to stand right where you are. But if you stand in unrelated points and react accordingly, irreconcilable differences, and thus unsolvable deadlocks will arise.

For this reason, it is necessary to try to be present in the 'exact point', which is the one that grants you a global point of view, or in Spinoza's words, the point of 'sub specie aeternitas'. To make it more clear, "The necessity of understanding things from an eternal point of view, of knowing in a single thought without considering the past or the future³, of being able to scan and examine them with a completely encompassing perspective and paradigm, and of heading towards the capacity to scrutinize..." In a more effective phrase, "seeing only and always in the present... 'There is no death for life now' (Wittgenstein)."⁴ To say in a term that refers to a more friendly and deeper awareness of time; to equip the rhythm of "ibn al-waqt". At this point, as a duty of creation, we should be able to hear in our selves the tension of reading the historical process and fulfilling our obligations to the divine authority at the same time. If we turn to the one and back from the other, then differences and conflicts arise spontaneously because the intransigence and conflicts in these approaches, with the effect of scientific egocentrism and narcissism, are always derived from the tendency to propose one-on-one solutions.

Therefore, the solution, or the way to the solution, is to see the full future. In more direct terms, the motivation and essence needed to mobilize believers is derived from the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet, while on the other hand, social change should be closely monitored, its inner pattern should be identified, and the inner systematics of the formation should be inspired by appropriate points and a Quranic direction.

³ Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü*, Paradigma Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2010, p. 1464.

⁴ Ömer Naci Soykan, *Felsefe ve Dil-Wittgenstein Üstüne Bir Araştırma*, Kabcacı Yayınevi, 1st Edition, İstanbul 1995, p. 20-25.

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Sufi Perspective of Human Alienation*

Kadir ÖZKÖSE**

Abstract

The biggest crisis is a crisis of humanity. Economic, social, political, and cultural crises can be somehow overcome, but humanitarian crisis inflicts deep and unreparable wounds. Therefore, investing in a human being is the most sizable investment. Human growth depends on ensuring internal and external balance, living a conscientious life, being at peace with himself, taking a trip to his inner depths and the use of his potentials. Man is a being that God does not despair of as long as he does not evade himself. But then where can be the escape since we shall return to whom we come from? So, man needs to set a course for the meaning of life, create familiarity with the Lord and run to Him in the sense of being in touch with God, seek heaven for the dwelling place and should remain faithful to his ontological structure as a part of cosmic order. Sufism draws attention to the human ontological adventure, meets him with ancient values, invites to join the caravan of eternity and advises performance of his functionality. It rejects human's self-alienation and alienation from the Lord caused by straying away to wrong deeds and moving away from the eternal reality and tries to develop the self-respect of man who was created as the Caliph and with the origin of familiarity. In short, this article focuses on the ontological foundations of this self-development.

Keywords: Sufism, alienation, human, sûfi, human nature, universe, unity and multiplicity

İnsanın Yabancılaşmasına Yönelik Sûfi Perspektif

Özet

En büyük kriz insanlık krizidir. Ekonomik, sosyal, siyasal ve kültürel krizler belki bir şekilde aşılabılır ama insanlık krizi tamiri kolay olmayan büyük yaralar açar. O nedenle en büyük yatırım insana yapılan yatırımdır. İnsanın yetişmesi iç ve dış dengesinin vücuda getirilmesine, itinalı bir yaşam sürmesine, kendisiyle barışık olmasına, kendi içsel derinliklerine yapacağı yolculuğa, kendi potansiyellerini kullanmasına bağlıdır. İnsan Allah'ın umut kesmediği bir varlıktır. Yeter ki insan kendinden kaçmasın. Zaten bu kaçış

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nereye olacaktır. O'ndan gelip yine O'na döneceğimize göre insanın anlam haritasını belirlemesi, Rabbine koşması, cennet yurdunu mesken tutması, ünsiyet peyda etmesi, Allah'la irtibat içinde olması ve kozmik düzenin bir parçası olarak ontolojik yapısına sadık kalması gerekmektedir. İnsanın ontolojik serüvenine dikkat çeken tasavvuf, insanı kadim değerlerle buluşturmakta, sonsuzluk kervanına katılmaya davet etmekte ve kendi işlevselliğini gerçekleştirmeye davet etmektedir. Halife olarak yaratılan insanın kendini unutup, yanlış adreslere savrulup, ezeli gerçeklikten uzaklaşıp kendisine ve Rabbine yabancılaşmasını reddetmekte ünsiyet kökeninden gelen insanın benliğini inkişaf ettirmeye çalışmaktadır. Kısaca makalemizde bu benlik inkişafının ontolojik temelleri üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, yabancılaşma, insan, sūfî, fitrat, âlem, vahdet ve kesret

Sufism is the understanding of the fact that the end is hidden in commencement, the desire for the homeland and the loyalty to the promise given in the day of creation.¹ The preamble of *Masnavi*, which was authored by Rumi (d. 672/1273), is nothing but the sing of this struggle. Allah has breathed into man from His soul.² Forgetting Allah is therefore the greatest punishment. The expression of the separation and the union has been the most fundamental emphasis of Sufis. Sufi figures draw attention to the pain of separation that ravages people while mentioning the burning power of the fire of separation. The poems that talk about the transience, ecstasy, trance, relief, benevolence, and survival concepts together with the beauty of union that warm hearts are too many to count. The education of a pathway means to end the pain of separation and drink the water of union. The idea of God is more immanent than the idea of love in the line of lore, and it is envisaged that the servant will experience spiritual togetherness with his Lord in both the dimensions of transcendence and closeness. In this article, we would like to evaluate the meaning of alienation as attributed by Sufis under the following four main headings.

1. Ontological Dimension of Alienation

Every human being is created as a potential human and equipped with the human perfection.³ Some humans brought into existence as an opportunity may be unaware of this potential and cannot realize their functionality. As with all beings, there is an essence beyond the physical appearance.⁴ As Allah is the absolute being, to the existence of all beings is a manifestation of a beautiful name of Allah. While each being other than man are the reflection of a divine name, man is an entity that

¹ Abu al-Qasim Abd al-karim al-Qushayri, *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya Fi 'ilm Al-tasawwuf*, Ed. Ma'ruf Zerrik & Ali Abdulhamid Baltacı, Dar al-Hayr, Beirut 1993, p. 299.

² Al-Hijr, 15/29.

³ William Chittick, *Hayal Alemleri -Ibn Arabi ve Dinlerin Çeşitliliği Meselesi-*, Transl. Mehmet Demirkaya, Kaknüs yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p. 49-50.

⁴ Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, *Mujamu Istilahat al-Sufiyya*, Ed. Abdülâl Şahin, Dar al-Inad, Cairo 1992, p. 55.

each of the divine names manifests them as a whole. As one becomes aware of these divine names, which are unique in himself, he will realize his own reality. The fact that divine names are visible in man will lead to man's equipment with the attributes of humanity.¹

In the primordial covenant with Allah, there was an awareness in our souls. There was strong consciousness between man and Lord in the response, "Yes, indeed...", to the question "Am I not your Lord?" This eternal ore found in the structure of man was bringing him into contact with infinity. Human beings are expected to perform this astral journey. Because there is a theory of return according to the adherents of Sufism. It follows a sequence from simple to perfect before the attributes of Almighty Allah are manifested in human form, and flows through all the beings present in the universe and comes down to man in degrees. The human being, before coming to the realm in human form, consists of a piece of water (semen) in "the waist of the father" and "the mother's womb". This drop of water that exits in bodies of the mother and father is made up of the minerals they eat and drink. In this case, before human beings become the semen, they stand in a disorganized state in the material universe, each particle of which is in a separate entity. That is why man is accepted as the abstract of the whole universe, or the essence of the world².

The coming of man into this world is a condescending stage. While our souls from the divine level are equipped with purity, grace and blessedness, they are recorded with the traces of the body by taking the cover of the body, entering into the cage of skin and descending to the universe of appearances. The reduction from eternity to finitude and from immortality to mortality, the transition from grace to density shows the human's fall from the divine level to the servile universe through a journey that has driven him away Allah.³ While being dressed in each of the divine names with the most sacred effusion (fayz al-aqdas) at the degree of the truth of Muhammad, we had our own competence that declared our truth as the immutable entity (a'yan al-tsabitah) and with the sanctified effusion (fayz al-muqaddas).⁴ We were the entities hidden in eternal attributes of Allah based on the truth as that immutable reality.⁵ We were clad in the secret of destiny, in the knowledge of God, stripped of all kinds of relativistic assets.⁶ As His servants, we

¹ Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, Ed. Abu-ala al-Afifi, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut 1400/1980, I, 101-102.

² Abdullah Uçman, "Devir Nazariyesi ve Osmanlı Tasavvuf Edebiyatında Devriyyeler", *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler Kaynaklar-Doktrin-Ayin ve Erkan-Tarikatlar-Edebiyat-Mimari-İkonografi-Modernizm*, Ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2nd Edition, Ankara, 2014. 576.

³ Uçman, "Devir Nazariyesi", *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler*, p. 576-577.

⁴ Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, I,120.

⁵ Şerif Ali b. Muhammad al-Jurjani, *Kitab al-Tarif*, Dar al-kutub al-Alimiya, Beirut 1995, p. 30.

⁶ Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi, *Insha al-dawair ukhlat al-mustawsir at-tadbiratu al-Ilahiyya*, Ed. H. S. Nyberg, Leiden, 1336/1919, p. 16-17.

did not have ontological relations with Allah but we felt ourselves in Him. We knew that infinity, absolute beauty, absolute reality was in Him in the state of *as-sayr fi-Allah* (the voyage in Allah), we realized that as we were fed by Him and became closer to Him, we felt the awareness of reaching the divine dimension.

2. Physical Dimension of Alienation

The eternal knowledge states that we are the creatures in which the divine attributes differentiate while we begin to appear as holy and elegant beings within the condescension to the world of souls.¹ In Sufi ontology, as a result of this course of existence, man becomes an entity that takes on potential possibilities. Within the next stage, the divine entity begins to manifest in the realm of dominion. The realm of dominion is a means of bringing the effusion of the world of souls to the physical world. It is a ravine between souls and physical objects. Therefore, all judgements of these two different worlds gather in this intermediate realm. It is both visible and invisible; and it is abstracted from both the other two realms. It is more compact compared to souls, more elegant than objects. *Jinns* exist in this realm as well.²

Appearing as a project in the the realm of dominion, man reduces to the physical world and the physical dimension, the appearance finds freedom, falls under controls, and gains visibility. While all kinds of anxiety, pain, disaster, suffering, and evil are not encountered during the journey of creation in the world of unity, man begins to be challenged by evil, disaster, and weakness in the physical world, which is the realm of challenges. The disorder and deceptiveness of the physical world suffocates and overwhelms him. We see him alone among the crowds, moving away from his original homeland, even breaking away from his own core, hurtling to different addresses, forgetting the purpose of creation and alienating himself. The fall from the best of stature (*ahsan al-taqwim*) to the lowest of the low (*asfal al-safilin*) leads man to deserve divine punishment. To remind the person who forgets the secret of creation, who walks away from nature and loses himself, to travel to the origins, to reach the levels to which he belongs, the divine mercy overflows and always offers opportunities because man is not an entity that will be abandoned, rolled into the pit of evil, and neglected. The prophets sent, the holy books, the verses of Allah read were sent to save people from alienation in every period. With the reminders of divine stimuli, the mental faculties, the dimension of thought and contemplation, and the spiritual depths of man become re-functional again. The spirit of the person who develops consciousness plays an active role by tearing the skin sheath, the mind that is condemned to captivity with worldly passions is getting freedom, the heart that is contaminated by sin and rebellion is illuminated by the light of Allah, and with these stimuli, the person becomes aware of the reawakening, his equipment and responsibility in life. This

¹ Ekrem Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevi'de Bilgi ve Varlık*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2005, p. 253.

² Selçuk Eraydın, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, M.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul 1994, p. 232-233.

awareness contributes to the completion of one's unfinished journey. The name of this second journey, which provides relief from alienation, is now the starting hemicycle.¹ This hemicycle is man's ascension (*miraj*) and wings for eternity. It is a new but a conscious journey from the divine realm, where the man has originated. Having been degraded to the physical world before, the man ascends to the realm of dominion, the world of souls, and eventually the immutable entity, which exists in the world of unity. This ascendancy brings perfection to man. It ascends him to the degree of perfection.² The perfect human breaks the chains on his feet, the shackles on his arms snatcher, rips out the soul of the lasso that surrounds him, and the traps between him and Allah. He also the evil curtain blinding eyes and heart against his horizons. In terms of separation, the perfect man who survived the dullness of staying away has now found the true taste, reached the desired destination and the secret of death before dying by drinking the water of ultimate union.

In the cosmic dimension, being the micro-cosmos that encompasses the universe is due to being the creature in which the divine names manifest themselves. What can be mentioned regarding the person who perceives the imprint of all things from the sphere to the specter is not the loneliness in the universe but the intimacy. Human beings deserve more to be considered in terms of the involvement in the cosmic holiness than the weakness as a part of the physical realm. Therefore, if man does not alienate himself, he forms intimacy with all beings. For those who duly fear Allah, Allah makes everything pleasant. As a part of the cosmic order, it is essential that man is made to feel his presence as a caliph, not a prisoner. The fact that man is a sovereign entity allows him to contribute to the existence of the cosmic order, and to respond to the expectations of things and all beings, not to his domination and exploitation of things. When man is the interpreter of the language of things, he knows that every entity in the universe has its own meaning. The human being who escapes himself, who is alienated from the truth, who cannot reach the degrees he deigns, who pass through divine degrees, who cannot reach the secret of perfection is doomed to melt in the clutches of life, to hurl at the vague addresses of everyday life, and to be enslaved under material beings. Then, we have to look for answers to the question, "how should man relate to things?"

¹ Mustafa Uzun, "Türk Mutasavvıfları Edebiyatında Devriye ve Ahmed Yesevî'nin Devriye Yaşnamesi", *Ahmed-i Yesevî Hayatı-Eserleri-Fikirleri-Tesirleri*, Ed. Mehmed Şeker, Necdet Yılmaz, Seha Neşriyat, İstanbul 1996, p. 488-489.

² Kadir Özköse, "İnsan-ı Kâmil Nazariyesi Çerçevesinde İnsan-Âlem İlişkisi", *Araştıran Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İlmî Dergisi*, Bishkek 2010, Issue: 9-10, p. 17-33.

3. Material Dimension of Alienation

As a religion, Islam, which emphasizes the balance of the world and the hereafter, cares about the unity of matter and meaning, commands the relationship between individuals and society, and envisions the harmony of the soul and body. Islam also commands people to enjoy the blessings of this world above all, to fulfill their worldly responsibilities. Therefore, there is no escape from the world, denial of matter, abandonment of goods in Islam. Since there is no clergy in Islam, it is not possible for man to make reclusion a philosophy of life.

However, if the harmony predicted by Islam is to neglect the hereafter and perpetuate the world, to ignore the spirit, to take on physical and sensual passions, to ignore the meaning and to fall into the passion of matter, to escape the divine unity and disappear in the way of evil, the natural human character gets lost, self-alienation increases and the helm of life becomes superficial. Today's societies are unfortunately fended off under the influence of materialist ideas, lost in the grip of secular worldviews, become victims of selfishness and greed and the victims of conflicts of interest. Today, humanity is losing its divine feelings, moral peace and values and human relationships. Right at this point, as in the past, Sufism attracts us with its reviving breath, stimulating sound and evocative dimensions. The Sufi tradition envisions a way of life in which human beings have the thought of asceticism contrary to the be bond to matter, the conception of destitution in response to secular nature, the treasure of modesty and humility in the face of greed and profiteering. In this sense, asceticism does not deny the substance but being its slave.

The worldly pleasures are the harbingers of our ravaging desires. Pleasures give rise to ambitions, thus ambitions give rise to qualifiers. The ambition of position and class, the sense of self, the desire to take possession, and the nature of dissatisfaction drive the person away the truth. Lust makes a habit of ingratiating with others. Being a self-seeking person makes one bound to the world. Since it is not possible to satisfy desires, there is no end to the ambitions that serve in this way. Every ambition creates an affliction at the end. That's why ambition is often called affliction would-be. Asceticism is to turn away from the world despite the soul complimenting it, the heart tending to it, and the self desiring it.¹

While earthly desires and maddening nature causes increased grief and suffering, asceticism is a factor that allows the heart and body to find peace. Accordingly, as narrated by Anas ibn Malik, the Prophet (pbuh) stated that Allah will place wealth in the hearts of those whose purpose is in the hereafter, that He will place poverty before the eyes of those whose purpose is in the world and won't let them make both ends meet.² In the words of the well-known Syaikh Abu

¹ Abd Allah ibn Mubarak, *Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq*, Ed. Habib al-Rahman al-Azmi, Beirut 1386, p. 9.

² Wakee ibn al-Jarrah, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, Ed. Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd al-Jabbar al-Fariwai, Mektebetu al-Dar, Medina 1994, II, 638.

Sulaiman Al-Darani (d. 215/830), if the world comes and settles in a heart, the hereafter will go away from it.¹ According to the adherents of Sufism, the punishment of the forbidden goods and the provision of the lawful goods after the person is ready for the account of the world will not be an obstacle to him. Those who dispose of religion and try to get worldly opportunities will suffer the greatest disappointment. The Sufis rejected substance and wealth because it led to ambition and passion, to arrogance and pride, and made it into a race of wealth because being inclined to the worldly life leads to the oblivion of the hereafter and makes one a slave of the world and his worldly lusts.² Fudayl ibn Iyadh (d. 187/802), who succinctly expresses this fact, says that: “Allah has filled all evil into one house and made the love of the world a key to it. Whereas, He filled all the good into another house, and made asceticism a key to this house.”³

Worldly desires alienate humans from both the Lord and self. Ahmad ibn Abi al-Hawari (d. 230/844)⁴, who speaks of the fact that Allah will remove the light of asceticism and trust from the heart of those who look at the world through the eyes of desire and love, notes the deceptiveness of ephemeral delicacies in the world. Therefore, asceticism is not the lack of wealth in hand, but to be able to remove the influence of matter from the heart;⁵ it is the absence in the heart of what is not available in hand.⁶

Rumi, who says that human beings are the last circle of creatures in the eyes of Allah, mentions that he should not sell himself to anyone. To prove this point, Rumi tells the wisdom of a person who has a rooster, dog, mule, and horse. This person, begs Moses a lot and convinces him to teach him the language of the people of the animals. Then one day he witnesses the rooster telling the dog that the horse will die tomorrow. So he quickly sells the horse that evening. The next day, when he hears the news that the rooster has told the dog that the mule is definitely going to die, he sells it as well. Again, as the rooster convinces the dog that the slave is going to die, the master hears the conversation and promptly sells the slave. The man who is happy to rid himself of trouble again overhears what the rooster says. The rooster tells the dog that he is going to die.⁷

¹ Ebubekr Ahmed b. Husain al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, Transl. Enbiya Yıldırım, İstanbul 2000, p. 59; Qushayri, *al-Risala* p. 411.

² Kadir Özköse, “Zühud ve Sûfîlerin Zühde Yükladıkları Anlam Tasavvufunda Dünyevîleşmeye Tepkisel Yaklaşım”, *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sivas 2002, VI/1, 180.

³ al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, p. 233; Qushayri, *al-Risala*, p. 119.

⁴ Qushayri, *al-Risala*, p. 410.

⁵ al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, p. 59; Qushayri, *al-Risala*, p. 117.

⁶ Abu Bakr Muhammad Kalabadhi, *al-taarruf li-madhahab ahl al-tasawwuf*, Ed. Mahmud Emin al-Nawawi, el-Mektebet al-Azhariyyat lit-Turas, Cairo 1992, p. 110.

⁷ Kadir Özköse, “Mevlânâ Düşüncesinde Firkat ve Vuslat”, *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 2005, Issue: 14, p. 233-250.

The man runs to Moses and begs him to save himself. Moses' answer would be: "now go sell yourself and save yourself."¹

Narrating this story, Rumi states that the person who does not consider his or her qualities may one day lose everything, that his or her self will be lost, and that he or she will become someone else's instrument. This story also reveals the character of a self-centered person who learns nothing from signs and who cannot get out of trouble. Based on these narratives, Rumi generalizes that human beings resort to means of wealth and power as a result of their nature, helplessness and insecurity, and attempt to use wealth, power, and belief in interpersonal relationships. When a person like that comes to power, he starts behaving wrongly.²

4. Selfish Dimension of Alienation

As we mentioned at the beginning of our article, by using their potential to the maximum, one can develop self. Building personality to the highest degree, maintaining the human search for meaning at all times and moving in the light of values makes the ore of humanity visible. Therefore, the degree of human self-actualization is directly proportional to the realized potentials.³

According to Maslow, once the need for the basic human needs such as security, belonging, identification, love, and respect is satisfied, the individual will be able to realize the potential he/she brings in to mature and realize himself/herself. Again according to Maslow, the only way to reach the true source of values is to begin a quest for the inner self.⁴

The principle of the fact that whoever knows his soul knows the Lord shows that man has a divine self besides his empirical side. Allah has created man in his own image. In this respect, man was created according to the image of God. Being created according to the image of God is the greatest security and protective reason for man. No one can destroy or ruin anything created in God's image except God.⁵

In order for man to reach this divine essence that exists in himself, the ego must be removed away. Therefore, it is not possible to come face to face with the divine truth without emptying the mind, clearing the heart, and killing the self empirically. The nature of divine reality "can not be understood directly by those who are not pure in heart, poor in spirit, who doesn't try to be full of love and

¹ Mewlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi, *Masnavi*, Transl. Velede İzbudak, Ed. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, MEB Yayınları, Ankara 1998, III, 266-277, b. 3266-3398.

² A. Reza Arasteh, *Mevlâna Celâleddin-i Rûmî'nin Kişilik Çözümlemesi Aşkta ve Yararlıta Yeniden Doğuş*, Transl. Bekir Demirkol - İbrahim Özdemir, Kitabiyat, Ankara 2000, p. 79.

³ Victor Frankl, "Kendini Gerçekleştirme ve Kendini İfade Etmenin Ötesinde", *Sana Ruhtan Soruyorlar*, Ed. Kemal Seyr, Transl. A. Demirhan, İstanbul 1991, p. 324-325.

⁴ Abraham H. Maslow, *İnsan Olmanın Psikolojisi*, Transl. Okhan Gündüz, İstanbul 2001, p. 40-50.

⁵ Ekrem Demirli, *Fusûsü'l-Hikem Şerhi*, Kabcacı Yayınevi, İstanbul 2006, p. 443.

doesn't fulfill its conditions." So, "...every knowing requires certain conditions; conditions, on the other hand, vary according to different objects of knowledge. The manifestation or recognition of God depends on the purification of consciousness.¹ The purging of the mind from empty emotions, the purification of the heart and the acquittal of the soul will first and foremost enable man to comprehend his own reality.

In scholarly tradition, in order to prevent alienation from the human self, the person must break the idol of the sensory self.² When he drives the idolatry away, the meeting of the servant and his Lord will be established. The value of man is only with the dignity of his essence, and his ego, or the "self", is an obstacle in capturing this essence. Then he should be able to catch the "real self" who hides himself under the covers of ego; in other words, he should purify himself by diving into the stream of nothingness.³

Rumi, who likens the wise men to the people who are thirsty and the fire of separation in the heart to thirst; the presence self that prevents convergence to the wall; the self's isolation to breaking stones from a wall and every plucked mudbrick to approaching Allah in the place of prostration⁴ narrates that:

"On the bank of the stream there was a high wall, and on the top of the wall a sorrowful thirsty man. The wall hindered him from (reaching) the water; he was in distress for the water, like a fish. Suddenly he threw a brick into the water: the noise of the water came to his ear like spoken words, Like words spoken by a sweet and delicious friend: the noise of the water made him drunken as (though it were) wine. From the pleasure of (hearing) the noise of the water, that sorely tried man began to hurl and tear off bricks from that place. The water was making a noise, that is to say, (it was crying), "Hey, what is the advantage to you of this hurling a brick at me?" The thirsty man said, "O water, I have two advantages: I will nowise refrain from this work. The first advantage is (my) hearing the noise of the water, which to thirsty men is (melodious) as a rebeck. The noise thereof has become (to me) like the noise of (the trumpet of) Isrâfil: by this (noise) life has been transferred (restored) to one (that was) dead; Or (it is) like the noise of thunder in days of spring — from it (the thunder) the garden obtains so many (lovely) ornaments; Or like the days of alms to a poor man, or like the message of deliverance to a prisoner. 'Tis like the breath of the Merciful (God) which, without mouth, comes to Mohammed from Yemen; Or 'tis like the scent of Ahmad (Mohammed), the Apostle (of God), which in intercession comes to the sinner; Or like the scent of beauteous, graceful Joseph, (which) strikes upon the soul of lean Jacob. The other advantage is that, (with) every brick I tear off this (wall), I come (nearer) to running water,

¹ Abdüllatif Tüzer, *Dinî Tecrübe ve Mistisizm*, Dergâh Yayınları, İstanbul 2006, p. 199.

² Arasteh, *Aşkta ve Yaratılıştta Yeniden Doğuş*, p. 28.

³ Cengiz Gündoğdu, *Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî Öğretisi ve Takipçileri Hakkında Metodik Bir Yaklaşım*, Aktif Yayınevi, Ankara 2007, p. 181-182.

⁴ Kadir Özköse, "Mevlânâ Düşüncesinde Firkat ve Vuslat", *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 2005, Issue: 14, p. 233-250.

*Since by diminution of the bricks the high wall becomes lower every time that one is removed. The lowness (destruction) of the wall becomes a means of access (to the water); separation from it is the remedy bringing about a union (with the water). The tearing away of the adhesive (firmly joined) bricks is (analogous to) prostration (in prayer): (it is) the cause of nearness (to God), for (God has said), 'And prostrate thyself and draw near (to Me).'*¹ *So long as this wall is high-necked (lofty and proud), it is an obstacle to this bowing of the head (in prayer). 'Tis impossible to perform the prostration on the Water of Life, until I gain deliverance from this earthly body. The more thirsty any one on the top of the wall is, the more quickly does he tear off the bricks and turfs. The more any one is in love with the noise of the water, the bigger clods does he tear away from the barrier. He, at the noise of the water, is filled with wine (ecstasy) up to the neck, (while) the stranger (to love) hears nothing but the sound of the splash.'*²

This universal self that Rumi refers to is a conception of the self that needs to be shrouded. In Sufism, the subconscious is much more important than consciousness; whereas consciousness is limited, the subconscious contains infinite possibilities and only forms a certain part of our existence. The traditional self has separated us from our original, that is, from merging with life. When we become aware of this separation, we have reached the universal level of existence, and we have attained transcendental consciousness.³

Cahidi Ahmed Efendi, who talks about the obstacles that took us away from our homeland and prevented us from diving into the river of convergence, lists them as self-compliance, arrogance and self-disease, and offers the cure for getting rid of them as being connected to the perfect guide:

Give your essence to a guide, do not remain in pride and self

Do not be one of those attracted and do not block the way to Lord

If you pride your self as your Lord

*Lord knows who is right, do not pride your self.*⁴

This individual awareness, which Cahidi Ahmed Efendi points out, and the effort to recognize the person's essence and to know himself, is what Yunus Emre calls "*knowledge is self-knowledge*". Self-discovery and recognition is a journey that must be started immediately in the tradition and will continue for a lifetime. Individual awareness begins with us searching for the cause of all the results we have achieved and taking responsibility for our lives. Summani refers to the term "courage" as reaching this consciousness:

¹ Al-'Alaq, 96/19.

² Mewlana, *Masnavi*, Transl. Veled İzbudak, II, b. 1192-1214.

³ Arasteh, *Aşkta ve Yaratılıştta Yeniden Doğuş*, p. 43.

⁴ Cāhidī Ahmed Efendi, *Divan*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hasan Hüsnü Paşa Bölümü, no: 796, vr. 31^a.

When Summani is loyal in advise

There is pleasure in every situation

No perfection exists in betrayal of thought

*Courage is one's knowing himself.*¹

Yunus Emre's saying, "there is an I inside me" implies this fact. Thus, man will rise to the degree of self-knowledge and, in this way, to truly know and love God at the end of his struggle against the self. The idea of Sufism refers to the person who, as we mentioned earlier, has realized his essence in this way and has been able to capture the real purpose of creation by purifying himself, as man of perfection, in the sense that he has realized the nature of humanity perfectly in himself. Individual awareness begins with us searching for the cause of all the results we have achieved and taking responsibility for our lives. The person who realizes his essence in this way and is able to catch the real purpose of creation by purification at the end of his struggle against him will rise to the degree of knowing and loving Allah in his true sense.²

Conclusion and Remarks

It is the journey of human nature that makes people, who are abstracts of the universe, happy. Distancing from nature makes man meaningless, makes him lose his way and makes him forget the reality of creation. Man is a traveler of the path of life. This journey is headed towards subjective and objective worlds. In the historical process such as today's people, human masses have achieved many journeys, changes, and developments in different geographies, far continents, in the space, planets, matter, universe; gained new opportunities, took steps to facilitate life, shortened distances, and transformed the world in which they live into a global village. Technological developments and scientific discoveries that make life easier continue at a dizzying pace. Human beings who explore the entire universe, unfortunately, have been far from recognizing themselves. The walls of the self have created insurmountable difficulties between people. The person who goes on a journey in the objective world has neglected the journey into himself. The self-neglect of man has shrouded his soul in gloom and given rise to desperate glances at life.

The alienation of man has led to his inability to make sense of things. Human beings who become alienated themselves, who live without harmony in their inner world, who take on depression, stress, stalemate and dissatisfaction, take on the

¹ Cengiz Gündoğdu, "Âşık Sümmânî'de Aşkın Metafiziği", Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi, January-June 2007, Year: 8, Issue: 18, p. 149.

² Gündoğdu, *Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî Öğretisi ve Takipçileri Hakkında Metodik Bir Yaklaşım*, p. 181-182.

ambition of owning, lose their values with the philosophy, “*homo homini lupus*”, and take on the gloom of what they have, neglect their own reality.

The main reality that saves man from alienation syndrome is that he continues his search for meaning, manages to be in harmony with himself, his inner self, and his Lord, and finds and reveals the divine essence hidden in him. Breaking down the wall of the self and meeting the stream of truth, weaving his own ocean of spirit, going deep into the divine manifestations of his heart, eliminating the weights of his soul will enable him to reach the destination in his life journey. Instead of turning life into the torment of hell, the man who survived the whirlpool of frigates will live a peaceful and peaceful life in the beauty of heaven while he is still on earth.

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Bid'ah and Superstitions as Tools of Alienation from Religion *

Cağfer KARADAŞ**

Abstract

Bid'ah and superstitions, which means deviation from essence of religion, is the topic of this article. In order to understand this point truly, it essential to focus on Sunnah, which represent the essence of religion. Bid'ah and superstitions are evaluated in terms of their origins and meanings. Besides, differences between bid'ah and superstitions are highlighted in this article. In this study, the aim is to differentiate Sunnah, essence of religion, and bid'ah and superstitions, representations of alienation.

Dine Yabancılaşma Aracı Olarak Bid'at ve Hurafe

Özet

Makalede dindarın dine yabancılaşması veya dinin özünden ve özgünlüğünden sapması anlamına gelen bid'at ve hurafe konuları ele alınmıştır. Bu iki hususun tam olarak bilinebilmesi için de öncelikle dinin özünü ve özgünlüğünü temsil eden sünnete yer verilmesi gereği açıktır. Sünnet özellikle anlam çerçevesi ve oluşum süreci noktasından ele alınırken bid'at ve hurafe mana ve mahiyetlerinin yanı sıra ortaya çıkış nedenleri noktasından da incelenmiştir. Ayrıca çoğu zaman birbirine karıştırılan hurafe ile bid'at arasındaki farklara dikkat çekilmiştir. Bu çalışmayla dinin özgünlüğünü temsil eden sünnet ile yabancılaşmayı temsil eden bid'at ve hurafe arasındaki temel ayrımı ortaya koymak hedeflenmiştir.

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Introduction

The correct practice of religion as well as the wrong practices have been established since its beginning. During the time of the Prophet, these practices were prevented with the support of revelation and the armor of virtue. However, absence of these two preventive factors after the Prophet made it difficult to avert such wrong practices. Although the companions, those after them and their descendants effectively fought against these practices due to temporal proximity to the Prophet, the same success could not be said to have been achieved in the following periods. In order to prevent such misdeeds, people have chosen to be under the umbrella of a sect by subjecting themselves to the scholars they trust from within these three generations. This decision is exactly for living and sustaining Islam as the Prophet practiced. The is called Sunnah, while the others are named bid'ah or superstition. While Sunnah is the correct practice of religion, bid'ah is to deviate from religion in the name of religion or in the name of piety. In this sense, bid'ah means alienation of the adherent from his own religion or disengagement from the essence of religion and loss of its original values. The recognition of bid'ah and superstition depends primarily on the recognition of the meaning and nature of the Sunnah.

Sunnah

Various descriptions of Sunnah have been made according to the branches of science and different mindsets. According to the hadith scholars, "It consists of the words, acts, endorsements, and manners of the Prophet (pbuh)." The words and deeds of the messenger of Allah before the prophethood are included in this description. Scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence describe Sunnah as "words, acts and statements that are conducive to religious evidence", while scholars of the jurisprudence itself define it as "religious provisions other than *fard* and *wajib*." Apart from these, there are also descriptions of Sunnah, such as "the Prophet's way of life", "the path followed by the first Muslims as the way of the Prophet" and "every provision reported by the Prophet."¹

¹ See Abdullah Aydınli, *Hadis İstihlaları Sözlüğü*, İstanbul 2006, "Sunnet"

According to the description of the practice, Sunnah is “the principles that emerged from the practices of the Prophet.”² It would be more appropriate to understand it as *practices that would be in accordance with the words, verbs, and expressions of the Prophet*. However, by taking into account the abstract side, especially the belief aspect of the religion, it is necessary to add the oral statements of the further generations after the Prophet, as long as they are in accordance with his words, deeds, and figures because it is a fact that people in later ages developed models of thought and practice based on the words, verbs and expressions of the Prophet.

When it comes to contact with the Quran; Sunnah is the explanation of the Quran and its application in the course of life. Therefore, Sunnah is not independent of the Quran. Accordingly, the Quran, also, cannot be considered independent of Sunnah. In this case, the meaning frame of Sunnah has a breadth that *expresses the whole of the Quran and the words, acts, and expressions of the Prophet*. Thus, Sunnah can be understood in a broad way to encompass the Quran, and that would be the right interpretation. As a matter of fact, it is narrated from al-Bayhaqi by al-Suyuti, and from al-Suyuti by al-Maqhul that: *“the need for Sunnah of the Quran is greater than the need of the Quran for Sunnah.”* This is due to Sunnah being the explanation of the Quran and its application to life. And the verse, “And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought”³ supports this opinion.⁴ As a matter of fact, in this verse, the whole of the Quran is implicit in terms of meaning and therefore, in addition to those who comment that the need for the Prophet's explanation is clear, the Quran is not all explicit but some of it is still firmly revealed, so the verse only requires the explanation of those who are concise. Besides, about this verse, there is also a third interpretation that the Prophet had a duty to explain all the provisions to the responsible people. No matter which

² Aydınlı, *Hadis Istihlaları*, “sunnet”

³ an-Nahl 16/44.

⁴ Suyuti, *Miftah al-jannah fi al-ihitijaj bi-al-sunnah*, Medina 1408, p. 43-44.

interpretation we accept, the position of the Prophet to convey the Quran as well as to explain and practice is a fixed reality.⁵

According to this, **Sunnah** is an accepted idea and practice in the Islamic community based on the solid and authentic information/news that comes from the Prophet through companions, His followers and the generation after them. In this sense, it can be said that Sunnah is a certitude and stable form of the originality of religion. This is the meaning of 'Sunnah', which is commonly used among Islamic scholars. This is the meaning that is attached to the word 'Sunnah' in the concept of 'Ahl al-Sunnah', which means "Sunnah adherents" or "those who follow Sunnah". According to this description, the Prophet's practices are both an example and an original model for subsequent Muslims. Accordingly, the following generations described the Sunnah in this way. They understood it as "to adopt the Prophet's way of life, the models of thought and behavior of Him and to follow His practices."

At this point, it is clear that the *application* has a central point. Although the field of belief is not subject to application, it is necessary to consider application related to this field as a term. While Allah Almighty, to who there is nothing unknown, sees the heart of a human, humans themselves, whose knowledge is only limited to the seen, can judge people based on words and actions because the only thing that can be known to man is the manifested word and actions. The provision of "we only know what is written in the word and what is acted" (نحن نحكم بالظاهر والله يتولى السرائر)⁶, which has settled in the mindset of the Ummah since the first periods, requires this. Since one's belief/faith is manifested by reflection in behaviors or oral statement, it is also appropriate for Sunnah to make an assessment according to it. Such was the treatment of the Prophet towards the companions. As a matter of fact, the scholars of qalam have found it sufficient for the person to declare his faith in the word to consider him/her a Muslim in worldly terms and to fulfill the provisions of the religion because it is not possible for any other entity to know one's heart except Allah.⁷ Considered together with belief, Sunnah is that a person's

⁵ Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Tafsir Al-Kabir*, Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut nd., XX, 37-38.

⁶ Al-Ajluni states this phrase as *أمرت أن أحكم بالظاهر والله يتولى السرائر*. For reviews, see: *Kashf al-khafa and muzil al-ilbas*, Beirut 1405/1985, I, 221-223.

⁷ Maturidi, *Ta'wilat Ahl As Sunnah*, Ed. Fatima Yusuf al-Hiyami, Beirut 1425/2004, IV, 559; Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *Usul al-Din*, Istanbul 1928, p. 347-355; Abu al-Mu'in al-Nasafi, *Al-Tamhid fi Qawa'id al-Tawhid*, Cairo 1987, p. 100.

subjection to the words and acts of the prophet and the aforementioned three generations. In this sense, “it is also within the scope of bid'ah to declare a person who reveals that he is a Muslim by word and deed an unbeliever because the Prophet did not regard even the hypocrites, who did not believe in heart, as unbelievers. As a result, Sunnah is that the practice of the Prophet became entrenched in the hands of the first three generations and became a model for the subsequent Muslims. Bid'ah, which is described as “practicing something unprecedented and unexampled” is the opposite of Sunnah in this sense.

A three-stage process can be mentioned in the formation of circumcision, which puts the practice forward/center: 1. The practice of the Prophet, the Rashidun Caliphate and the companions; 2. The practice of the successors; and 3. The practice of their successors. This is because the Prophet praised the three generations after him: “the best of you are those who lived in my age, then those who followed them, then those who followed them.”⁸ It is because of the fact that the Prophet praised these three generations, that they continued their practices and played a first-degree role in becoming established. Otherwise, the temporal gap that emerged after the Prophet would mean that Sunnah and the religion put forth by Sunnah remained ineffective. So it is a fact that the efforts and endeavors of these three generations in the transition of Sunnah into a settled state are of great importance and deserve praise. Accordingly, it is not possible for Sunnah to take place within a short period of time. In other words, it is not possible for Sunnah to become established in the whole society within short time. It is not appropriate for Sunnah's being 'settled' because the concept of Sunnah is used for matters that have become established and are practiced by people. However, It is also necessary to underline that *the real Sunnah is the Prophet's practices are based on his words, deeds, and expressions* because Sunnah is the practice of religion. As the one who communicated and explained the religion is the Prophet, his practices must be considered first. However, it is a fact that it takes a long period of time for these practices to become widespread and established in Islamic society, as has been experienced before. Accordingly, it was not possible for all companions of the Prophet to know and learn all his words, deeds and phrases within a limited period

⁸ Bukhari, “Shahadat”, 9; Müslim, “Fadai al-sahaba”, 212; Tirmidhi, “Fiten”, 45; Al-Ajluni, *Kashf al-khafa*, I, 475-476.

of time. And the companions may not have witnessed His every practice and heard His every speech in person. Therefore, it is obvious that Sunnah of the Prophet required a process that covered three generations. The companions learned from each other, their successors learned from them, and the next generation learned from the successors of the companions.

Ahmad Emin's assessment of the process of the formation of the mindset of knowledge in the Islamic Society supports our assessment of the settlement of Sunnah: "after the conquest of many countries, the companions were dispersed to different regions. These companions, who were all scholars, set out for education and they formed the core of the madrasas to be established in those regions. These scholars had their own personalities and they reflected these personalities to the madrasas in which they played a core role. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud in Kufa, Abdullah ibn Abbas in Mecca, and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn 'As in Egypt... It was out of the question that all of these companions knew everything the Prophet said and did and anything else related to the teaching of religion because some of them were not present when the Prophet preached; so it is natural that they missed some of the things learned by other companions. So everyone had knowledge of certain things but knew nothing about some others. This brought about the fact that the Hadith found in one region did not exist in others. The companions were followed by the next generation and the successors took their place in raising the banner of knowledge. When many of them realized that there was information they did not know but available in other regions, they went on journeys to obtain it. There was a constant movement for scholars of the period. The Egyptians went to Medina, those in Medina to Kufe, the people of Kufe to Damascus, and the people of Damascus to another. Thus they were trying to establish a unity of knowledge in the land of Islam. As a result, differences based on different personalities of the companies were minimized. The duty was taken over by the successors after the second generation and the method was sustained."⁹

It is very likely that Sunnah has become widespread within the Islamic society after each of these three generations practiced what they had learned about the religion. It is not possible for these three generations, who have been praised by the Prophet, to make up another Sunnah of their own accord. This is because they were

⁹ Ahmad Emin, *Fajr al-Islam*, Cairo nd., Mektebet al-Nahda al-Misriyya, p. 192

making a sincere effort to carry out or promote Sunnah on way reaching the Prophet. As can be seen in the quote from Ahmad Emin above, they were on a constant journey of knowledge. Therefore, the practice of the companions, their followers and the third generation in religious matters was considered in the scope of Sunnah. As a result of this extremely accurate and even progressive attitude, all the institutions and rules of Islam have been established. Accordingly, Sunnah of the Prophet means the practice of Islam. The first generations, who understood this properly, were very receptive to bid'ah from the beginning and took a very clear and harsh attitude towards those spreading bid'ah. When we realize how important this attitude is to protect the purity and health of Islam, just as under the reign of the Prophet, we better understand the present danger of bid'ah and superstitions towards religion and society. *Thus, the transition process of Sunnah to life was completed by the three generations praised by the Prophet, namely, the companions, their successors and those after them.*¹⁰

Bid'ah

Sunnah is to live according to the religious essence and in its original form, while bid'ah is the name of moving away from this essence and losing originality. In other words, bid'ah the alienation of the adherent and distancing himself from religion. It is only by staying true to the essence of the first day that we can live the sound and true religion. Moving away from this essence and true line drives one towards other channels and causes him to go astray. In fact, Satan's turning away from His mercy and His expulsion, despite the command of Allah, shows up with a new path and a claim of truth because ensuring the authenticity of religion depends on its preservation as it comes from the divine source. Iblis' attitude towards the command of Allah when Adam was created is a striking example of this. "[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."¹¹ And this became the first bid'ah in history.

An example of the kind of bid'ah that means *creating something that has never been on the agenda or uttered in the field of faith in the history of Islam* is to open up discussion

¹⁰ Cağfer Karadaş, *İslam'ın İnanç Yapısı*, Bursa 2006, p. 153-158.

¹¹ al-A'raf: 7/12.

on the subject of destiny. While the principles of faith were determined during the Prophet's reign and these principles were established among the companions and during his time, towards the end of the companions' age a group in Basra opened this issue to discussion. Giving the name of Qadariyah to this group is not because of their denial of fate, but because of their talk and discussion about destiny. Indeed, the statement "Ma'bad al-Juhani was the first to speak about destiny" (أول (قال في القدر معبد الجهني/من تكلم) in Muslim and Tirmidhi is evidence that fate was being debated at the time. His reaction when the news reached Abdullah ibn Umar shows that this issue was not brought to the agenda of discussion among the companions or even in the region of Hijaz in any way. The fact that the strangeness of this debate and the people who opened the debate were carrying out a first was found to be contrary to the established and original rules of that period. "Neither let them see my face nor let me see their face," said Abdullah ibn Umar about the group and he excluded them. The reason behind this exclusion is that they created something new within the religion and it was considered as though they were moving religion away from its original origin. Another evidence is this issue was never brought up among the companions is Abu Bakr Ibn Al-Arabi's determination that "the rumours concerning the Prohibition of speaking about destiny are fabrications". That is to say, this issue has never been raised among the companions in a way that requires prohibition. These and similar groups have been called Ahl al-bid'ah by the main religious mass living the religion according to Sunnah, because they have opened up discussion about a subject that has never been on the agenda among the companions.¹²

An example of bid'ah in the area of worship is that the polytheists created a type of whistling and clap while going around the Kaaba, as reported in the verse "And their prayer at the House was not except whistling and hand-clapping."¹³ The fact that the polytheists reduced the *tawaf* worship performed since Abraham to whistling and clapping naked is a deviation from the religion of Abraham. This is also a striking example of how the right religion and worship have undergone a process of degradation through bid'ah. On the other hand, the polytheists used

¹² See Müslim, "Kitab al-Iman", 1; Tirmidhi, "Kitab al-Iman", 4; Abu Bakr ibn Arabi, al-Awasim min al-Qawasim, Ed. Ammar Talibi, Algeria nd., II, 190; for more information, see: Çağfer Karadaş, *Ana Hatlarıyla Kelam Tarihi*, İstanbul 2015, p. 30-35.

¹³ al-Anfal: 8/35.

turned this worship in Kaaba into a torment for the Prophet and his companions. In this context, they tried to confuse the Prophet and his companions and disturb their peace by whistling and clapping while praying.¹⁴

In the field of politics, question of the appointment of the imam/caliph through consensus, which is not mentioned by the prophet nor by the companions and which has no application, has again taken its place in the literature as an example of bid'ah. With the death of the Prophet, first Abu Bakr, then respectively Umar and Uthman were elected caliph by the will of the Muslims. And no one, including Ali, objected. Ali himself was also elected by the vast majority in Medina and designated as caliph/imam. Ali neither objected to his appointment as the caliph in this way nor claimed that he was an imam who was designated with consensus against Muawiyah. To claim that the imamate would be determined by consensus while the situation was as mentioned would be to put forward a new way and method that does not exist in fact and which is not practiced by the first figures of the religion in any way. This new claim has given rise to the claim that imams appointed with consensus in religion are innocent. And it means equating the imam with the Prophet or considering him as an alternative. This claim of the Shia came to the point of producing an alternative authority within the religion, especially in some Sufi groups, where the sheikhs/murshids, who are seen as imams protected from mistakes and sin (mahfudz). On the other hand, the source and the basis of Shia's claims regarding the Mahdi is the claim that the imams were appointed with consensus, which was only a bid'ah in fact.¹⁵

In this case, identification of the bid'ah depends on determining Sunnah in its original form and knowing its limits. As a matter of fact, since Sunnah is transmitted from generation to generation through clear narratives, its scope/boundaries have become largely clear. A statement and practice contrary to that within religion was considered bid'ah by the main group who lived based on

¹⁴ See Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf*, al-Meketebet al-Tevfikiyya, Cairo nd., II, 239-240; Fahreddin al-Razi, al-Tafsir al-Kabir, XV, 159-160; Al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa-Asrar al-Ta'wil*, Beirut 2001, I, 384.

¹⁵ Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *Usul al-Din*, p. 284-286. Abu al-Mu'in al-Nasafi, *Tabsirat al-adilla*, Ed. H. Atay, Ş.A. Düzgün, Ankara 2003, II, 445-460; Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, *Tajrid-al-'Aqaid*, Ed. A.M.H. Süleyman, Alexandria 1996, p. 135-150; a. mlf., *Risalah fi qawaid al-aqaid*, Ed. Ali Hasan Hazim, Beirut 1413/1992, p. 83-93; Ahmad Emin, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 266-278; Muhammad Husain Al Kashif al-Ghita, *Asli al-Shia and usuluha*, Cairo 1377/1958, p. 133-141.

Sunnah. However, this practice was limited by the majority of scholars to the area of *faith* and *worship*. Customs, traditions and certain habits among the people were not considered bid'ah. From this point on, bid'ah can be defined as, "*The practice was put forward in the field of faith and worship after the periods of the Prophet, his companions, their successors and the following generation.*" However, the provisions and practices obtained by reference of the originals of the religion, such as reasoning or comparison, cannot be considered bid'ah. In other words, reasoning and comparison are new provisions based on the origin of religion. Practices in areas where religion is not regulated are not included in the scope of bid'ah.

Bid'ah is a sensitive issue. So we need to be extremely careful about our judgements regarding whether a practice is bid'ah. For example, the way and method for a matter to become a religious provision has already been determined. In this context, the main sources of practice are the four proofs, namely, the *book*, *sunnah*, *ijma* and *qiyas*. In addition to the four main evidences mentioned, there are some minor evidences known to the people. The provisions laid down by reference to this evidence cannot be considered bid'ah. The reasons made by Islamic scholars is not considered bid'ah because they are within the scope of the method we talk about. In other words, the practices laid down by *ijtihat* cannot be included in the scope of bid'ah. Some practices that are common and considered traditions can not also be included in the scope of bid'ah. Life is highly variable and dynamic. It is not right to seek the judgement about every new development in the Quran and Sunnah, and it is not always possible to find answers there. Such an approach limits life and makes it boring because orders and prohibitions have been set in religion. Apart from this, there is a very wide area left to the preference of people to be made and not to be made. It is left to man to make decisions in this regard. This means that a person can make some personal or social decisions freely. Such arrangements and decisions cannot be included in the scope of bid'ah.

A second sensitive point is that some practices are included in religion under the name of Sunnah, while others are included in the scope of prohibition under the name of bid'ah. In particular, some religious groups show the practices of their leaders within the scope of Sunnah. It is like this to establish Sunnah based on a number of fabricated words under the name of Hadith. As Imam Rabbani said, *every bid'ah leads to the elimination of a Sunnah*. For example, the long words of

niyyah before prayers, which are bid'ah, prevents early participation in the prayer in congregation, which is sunnah.¹⁶ Right at this point, the Prophet's warning is very important: "whoever gives life to an abandoned Sunnah after me, he will be given a reward as the reward of all who practice it. And nothing shall be diminished from their reward. And whosoever creates a bid'ah which is not in accordance with the good pleasure of Allah and his messenger, he shall be charged with the same as the sins of the people who do it. Nothing shall be diminished from their sins."¹⁷

The reason for the confusing Sunnah with bid'ah is that there is a very subtle distinction between these two in some respects. Sometimes it is not possible to notice this distinction. For example, visiting cemeteries is sunnah, but seeking help from the grave is bid'ah. A cemetery visit should be to remember death and to pray to those lying there. Other than that, it is not right to turn it into a visit of worldly interest because with the transition to the life in the grave, the period of 'practices' is over. Therefore, the dead cannot do favors for the living.

On the other hand, the inclusion of certain social practices within the scope of bid'ah due to being habit and tradition also leads to unrest in society. In fact, the removal of such practices leads to the destruction of many cultural values and practices. Therefore, it would be favorable to distinguish between the cultural element and the bid'ah. For example; writing poems and mercies about the Prophet and reading them with music are cultural values. Mawlid ceremonies can also be considered in this context. If people do not convert such practices into obligatory religious practice i.e. Fard, Wajib, Sunnah worship, there should be no harm in doing so. On the other hand, all good activities that believers do for the sake of Allah, which are not covered by religious prohibition, are seen as worship. From this perspective, reciting mawlid poems is not only a cultural activity but also a kind of worship. But the subtle point here is not to regard this activity as a religious order and not to make it mandatory. To perform a ceremony voluntarily and to commemorate Allah and the Prophet should cause no problem in terms of the religion. However, regarding mawlid ceremonies on the fortieth or fifty-second day of the dead or on the fortieth day of a baby born as obligatory, having an

¹⁶ Imam Rabbani Ahmad al-Sirhindi, *al-Maktubat*, Fazilet Neşriyat, İstanbul, nd., I, 159-160, 186th Letter.

¹⁷ Müslim, "İlim", 6; Tirmidhi, "İlim" 16.

expectation in this regard, forcing people to do so, and considering otherwise a sin is an obvious bid'ah.

On the other hand, it is also not right to wreak havoc in the name of eliminating bid'ah. Such an approach may have more damaging consequences. For example, it is not right to demolish the tombs and cemeteries, which were built centuries ago in order to make graves simple, and which have historical and artistic value because those tombs and tombstones are like title deeds proving that these lands we are living on belongs to us. We can use them as historical documents against enemies who claim rights on our lands. In addition, these buildings are assets in the name of art and culture. In religion, there is no compensation for harm by harm. Care can be taken to make a new tomb simple, but it is not right to destroy a tomb built centuries ago.

Reasons for the emergence of bid'ah

1. Striving to live the religion better: the equivalent of this expression in our classical works is *ifrad* (overdoing), which means to go too far in religion. Sometimes people ruin or even waste in religion in the name of better religious life. Religious efforts to live better is an issue that has been on the agenda since the time of the companions. Accordingly, the demands of some people from the companions of the Prophet are constantly to fast, to perform prayers and to be completely removed from sexual relations were not welcome by the Prophet, and even such approaches were forbidden. Accordingly, the Prophet did not find the attempts of Abu al-Darda and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As to fast continuously and to pray continuously correct, and declared to them that "their bodies, their eyes, their family and even their guests have rights over them."¹⁸ In later centuries, even today, some people attempt to build the foundation in Arafat, which depends on a certain time and place, in their own cities. Even if this is a well-intentioned attempt to live together the mood of the pilgrims, it is ultimately against the procedures and principles of hajj and wuquf, and it is bid'ah. Similarly, being based on good will to lay the ground for those who have never performed does not prevent the *tahajud* prayer, which performed by the prophet in his room,

¹⁸ Al-Nawawi, *Riyad al-Salihin*, (together with Subhi Salih, Manhal al-Waridin) İstanbul 1990, Pamuk Yayınları Ofset Baskı, p. 143-147.

performed in congregations in the mosque from being a bid'ah. This kind of interference and behavior brings with it the risk of ignoring the requirement that is bound to a certain time and place of worship and confusing the obligatory worship with Sunnah in religion.

2. Respect for the past: Respect for the past stems from the fact that it is seen as a spiritual power and motivator for the present and the future, as well as a search for roots and origins of the human being. In fact, respect for the past is accepted within the boundaries of sobriety and economics because every person has a deep backward kinship history, especially to his/her parents. Man's attachment to the past is natural. This is why it is ordered that the relations of relatives be kept strictly and to be cared of. However, it is within the scope of bid'ah that the blessing of the past and the spiritual heritage from the past are introduced into the religion as an essential element. Accordingly, it is stated in the Quran that the polytheists went and counted their ancestors in the grave in order to be superior to others and to be proud.¹⁹ This is the underlying reason why today racism and, to some extent, nationalism are quite popular. Indeed, there is an emphasis on origin in the rebellion of Iblis as pointed out above. This understanding leads people over time to bless the elders of the tribe or nation, to see them as prophets, and even to accept their words and practices as a religious basis.

3. Extreme respect for imams and leaders: As mentioned above, the first example of this is the principle of belief in Shia that Ali was the imam who was appointed with consensus. Similarly, the appointment of some sheikhs by their predecessors was perceived as a divine designation. Thus, the resulting religious leader is considered to be free and protected from mistakes, and every word he says is considered to be a religious order. In other words, in Shia, Imams are considered innocent and in Sufism, saints are considered protected, and their words and actions are seen as religious orders. According to Ku'eyri, this protection does not eliminate the possibility of sinning throughout the test of being a servitude.²⁰ However, taking this understanding to an extreme level in some Sufi circles has

¹⁹ At-Takathur 102/1-2; and see Maturidi, *Ta'wilat*, V, 513.

²⁰ Qushayri, *al-Risala*, Ed. Maruf Zuraiq Ali Abd al-hamid Baltaci, Beirut 1410/1990, p. 359-360; Ali al-Kari, *Da al-meali ala bed al-emali*, İstanbul 1985, p. 65; Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, "Hıfz" and "Mahfuz" sections

laid the groundwork for the emergence of new practices within religion, namely bid'ah. The fact that the elders of Sufism persistently suggested that the explicit aspects of Sharia should be taken as a basis was not enough to prevent the bid'ah which took place in this area.²¹

4. Some old religious and cultural values: Some values belonging to past nations and cultures are carried in Islam as if to become an element of it. Since some of them are superstitious, Islam has already struggled with them. For example, idols and beliefs based on them are elements of bid'ah that all true religions struggle with. The story of the beginning of idolatry in Mecca is a striking example of this. Amr ibn Luhay, a former saint of the Quraysh, went from Mecca to Damascus for trade. There he saw people worshipping idols. He was pleased, and took one of the idols and brought them to Mecca, and he placed it for people to worship, and named it as *Hubal*. This is how the first idolatry began in Mecca. Qusay, who had made brought benefits to the Quraysh, placed this idol inside the Kaaba and placed fortune arrows in front of it. The other Arabs also put their idols in and around the Kaaba and placed arrows of fortune in front of it. When the Arabs were involved in important activities such as travel, trade, or marriage, they pulled arrows in front of the idols and acted accordingly. Thus, the Quraysh left the path of Ishmael and Abraham, which was the religion of Allah, and worshipped lifeless and bloodless idols they had made of stone, mud-brick, wood, even of flour-palm paste.²²

5. Hadith forgery: Some with good intentions and some with purpose, the attribution of some falsehood and false information to the Prophet is regarded in history as a fabrication of Hadith. In this way, the basis for the formation of a lot of bid'ah within the religion has been prepared. The scrupulousness of the narrators about the reliability of the hadith is to prevent such a course. This may be the reason for the saying of the hadith, "*Do not tell a lie against me for whoever tells a lie*

²¹ According to 'Abdul Qahir al-Suhrawardi, the recollections that come to the heart are measured by Sharia. If it falls in accordance with *fard* or *naflah*, it is practiced, and if it is in *haram* or *makruh*, it is abandoned. If there is an equal situation, it shall be acted according to the nearest legitimate measure, which would be contrary to the desire of the soul. (Abdul Qahir al-Suhrawardi, *Awarif*, p. 465). Al-Ghazali, on the other hand, is of the opinion that it would mean the annulment of the sharia of Western knowledge, which is contrary to the religion's laws. (Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ullum al-Din*, I, 171-174). According to Sun'ullah Gaybi, Sharia is the essence of the truth and the truth is the core of the Sharia. The claim of truth that opposes Shariah, which is explicit, is falsehood. The person who claims a matter that does not conform to the law as truth is heretical and perverting. But those who accept the truth that is agreed with the Shari'a will be regarded in the right path. Those who claim the opposite are heretics. All saints of perfection are the men of the tawhid. (Sun'ullah Gaybi, *Akaidname*, İnebey Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi, Bursa, no: 854/4, vr. 26-27).

²² Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat al-Nabawiyya*, Ed. Ömer Abdusselam Tedmuri, Beirut 1408/1987, I, 79-85

against me (intentionally) then he will surely enter the Hell-fire."²³ However, despite all this, many fabricated hadiths have emerged and the scholars have seen that one way to get rid of them is to collect such words and bring them to the attention of people. In spite of this, it is clear that some people, especially on screens today, who are announcing hadiths as fabrications, do not display anything of this effort, attention and diligence of the old scholars. What they say and what they spread turns the service to Islam into loss because every utterance or practice made up and put into color of religion distorts religion from its essence.²⁴

Superstitions

Superstition means "empty words, meaningless practices, inconsistent thoughts." In the religious sense, "they are void beliefs and practices that have no religious or logical basis and are considered to be worshipped in the name of religion". It is also possible to call them 'void faith'. In other words, they are words, actions, and behaviors that are not at the core of religion, which are introduced into religion in a number of ways and which are accepted in society as religious beliefs and worship. Many of the superstitions have descended from superstitious religions and entered into the life of societies. But there are also superstitions invented by humans over time. For example, the superstition that "if the person with car sickness (who feels sick on a trip) drinks some petrol, he will find relief" is of this kind.

Difference between bid'ah and superstitions

Due to the similarities, bid'ah and superstition are sometimes confused with each other. From the point of sameness and separation, we can evaluate bid'ah and superstitions in three parts:

1. While all of the bid'ah are religious-looking, some of the superstitions are related to daily life and independent of religion. For example, tying rags to tombs is a religious-looking bid'ah and superstition. However, the superstition of "seven-month-born child lives, eight-month-born does not live" is not religious.

²³ Bukhari, "İlim", hadith no: 110; Al-Nawawi, *Riyad al-Salihin*, p. 754 (hadith no: 1378).

²⁴ For more information, see: Yaşar Kandemir, *Mevzu Hadisler*, Ankara 1980, p. 187-195.

2. There are bid'ah that fall within the scope of superstition and that do not. Good (hasanah) bid'ah are not considered superstitions, while bad (sayyiah) bid'ah are superstitions. Building minarets and reciting the adhan from there, performing *tarawih* prayers with congregations for twenty rak'at is considered good bid'ah, so they do not fall within the scope of superstition. In contrast, believing that ghouls emerge from graves and summoning the souls of the deceased is both bid'ah and superstition.

3. Bid'ah are practices contrary to the Sunnah of the Prophet. Therefore, the emergence of bid'ah was after the birth of Islam. However, the emergence of superstitions goes far back in history. As superstitions are vanity, we can say that they began to appear with the corruption of the true religion after Adam.

Superstitions and Religion

Some people from the past to the present have claimed that religion and many aspects that are religious are superstitions. For example, the Quran says, "*And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, 'We have heard. If we willed, we could say [something] like this. This is not but legends of the former peoples.'*"²⁵ The polytheists declared the words of the Quran as 'legends' and superstitions. Likewise, they declared the miracles shown by the Prophets as tales of the ancients.²⁶ Today, some materialists and positivists, who regard experiment and observation as the only source of knowledge, place all religious beliefs, especially the belief in Allah, into the scope of *superstitions*. As they do not see them with naked eyes, they consider the things that are revealed in the Quran and Sunnah as unreal, such as angels, Jinn and Satan. They deny that there is a soul beyond the human body because they do not accept what is outside the material dimension. According to them, worship, asking for help from Allah, and linking moral rules to reward and sin are all superstitions. It is necessary for the religious to strengthen their position against the idea that regards religion as a complete superstition. For this reason, there is a need for specific knowledge to distinguish between the true religion and superstitions. Otherwise, there is a faltering situation between the fact that religion is considered

²⁵ al-Anfal: 8/31.

²⁶ al-An'am: 6/25; al-Anfal: 8/31; an-Nahl: 16/24; al-Mu'minun: 23/83.

a complete superstition and the fact that superstitions are converted into religion. It is possible to mention four different views on religion and superstitions:

1. Those who regard every traditional practice among the people as a part of the religion... According to them, there is no such thing as superstition. This group expands the area of religion to the extreme, and shows an understanding that respects and advocates all kinds of religious practices. It is observed that those who oppose religion attack with the same approach by showing a number of points that are not from religion. Such people are campaigning against religion through bad treatments and practices, for example committing acts of honor and beating women. However, these behaviors are often due to ignorance.

2. Those who define Islam as the religion of reason and consider anything that does not stand to reason as superstition. In particular, efforts to adapt Islam to the understanding of the modern era have brought with them some extreme views and practices. For example, the denial of miracles and wonders, the denial of intercession, claiming that prayers are unnecessary as they prevent people from working, fasting is harmful as it decreases power, the incident of *miraj* (the Prophet's ascension) has not happened...

3. Those who consider religion a complete superstition. Some anti-religious and atheist circles tend to call religious beliefs and practices purely superstitious. According to them, religion is a number of practices unique to the people of the past ages. The fact that man relies on beings other than himself is the denial of the self. Man can overcome any difficulty with his own intellect and means. So Allah, angels, and jinns are nothing but superstitions because it is not possible to prove such beings by experiment and observation. Human beings only accept the existence they know and recognize through experimentation and observation. Everything except experimentation and observation is unreal and superstitious.

4. Those on the side of distinguishing between religion and superstition. These are the people of the right path who consider the book, sunnah, ijma and qiyas altogether as the religious proofs and evidences and consider everything outside this framework bid'ah and superstitious because there are rules for determining what is religious and what is not. By implementing these rules, bid'ah and superstitions can be exposed. But the people who will do this need to have sufficient information knowledge and sincerity. The claims of those with

malevolent intentions who produce ideas without having the knowledge cannot be respected for their religious claims.

Reasons for the emergence of superstitions

1. Fears: People seek some material or spiritual basis to overcome and suppress their fears. When they cannot find a material basis, they resort to spiritual quests. If a person's religious consciousness is not strong, he relies on a number of superstitions or fabricates them himself. Whistling while walking through the cemetery and resorting to psychics or jinn to overcome some psychological fears can be an example of this.

2. Desires: People search ways to achieve things that are desired. They resort to superstitions if they can't do in normal ways. Attaching rags to tombs to have a child, to hang baby models, to visit various people and places to get rid of a number of diseases are examples of this.

3. Smugness: Mankind has a structure that admires itself and what it does. Man even makes effort to change the religion that Allah has revealed in accordance with his own desires and passions. One reason for the corruption of religions is this smugness. Allah Almighty describes this nature of man as follows: "Then is one to whom the evil of his deed has been made attractive so he considers it good [like one rightly guided]? For indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. So do not let yourself perish over them in regret. Indeed, Allah is Knowing of what they do."²⁷ In this way, smugness has a great role in the emergence of many superstitions in history.

Number of superstitions

It is very difficult to determine the exact number of superstitions because certain issues that are considered superstitious by some may not be regarded so by others. The research conducted by the Directorate of Religious Affairs based on the data obtained from provincial directorates revealed the existence of 1380 different superstitions in Turkey. According to the classification, 335 of these superstitions are related to family, 319 to funeral, 272 to health, 78 to cemeteries, 49 to *hidrellez* (old Turkish celebration of spring), 39 to fortune, 170 to worships, 17 to hospitality, 9 to

²⁷ Fatir: 35/8.

magic, 9 to jinn and fairy, 8 to ashura, 7 to halal-haram, 6 to amulet, 2 to solar eclipse. Evaluations can be made based on these numbers. In this sense, multifaceted evaluations have already been made in the Diyanet Monthly published by the Directorate.²⁸ But it is also necessary not to fall into a pessimism by looking at these numbers. It is a fact that most of them are believed by a very small minority, and many of them have been out of people's agenda in parallel with the development of education and religious consciousness. However, this number and those that count should not be underestimated. It is obvious that the religious and cultural consciousness levels of people should be raised, especially in education. So it is clear that this work by the Directorate of Religious Affairs will contribute in this sense.

We should not see superstitions as a problem limited only to Islam and the Eastern world. As mentioned earlier, it is a fact that many of the superstitions that exist in Islamic societies are descended from ancient religions and beliefs. Besides, many superstitions still exist in the west today. For example, superstitions such as the belief that numbers 13 and 17 are sinister, donkeys are protective against any mafia, the horseshoe is auspicious, the black cat is sinister, and the owl is a sign of evil are common beliefs in Western societies even today.²⁹

Conclusion

The announcement of religion and its practice started with the sending and commissioning of Muhammad Mustafa (peace be upon him) as a prophet. Therefore, the revelation and practice of religion are simultaneous developments. It is not unique to the Prophet but also applies to all previous prophets. No one has any privileges in religion. The verses addressing the prophets, such as *"So remain on a right course as you have been commanded"*³⁰ to the Prophet, *"And We wrote for him on the tablets [something] of all things - instruction and explanation for all things, [saying], 'Take them with determination and order your people to take the best of it. I will show you*

²⁸ See *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, Haziran 2006.

²⁹ See "Bunlar da Batı'nın hurafeleri" <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bunlar-da-bati-nin-hurafeleri-4708173> (13.03.2016; 22:04).

³⁰ Hud: 11/112; Ash-Shuraa: 42/15.

the home of the defiantly disobedient."³¹ about Moses, states that each prophet is responsible for the provisions revealed by the respective religion. Therefore, the prophet is the person who brings religion and who is personally addressed by it. That's the religion was first practiced by by the Prophets himself because He has the quality to be the first role model. Accordingly in the Quran, the definition of a good example is made for the Prophet. Therefore, the Prophet himself, together with his followers, is the subject of the commandments of the religion. In religion, there is no privilege for or discrimination against anyone, including the Prophet.

The continuation of this practice with the second and third generations ensured that Sunnah gained its entrenched characteristic. Accordingly, the fact that the Prophet praised the first three generations is a strong sign that the transformation of Sunnah into established principles has taken place through these hands. As a matter of fact, sociologically, the successful implementation of a practice and the acquisition of the property of settlement depends on the continuation through several generations. That is why the Prophet drew attention to the first three generations.

It is inevitable that some contrary attitudes and behaviors will emerge along with Sunnah's involvement in life because the human is constantly in pursuit of innovation and in search of behaviors peculiar to himself. He seeks social support for every innovation he invents to garner both self-satisfaction and appreciation, and tries to make others partner in his innovation. This quest for innovation is called bid'ah in religion if it is contrary to the practice of the Prophet and in such a way as to render it invalid. In addition to this, practices that do not conform to reason and logic, which are religiously objectionable, and which are sometimes harmful to individuals and society, or which have no benefit, are described as superstitions. Since the existence of superstitions dates back to earlier times and to some extent emerged independent of religion, bid'ah has a broader framework of meaning. For this reason, the true religions have struggled with existing superstitions throughout history and have taken measures to prevent new superstitions and bid'ah from emergence. because bid'ah and superstitions are like discrete herbs added to religion later and presented as an element of its nature. In this respect, bid'ah and superstitions function as alienating the divinities of religion.

³¹ al-A'raf: 7/145.

This alienation means either that the adherent will move away from the true religion or that the religion will lose its originality. Indeed, the falsification of Judaism and Christianity resulted from the introduction of such bid'ah and superstitions into religion. Even in the time of Moses, the Jews who saw people worshiping idols wanted a similar practice for themselves. Samiri's request for the calf idol by taking the opportunity of Moses' leave was also a bid'ah. In the same way that the Jews tried to hide some of the verses of the Torah during the time of the Prophet could also be considered in the scope of bid'ah. Indeed, similarly, the fact that the Christians glorify Jesus in a way that transcends his human dimension, that they fabricate a lot of superstitions about his death, and that they finally regard him as "the son of God" is a development that detracts from the essence of the religion. These and similar other beliefs and practices have caused irreparable damage to both religion and religion's adherents throughout history, and have led to difficult gaps between the true religion and its followers.

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Religion and Alienation: Facilities, Opportunities and Dangers*

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Abstract

Alienation occurs in the life of individual; although, the concept itself has many different meanings within different disciplines. Religion is a field that can help individuals to overcome alienation in evolutionary nature. Although religion may help alienated people to overcome this problem, it has also potential to cause alienation. If religion is learned properly, it will help people positively. This relationship is positively correlated.

Keywords: Alienation, individual, religion, facility, opportunity, danger

Din ve Yabancılaşma: İmkânlar, Fırsatlar ve Tehlikeler

Özet

Çok genel bir anlam içeren yabancılaşma kavramına değişik disiplinlerden farklı anlamlar yüklense de kavrama yüklenen anlamların yoğunlaştığı alan bireysel temelde olup, yabancılaşma bireyde meydana gelmektedir. Gelişimsel bir doğaya sahip olduğunda hayatının hemen her aşamasında yabancılaşmayla karşı karşıya olan insanın bu süreçle başa çıkmak için yardım ve destek alabileceği alanlardan birisi de dindir. Dinler yabancılaşma sürecindeki insana bu süreci başarılı bir şekilde yönetmek için önemli imkân ve fırsatlar sunsa da, yeni yabancılaşma alanları üretebilecek tehlikeler de içermektedir. Dinin bu sürece olumlu katkısı onun yeterince doğru bir şekilde öğrenilip imkânlar ölçüsünde hayata geçirilmesiyle doğru orantılıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yabancılaşma, birey, din, imkân, fırsat, tehlike

The fact that it has a very general nature and is the common denominator of a process that occurs in all areas of social-psychological life makes it very difficult to define the concept of alienation. The distinction between other concepts close to the

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concept of alienation and the concept of alienation is not always clear, and this further increases¹ the confusion and uncertainty of the concept, and it is also loaded with opposite and contradictory meanings. The concept of alienation has recently come out of lines in literature, documenting almost everything from the air that modern man inhales to the environment in which he lives².

The Latin origin of the concept of alienation is “*alienatio*”, derived from the verb *alienare*³. The concept of “*alienus*”, which means another and alien in Latin, refers to the end of the control of one’s own activities by alienating himself and the society in which he lives by partially or completely losing his personal belonging when his mind is related to diseases⁴. The concept of alienation was used in medieval English, as in Latin, to mean unconsciousness or loss of cognitive power⁵. Indeed, as Fromm stated, the words “*aliéné*” in French and “*alienado*” in Spanish are used in the meaning of the mentally ill⁶ and the doctors who are currently caring for the mentally ill are called “*alienists*”⁷. In other words, this term is used about people who experience mental balance disorder, because they are disconnected from their relationships with their environment. This is why the concept is used today in the sense that more people feel completely separate and unfamiliar from their relations with the people and things around them⁸. The general tendency of American sociology to accept data on the social conditions that create alienation and reduce alienation to the psychopathology of the individual is also paralleled by this situation. The concepts of “ineffectiveness”, “withdrawal”, “apathy”, “insensitivity”, “indifference”, “ambivalence”, “disconnection”, “normlessness” and “isolationism” are closely related to the concept of alienation and are sometimes used as its synonyms⁹. In this context, pessimism, cynicism (contempt for morality), is defined as a syndrome of emotional insecurity and alienation that the concept of retardation cases, and reject socially approved attitudes and

¹ Tolan, Barlas, *Çağdaş Toplumun Bunalımı (Anomi ve Yabancılaşma)*, Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi Yayınları, Ankara 1980, p. 305.

² Kılıç, Sadık, *Yaban’cı’laşma, (İnsana Karşı Toplumsal Süreç)*, Rahmet Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1984, p. 14.

³ Schacht, Richard, *Alienation*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London 1970, p. 1.

⁴ Budak, Selçuk, *Psikoloji Sözlüğü*, Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, Ankara 2000, p. 817.

⁵ Schacht, Alienation, p. 2.

⁶ Fromm, Erich, *Çağımızın Özgürlük Sorunu*, Transl. Bozkurt Güvenç, Gündoğdu Yayınları, 3rd Edition, Ankara 1995, p. 56.

⁷ Fromm, Erich, *Çağımızın Özgürlük Sorunu*, Transl. Bozkurt Güvenç, Gündoğdu Yayınları, 3rd Edition, Ankara 1995, p. 10; Drever, James, *A Dictionary of Psychology*, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1955, p. 12.

⁸ Güngör, Erol, *Kültür Değişmesi ve Milliyetçilik*, Ötügen Yayınları, 3rd Edition, İstanbul 1986, p. 171, (22nd Footnote).

⁹ Gold, Martin, Juvenile Delinquency as a Symptom of Alienation, *Journal of Social Issues*, 1969, 25 (2), s.122; Schacht, Alienation, p. 155.

interpersonal relations to trust other people and rules that regulate the composition includes covering of personality characteristics¹⁰.

To better understand alienation, it is necessary to define the human concept. It is only by this definition that it can be revealed whether human beings are alienated or not. Then what do we have to understand from a human being? What makes a man human?

Human beings can be defined as a bio-psychic and social entity that thinks, knows, acts, has a sense of value, religious tendencies, has a sense of time, works, loves, fears, idealizes, and has unique qualities among others. Then alienation means not being able to maintain this integrity by not being able to adequately bear the mentioned characteristics. The natural result of this situation is the problem of incompatibility occurring in the inner and outer world.

While the factors that cause alienation are usually social, alienation occurs in the individual. The reflection of the alienation that takes place in an individual's inner world on their relationship causes social alienation, and individual and social alienation consistently produce each other. In fact, this situation is not only unique to alienation but also applies to many other characteristics of man. However, the weakening and deterioration in the mechanism and function of any system, including religions that challenge alienation, as a result of encountering situations that are not in accordance with its nature, can also be defined as alienation. It is necessary to remember here that the definition of man given above depicts the *ideal* human. In this case, the alienation of human beings at certain levels until they reach the ideal stage is an inevitable phenomenon. It can even be said that the whole of life is a process of alienation until it reaches its level of maturity. In this case, alienation can be considered as a natural part or consequence of human life, which is a developmental phenomenon on the one hand, while on the other hand it can be considered a powerful motivator that drives development.

It can be suggested that life is actually a process of alienation because every new situation an individual faces is alien to him, forcing him to adapt to this new situation, and in some cases to cope with it activates his potential. People can cope with some of these new situations in their lives with their own resources, but they can't cope with some others. This condition puts them in need of different doses of help at various periods of their lives. For example, it is known that the survival of a newborn baby needs the help of others. However, the baby often needs the help of others also to develop a healthy personality. Religions, which can also be considered a divine aid for healthy personality development, begin to function as developmental guides from the moment people enter the value system. For example, when the individual-God relationship is established from the Islamic axis,

¹⁰ Gould, Laurence J., "Conformity and Marginality: Two Faces of Alienation", *The Journal of Social Issues*, 1969, 25 (2), p. 44, 51.

it turns into the Lord-servant relationship. The person who gains the title of a Muslim through this relationship means the individual who trusts the guidance of Allah on his personal development and who submits himself to Him in this regard. After that, he is no longer someone who is trying to deal with alienation alone, which is a kind of humanization adventure, but he is someone who is trying to deal with this problem with Allah. So, if every new thing that man encounters is a stranger, is religion and therefore Allah not of these strangers?

One of the characteristics found in the nature of human beings is religious tendency. In the context of this trend, which is expressed in religious terminology by the concept of nature, there is *the potential to seek a superior power or to know and contact its creator*. Religion and science are almost in alliance regarding this condition, which is considered to be the genetic basis of religiosity. The concept of human nature¹¹ as mentioned in the Quran and related hadiths¹² imply positive abilities and predispositions given by Allah to human nature during the first creation, such as inclination to belief in one Allah, tendency to know its creator, and soul cleansing¹³. As a result of the weakening and disengagement that occurs in this tendency due to environmental factors, the tendency towards Allah may be masked by other factors, it may become increasingly dumbed down and eventually the relationship between Allah and man can not be established, or it may come to the point of total disengagement. Instead, by substituting *the profane and secular values*, the concept of God can become void words that have lost meaning in the minds of people¹⁴. While these situations can be understood as religious alienation on one hand, on the other hand they can be characterized as *individual alienation* in the sense of not being able to reveal an important potential in an individual's entity structure. In other words, the alienation of man to himself and the alienation to Allah or to religion can be evaluated on the same plane. Perhaps the broadest meaning of alienation in this context is *alienation to reality* in the sense of the individual not being able to notice the realities of what is happening in and around him or her. In this context, the person who carries a soul from Allah in the nature of being is addressed as follows in the Quran: "*And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?*"¹⁵. In this case, alienation corresponds to a lack of awareness of the possibilities, opportunities, and possible dangers present in the inner and outer world of the individual, including Allah.

As mentioned above, it is not difficult for a person born with a religious predisposition to have a conscious contact with Allah because the vast majority of people are born in a family environment that is more or less familiar with religion

¹¹ Ar-Rum, 30/30.

¹² Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ismail, al-Sahih, al-Maktabat al-Islamiyya, Istanbul (no date), Tefsir-u Sare, 30, 1; Cenaiz, 79, 80; Müslim, Kader, 22.

¹³ Hökelekli, Hayati, Fitrat, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, p. 47-48.

¹⁴ Kılıç, *Yaban'cı'laşma*, p. 143.

¹⁵ Adh-Dhariyat, 51/20-21.

on one hand, on the other hand, life problems often trigger the tendency of a weak person to seek superior power and seek refuge in it. But the real problem begins after that because it is one thing to have conscious contact with Allah from time to time due to the difficulties of life, and it is another thing to live and maintain this contact for a long time. Here, religions are systems that answer the question of how this contact with Allah can be established and maintained. The religions that gave the answer to this question by revelation presented to people in a concrete way with the exemplary lives of the prophets. In other words, the most perfect forms of the relationship between Lord and servant were exhibited by the prophets because they are individuals who submit themselves to Allah at the highest level regarding their personal development. It is possible to see this clearly in the hadith of the Prophet, "*my Lord has taught me and has done my manners in the best way.*"¹⁶ So, what can be said about the alienation experienced by the prophets, have they never experienced alienation? If we answer this for the Prophet Muhammad in particular, the answer will certainly be 'yes, He has experience' because, as the Quran says, all prophets are human beings¹⁷, and alienation is man's destiny. To be a prophet means to be a stranger twice as much. Accordingly, Muhammad experienced an intense alienation when he addressed the first revelation and when he told others about the situation he had experienced, and when the revelation was stopped. The situations he faced when he started the communicate, when he was boycotted, when he went out to fight against his own people, when he was digging a ditch with a pickaxe and a shovel, were strange things to him. He has overcome these problems by taking refuge with Allah, by giving his back to Him, by seeking help from Him, by feeding Him psychologically, and sometimes by challenging others with His power. All this is essentially the process of "*nurturing by His Lord*" in terms of human development and individual piety, and on the other hand the spread of a new religion across the world.

It is possible that all people whose destiny is alienation, such as the prophets, receive high-level help from Allah in this process. In other words, Allah's guidance to the prophets through revelation applies to other people, and the most common name for it is the way of religion. According to this, religion is one of the important opportunities for human beings in the process of combating alienation. From time to time, divine guidance is realized through direct interventions in the form of birth and inspiration to the heart, which creates an important opportunity for a person who is a traveler of personal development. Inspiration, which means direct feeding from Allah, provides an important motivation for the individual and sharpens his perceptions. One of the natural consequences of this situation is foresight. However, in a *hadith qudsi*, inspiration is bound to positive behavior, as stated in "*if you work with what you know, I will teach you what you do not know.*" According to this, it is possible to get help from Allah through religion, whether indirectly or directly,

¹⁶ al-Hindi, *Kanz al-ummal* XI/406; Suyuti, *al-Jamiu al-saghir*, I/12

¹⁷ At-Tawbah, 9/128.

in the adventure of personal development, which is also a process of alienation. However, this situation also depends on certain conditions, and failure to adequately meet these conditions can lead to new alienations. In other words, while religion has the potential to make serious contributions to the person in the process of alienation, it is possible to alienate him even further.

There are two basic conditions for religion to contribute positively to the process of alienation. The first of these is sufficient knowledge of the true religion. It is not possible for Allah to guide people if the information that constitutes an important dimension of religious life is not obtained properly and adequately from the proper sources, and the danger of this situation is that man is a servant of others but not of Allah in good faith. People who put their minds and cognitive abilities at the service of others to guide their religious lives instead of providing them with the right knowledge of religion are more open to alienation. Similarly, religionists who learn the religion from wrong sources, not the right ones, or who do not learn enough, who do not distinguish it from superstitions are also more open to alienation because incomplete and incorrect knowledge of religion sometimes causes people to become depressed by putting religious boundaries in a much narrower pattern than they are, and sometimes by eliminating almost all boundaries it destroys the organization of religion into human life, even in these cases it is a clear religious alienation. While most simple examples of this situation are fearing people who violate minor rules with a hell that will last for years or opening the gates of heaven to those who do simple favors; the understanding that being religious is a matter only of praying, fasting, pilgrimage and alms, abstracting it of piety, truthfulness, honesty, fairness, hard work, productivity, security, solidarity, altruism and many other social behaviors is an explicit alienation.

It is not enough to hone it correctly for religion to contribute positively to the process of alienation. The second basic condition of this situation is that it is implemented at a sufficient level. It is also alienation for the individual to think that his faith does not transform himself without sufficiently conveying the guiding principles of his religion to his life, as well as to observe such devout people and to form an opinion about religion based on this observation. The practice of religion in life is directly proportional to the value given to it. It is not possible for a person who does not value to take it seriously, nor is it possible for him to transfer what he does not take seriously into his life. In this case, not giving or not being able to give enough value to faith poses another risk as another of the fundamental problems of today's religious people. In our opinion, this is the result of a wrong perception of religion, along with incomplete and insufficiently accurate knowledge of religion because the vast majority of people perceive religion as a responsibility and see it as a debt that they do not want, rather than an opportunity and chance that they can take advantage of in their own personal development process. This perception makes it difficult for religion to be realized in life, as well as making it devoid of meaning and limiting its developmental functions because debt discharging

activates the feelings of weakness instead of pleasure, bringing the tendency to distance instead of proximity because the unpaid debt reminds the individual of the penalty, it activates the feeling of fear. Thus, approaching the worships with a sense of debt on one hand reduces the motivation for them, on the other hand it allows only the protective functions of religion to be lived. However, the main contribution of religion to the human being in the process of alienation is realized by the introduction of its development functions. These functions are not revealed in piety fueled by fear, but in piety fed by love.

Regardless of the motivations, worship is one of the main factors that carry Allah into the consciousness of the individual and provide vitality there. It is not possible for a religion that does not ask for worship to go beyond a dry philosophy, nor is it possible for a person who does not tend to worship to develop in religious terms. The fact that Allah exists in the active zone of individual consciousness and continues to exist here means the end of the separation between man and Allah, which corresponds to mature religiosity. This situation, which is stated in the Quran as "*keeping prayer from evil*,"¹⁸ indicates that the individual who joins with Allah in his consciousness during prayers may actually succeed in staying away from evil. The problems of orientation to worship and execution are the main reasons for alienation in religious life. Based on this, not believing in religious doctrines by heart and being skeptical against them, not having at least an acceptable level of religious knowledge to perform religious practices, not being able to achieve psychological satisfaction from worship, not being able to observe explicit religious prohibitions and habitual behaviors can be considered different reflections of religious alienation observed in different areas. In this context, the most widespread habits like laziness, lying, freeloading, gossip, waste, adultery, theft, dishonesty, injustice, oppression, and abusing religion for personal interests can be considered lacks in human development or different manifests and results of religious alienation.

In fact, religion's greatest contribution to the individual in the process of alienation is to raise awareness and help him to realize the possibilities, opportunities, and dangers both within and around him. In this context, one of the greatest dangers facing today's religious people is the religious defense mechanisms they experience as a result of lack of awareness. The vast majority of people think that they are living the truth, even though they are moving away from their individual reality and entering into a pattern of lies, with the introduction of the defense mechanisms that have emerged in religious life.

That is, although the believed and adopted tend to produce behaviors that are appropriate to them, the inability of the human to perform these behaviors under the influence of other factors causes a contradiction that outweighs the cognitive aspect. One of the most commonly used ways to get rid of this contradiction is

¹⁸ Al-'Ankabut, 29/45.

defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms sometimes work in the form of suppression of the individual's beliefs, which forces him to act, by pushing him into the subconscious mind, and sometimes by producing arguments that can justify the discrepancy between belief and behavior in various ways. In this case, the perception of faith evolves. Individuals begin to produce partially rational arguments and think that their cognitive sides are stronger, they can survive in this system even without practices, Allah doesn't need anyone's worship, Allah is the merciful one and may forgive those who don't act in His way, religion is a matter of inner peace and the destination can be reached in different other ways. Another orientation of religious people who have difficulty fitting their behavior into their beliefs is to do this by a little retouching on their beliefs. In this way, the cyclical relationship between the beliefs and behaviors of the individual who has survived the internal contradiction becomes effective this time between their new beliefs and old behaviors.

It is not easy for individuals who infect their religious life with defensive mechanisms to get out of this situation because the disconnection from the reality inherent in defense mechanisms applies to religious defense mechanisms as well. The natural consequence of this situation is that someone who thinks he is religious or who perceives himself as a religious person is not really so. The simplest evidence of this situation is that individuals who frequently perform religious rituals in their lives also frequently perform behaviors that are not approved by religion. These are the indicators of religious alienation. In this way, it becomes more and more difficult for the individual who is moving away from the world of religious reality to return to the true perception of religion or worship because while the major factors that save the individual from this kind of orientation are dramatic experiences, such experiences do not raise the religious awareness of anyone who experiences them.

One of the most frequently used defense mechanisms in religious life is the effort of the individual to make concessions by not performing the prayers that are difficult for him or her, but by practicing the prayers that are easy. This situation is applied more to appease the feeling of sinfulness caused by the violated religious prohibitions. For example, a wealthy devotee can compromise the shortcomings of his religious life by giving scholarships to students or spending lavishly on charity work. This may even create the illusion that some individuals think of their expenses in the name of religion as a form of credit to violate the religious prohibition. The main purpose of worship, however, is to improve the consciousness of Allah in the individual by nurturing the soul and keeping it alive. Such defenses serve not to improve the consciousness of Allah but to increase the appetite of the soul. Accordingly, it is clear that no behavior that does not contribute to the development of the consciousness of Allah in the individual can be worshipped, even though it has been recommended by the religious person. In this context, it is meaningful that the measure of atonement, which is required to be

performed as a result of the violation of certain religious prohibitions according to the religion of Islam, is adjusted according to what is difficult for the human soul. For example, the penance of a rich person who intentionally breaks his oath is not to feed ten poor people, but to fast for three days.

One of the most effective ways to get rid of alienation in worship is to focus on the semantic dimension in them. For example, the vast majority of people who do not know the language of the basic sources of the religion they believe in often pray with the ready prayer patterns they have learned. This often results in praying without realizing what kind of communication is made with Allah and what is asked of Him. However, prayer cannot contribute to this process as religious development necessarily occurs with the rise of religious awareness or consciousness. The same applies to other types of worshipping. For example, the prayer, which consists of a prayer with a certain time and distinctive rules, requires the recitation of some oral invocations. People who do not speak Arabic perform their prayers by reciting these prayers without knowing what they mean. The same is true for those who know the meaning of the surahs they recite in prayer, but do not focus on the meaning. The natural consequence of this situation is an unproductive life of worship. As a matter of fact, some religious people become increasingly alienated from religion due to their inability to achieve the awe and psychological satisfaction they seek in their worship¹⁹.

In a study of the language of worship, it was found that the language of worship is a factor that can create alienation in the field of religious life. Accordingly, individuals who read the surahs for prayers by thinking about their meaning were found to exhibit significantly higher levels of internal religious motivation than those who *“do not know the meaning of the surahs of prayer”, “read them without thinking about their meaning, despite having the knowledge”* and *“favor worshipping in Turkish”*. A similar situation arose when these findings were examined in reverse. According to this, 21.8% of subjects with low levels of internal religious motivation did not pray, while this ratio was 2.6% for the group with high levels of internal religious motivation. The rate of thinking about the meanings of the surahs recited in prayer in the high level group was 30.3%, while this rate decreased to 13.5% in the low-level group in terms of internal religious motivation.²⁰

The above findings reveal the close relationship between religious beliefs and behaviors, as well as the importance of the level of awareness during the practice of religious rituals. Just as any information or action that does not extend a person's point of view is obliged to remain stumped, the forms of worshipping that do not raise religious awareness are similarly bound to remain stumped or become defensive mechanisms. According to this, while purity and sincerity are important in the worship that will improve religious consciousness, they are not alone

¹⁹ Karaca, Faruk, *Din Psikolojisi*, Eser Ofset, Trabzon, 2015, p. 162.

²⁰ Karaca, Faruk, *Psiko-Sosyal Açıdan Yabancılaşma ve Dini Hayat*, Bil Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 224-226.

enough. As the individual knows what to do during worship, he also needs to know what dialogues he enters into, what he promises to Allah, and what he wants from Him. Otherwise, the worships face the risk of not being able to move beyond automated bodily movements because individuals who do not focus on meaning in religious practices are interested in what preoccupies the active region of their consciousness during worship, and their religious practice falls into secondary importance. In this context, it is common for people to remember the location of some lost items during prayer or to discover interesting ideas about the subjects they have concentrated on. In addition, it is not as difficult to learn the meaning of the prayers recited in worship and to read them from their original form during worship by concentrating on their meaning, and it is something that anyone who takes his religion seriously and values it can do.

As a result, alienation is the inevitable fate of the human cub, which has a developmental characteristic, no matter what meaning is attached to it. While alienation makes life difficult on one hand, on the other hand it throws wood into the fire of human development in order to develop their potential for survival. Moving along the path of development means more easily dealing with alienation. People get help from different sources to deal with the problem of development. Religions, which are significant alternatives for help, have always been the center of attraction for people throughout history. However, the reputation and inclination of people with structurally high religious interest to religions do not guarantee that they get enough use of them. In some cases it is even possible for religions to add new areas of alienation to human life. The positive contribution of religions to this process depends on the conditions of learning them correctly enough and transferring them to life in the measure of possibilities, and the opposite results in the other direction.

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Religious Alienation*

Mustafa TEKİN**

Abstract

This article mentions the relations between religion and alienation with a facet; Does religion alienate human-beings? We divide religion into two categories; theoretical and sociological religion. In the general sense, religion is characterized as a potential power for going beyond alienation. But it is possible to mention positive functions for religion in daily social life. We propose that there are positive correlations between sociological religion and alienation in this article. This thesis is tried in three categories; Intellectual and mental alienation, alienation in religious culture and alienation in daily social life. Alienation was analyzed within the relations between human-beings and truth. At last, it is possible to mention alienation.

Keywords: Religion, Alienation, Theoretical Religion, Sociological Religion, Culture

“Din” dârâne Yabancılaşma

Özet

Bu makale, din ve yabancılaşma arasındaki ilişkiye bir boyutuyla değinmektedir; dinin yabancılaştırıcı işlevi var mıdır? Burada din, iki farklı kategoride ele alınmıştır; teorik din ve sosyolojik din. Genel anlamda din yabancılaşmayı aşacak bir potansiyel olarak tanımlanmakla birlikte, gündelik sosyal hayatta yaşanan dinin bir takım yabancılaştırıcı işlevlerinden bahsetmek mümkündür. Bu açıdan biz, makalede, sosyolojik din ile yabancılaşma arasında pozitif ilişkiler olduğu tezini öne sürmekteyiz. Bu tez üç başlık altında denenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bunlar; fikri ve zihinsel yabancılaşma, Din kültüründe yabancılaşma ve gündelik ibadet ve pratiklerde yabancılaşma. Makalede yabancılaşma, daha çok insan ve hakikat arasındaki ilişkiler içerisinde analiz edilmiş ve nihayet belirli oranda bir yabancılaşma işaretlerinin var olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din, Yabancılaşma, Teorik Din, Sosyolojik Din, Kültür

The concepts of religion and alienation, the topics reviewed in this study, are included in an area where we discuss them separately or collectively considering

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their positive or negative relationships with one another. Alienation has become a significant problem along with the concepts such as post-modernism, world of images and consumption society because analyzing the concept of alienation has become more related to the concept itself, and this process obligates examining the relationships of this concept with other disciplines on one hand. On the other hand, increase in urban population, urbanization, culture industry, popular culture, and rapid communication make it difficult for people to catch up with their own "spirits". Moreover, generalization of violence, demoralization, demolition of traditional relational networks and increase in schizophrenia cases all indicate alienation.

This study was limited with the sociological review of the relationship between religion and alienation. Examining this relationship requires reviewing the formal and shape-related effects of these concepts over one another and studying the mutual interactions along with their social aspects. The scope of the analyses in this study will be narrower while the study avoids from discussing the general framework. A sociological analysis will be performed only in regard to the alienation-related effects of religion.

The following two points should also be mentioned to clarify the discussion topic: As known to all, there are theses reflecting the positive and negative effects of religion on alienation. The theological articles in this topic can be included in the discussion by positioning them as the elements that will enable people to overcome religious alienation. This study aims to perform a different discussion while mentioning the alienation-related aspects of religion. This discussion is believed to be meaningful and actual in the conjuncture (a period when Muslims undergo class-related, cultural, social and political changes) we are in.

What sort of content is meant by mentioning the alienation-related aspect of the religion? The religion can be divided into two dimensions for making the discussion more functional. The first reflects the religious theories, meaning the religious abstract discourse. This can also be regarded as theoretical religion. The second indicates the transformation of theoretical religion into practices through society. Religion here achieves formality in a society and has variations as practices, which will be called "sociological religion." Sociological religious implications will be used in the analyses regarding the relationship between religion and alienation.

After determining the limitations of the study, the thesis can be explained. The transformation of religious people following the 1980s, increase in wealth, class-related advancements, and centrist Islamic ideology and practices have appeared in Turkey in time. Muslims' claims regarding the religion have decreased in time in line with these religious ideologies and practices which have been occasionally based on conformism. On one hand, the new "religious culture" and practices bring forth a movement of alienation. On the other hand, it is fair to state that the structures regarding Islam an ideal have been radicalized and alienated as a result of the global injustice and distrust environment on a larger scale. The following section briefly reflects the relationships between the concepts of alienation and religion to form a conceptual framework first.

A) Alienation:

The concept of alienation is regarded as an actual discussion topic of the modern times. The negative content of the concept causes one to think over the concept of "human" once again. This concept also covers an analysis regarding the alienation of humans and relevant reasons. Accordingly, alienation can be defined as anything before the meeting of one with oneself or the distance between one and the oneself. The distance here can be considered as any type of social, political or cultural processes that prevent one from realizing oneself instead of being regarded as a volume-related concept or spatiality. Therefore, all obstacles before staying as "self" are alienated. As a result of one's failure in realizing one's own reality and because of the elements serving for the purpose of replacing this reality, one becomes alienated.

Two people should be mentioned when it comes to alienation. One of them is Hegel who prioritizes nature over culture considering the differentiation between nature and culture and states that humans established a second world against the natural world. There are two worlds according to the common sense, namely, natural and spiritual world according to Hegel. The spiritual world was founded by the people, and it will remain as so no matter how much it was designed with sacred concepts. This world is present with and by human elements.¹ Hegel regards alienation as a necessary point to be overcome to establish the particular individuality of the spirit and to form the essential characteristics in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.² According to Hegel, one will be able to overcome the concept of alienation as much as one reaches beyond this point and reestablishes relationships with the natural elements. Hegel here stresses what sort of obstacles emerge between the culture people have formed by themselves and the natural world.

The second important name is Karl Marx. Marx assesses alienation through the concept of "labor". The main problem here is the mass labor force and its commodification. According to Marx, the product of labor appears as a foreign and independent factor before the labor and production. The product of labor is the materialized labor indicating the objectification of labor. The objectification of labor in this way emerges as the termination of reality and slavery to objects for the workers while ownership appears as alienation.³ The important problem here is the objectification of labor and produced good and transformation of them into a force that is independent from the producer. According to Marx, "Possessing an object causes such an alienation that the more a worker produces, the less he/she can have, and the worker submits to the domination of the capital. All these results can be found within this definition: A worker is in a relationship with the product of his/her labor that is similar to the relationship with a foreign object. From that perspective, it is clear that the more a worker forces himself/herself, the more

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Tarihte Akıl*, Çev. Önay Sözer, Second Edition, İst., Kabalıcı Yay., 2003, p. 55.

² Temel Demirer-Sibel Özbudun, *Yabancılaşma*, Ankara, Öteki Yay., 1999, p. 12.

³ Karl Marx, *1844 El Yazmaları*, Trans. Murat Belge, Second Edition, İst., Birikim Yay., 2003, p. 75.

his/her foreign and objective world becomes powerful. However, the number of worker's possessions decreases as the worker's career becomes poorer, which is also the case for religion. The more one presents to God, the less is left for one... In other words, the life a worker reflects to the object emerges as a foreign and opposing element for the worker."⁴ As a natural result of all these, the effectivity of the producer becomes foreign for him/her, and that producer loses the self.⁵

The perceptions of Hegel and Marx toward alienation inevitably make the concepts of human nature and personality more distinct. Alienation of humans occurs on the distance between the nature and people both in Hegel's differentiation between natural and spiritual world and Marx's analysis on labor. Nature here is defined as the purest form of humans. This study indicates that there are two meanings behind the western emphasis on the concept of "nature". One of them reflects the modern objection to the Christian ideology that human desires should be suppressed to be the perfect man (*insan al-kamil* in Islam), while the other stresses the reestablishment of humanistic ideology prioritization of nature. Revelations are some of the good beginning points for considering the observations and experiments before the religious perceptions. However, the use of the concept of "nature" (particularly the human nature) covers many self-related desires of people without paying attention to their levels of morals⁶. The differentiation between the concepts of "characteristics" and nature can be mentioned here.

What should be discussed is the alienation between people and what they produce (including culture), or the transformation of one's products into the objects between the one and oneself. People make an effort to meet their basic human needs in their daily lives in some way. Accordingly, objects are needed by people to maintain and facilitate their daily lives. However, these objects turn into objectives for people after some time and deprive people of a life goal that can improve their states and potentials, which can be regarded in the context of alienation. For instance, sheltering is a basic human need. However, people's actions and lives may become alienated for them when they mortgage their future and get into long-term debts. Household goods should serve for the purpose of facilitating human life but they may turn into the goals which are always renewed in the consumption society and for which people always have to work. Therefore, the culture, behavioral patterns or even the images people generate to meet their daily human needs all turn into an element of alienation. It should be noted that Hegel and Marx approached the subject from an important point.

B) Religion and Alienation:

People do not come to this world intentionally. They naturally ask questions about themselves and the world they are in after they become aware for the first time. The questions people ask as a result of the contact between the "self" and the

⁴ Karl Marx, *ibid.*, p. 75-76.

⁵ Karl Marx, *ibid.*, p. 78-79.

⁶ Shams: 91/8.

“world” are related to seeking meaning, which is similar to our attitudes and concerns arising when we come to a place we do not know the purpose of recognizing the place, understanding the reason for being there and learning what will happen next. The reasons why people come to this world and the life after death are both an issue of curiosity and concern for them. Their selves aim to understand this issue but the result of thinking over the “self” and “world” is that they, as the creatures with limits, cannot have thorough information about themselves and the world. They do not give up their purpose of learning but their “abilities” and “limits” prevent them every time. Moreover, the judgments developed with information, experience and internal processes to understand the reality regarding the “self” and “world (this can also be called the objects)” are retested in life. The main purpose for the self in defining itself is to overcome alienation. The failure in recognizing itself and the world is an indicator of alienation for the self because distorting the “reality” deepens the concept of alienation.”⁷ The main problem in terms of alienation is the failure of people in establishing a proper relationship with the reality regarding the place they come, the reason they live and the life after the death.

The quality and presence of people on the world, i.e. different ideologies regarding their own realities, philosophies. and religions created different ideas. Ideologies and philosophies among these ideas define people within the borders of the world, but people’s realities are secular and limited as they do not have an idea regarding metaphysics and the life after death. The most detailed recommendation regarding life after death has been probably offered by religions which aim to clarify the meaning-related issue(s) of where people come from, why they live and what will happen after death⁸. It is precisely at this point that religions constitute the most serious opportunity in an attempt to overcome alienation. It is fair to state that sending prophets to societies is meaningful for making people face their “selves”.

The presence and life in the world also serve to distract people from their final purposes and targets. The world is actually an opportunity for people to get ready for life after death. However, making the world the main goal constitutes a significant dimension of one’s alienation. Sufism-related approaches have often focused on this issue. The negative attitude toward the world seems to be related to one’s alienation in the philosophy of unity of existence. Accordingly, “humans who come to the world after getting released from the divine authority have longing in the world and desire to return back to that authority and be extinct or present before the God. This situation, i.e. the separation, gives people a complete feeling of alienation. On the other hand, presence in the world already reflects a case of alienation in regard to being separate. While this case enables people to refocus on their characteristics, a path is opened for them: Being alienated from the world.

⁷ Mustafa Tekin, “Ateizm İle Teizm Arasında Yabancılaşma-Hangi ‘Ara’da Görüşeceğiz?”, *Birikim*, p. 320, date: 2015, p. 94.

⁸ Jean Chevalier, “Din Fenomeni”, *Din Fenomeni*, Trans. Mehmet Aydın, Konya, Din Bilimleri Yay., 1993, p. 10-11.

What Sufism in general and Mawlana in particular recommends against the feeling of alienation following birth is to become alienated from the world which is already foreign for them and will possibly make them alienated.⁹ We reflect the emphases of Sufism to make sure they indicate the reality that the “world” can be an important wall between the people and truth while putting the discussion of whether Sufism ideology establishes a proper relationship with the world aside. In addition, it should be noted that the conceptualization related to “becoming alienated from the world” assigns a positive meaning to alienation and that people can generate the opportunities to meet with their “selves” once again.

This study already reflected that people’s productions on the world (culture, technology etc.) can divert them from their own reality and cause a sense of alienation. While religions generally recommend a simple life style, what they aim to ensure is that people do not lose their own realities. These productions called spiritual by Hegel generate extensive historical accumulations and people are overwhelmed and possibly lose themselves under these accumulations. It is fair to state that religions remind relevant aspects in this regard.

This study mentioned that religions in general and Islam (theoretical aspects) in particular may constitute a resistance before people’s alienation, generate the opportunities for meeting with the “self”, reflect people collectively and make them familiar with the “reality”. However, these points indicate the aims and ideals of religions including Islam. Reviewing Muslims’ relationships with alienation in the daily life is another dimension of the issue. The following sections will analyze whether Muslims’ Islamic perceptions cause an alienation from different perspectives.

C) Alienation-Related Role of Religion

As mentioned before, this study focuses on the hypothesis that certain Islamic perceptions and relevant practices cause alienation under three subtitles.

1- Mental and Ideological Alienation

The concept that is critical for humans would be “reality”. While this concept has close ties with “truth” reflecting Allah, it also contains terms such as fitness to essence, truth and reality. There is certainly an irreplaceable relationship between Allah and fitness to truth (or reality). First and foremost, all objects have a reality in their essences. People somehow perceive themselves and objects. However, the correspondence of information arising from each perception to reality raises concerns, which arises from one’s weakness and deficiencies, and objects’ positions and perspectives. Allah thoroughly knows the reality of objects. However, people talk over the different aspects and reflections of reality and shorten the distance

⁹ Mustafa Tekin, “Mevlâna Celâleddin Rûmî’de Din ve Yabancılaşma”, *İ.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, I.1, Malatya, 2010, I,111.

between themselves and objects by making an effort to grasp the reality in the objects and their spirits. What is expected from people first is to seek whatever fits the reality. The reflection of this over the social environment is disapproving the myths and wrongs and giving credit to the right people instead of justifying personal ideas, ideologies and behaviors in daily life and the relationships with God and environment.

The first problem here is to be alienated from Muslims' wrongs while accepting the personal religious perceptions as the truth. It is without a doubt that Islam pointed the truth in Muslims' expressions of a reality and the truth in the relationships between God and humans, between different people, and between humans and the environment. Muslims, however, have defended a stereotyped, labeled, and guaranteed Islamic ideology and prioritized this approach over reality, which indicates that the Islamic perception at a mental and ideological level is actually an alienation-related approach and that this approach will/did create a distance between the humans and reality. Analysis over a couple of different reflections of this problem will probably help detail the issue.

If we regard humans as a subject and religious texts (Quran and Sunnah) as an object in the formation of Islamic perceptions and relevant information, we should realize that two important risks like textual statements and understanding and perception of human subjects stays as an obstacle before making the subject meaningful properly and making an effort to reach the reality. Accordingly, this means that understanding and perceiving is not an absolute action. The result of this process is that one's pursuit of reality is a constant search and renewal of the self. The unresponsive characteristics of the Muslim world partially arise from this stabilization, and therefore, "reality" is reduced to a conjunctural determination. This can be seen in the abstract, unresponsive ideologies of Muslim societies. First of all, this situation, which is a mental weakness, takes the Islamic understanding recorded in a place and time into the backup of the culture and history of that place and time and opens a great distance between the truth and the human; religion should be an exploratory element; The sincere demands and thoughts of Muslims which include demanding or facing with "reality" may be replaced with certain shallow Islamic perceptions in this regard. Believers' constant search should be related to the reality of objects. Accordingly, respect and demands regarding the reality require a mental attitude.

Islam has severe issues in this regard. Deceptions in daily life, fondness for objects, carelessness, Allah, and people's weaknesses regarding respect toward one another and environmental law emerge as the distances between the people and reality. More importantly, this distance between reality and people can be justified with the religious discourses. Failure to implement justice (or failure of objects) in this regard seems to be related to falling away from truth at the same (primary) level. First and foremost, we believe this is a mental and ideological problem.

The second issue related to mental and ideological alienation is the relationships between Muslims and mortal objects in general and ties with the government in particular, and the ideological transformations arising from these. Like all other

religions, Islam asks and expects all believers to display certain attitudes against life and situations. Accordingly, religions recommend people to establish certain relationships with all institutions and objects. All sorts of relationships enable people to be more mature and self-aware when established within certain rules. A central authority is not meant solely by saying government. Instead, all Foucault-related authority levels in society are mentioned in this regard. The presence of Muslims in the world assigns a responsibility to them. These people aim to use their authority-related mechanisms (money, government, offices) to establish justice as a necessity of this responsibility. The transformational characteristics of the authority mechanisms may create a process of justification where authority, instead of "truth", is at the center. The seductive aspects of authority may have an alienation-related function for all sorts of government.

Turkey has witnessed the move of the class named religious people from the periphery to center and seen their rise from the low to middle and upper classes since the 1980s, which had reflections in many different areas and social institutions from economy to politics. Certain practices such as individualization and value loss, distances between the classes, loss of the meaning in wearing hijab, and faster process of materialization significantly transformed the mental world of the Muslims. The main problem, however, is the form of establishing a new relationship between humans, the world and Allah with these transformed minds. This is exactly where alienation begins. The interesting point here is that the alienation of mind and stance can be justified by religions. Therefore, Muslims may move away from the reality by receiving support from different comments. Various Islamic approaches and perceptions covers the truth, as noted by Marx, and serves for an alienation-related purpose. The process in the transformation itself often makes the crisis regarding the stance and ideology of one imperceptible.

Another problem is that the justification of different authority levels and all sorts of gains for religion makes the Muslims' minds alienated from reality. The issues experienced when the Islamic ideology was at the periphery may bring forward an attitude such as the justification of authority as a result of getting positioned in economic, cultural, social. and political center. Moreover, this is more obvious in the approaches of perceiving and justifying different authority levels among the religious people, which can be regarded as important for the specific transformational nature and reality of authority to reflect the weaknesses seen in demands.

2- Alienation in Religious Culture

Every religion becomes institutionalized after meeting with the societies under the conditions of relevant periods, and they become a part of interaction after spreading and contacting with different cultures. Islam experienced this process after being revealed to the Arabic society. Muslims from different geographies of the world can experience Islam through different cultural elements in the present time. Religious studies on understanding the religion have been performed thus far,

and we have a massive Islamic experience at the moment. A long period of time since the revelation of Islam (1400 years) causes Muslims to consider the modern religious culture in perceiving Islam, which has certainly both positive and negative results for society. Alienation is the primary element among these negative results.

This study reflects three different dimensions of the relevant issue. The first is that religion reflects the position of culture and tradition along with the religious comments as noted above. People internalize the culture of their society through the socialization process. They learn many religious aspects in these cultural patterns. It is fair to state that masses adopt the patterns and information learnt through culture as the absolute truth without even questioning them. Thus, the tradition and culture in this regard may block one's perceptions regarding the reality. A metaphor can be used to make the issue clearer. If we release a small snowball from the top of a hill, it will turn into a massive ball when it reaches the bottom. Reality is essential, minor and simple. However, the distance with the mass and reality increases as history, culture and traditions start to play a role. More importantly, this culture and tradition may become religious in an interesting way, create a sanctity around reality and turn into a wall blocking the access to this sanctity. The social status of culture and tradition may be religious in a strange manner after almost being combined with reality.

Another significant point is that religious comments may begin to overshadow the religions. Thus, stability is blocked in the search for renewal and comments turn into a dogma to replace the reality. A mass scientific accumulation should be mentioned when Islamic ideology is studied. The Islamic interpretations and perceptions related to the movements of Ghazali, Averroes, Fazlur Rahman, Nasr, Iqbal and Ibn Taymiyyah can be mentioned here. These interpretations contribute to the efforts to understand Islam and to follow the path to truth. However, relating any of these with Islam or getting stuck with one of these means making an effort to explain the universal concepts through limited resources. The efforts to define the universal concepts through these limited resources generate serious distances between the people and reality. In addition, the relationship between these religious interpretations with limited resources and the concept of takfir focuses on dogmatism rather than the reality.

The second dimension related to these issues is the equalization of religious interpretations or solutions of many issues with the religions, transformation of these solutions into unintended formats, and the continuation of this equalization even if the capacity to meet the modern problems reaches the end. This is called "**reductionist equalization**", which means that formal structures developed in a certain period to fulfill certain religious goals turn into the main target after the initial purpose is forgotten in the following periods. This is reductionism because the concept is reduced to the level of formality. However, these formal structures are the answer to the issues of the relevant periods. They are related to equalization because they equalize form with the purpose, which results in generating religious traditions and forms to be a burden for the people in the following periods. Formalization is certainly unavoidable for the societies in the historical process.

However, the problem is that these forms are becoming more determinant and replace the reality.

Another issue is the congregations and cults formed throughout Islamic history and the alienation arising from their cultures. This issue can be examined under two dimensions. The first is that the congregations and cults position themselves as the “path to Islam” which is already a significant issue. Although they should be regarded as an Islamic interpretation and contribution to diversity, their monopolist and exclusionary attitudes are problematic. Moreover, the stereotyped attitudes and behaviors of the culture in these groups often result in losing the aspects regarding the purpose of religions and limits of the reality. The duties assigned to group members and followers or even the religious ceremonies sometimes deviate from their intended meanings. On the other hand, the leading culture can produce a religious hegemony after losing the guiding characteristics, which is accompanied by the loss of the search of reality within the borders of congregation and leadership.

The second dimension reflects the rise of neo-Salafist movements such as ISIS and their activities under the name of Islam. These structures formed due to the strong effects of certain factors such as financial, social, and political aspects make Islam a pure form of violence, which indicates the dimensions of alienation. Islam, a religion which mainly aims to enable people to live in peace, is transformed into a human grinder. The takfir discourse deepens the dimensions of alienation within its religious legitimacy frame. It is a fact that these structures which appear to present a compensation to the Muslim people who have been oppressed and exploited in the adventure of modernization have problems with tradition, culture, other people, and even God and therefore, reality.

This study reflected the culture of society and alienation-related dimensions of religious culture under this section. It should be noted that culture generation is inevitable for societies, which is also indicated by Hegel. However, the problem is the weakness experienced in questioning this culture and criticizing it. In this case, culture turns into an insoluble issue between humans and reality. Religions which should illuminate people start to be associated with alienation when this issue is justified religiously.

3- Alienation in Daily Practices

Religions have multi-dimensional effects in one’s life, which arises from the inclusionary quality of religion and is related to the search for meaning. Religion also covers both practices and daily lives. This study analyzes how alienation affects the daily lives and certain religious practices under this title.

The most typical example in this regard can be seen in consumption ethics and relationships. As known to all, consumption society insists on its own culture and ethics. Identities are transformed as the emergence of consumption culture in every area is accompanied by the economic, political, and social rise of the sections called religious, which results in the loss of religious purposes and scopes regarding

people and society. We can witness the multi-dimensional reflections of this problem. In other words, houses are now full of household goods, so there is almost no space left for people, which seriously affects the relationships with the guests, neighbors, and relatives and causes people to get lost in personal labyrinths. It becomes harder for people to get in the houses which have become narrower in time. The fact that consumption dictates its own relationships and ethics consume the real-life practices of religion even if the religious discourses are repeated, and this results in the justification of consumption ethics and relationships with the combination of religious discourses on one hand.

On the other hand, the consumption-based ideology also consumes the interpersonal relationships, which creates a temporariness in the religious relationships and resets people's memories. Certain practices have been transformed as a result of religious classes' rise following the economic and social developments after the 1980s. These practices formally have religious characteristics and these forms, the content of which is determined by the consumption ethics, may gain a religious identity.

Certain reflections of religious practices seem to bear the traces of this alienation. Practices are not the essential religious goals. They are performed for the purpose of keeping the relationship with Allah active and being cautious and purified. For instance, performing prayer five times a day is related to purifying and making an effort not to deviate from the divine path. Visible and invisible aspects of praying serve such purposes for the believers. The Quran reflects a fact through Shuayb, whose nation reacted to him saying "O Shu'ayb, does your prayer command you" when he told them to be careful in measurements¹⁰, which reflects the goals of prayers and their relationships with the daily lives. The termination of the relationships between religiousness and ethics transforms prayers into a mechanism within its narrow scope, and prayers may turn into a ritual. Therefore, prayers' function of directing people to the path of reality, which can be called *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, get distorted in this regard.

The most suitable example for alienation in terms of prayers can be seen in the pilgrimage or umrah trips, both of which have become a trend in the last 10-15 years. However, these sacred trips which should purify people now include shopping and consumption activities, or the purification process may be mechanical in time. These trips are also occasionally related with the statement "cleaning the records", which reflects receiving support from an ideology of automatically cleaning all sins throughout the year. The content of the responsibility related to pilgrimage and umrah and the meaning of purification becomes nullified in this context. On one hand, a prayer is seemingly performed but its contribution to reality becomes unclear. On the other hand, pilgrimage and umrah have turned into a belief tourism. Therefore, they are prioritized with their touristic dimensions in one's life. The generalization regarding the concept of belief

¹⁰ Hud: 11/86-87.

tourism or religious justification of it with its secular content can be assessed accordingly.

In addition to the spreading of technological and communicational means, the extensive negative impacts of personalization create an alienation through the transformation of interpersonal relationships from face-to-face concepts to virtual facts. The weakening of religious emphases of visits and face-to-face relationships in practices and transformation of them into insincere messages and images weaken friendships and feelings of responsibility toward society. Mobile phones playing adhan and alarms and other religious messages make this weakness deeper instead of overcoming it. Such an isolation makes people more isolated and alienated.

Conclusion

Alienation is a significant handicap, the qualities of which are strengthened by the present time. The theoretical religion, which indicates the basic discourses of Islam, has the content that will help overcome alienation. However, particularly considering the changes and current state in Turkey, we can mention severe social alienation in our society. This study reviewed the concept of alienation considering the relationships between people and truth. From this point of view, it is fair to state that alienation first emerges in the mental stances of Muslims. Other practices in social life are nothing but the reflections of this mental case. The arguments in this study may be opposed considering the rise of religiousness indicators. However, these indicators may be misleading in assessing the problems. The fact that religion is a significant justification resource may cause alienation that is occasionally accompanied by certain religious approaches. However, this does not require perceiving anything social as negative.

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Religion, Familiarity and Alienation*

Bilal SAMBUR*

The relationship between religion and alienation is one of the most important discussion topics of the modern times. Have people been alienated from religion? Does pluralism inevitably require alienation? What sort of theological approaches can be developed between religion, alienation, and pluralism? Does religion have an alternative approach toward alienation? Is religion the source of alienation? Discussing and answering these questions is highly important for the future of humanity.

Alienation is not a concept that solely reflects the state of humanity in the present time. Alienation reflects a deep disruption within the essence of one instead of being an economic and social categorization. This concept indicates the internal disruption within the self rather than the apparent external ones. Islam relates alienation with concepts of polytheism and ignorance in its own theology. These two concepts reflect all sorts of orientation which are against the essence of humans. In other words, all kinds of corruptions weakening, damaging or destroying the humanity of people reflect alienation, which

means deviating from both human and divine facts or actions. Humans essentially have both traces of divinity and humanity. Losing the ideology of serving Allah, protesting Allah or adopting an attitude of becoming a Allah is essentially alienation. One's discovery of divine and human elements at the same time means illumination. Confusing and degenerating the divinity and humanity is ignorance and alienation.

A human is not a production machine or an object that can be purchased. A human cannot be reduced to any sort of objects. The essential position of humans is reflected as the most honorable among creatures. Anything that reduces, weakens or violates one's honor is related to alienation. This honor cannot be violated anyhow according to Islam.

The red line of Islam is tawhid and human honor. Ignorant people experience chaos and anonymity. The essential anonymity, however, is the confusion regarding the holy identity of Allah and identity of humans. The deviation of the relationship between Allah-man, man-man and man-universe is the source of the chaos and crisis.

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Islam orders people to have goods and property but not to be a slave for these. Slavery to materials is nothing but alienation. Instead of being a slave to goods and materials, it is necessary to make them the means for a humane life. Goods and materials can be the sources of alienation and means enabling a humane life.

Islam teaches people that they are not weak, meaningless, adrift or irregular, isolated or abandoned, and that they should not deviate from themselves and Allah. Ignorance as alienation directs people to helplessness, meaninglessness, irregularity, idleness, isolation and deviation from humanity and divinity. Alienation is essentially the barbarization of humans. Islam teaches people in terms of humanity and ensures that they live as the most honorable creatures by preventing them from falling to the lowest degrees.

Human life is divided from all aspects. Everything including villages and cities, people and society, religion and science, spirituality and rationality, art and spirituality, religion and philosophy, and Allah and people are separated from one another and made opposite. Alienation is the division of all human beings into enemies.

Allah does not regard people as weak creatures. People do not pray to Allah because they are weak. People serve Allah for they are strong. Serving or slavery to Allah is not a renunciation of freedom. People do not abandon or limit their freedom before Allah. Instead, they experience freedom. Allah is the truth making people's freedom possible.

Islam does not consider people as the creatures who are stuck in this world and to be distinct in time. The life after death is like a farm for people. What is essential in Islam is the unity between the world and eternal life. Modernity makes people alienated from life after death and addicted to the world. Collective recognition of the eternal life and world bases people's relationship with one another and world on proper and mature foundations.

Islam is not an atrophy of consciousness. The common and problematic element among the people is ignorance which makes people accept exploitation and orders them learned helplessness. Ignorance is an ideology of cruelty which is a deviant output of humanity. However, Islam is an illumination that keeps one's consciousness alive and precise. Islam is irreplaceable for human life. One needs no type of ignorance in one's life.

Religion helps people be themselves. It can ensure people's stability, maintain their social relationships and enable them to adapt to other people. People do not get alienated from humanity due to religions which are often used as a means for justifying the human corruptions. The objects produced by humans can be sanctified through religions. The main quality of ignorance is that it instrumentalizes religions.

Alienation is essentially a sort of torment which something is taken from where it belongs and is taken somewhere else as well as the objectification of the person by purifying himself from the elements that make him human. One's

objectification toward humanity is a torment. Alienation is the greatest torment toward humans.

Modern people do not understand the religious language, concepts, beliefs, and values. Secular ideologies have alienated people from religions. Modern people do not have the imagination and thoughts to grasp the meanings of certain concepts such as God, the holy book, prayer, praying, prophet, tawhid, afterlife, independence, slavery, taqwa, familiarity, taarroof, and revelation. Modern people have largely lost their ability to talk about religion. Secular people cannot understand the religiousness-related experienced when religious people mention their relationships with God, which indicates a serious alienation.

People of the modern world seem to have differences. Pluralism is the most important fact of the modern day. People become more alienated from one another as they appear with their pluralist characteristics. Pluralism is known to be the most important factor contributing to the concept of alienation. Humane pluralism should result in humane meetings and recognition. People alienate from one another due to differences, which is a serious issue. Examining humane pluralism and meetings collectively is the most important approach toward interpersonal alienation.

Although people need to recognize one another with their differences, governments take sides against the human differences, which is another serious issues. When people get to know each other, governments should disregard all sorts of belief, ideology, and identity. Governments should take no sides against beliefs.

As our lives become plural, modern borders between the personal and public concepts disappear. People who are religious in their personal lives aim to reflect their religiousness to public life. While personal concepts become public, the public ones become personal. People want the public area to be a discussion and recognition area. They also desire to present a language and practice where they can experience their own identities.

Human nature should not be limited to a theory or approach. There may be numerous approaches regarding human nature. Limiting this nature to a single theory means a serious form of alienation. History of humanity cannot be limited to a theory or period. A certain period cannot represent the whole history, time and place as a single criterion determining the future of all people and periods.

Humans are active, dynamic, and creative creatures. Their activeness is independent from the other objects. Consumption of one's activeness through addictions is the greatest form of alienation. It should be remembered that people are active and dynamic with no relation to objects. Other objects are present depending on the activeness and creativeness of humans. All objects can be created when people are present.

Humans are defined as the creatures seeking power and authority. People's duty is not to establish authority over nature. Authority and power are not natural

characteristics for people. Reducing people's status to animals who only make efforts for authority means denying humanity. People should establish an innate relationship with nature instead of attempting to dominate it. Instead of dominating nature, humans should be in a relationship with nature in such a way that they improve it. People's duty is to live without destroying nature.

Humans are different compared to other creatures. One of the most prominent features of humans is that they build their own lives. Other creatures maintain their existence through the resources they find in nature. However, people meet their certain needs such as eating or taking shelter by processing natural elements. While meeting their psychological needs, they also have to perform change-related renewal and creation activities to meet their spiritual and ethical needs. People who do not build their lives entirely are the ones who abandon themselves. They actively work to meet their bodily needs and create pleasures in this regard but they do not make an effort to meet their psychological and ethical needs. Humans need creative power, work, and love.

Their needs related to nutrition and reproduction are different than those of other creatures. Therefore, their such activities should be human. They cannot eat, drink or reproduce like animals in a human environment. However, we observe that there is a regression among people as they meet their human needs in an animalistic way. We as humans should find ways to meet our needs in a humanistic way once again. Eating or sexuality is not solely a purpose. They are just the means of becoming better and more mature people from philosophical, spiritual, ethical, aesthetical, scientific, and social perspectives.

There are certain indispensable characteristics for humans. Sense of community, awareness, and freedom are indispensable for people. Religion today appears as an element preventing one's sense of community and freedom. A religion objecting one's freedom and mind does not mature one, or a religion that makes the concepts of mind and freedom dysfunctional and invaluable corrupts people.

Religion is not an activity one does by oneself. It is a collection of experiences one shares with others. These religious experiences are characterized according to awareness, sociality, and freedom and in line with the set of meanings regarding life. Awareness, socialization, and liberation cannot emerge independently from one another in the context of religiousness. The opposition and irrelevance between religion and freedom, religion and awareness, and religion and sociality is a form of alienation.

The context of freedom does not reflect a non-religious experience. Freedom coexists with religion. Religiousness cannot be present without freedom. It is the product of freedom. A religion terminating freedom is a malevolent form of slavery instead of being an experience of religiousness. Freedom is the ability to choose and live a lifestyle without interfering other people or being interfered by them. Regarding religion as an instrument of interfering in human life causes religion to be transformed into the means of terminating freedom.

Religion should realize that freedom is an indispensable value for man. Religion does not review freedom in the context of being in the positions of doing right or wrong. Freedom should be understood without pressures or judgments regarding truth or falsehood. People have the choice to select the rights and wrongs. Religions should realize people's rights to do wrong and deny forcefully interfering in people's wrongs. Without spiritual and social pressures, it is natural for people to build their own lives. Another natural case for people is that they realize themselves without forcing and pressures.

The relationship between religions, people, and society is significant. While relating itself with freedom, religion should be free of pressures and obligations. Religions should regard people as only humans instead of approaching them as objects to be interfered. One can realize one's humanity only by considering the others as subjects. Sociality, awareness, and freedom require regarding the others as human subjects. People can realize their religiousness, ethical characteristics, scientific acts, morals, and artistic activities through social humanization in their social relationships. However, humanization cannot occur in a dehumanized society. Humanization and freedom of the society are closely related to the social options and opportunities provided to other people. Defining freedom in no relation to social borders and reality criteria but according to the personal suitability criteria and interference-free state enables people to constantly change and improve themselves. Religion reflects a continuous presence and creation within the context of freedom. People are human when they become the members of a social world freely. However, they may lose their humanity as long as the social world interferes with the freedom of people in the name of religion.

Humans are creatures which constantly maintain their existence and presence. However, they should have limitless options to build themselves. Religion is one of these options. It turns into an instrument of alienation and corruption when it terminates people's other options. Religion should enable people to discover different ways of recognition instead of making a certain definition regarding humans. Alienation is closely related to losing freedom, and it makes people artificial. Termination of freedom within the process of terminating one's options means limiting one's acts with artificiality.

Alienation actually hurts people spiritually. It is formed through the external control of people. Transformation of religion into a domination, control, management, and discipline mechanism causes people to be alienated from their natures and potential. Religion as a control and management instrument is the most serious means of alienation. If religion can be experienced as an open-ended period of freedom, a proper state can be achieved. Controlling one's life and imposing another life to one reduces one's status to a simple, controllable object. The obsession of controlling prevents people from establishing free relationships with self, society, and life. People's obsession to control others and establish hegemony over them makes them slaves to each other. This is theologically called serving

someone slavishly, which is the greatest form of corruption and alienation. The most effective way to be followed against alienation is the slavery to Allah rather than to people. Ignorance demolishes people. It is the means of corrupting people in the name of religion. Turning people into the means of consumption is a serious issue. Objectification of people, on the other hand, means dehumanizing people physically and spiritually. Transforming people into an object that just thinks and acts is a great issue to be examined.

Religion is generally regarded as the means of shaping one. The idea of creating a new person in the name of religion is justified. This process actually means creating a second-hand person. If one considers oneself as a second-hand product from the hands of another person, it means one has no relation and becomes alienated from oneself. Religion is not an activity to create a second-hand person. This person does not reflect the original personality from an emotional, ideological, theological, and behavioral aspect, thus becoming someone else. A second-hand person is somebody who loses many human aspects. A second-hand personality means feeling the self as weak and incapable. This form of personality considers staying indifferent to all the actions around as success, fails to control emotions and regards the self as a leaf swaying from side to side due to destiny. A second-hand person is actually someone who has no relation to themselves and succumbs to the others. This person, who is created by the external world, cannot offer a meaning and purpose to the self, world, relationships, and life. However, a true personality reflects the one who creates one's own world instead of being created from the external world.

People often feel weak and incapable. People may not understand what is happening in the world but they may think that many secret powers control their lives and that there is no option but to desperately give in to these powers. Termination of the relationship between one's life and life philosophy is a form of alienation and corruption. A great gap may emerge between people and the reality they experience due to the failure in grasping the mystery of existence. Therefore, people may lose their relation to reality. Human life is becoming less human but more mechanic every passing day. People cannot participate in the social, political, and cultural life adequately if they lose their relation to reality.

Religion is mostly used as the means of controlling people. The mind has the highest share from such attempts and actions of religion. The mind that is religiously appropriate is forced to have a limited scope, and a free and operative mind can be denied in this context. Another factor that is denied or controlled as much as the mind is morals and spirituality. Although religion that is reduced to the level of a political and economic instrument, glorifies morals and spirituality on a discursive level, it can be transformed into an opportunist object while controlling the morals and spirituality and deviating people from principle sets. Reason, morality and spirituality are experiences that are the essence of life. The instrumental religion controlling reason, morals, and spirituality also functions to control one's development, constructiveness, creativity, joys, enthusiasm, freedom,

goals, and behaviors. Using religion as the means of controlling other people makes people alienated from the self and life.

Islam regards itself as natural for people. It is the essence, home, and roots for humans. However, there is an alienation between people and Islam. People instrumentalized Islam for their personal and social interests and power-related efforts. As mentioned before, Islam is a home to people. If people cannot feel safe, well, and free in the home of Islam, this means people are radically alienated from Islam. The greatest challenge before humanity is the rediscovery of Islam as a natural element, country, and home.

People should have a true personality first to discover Islam as their original homes. A personality that is only designed to be offered and sold to people will be alienated from the self and Islam. A masked and artificial personality organizes itself as alienated from humanity, Allah, and Islam. Allah does not seek slaves to be purchased. Instead, Allah wants proper and realist servants performing proper religious practices and have a complete faith.

A religion that terminates the relationships between God, nature, and society while deviating them from reality and that restrains people within the paganism of history, society, and nature is not a religion but a deviance. Islam wants people to associate the relationships with self, Allah, other people, and nature to reality and experience these relationships accordingly. Tawhid, prayers, pilgrimage, and fasting are the conditions ordered to people to follow a true path that enables them to prevent their relationships with self, Allah, society, and nature from turning into an illusion. Islam's pillars are the reality-related grounds for people's all kind of relationships.

Allah is the source for the people to recognize themselves. It is not possible for people to recognize themselves before recognizing Allah. However, regarding God as the source of alienation by positioning people and God as opposite to one another is a great form of deviation. People deviate from themselves, other people, and society as they become more alienated from God. According to Islam, Allah is closer to people than their jugular veins. Allah is the absolute reality that is not alienated from people and does not abandon them. Alienation ends when Allah and people come together but their separation constitutes the sources of all corruptions.

A religion as a human product is a source of alienation. A practice using religion as the means of authority, reputation, power, money, oppression, and lies is a form of alienation. A religion that is transformed into the means of materiality and fraud is nothing but an ordinary instrument used by people. A religion that is reduced to the status of realizing ordinary goals is nothing but a disgrace. Religion as a disgraceful act is the greatest form of alienation.

Islam is a natural religion establishing familiarity between people, society, Allah, and nature. The physical distance between God, people, society, and nature is smaller whereas the existential natural distance is higher today. People have

become indifferent with false selves. These people cannot establish relationships based on familiarity, closeness, and sincerity. Islam presents the familiarity thesis against alienation. Familiarity is not the state of being alone and alienated. It is the coexistence of God, humanity, and nature, and it is a form of self-realization. However, it is not an act of formally being with other people or serving God through insincere rituals. It means serving God and being a true human based on the human and natural emotions, ideas, and behaviors. Familiarity means establishing a true relationship and sense of belonging. It means being a human with proper morals.

The Ethics of Consumption and People in Regard to Depreciation and Alienation*

Nejdet DURAK**

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Abstract

Morality is a field of evaluation which is special to human beings who have a socio-cultural existence. This characteristic makes all human thoughts and behaviors evaluated morally. Humans who have become alienated from his ontological characteristic along with globalization, drawing away from traditional values, has for centuries, struggled to exist in a world where consumption morals are arbiter. The phenomena like identity depression, alienation, losing of values, and numerical appreciation that came along with the transferring from the traditional community to the modern and postmodern community requires the examination of human being's act-value from this point of view. The aim of this study is to point out the numerical human being's socio-psychotic despair related to the philosophical outcomes.

Key Words: Moral, Moral of Consumption, Alienation, Depreciation, Moral Value

Değersizleşme ve Yabancılaşma Bağlamında Tüketim Ahlâkı ve İnsan

Özet

Ahlâk, sosyo-kültürel bir varlık olan insana ait bir değerlendirme alanıdır. İnsana özgü bu nitelik, onun bütün düşünce ve davranışlarının ahlâkî değerlendirmeye tabi tutulmasını zorunlu kılmaktadır. Küreselleşme süreci ile birlikte bu varoluşsal niteliğine yabancılaşan insan, yüzyıllardan beri sahip olduğu geleneksel değerlerden uzaklaşarak tüketim olgusunun belirleyici olduğu tüketim ahlâkının değerler dünyasında var olma çabasıdadır. Geleneksel toplumdan modern ve postmodern topluma geçişle birlikte ortaya çıkan kimlik bunalımı, yabancılaşma, değersizleşme ve rakamsal değerlendirme türünden olgular, insanî eylem-değer ilişkisinin bu açıdan incelenmesini zorunlu kılmaktadır. Bu çalışma tüketim

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ahlâkına ait öz nitelikleri ortaya koyup, değersizleşme sürecinden geçen insanın, geleneksel değerlerinden kopuşunu ve tüketim ahlakının değer dünyası olarak adlandırdığımız “rakamsal değerenme” içindeki ahlâkî konumunu eleştirel olarak incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahlâk, Tüketim Ahlâkî, Yabancılaşma, Değersizleşme, Ahlâkî Değer

Introduction

Moral values are briefly the elements that enable us to define human behaviors as benevolent or malevolent. Value is a dimension of awareness one adds to one's existence as an actual and personal characteristic.¹ Moral values are the existential elements determining one's pattern of intention and action, social relationship type, and philosophy. Humans are born into a world of values, and they constantly update these values as they are the creatures generating values and living in relation to the concept of change², the essential quality of existence, which is different compared to the other creatures. There are certain dominant spiritual values which are based on beliefs, cultures, and history, which do not succumb to changes, and which maintain permanence. However, there are also other values which are based on the social structure, lifestyle, and current time. The traces of these values are terminated by changes. Another important aspect of values is their quality that spiritually enhances, develops and raises one.³

The social reflection of this existential change is that the traditional social structure is transformed into modern and postmodern structures of society.⁴ It is beyond a doubt that this change has resulted in the replacement of traditional values with the new ones. Thus, a mindset change that can be recognized through the old and new values and attitudes has emerged.

The modern concepts of globalization, culture industry, and consumption-based lifestyle caused people to deviate from traditional values and these values to lose their meanings and significance. This process also caused permanent and radical values to lose their functions and human behaviors and relationships to be determined by daily, personal, and rootless values. As values are the social structure elements determining the form and purpose of human relationships, value-related concepts enable people forming the society to participate in social relationships under either “solidarity” or “competitive” conditions.⁵

Human relationships are determined based on the principle of solidarity in the traditional societies where spiritual and radical values are dominant⁶, but the social

¹ Kuçuradi, İoanna *Etik*, Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2006, p. 181.

² Hughes, H. Stuart, *Toplum ve Bilinç*, Trs., Güzin Özkan, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995, p. 9.

³ Ülken, Hilmi Ziya *Ahlâk*, Ülken Yayınları İstanbul 2001, p. 153.

⁴ Şaylan, Gencay, *Postmodernizm*, İmge Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 24.

⁵ Kaya, Yaşar, *Toplumsal Yapı*, Turan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2003, p. 20; Rokeach, Milton, *The Nature of Human Values*, The Free Press, New York, 1973, p. 13.

⁶ Armağan, Mustafa, *Gelenek*, Ağaç Yayınları, İstanbul 1992, p. 63.

relationships in modern societies focus on competition.⁷ Traditional values aim social association, solidarity, and national and spiritual pleasures but the values of modern times focus upon personal pleasures based on personality, selfishness, and competition.⁸ Moreover, the simplest mechanism determining the ethical action in traditional societies and constituting the root of common ethical criteria is the concept of awareness shaped by religions⁹, but this function is fulfilled by the personal preferences and financial (digital) values in modern societies where religions significantly lost their organizing and regulatory characteristics. Descartes' concept of "self"¹⁰ enabled people to form a social structure based on modernism and individualism, and modernism as a personal social structure helped people create their own rational values. As this process causes values to be multiple, relative, personal, and rootless, value crises containing certain concepts such as "depreciation" and "alienation" occurred in modern societies.

The efforts to make the existence of people in this world more meaningful affect and determine their social and cultural behaviors. According to Max Weber, we can understand social behaviors and explain the relevant reasons only through interpretation. Internal logics of value-related systematics should be revealed considering the metaphysical or religious concepts to understand people and socio-economic life. Making people's social and economic attitudes meaningful in different social structures is possible only through such efforts.¹¹

The concepts of identity crisis, alienation, and depreciation, all of which emerged upon the transition from traditional society to modern and postmodern society, obligate the examination of human actions-values from that perspective.

This study aims to critically review the ethical position of consumption society in a new value crisis which can be called as "digital evaluation" by analyzing the world of values belonging to the concept of consumption, a social and cultural phenomenon of the modern times in regard to value crises such as depreciation and alienation. For that purpose, this study briefly demonstrates the intentions behind the concepts of depreciation and alienation. In addition, considering the new context, it examines the new value crisis that is positioned in the world of values within the ethics of consumption and that is called "financial or digital appreciation", and it analyzes the current position of people in this appreciation or depreciation process.

⁷ Ester, P.- Halman, L.- Moor, R., *The Individualizing Society*, Netherland 1993, p. 100.

⁸ Ersoy, Ersan, "Bağırsız Bireyin Modern Bunalımları: Değişen Dünyada Sosyal İlişkiler", *Türk Yurdu*, 2011, p. 292, I. 4.

⁹ Ersoy, "ibid.", p. 4.

¹⁰ Descartes, Rene, *Felsefenin İlkeleri*, Çev., Mesut Akın, Say Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 90.

¹¹ Aron, Raymond, *Sosyolojik Düşüncenin Evreleri*, Trs., Korkmaz Alemdar, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara 1986, p. 509.

1- The Concept of Depreciation

Value is defined as “the abstract criterion used to determine the value of something” or the “worth of something”¹². This term is defined in the philosophical literature as “a long-term belief regarding a certain style of behavior or main purpose of existence”,¹³ “a belief regarding whether something is desirable or not”,¹⁴ or “desired or desirable facts of actions, and judgments made based on the needs and ideals regarding the human attitudes, cases and objects related to these desired or desirable facts or actions”¹⁵.

Value is a concept that exists based on people and that emerges in line with the social organization.¹⁶ In addition, the concept of value determines a process of common acceptance making the human concepts and events meaningful and presenting the justification norms regarding people.¹⁷ Accordingly, the concept of value means all untouchable rules which make the process of meeting physical and spiritual needs of human life on a legal ground permanent and which are accepted as correct by everybody.¹⁸ Therefore, the world of values can be defined as a safe environment of rules where real needs arising from human nature are met on a common ground.¹⁹

From that perspective, the concept of “depreciation” means losing the constant values which arise from human nature, become justified through the social partnership and are regarded as factual codes, replacement of these values with modern values or corruptions regarding this process. The following are the concrete examples regarding the psycho-social reflections of depreciation over people and society: a) Losing the self-related awareness; modern people relate the social values with their personalities with the claim of becoming a person, live what they prefer instead of following the glorified models, and glorify their own feelings.²⁰ Modern people are those who reject being themselves and make effort to adopt the popular model. Analyzing the current state of modern people over the concepts of simulation and reality, Baudrillard states that the borders between the concepts of image and simulation has been lost and that hyperreality has replaced

¹² Türk Dil Kurumu, *Türkçe Sözlük*, TDK Yayınları, Ankara 1998, I, 538.

¹³ Rokeach, M., *The nature of human values*, Free Press, New York 1973, p. 5.

¹⁴ Güngör, Erol, *Değerler Psikolojisi Üzerinde Araştırmalar*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 2010, p. 27.

¹⁵ Bolay, Süleyman Hayri, *Felsefi Doktrinler ve Terimler Sözlüğü*, Akçağ Yayınları, Ankara, 1997, p. 93.

¹⁶ Durak, Nejdet-İrğat, Muhammet, “Bir Çevre Problemi Olarak Değer Erozyonu: Yabancılaşma ve Değersizleşme Bağlamında İnsan-Çevre İlişkisi”, *2. Uluslararası Çevre ve Ahlak Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, Adıyaman Üniversitesi Yayınları, Adıyaman, 2014, II, p. 1155-1162, p. 1156.

¹⁷ Erdem, Hüsamet, *Ahlâk Felsefesi*, Hü-Er Yayınları, Konya 2003, p. 35-37.

¹⁸ Aristoteles, *Nikomakhos'a Etik*, Trs. Saffet Babür, Bilgesu Yayınları, Ankara 2009, 1103a.

¹⁹ Durak-İrğat, “ibid.”, p. 1156.

²⁰ Toku, Neşet; “Değerlerin Dilemması; Subjektiflik ve Objektiflik”, *Bilgi ve Değer*, Ed. Şehabettin Yalçın, Vadi Yayınları, Ankara 2002, p. 102.

the reality.²¹ Accordingly, hyperreality reflects the bodies, objects, attitudes, and behaviors idealized in the media, all of which replace the reality. Baudrillard also mentions that the concept of classic logic makes efforts to fight against simulation in all categories and that simulation has already eluded the logic and replaced the reality principle.²²

b) Rootlessness; people of the modern times lose their relation to their history and all historical values and generate false, meaningless values suiting their purposes and interests in all fields, particularly ethics, which causes people to lose their roots or have distorted roots and become alone as a result. c) Selfishness and utilitarianism; people who become alone and alienated from their essence become selfish with the idea of success that regards the competition, utilitarianism, ambition, and lose of others as achievement in the world of "consumption" that is the most prominent condition of existing offered by the modern world²³. As Baudrillard notes, the people of consumption culture who have become selfish feel satisfied when they are the only ones achieving the abundance and wealth offered by consumption but they feel pain when they share these with others.²⁴ The only goal of these people who justify anything with the idea that what is good for me, is actually good is to have more stuff earlier than the others, which causes them to regard everybody around them as a rival to be beaten and thus feel an endless uneasiness. They live their lives by being jealous of those possessing more than them and by fearing those who have less than them.²⁵ Selfishness and utilitarianism have caused people to lose their ties with their families, relatives, neighbors, congregations, and traditions and to experience depreciation.²⁶

One of the concrete reflections of depreciation that can be read through people and society is purposelessness. Moreover, people have deviated from long-term purposes and values in modern times and focused on temporary and simple purposes and values. Moreover, culture industry as a concept triggering the depreciation process and cultural corruption makes the society adopt the consumption culture and imposes purposelessness to people in such a way that every new value in the consumption culture is systematized in a manner to nullify the previous ones. Therefore, in an environment where permanency is absent and where consumption is regarded as the main reason for existing and surviving, the emotional ties between people, objects, and values have been distorted, and

²¹ Baudrillard, Jean, *Simülakrlar ve Simülasyon*, Trs., Oğuz Adanır, Doğu-Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2003, p. 15.

²² Baudrillard, *ibid.*, p. 18.

²³ Poole, Ross, *Ahlak ve Modernlik*, Çev. Mehmet Küçük, Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul 1993, p. 101.

²⁴ Baudrillard, *Tüketim Toplumu*, Trs. Hazal Deliceçaylı ve Ferda Keskin, Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, p. 22.

²⁵ Fromm, Erich, *Sahip Olmak Ya da Olmak*, Trs. Aydın Arıtan, İstanbul 1997, p. 30.

²⁶ Ersoy, "ibid.", p. 5.

people's memory protecting people's values and experiences symbolizing them have been made meaningless.

These processes related to the depreciation have caused people and society to have fears and distrust instead of trust, conflicts, and disagreements instead of love, tolerance and cooperation, and personal and momentary targets instead of common and permanent goals.

2. The Concept of Alienation

Alienation is briefly the name of process or actions which make one deviate from one's environment and especially one's essence.²⁷

This term has been derived from the Latin term "alieno" and it is also used as "alienation" in French. This term is reflected with "yabancılaşma" in Turkish. This Turkish version has been derived from the Farsi term "yaban" meaning empty or desolate and it also means foreign people, wild, foreigners, and non-modern.²⁸

The first philosopher examining the concept of alienation as a philosophical problem is Hegel who established his ideas through the alienation of "Absolute Spirit". In his work entitled *Phaenomenologie des Geistes (The Phenomenology of Spirit)*, he reviews humans as a phenomenological and historical creature and defines existence in the process of dialectical presence. This process is based on the concepts of 'mind', 'essence' or 'idea' which reflect thinking and homogeneity of existence. The spiritual purpose is to achieve the awareness and freedom of the self. Accordingly, the spirit which emerges in the nature first turns into something different by becoming alienated from the self.²⁹ Hegel states that this alienation process of the spirit spreads toward the society, cultural field and art, respectively, which are the historical fields of existence.³⁰ Hegel explains this process as the developmental steps of the spirit starting from the 'subjective spirit', gradually reaching 'objective spirit' and 'absolute spirit' and becoming meaningful in art, religion and philosophy.³¹

Accordingly, the reflection of spiritual alienation over people, who are social creatures, can be observed as externalizing the self, personality or essence in the physical objects, social institutions and cultural products in order to meet people's unlimited needs during their continuous activities. This indicates that the distance

²⁷ Durak-İrğat, "ibid.", p. 1157.

²⁸ Eyüboğlu, İsmet Zeki, *Türk Dilinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü*, Sosyal Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 714.

²⁹ Gökberk, Macit, *Felsefe Tarihi*, Remzi Kitapevi, İstanbul 1990, p. 438; Özlem, Doğan, *Tarih Felsefesi*, Say Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, p. 121-122.

³⁰ Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Tinin Görüngübilimi*, Çev., Aziz Yardımlı, İdea Yayınları, İstanbul 1986, p. 23.

³¹ Özlem, ibid., p. 122-123.

between people's physical and spiritual existence has increased and thus people have alienated from their essences.³²

Bumin who states that overcoming the process of alienation is possible by achieving the self-awareness while understanding that the outer world is a different creation than the self also notes that this is only possible by understanding the process as a timewise-spatial reality and establishing the relationship between the self-awareness and world in a way different than those of Descartes and Kant.³³

Bumin mentions that the master-slave dialectics in Hegel's philosophy is the process where self-awareness achieves autonomy, and she regards the background of human-human and human-nature relationship as the dialectics arising from the mutual influence between the concepts of slave and master.³⁴ Thus, the master-slave dialectics becomes a reflection of the period when people become free by achieving the awareness of becoming a human. Humans overcome the issues related to their own biological existence by making an effort to make sure they are accepted as autonomous creatures, which is different compared to animals. Accordingly, slaves will work as the servants of masters and nature as they cannot overcome their nature in circumstances.³⁵

Marx who was influenced by Hegel reviewed the issue of alienation as a social phenomenon. He evaluated the forms of alienation by analyzing the experiences he had through a critical process and defined government as a form of alienation in the historical reality instead of bringing an idealist definition to the concept of alienation.³⁶ Accordingly, the concept of alienation turns into a fact that is obligatorily experienced and that arises from the productive actions of people which is a natural result of humanity's development.³⁷ According to Marx's historical ideology, what determines history is not a spiritual essence but the socio-economic structures formed in relation to the materialistic relationships. This process makes the capitalist society called the modern society prominent, reveals people's alienation from their efforts, social relationships and essence, and causes people to be oppose to one another.³⁸ One of the natural results of this process is the alienation of people from nature.

In the work *Capital*, Marx uses the concept of "meta fascism" to reflect the highest degree one's deviation from and alienation from the self reaches. This

³² Tolan, Barlas, *Çağdaş Toplumun Bunalımı: Anomi ve Yabancılaşma*, Toplum Bilimleri Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, Ankara 1980, p. 145.

³³ Bumin, Tülin, *Hegel Bilinç Problemi, Köle-Efendi Diyalektiği Praksis Felsefesi*, Alan Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1987, p. 23.

³⁴ Bumin, *ibid.*, p. 33.

³⁵ Bumin, *ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁶ Bottomore, T.B.-Rubel Maximilien, *Marx'ın Sosyolojisi*, Chiviyazıları, İstanbul 2006, p. 25.

³⁷ Bottomore-Maximilien, *ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁸ Bottomore-Maximilien, *ibid.*, p. 54.

concept indicates the internal and respective values of products with no relation to the efforts. As a result of this, the commodities themselves, to meet human needs by human hands, become a purpose.³⁹

According to Bottomore, Marx's goal was to reflect a society where people who got rid of "alienation" forms of the capitalist society live by understanding and controlling both nature and social relationships and managing their own destiny, and according to him, this was also the purpose of socialist movement. However, this was not an ideal specific to Marx. Instead, it was one of the leading orientations regarding the progressive theories of the 19th century."⁴⁰

Approaches such as "collection", "possession", and "avoidance from consumption", which have become prominent through the capitalist perceptions of the 19th century, have been replaced with the undesirable concept of "consumption merit" along with the capitalist understanding of the 20th century. According to Marx, people become alienated from their essences at the end of this process where the objective conditions of socio-economic production are developed.⁴¹

Similarly, Durkheim reviewed the concept of alienation in a socio-economic context. He used this concept to reflect anomy. According to him, negative anthropocentric incidents regarding the concept of cooperation emerged with the transition from "mechanic solidarity", a quality of traditional social structure, to "organic solidarity", a quality of the modern social structure. Bayhan states that Durkheim reflected the reason for these negative incidents as making the people involved in organic solidarity deprived of the ability to understand the purpose and meaning of what they do.⁴² He also mentions that Durkheim's alienation theory meaning anomy was first based on the socio-economic grounds and reached its highest status in cases such as the increase of economic crises, bankruptcies, and distortion of the relationships between the employers and employees.⁴³

The concept of alienation is a concept requiring to review people from many perspectives, such as sociology, psychology, economy, and metaphysics, in the modern life. Alienation also reflects becoming unfamiliar with the values determining the selves of people. It is also the loss of cultural and social values surrounding people and also the emergence of a psychological indifference. According to Akyıldız: "The fact that the content of personal essence was not revealed concretely makes the reasons and content of the concept of alienation more unclear. These unclarities provide the ability to generate various

³⁹ Cohen, Gerald A., *Karl Marx'ın Tarih Teorisi*, Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, İstanbul 1998, p. 145-146.

⁴⁰ Bottomore, T.B.-Rubel Maximilien, *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴¹ Akyıldız, Hüseyin, "Bireysel ve Toplumsal Boyutlarıyla Yabancılaşma", *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İİBFD.*, Year: 1998, I. 3, Güz, p. 163-176, p. 165.

⁴² Bayhan, Vehbi, *Üniversite Gençliğinde Anomi ve Yabancılaşma*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1997, p. 11.

⁴³ Bayhan, *ibid.*, p. 11.

interpretations and ideas to certain philosophers examining the concept of alienation in line with their ideological and philosophical approaches.”⁴⁴ Accordingly, this concept has two dimensions, namely, biological and psychological. If we define postmodern people as the creatures who live to survive biologically and to be busy psychologically and who are already aware of this⁴⁵, we mention a creature aiming to survive first and making efforts for the psychological busyness-related needs arising from the awareness regarding the death theme later.

As the world of values (ideology, religion, culture, nation) which postmodern people can use to replace themselves become meaningless in the modern world and the ethical values have less content, people focus on different arguments to fill this gap and to survive. In addition, while the developing technological and communicational tools globalize the world, people become alone in a virtual world, deviate from the ethical values determining their ontological relationship with the traditional nature, become alienated from these values and get dragged into a virtual reality.

It is obvious that the concept of alienation, which was reviewed in Hegel’s philosophical analysis and examined in the socio-economic analyses of Marx and Durkheim, means one’s deviation from essential values in particular, social deviation from the same values in general, and loss of identity.

3. The World of Values in the Ethics of Consumption: Digital Appreciation and People

Baudrillard defines society, the most prominent quality of which is to use the images and values assigned to different products and services to promote the idea of personal consumption through the media, “*consumption society*” where the culture of consumption is dominant.⁴⁶

There are stereotypes lifestyles which are based on brands and images in the consumption society. The most dominant characteristic of the people who are the members of this society is the continuous consumption. People of the consumption society live to consume instead of consuming to live.⁴⁷ According to this perception, consumption has turned into a purpose to maintain people’s bio-psychic life. The condition of existing in a system shaped accordingly is closely and solely related to the consumption activities generated by this system. The aforementioned attitude, in other words, people’s selection or consumption of products and services has the

⁴⁴ Akyıldız, Hüseyin, “*ibid*”, p. 175.

⁴⁵ Özdemir, Muhammet, “Kur’ân ve Sosyal Bilimlerin İnsan Yaklaşımları”, *EskiYeni Anadolu İlahiyat Akademisi Araştırma Dergisi*, I. 26, Bahar 2013, Ankara, p. 9.

⁴⁶ Baudrillard, *ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁷ Featherstone, Mike, *Postmodernizm ve Tüketim Kültürü*, Trs., Mehmet Küçük, Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul 2005, p. 67.

goal of realizing the emotion related to having an extraordinary, privileged and outstanding lifestyle which contains differences in selecting new living experiences. People of the consumption society always aim to buy and have many objects and to exist by consuming these continuously.⁴⁸

Products of the consumption society are rather defined as “symbols”, instead of objective objects, through the media. What is important is what products represent instead of what they are. The point of focus here is the image carried and created by the product instead of its real essence. “Mediatic hedonism”⁴⁹ becomes clear with the efforts to make sure each field and moment of life is regarded as the pleasure itself. New lifestyles bring pleasure and consumption to the center of life regardless of whether in virtual or actual environment. The relevant status has reached a state where it can only be achieved through the objects with the concept of luxury and relevant terms in the consumption process which is managed by the major capitals under the name of new lifestyles.⁵⁰ Consumption culture’s structure that is limited to meeting needs was replaced with the action of fulfilling desires and requests in the consumption culture. Accordingly, consumption with certain desires and social forms can be defined as purchasing, possessing, and using prestigious brands and aestheticized products and services for certain purposes such as belonging to a hedonist or ostentatious group or culture with a certain lifestyle.”⁵¹

A chaotic and egoist lifestyle emerges when people who live to survive biologically and be psychologically busy and who are aware of this process adapt to the consumption culture. What is meant by the lifestyle mentioned here is that people experience personality erosion due to the ambitions and challenges regarding certain ethical values such as sincerity, trust, solidarity, and empathy and that they selfishly maintain their existence by disregarding others.

Modern people face an ethical dilemma because the ideology surrounding their lives drive people to ethical inconsistency from a certain perspective. Accordingly, the ethical values adopted by people have a great importance in overcoming the dilemmas they face and solving the problems of the current era. Therefore, morality is an achievement for people. The opposition between what should happen and what happens paves the way for a ground where conflicts and ethical tension occur and people’s ethical responsibility and participation become prominent.

⁴⁸ Lindstrom, Martin, *Buyology*, Optimist Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 56.

⁴⁹ Belk, Russell W., *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, Routledge, London and New York 1995, p. 98.

⁵⁰ Corrigan, Peter, *The Sociology of Consumption*, Sage Publications, London-Thousand Oaks- New Delhi, 1997, p. 113-115.

⁵¹ Zorlu, Abdulkadir, *Tüketim Sosyolojisi*, Global Yayınları, Ankara 2006, p. 60.

Conclusion

Alienation and depreciation cause value-related issues by turning the biological needs of trusting into distrust, coexisting into insincerity, and existing and leading into selfishness.

Certain values such as austerity, modesty, and prestige, which are the main values of Islamic ethics, have been destroyed and reshaped in the society of consumption. A new world of values consisting digital values has surrounded the people of consumption. People have been racing to have everything before anyone else and become prestigious in this way in the world of values of the consumption culture that we can conceptualize as the “digital appreciation”, and they have turned into financial creatures defined and evaluated through the financial concepts such as money, goods, title, credit rating, and so on. People replace their permanent ethical merits with the material merits in this period when financial values have turned into the category of existence.

The world of digital values indicates an environment that does not consider one’s internal world and makes them alienated from their selves. Moreover, no concepts in one’s spiritual world have a digital equivalence. Social life in the consumption society is expressed through the science of statistics where numbers indicate a significance. These concepts, which are different for the spiritual world of people, prevent a human approach and philosophical perceptions to be generated in this regard.

People are digitally valued in the society of consumption. This is clearer in banking and marketing sectors where financial values are more dominant. The targets assigned to people working in these sectors constitute the basis for the evaluation principles.

People experience “digital appreciation” by expressing their values through numbers in the world of the ethics of consumption in such a way that the digital values one has determine one’s social status and people gain value as much as their balances in bank accounts in this world of values. People’s spiritual aspects are neglected or even disregarded in this world of values. People who internalize these ethical aspects perceive others who are deprived of these values as a meta as their financial (digital) values increase, attempt to buy them, use them as the means of getting satisfaction or relieving stress, or even try to take their basic right to live away.

Instead of being a benevolent person, people are encouraged to reach higher statuses with digitally-reflected values through certain magical formula called personal development. People who are surrounded by the world of numbers deviate from spiritual values to be successful on this world, and they disregard their inner world, conscience, and emotions, all of which are not digitally expressed, to reach digital values when needed.

Most of the ethical problems in the consumption society arise from the opposition between the world of values in the ethics of consumption and traditional values. The people of numbers despise the traditional people making an effort to rise in the spiritual dimension and disregard their world of values.

The world of digital values recognizes no religious, cultural, national or traditional values and even regards these as forms of hindrance. As happiness is related to having the values expressed with numbers, people make an effort to make their beloved ones happy through the objects indicated with numerical values. Similarly, they punish who they do not like through digital values.

In conclusion, the world of values in the ethics of consumption means a strict, material and antipathetic quality full of numbers, and the people making efforts to exist in this world of values have flexible, spiritual, and emotional characteristics. Thus, people are pushed toward social anomalies such as constant conflicts, dilemmas, suicide, distrust, and loneliness in this world of values.

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A Philosophical Review of “Honesty, Keeping Promises, Charity, Humility and Compassion” Virtues from the Point of View of the “Book of Dede Korkut”*

Süleyman DÖNMEZ**

Abstract

Honesty and keeping promises are two of the essential values for a society to be in peace. On the other hand, humility and compassion are related for a human being to know himself. Man is a limited being. No matter how hard he tried, he will not be able to access the mountain height or drill the earth. It is not possible for him to escape from death with arrogance. He should know his limits. The one who knows his limitations is the one who venerates. The veneration is possible with compassion.

Keywords: Dede Korkut, Value, Virtue, Humility, Compassion, Charity

“Dede Korkut Kitabı” Nokta-i Nazarından “Dürüstlük, Sözünde Durma, Mütevazılık ve Merhamet” Erdemlerine Felsefî Bir Bakış***

Özet

Makalede ilk defa Dede Korkut Kitabı esasında insan olmada ayırıcı bir vasıf olan değerlerin adı geçen kitaptan seçtiğimiz ‘tevazu, merhamet, sözünde durma ve dürüstlük’

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erdemleri üzerinden tarih içre ontik bir gerçekliğe (onto-etik) sahip olduklarını göstermeye çalıştık. İnsan olmada nasıl tevazu merhametten ayrılamıyorsa, merhametin de sözünde durma ile dürüstlikle tamamlanması gerekir. Elbette her bir erdem, müstakil olarak ele alınıp incelenebilirdi. Ancak biz bu çalışmada bütünleştirici bir pencereden bakmayı öncelidik. Dede Korkut Kitabı’ndan seçtiğimiz dört erdemi içlem-kaplam bağlamında bütünlemek istedik. Örgümüzde tevazu, merkezî bir konuma yerleştirildi. Merhamet ise, onun lazımı olarak öne çıktı. Mütevazı olan bir kişinin aynı zamanda merhametli de olması gerektiği iddia edildi. Merhamet ile mütevazılığın iç içe geçirilmesi, insan olmayla ilişkilendirildi. İnsan olanın da sözünde durma ile perçinlendiği, sözünde duranın ise, dürüst bir insan olduğu ifade edildi.

Anahtar Kavramlar: Dede Korkut, değer, erdem, tevazu, merhamet, mütevazı, sözünde durma, onto-etik

Introduction 1

Value has an objective meaning as it is the topic of certain ideologies. What is meant by objectivity here is to exist independently from the subject. Accordingly, the issue or question we aim to solve is as follows: How do we find the topics in the judgments we use while talking about the concept of values or writing an article about this concept? The following can also be asked: How and where do the values exist? Are we facing a process of building or experiencing a discovery-related action? Or are we building a process that is based on discovering and that combines these two attitudes?

Values reflect a world of meanings of the past and present where we find ourselves regardless of whether this world is based on discovering, building or a combination of both. Therefore, an ontology of values will be demonstrated in this presentation. However, values will be limited to the merits “honesty, keeping promises, humility and compassion” in regard to the philosophy of ethics. Moreover, these merits will be reviewed according to the History of Turkish Ideology. Determining the concepts of above-mentioned merits which have a significant place in the lives of Turkish people whose history dates back to early times will not be easy. Thus, a limitation regarding the existence of these merits should be performed according to the texts or periods. Philosophical foundation of the merits in this study will be performed while being limited to the work “Book of Dede Korkut” as it has been 200 years since this work was recognized by the relevant literature and it is a unique work reflecting the social conscience of the Turkish people. In addition to presenting the historical reality, this study investigated, examined and analyzed it by anatomizing “what has or has not been transferred from the previous social conscience to the modern concept of personal existence”. This study aimed to draw attention to the fact that the values helping the Turkish nation maintain their existence have a deep philosophical foundation. The evidence that the merits in the Book of Dede Korkut have not been reviewed like this study did encouraged us to perform such a reading method. This study

made attempts to indicate that the values in the Book of Dede Korkut have an onto-ethical reality, which is first in the history of the relevant literature. The merits were selected randomly. No matter what merits are selected, we are of the belief that the reading method we performed can also be conducted for the other merits in the Book of Dede Korkut.

Introduction 2

While assessing the four merits, meanings of which have become deeper in the ideologies of the Turkish people, according to the Book of Dede Korkut, it should be remembered that the action of keeping promises cannot be assessed independently from the concept of honesty while the same is valid for humility and compassion. Our preference in building discovery-related activities is based on the connective aspects. Every reading method is subjective. However, the fact that reading methods are not exempt from subjectivity does not mean that these methods do not have the factors we focus. In other words, every consideration inevitably presents a case. The correctness, consistency, and validity of the case can occur through the point of views. Point of view reflects our perceptions.

In this study, we are able to make sense of our landscapes in the Book of Dede Korkut. However, we do not share the same case with the technical aspects of the history of literature. We assign the literature discussions regarding whether the text examined in this study is a saga or story to the authorities in this field.

This study reviews the Book of Dede Korkut published in modern Turkish through its original manuscripts. The existence and survival of this book is an exemplary adventure worth examining. However, this is a topic that should be reviewed with different aspects in terms of values. Therefore, such an examination is the background of the study. This background will be referred to when needed.

The main hypothesis of this study is that values are natural or innate in Turkish ideology.¹ The natural or innate characteristic here indicate that values have a history-based meaning rather than carrying a natural quality.² Being history-based makes the meaning more conditional. However, a conditional meaning is not closed to a metahistoric/metaphysical basis or evaluation. The point to be

¹ The naturality of values was mentioned by İhsan Fazlıoğlu first and efforts were made to base this concept on religious judgments. See: İ. Fazlıoğlu: "*Dinî Yargılar Tekvîmî mi, İtibârî mi? –Kadîm Tartışmaya Yeni Bir Yaklaşım*" (<http://www.ihsanfazlioglu.net/yayinlar/makaleler/1.php?id=251>).

² The date in this claim is considered a second natural field after nature itself, with an influence from Ibn Khaldun. The details of Ibn Khaldun's history concept will not be reviewed in detail in this study. However, as Ibn Khaldun's perception is the background for this study, references from our point of view will be reflected when needed. For more detailed information, see: Ahmet Aslan, *Ibn Haldun*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 39-60.

considered is to understand the conditional meaning without neglecting the intended context. It is a fact that understanding is actually a cognitive or metaphysical process.

There may be other ideas or views regarding the foundation of values. However, these will not be separately mentioned here. A general classification will be beneficial to see the whole picture.

Values can be sorted as internal or external based on their sources. Internalization of the external factors and vice versa is an issue that should be detailed in terms of the concepts of internal and external. This point will be referred to when necessary.

The concept of value has an internal meaning as it is related to the world of meanings. This can also be called value internalization. Although the concept of value reflects an internal sense, it has an aspect that is independent from people or exceeding them.

What do we mean?

Values turn into history-based objects as they acquire characteristics independent from people. They acquire an existence independent from the subject because there is a historical accomplishment in this case. Therefore, there are certain values which historically emerged and were separated from subjectivity under certain conditions and cases. However, their existence exceeds historicity although these values are historical objects. In addition, the realist values instead of those independent from the subject are examined. Understanding these values is a tough process in the modern times. A world isolated from values is appreciated once again in this case. Thus, relating the past to the present without the meaning shifts requires compassion and attention. Moreover, the process of understanding should be assessed for consistency and validity.

The validity of a history-based absolutized value is not related to the issue of foundation. Therefore, considering the consistency instead of validity while interpreting the values is a methodological necessity because consistency becomes visible if it is determined in accordance with the time, place, and concept of a value which can be transformed into a metaphysical thesis. This is the trial of discovering what is present. What should be remembered is that understanding the discovered is subjective and constitutive.

The subjective and constitutive quality of the discovered does not mean that the value is closed and cannot be transferred to another. Internal aspects become visible in external agreements. However, agreement does not mean a consensus.³ Consensuses may require a rather political and interest-based regression or

³ For detailed information about the concepts of “agreement and consensus”, see and cf: Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Bilimin Değeri Meselesi*, Eabil Yayınları, Ankara 2010, p. 13, 14, 15, 65, 66.

sacrificing the internal for the external. Moreover, if values have a role in the process, internal senses are not expected to contradict with the external reflections.

If policy is noted to be a value, too, there will not be an objection against this. However, policy has become a value which is not based on ethics anymore in modern times.⁴ Even the most ethical representatives of policy seem to prefer acting with the personalized or specified interests without paying attention to the open or hidden concerns related to comprehensiveness. It is fair to state that idealist statements do not have a meaning at least in the world of the present times. Particularly the current case of the governmental policies is a disaster. Therefore, instead of agreements, consensuses which prevent threats and maintain or increase the interests as much as possible have been preferred for some time. Such an axis shift can be regarded to be valid for other values, too. The evidence that this claim, which is partially true, has not become generalized as much as it has been in the political field is consoling. Moreover, it is clear that there are issues with the concept of political stance which does not accord to the concept of ethics well although efforts are made to ensure accordance occasionally. While examining the merits “honesty, keeping promises, humility and compassion” which we aim to base on the Book of Dede Korkut, the issues we face due to the dilemmas regarding the Turkish nation in particular and humanity in general will be realized by anybody with sense.

The Book of Dede Korkut and (Its) Value

Value is a concept which has a meaning in social awareness considering the subjective awareness. The stances combining the concepts ranging from particular to legal topics without sacrificing one for the other indicate the visibility of senses. Stances can occur through the actions or silence. It has been stated that values are determined by the subjects and that they can be assessed independently from the subjects. Distorting the relationship between the values and subjects indicate a world, rather than values, regarded to be real. Values and reality are not opposite to one another but subjectivity in values and objectivity in reality become clear as two concepts. The aspect separating subjectivity from objectivity is related to the needs. Values are not only concepts but a world which we need and seek and which completes us.⁵

Values exist by being experienced rather than being presented as a discourse. If a statement has an internal meaning, then it has a value. However, as an internal concept cannot be known by others, statements are considered first. Statements are expected to turn into actions. If the statements and actions differ, doubts arise. The

⁴ This transformation indicates that it is high time we mentioned the valueless values.

⁵ cf. Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Bilgi ve Değer*, Ülken Yayınları, Second Edition, Istanbul 2001, p. 197, 198, 201.

view that the internal and external characteristics of the speaker do not match emerges, and people remain aloof to the speaker rather than the words because the concept of value only exists verbally for such a person. However, this concept does not really exist for that person. Therefore, dead or dying values can be mentioned. The values in the Book of Dede Korkut are not exempt from this qualification.

We can understand how values are dead or alive through this example: In other words, certain values only exist in books in modern times. They were probably present in life, rather than in books, at a certain period. Even if these values were considered personally without being socially generalized, they had been included in life. However, they now belong to history. They were present one way or another in the past but they have not died yet. They keep on existing in both books and history. They will keep on existing historically. These circumstances do not mean that they are not values because what makes them valuable or valueless is related to our focus toward them rather than their historical characteristics.

Value has exceeded its age and individuals only if it is not trapped in history and books. The timeless historical meanings can be evaluated through the understanding of the current times as they are impersonal. They relate the past to the present. Whether the present times can be related to the future cannot be exactly understood from our point of view but the answer can be estimated.

Relation of the past to the present is generally positive in regard to the values but not all values can be considered as positive because values are not purely positive. Certain values are problematic. Terminating them is more preferable than maintaining. However, destroying the values in the book is possible, these values historically become eternal inevitably. Destroying the historical concepts can only be overcome with the fact that life is an imagination or dream but there are experiences in the virtual concepts, too. Therefore, non-historical aspects can only be present in the eternal moments free of time and place.

The Book of Dede Korkut goes beyond its time and will probably cover the future times. Both the book and its content are valuable. They are values themselves. According to what Muharrem Ergin narrates from his master Fuat Köprülü, the great researcher, the Book of Dede Korkut has a greater and more significant place than the whole of Turkish Literature.⁶

What makes the book valuable is its content instead of the book itself. However, the oldest handwritten manuscript copies⁷ which could be accessed today are more

⁶ See: Muharrem Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı*, Boğaziçi yayınları, Fifteenth Edition, Istanbul 1995, p. 5.

⁷ There are two handwritten manuscripts of the work. One is in the Vatican while the other is in Dresden. What is painful to consider is that the Turkish work having a greater place than the Turkish Literature is in foreign countries. Should we curse the Westerners due to their theft or thank them considering our disloyalty? We are facing such a dilemma.

valuable than their contents. The higher value of contents is not only related to scarcity, antiquity, and pioneering. What is more important is the content itself. However, what makes the content visible is the external aspects. Viewing the internal aspects without the external ones distorts the chances of agreement between them. When this agreement gets distorted, we only act by ourselves. Even if what we do by ourselves is valuable for a self-accomplished person, our actions are not adequate in expressing the self to others because the agreement making the value more meaningful in others' assessments is also reflected externally.

The Book of Dede Korkut reflect the external aspects based on the merits this study reviews. This work has many hidden meanings. Opening the locks of these secrets without breaking them requires skills or abilities. Certain keys or tools are needed not to break them. The problem is not related to the question which key opens the locks. The efforts to open the lock through trials are futile if one of the keys we have does not open the lock. If keys do not work, the lock can be opened by making a suitable key or using a tool. In order to enter or to see the inside from the outside, the lock must be opened.

The knowledge and experiences in this regard direct people to prevent trials from being futile. Therefore, it is important to analyze horizons with certain questions asked to self without neglecting current information and experiences while seeking ways to open the lock: What do we know about Dede Korkut? How is this person depicted in the Book of Dede Korkut? Is this depiction directly or indirectly related to us? Can I open the lock considering my case?

According to M. Ergin, the Book of Dede Korkut "is a national saga."⁸ Accordingly, the world we study does not belong to a single person. We are facing a work edited by the nation itself. What we aim to review is a common intelligence or social awareness. The common sense of the Turkish people is what we seek. The sense and stance, exceeding the personal aspects, is what we examine through certain keywords. If a work becomes national, the qualities of the characters and the author go beyond the personal limits. Seeking Korkut Ata, Bayındır Han, Salur Kazan, Kan Turalı, Uruz Beg or Deli Dumrul in history through certain specifications do not open the locks. However, neglecting history does not direct us to reality.

Sagas reflect the spirits of their periods. These spirits arise from the depth of history. What maintains the existence of a nation is its values. Specified emphases actually depend on the collectivity. It reflects the social visibility of the hidden concepts. The reflection of a certain period through images is not an issue. The conceptions of the era should be studies for a better interpretation. Therefore,

⁸ M. Ergin, *ibid.*, p. 5.

detailing the relevant ideas without being indifferent to historical data ensures consistent acts. The transcendence of consistency becomes the gateway to validity.

Four Keys, One Door: Merits of Humility, Compassion, Honesty and Keeping Promises

Our concepts are the keys to open the lock. These concepts, which as keeping promises, honesty, humility and compassion, will help us sneak inside the secrets of the Book of Dede Korkut. Internal concepts can be externalized through many more concepts. Our selection of keywords does not serve for a particular purpose. These were randomly selected considering that they are among the irreplaceable merits for the Turkish nation, and its past and present. Our reading methods can, and according to us, should be conducted on other merits, too. What we aimed was to provide an introduction through the foundation performed on these four merits.

These merits, which we believe are conceptualized for the Turkish ideology and philosophy, reflect a unit with two joints connected. “Honesty” and “keeping promises” is a joint while “compassion” and “humility” is the other in this case. It is not possible to separate honesty from keeping promises. Honest people keep their promises, and those who keep their promises are honest. Such people are expected to be compassionate and humble.

Compassion arises from humility. Humble people are compassionate. However, not every compassionate people can be humble. Moreover, humility should contain honesty and keeping promises in regard to compassion.

Humble people are compassionate, honest, and keep promise. Participation, rather than obligation, occurs here. Humility is an obligatory summit reached based on the principle of voluntariness. It is directly related to being human. Humility is a case of knowing the limits by correctly determining the personal state, place and position. It is the delicacy of staying within the limits.

Dede Korkut is the limit in every incident faced by the Oghuz Turks. He reflects the top point making humility visible. No action is taken without consulting Korkut Ata. Whatever he says is accepted. His orders are fulfilled.⁹ Korkut Ata and those consulting him are humble.

Korkut Ata is humble because he knows and sets limits. The final limit is set by God Almighty who determines and grants anything. Therefore, *Things are not ordered without Allah’s orders. Nobody becomes rich without Allah’s blessings. Nobody has accidents if not written in their fates or dies before their time comes, or the dead will not be*

⁹ See: Dr. Bekir Sami Özsoy, *Dede Korkut Kitabı (Transkripsiyon-İnceleme-Sözlük)*, Akçağ yayınları, Ankara 2006, p. 47. (This work will be hereinafter referred to as “DKK” without referring the name of the editor.)

resurrected without God's orders."¹⁰ These limits weakening people enable people to recognize themselves. They remind them to be humble because the divine limits understood through observations and experiences indicate *"nobody can have more than what God orders even if they collect goods with the limits as high as mountains. There is no end of collecting goods but no matter how powerfully water flows, it cannot fill the seas. Therefore, one should be humble*¹¹, *know one's limits and stay behind these.* Knowing limits is possible via information and humility.

Everybody should know their limits and act accordingly. Men should learn from their fathers while women should learn from their mothers because they will be the fathers and mothers of the future. Ladies should act as ladies while servants should act as servants. Limits are quite clear for everyone. Nature should not be neglected either. Just like ashes which cannot become a hill, foreigners cannot replace the sons. Servants cannot become the ladies of the houses by wearing pleasant dresses. External aspects should not fool anybody. Snow falling heavily cannot escape from melting when it turns summer. Therefore, it is necessary to know limits and act accordingly. Sacrifices should be made to proceed or let others hear one's name.¹² Every warning reflecting the limits should be known and followed. Otherwise, there would be no option but to bear results.

Violation of limits cannot be tolerated. It should be condemned. Otherwise, the orders are distorted and chaos emerges. Distortion in this sense reflects more internal aspects. Humility disappears as internal characteristics are distorted and efforts are made to surpass the limits. *"People try to mount a special horse in inappropriate cases. This is what malevolent people do. It is better for the sword of the malevolent not to cut, for the wild bitter grass not to be eaten by horses, for the bitter water one does not drink not to flow, and for the house which is not visited to be demolished."*¹³ All of these mean the distortion of the order. They also distort nature. *"They glorify the spirit but makes people deprived of a government. One should seek help from Allah instead of being stateless."*¹⁴ This issue distorts all orders and torments emerge. A human oppression is a sort of distortion occurring by deviating from humility. It means covering compassion. Oppression cannot exist at wherever there is compassion.

Humble people are also compassionate. Dede Korkut is humble and compassionate. Everybody easily consults him without hesitation. He gives advices to everybody while playing his qopuz. His words are like a cure for any issue.

¹⁰ DKK, p. 47.

¹¹ DKK, p. 48

¹² See: DKK, p. 48.

¹³ cf. DKK, p. 49.

¹⁴ DKK, p. 48.

The Turkish term “merhem (cure)” is derived from “merhamet (compassion)”. Compassion is “liking the human spirit more than the self.”¹⁵ It arises from the respect one feels toward the self and others. Respect, on the other hand, “spreads from the essence to the surrounding places”¹⁶, turns into compassion and becomes a divine sense guiding and warning people about the limits of their behaviors. This divine sense desires the eternal aspects through the voluntary actions directed by the awareness surrounding the presence and existence. Desiring eternity does mean renouncing the world. It indicates orientation because people should be merciful toward the world and people in it. It is clear that the world does not need people but people need it. In other words, “plants of a place are known better by deer while the grass is known better by wild donkey, roads are known better by camel, and smell of the environment is known better by fox.” What people should do is to use blessings without violating them.

Breach of trust is related to the failure in keeping promises. It is a personality issue totally distorting trust. Trust should be present both internally and externally. The internal trust is called iman while the external is named eman. Iman cannot be separated from eman. They are integral. If eman is absent, it means there are iman-related issues. Iman does not become complete if one is not trustworthy. Eman becomes visible when iman becomes completed.

Eman exists through iman while iman maintains its presence through the loyalty to promises. Loyalty is the truth. It requires being honest. The clearest indicator of honesty is the lies. Thus, the statement “it is better not to lie in this world” turns into a lie when it is said to trick somebody through the false statements regarding life and events. Lies indicate the distortion of the essence. People with distorted essence would say distorted words. There may be many reasons for the distortion of both. What concerns us at the moment is the relation between honesty and keeping promises, and quality of lies distorting the essence of people. It should be noted, even if this is a repetition, that lies are referred where honesty is absent.¹⁷ Dede Korkut does not lie. His words are true because his essence is perfect. There is no place in the hearts guided by Dede Korkut. Such people show honesty and bravery. Brave people are the honest and trustworthy ones.

Fingers of a hand cannot be the same for sure. There are brave and malevolent people in a society. These malevolent people use lies and gossip as they are not honest. They commit treachery. They aim to distort the relationships between men, fathers and sons, and wives and husbands. Almost every short story in the Book of Dede Korkut includes the events seducing society and results of these. The winners will be those who keep honesty and their promises rather than those who distort

¹⁵ Nurettin Topçu, *İslam ve İnsan Mevlana ve Tasavvuf*, Dergâh Yayınları, Seventh Edition, Istanbul 2013, p. 96.

¹⁶ N. Topçu, *ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁷ cf. Nurettin Topçu, *Var olmak*, Dergâh Yayınları, Sixth Edition, Istanbul 2010, p. 70.

the peace by lying. For instance, the incident that Dirse Khan tried to kill his dearest son¹⁸ was caused by a deviation arising from lies and gossips. Distortions should not prevail merits to live in peace in this temporary world.

Conclusion

Compassion should be completed with keeping promises and honesty as seen in the case of humility which cannot be separated from compassion. Every merit can be separately reviewed. What this study aimed was to examine the topic from a holistic perspective. Another aim was to integrate the four merits internally and externally. Humility had a central position in this pattern. Compassion was regarded as a requirement of humility. The claim was that a humble person should also be compassionate. Relation of compassion to humility was associated with being a human. This study also stated that human characteristics are strengthened by keeping promises, and those who keep their promises are honest.

Honesty and keeping promises are the irreplaceable values for a peaceful society. Humility and compassion, on the other hand, are related to knowing the self and limits. Humans have limits. No matter how hard one tries, they won't be able to reach the mountains or penetrate the ground. It is not possible to escape from death by patronizing others. They should know their limits. Those aware of their limits respect others. Respect is shown through compassion.

Dede Korkut is humble, compassionate, honest and keeps promises. His characteristics reflect his essence. These reflections surpassed him and became the social criteria used by everybody to examine themselves. The criteria here turn into values if they have an internal meaning.

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¹⁸ DKK, p. 64, 65.

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Alienation as a Moral Problem and Yahya Kemal*

H. Ömer ÖZDEN**

Abstract

Alienation, which can be defined most commonly as “getting away from the essence”, also shows itself in the life of Yahya Kemal similar to many intellectuals in the late Ottoman period. Although Yahya Kemal had grown up in a religious family, after a while he admired the West and went to Paris which distanced itself from national and cultural values while adopting a socialist point of view. He even started to see alienation as a requirement of civilization. The second stage of alienation emerged on him by developing a critique on alienation while internalizing it. Although he defended ideas developed by affects from West, he came back to his essence while reading history and made an effort to recover Turkish poetry from foreign influence. In the article, in particular Yahya Kemal, it is debated how Turkish society can distance itself far from the alienation of moral and national values.

Keywords: Alienation, Yahya Kemal, national values, morality, society

Bir Ahlâk Problemi Olarak Yabancılaşma ve Yahya Kemal

Özet

En genel haliyle “özden uzaklaşma” olarak tanımlanabilecek olan yabancılaşma, Osmanlı'nın son dönemlerindeki pek çok aydın gibi Yahya Kemal'in hayat serüveninde de kendisini göstermektedir. Dindar bir ailede ve muhitte yetişen Yahya Kemal, bir süre sonra Batı'ya hayranlık beslemiş ve İstanbul'da yaşamaya başladıktan sonra artan hayranlığı sebebiyle Paris'e gidip orada millî ve kültürel değerlerinden uzaklaşıp sosyalist bir bakış açısını benimsemiştir. Hatta yabancılaşmayı medenileşmenin bir gereği olarak görmüştür. Yabancılaşmasının ikinci aşaması ise yabancılaşmayı içselleştirerek ona karşı bir eleştiri geliştirmesi şeklinde ortaya çıkmıştır. Batı'dan etkilenecek geliştirdiği fikirlerini bir süre savunmaya devam ettikten sonra tarih alanında yaptığı okumalar ile millî değerlere ve milletine saygısı yeniden atmış, Türk şiirini yabancı tesirlerden kurtarmak için çaba göstermiş ve öz kültürüne dönmüştür. Makalede, Yahya Kemal özelinde, Türk toplumunda

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ahlâkî ve millî değerlere yabancılaşmadan uzak kalabilmenin ne şekilde mümkün olacağı ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancılaşma, Yahya Kemal, millî değerler, ahlâk, toplum

1- Alienation as a Philosophical Concept

The concept of alienation can be reviewed from certain aspects, namely, personal, social, and philosophical angles. The first of these can be regarded as one's deviation from the self, emulating or adopting other personalities. Such a definition has more psychological foundations. From a social point of view, alienation can be explained as the gradual transformation of specific social and cultural values and lifestyles while deviating from value-related concepts and adopting a different social structure. It is fair to state that this is a sociological depiction.

The issue has a philosophical aspect which cannot be interpreted without the psychological and sociologic foundation. The definitions in the philosophical dictionaries support this idea. The definition of alienation in one of these dictionaries as "one's extreme deviation from one's efforts and products; deviation from sociality by clearly hating certain attractive and valuable aspects of life or staying indifferent to these"¹ supports the claim in this study. Moreover, there is a similar case in another philosophical dictionary. Accordingly, alienation "reflects the state of discovering that certain lost qualities are possessed by another creature or indicates the awareness acquired in this regard by a person or group of people who have lost their personal characteristics due to external effects."²

Considering these definitions, alienation as a philosophical concept can be regarded as spirit's feeling of unfamiliar toward the self, its environment and national culture by forgetting about the personality with personal and national awareness.³ The first education everybody receives from their families is the ethical education. Families work to make sure their children are raised as people who do not fail to show respect to family members, elderly people, national and spiritual values, and general ethical concepts. Moreover, children raised in this manner follow these principles as long as they do not face adverse effects. However, t.v. series and movies, advertisements, online publications and games, other work

¹ Abdülbaki Güçlü - Erkan Uzun - Serkan Uzun - Ümit Hüsrev Yolsal, *Felsefe Sözlüğü*, Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, Second Edition, Ankara 2003, p. 1563.

² Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Felsefe Doktrinleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, Akçağ Yayınları, Ninth Edition, Ankara 2004, p. 451.

³ See: Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Yabancılaşma Karşısında Yahya Kemal", *Hece Dergisi Yahya Kemal Beyatlı Özel Sayısı*, Issue: 145, January 2009, p. 79.

causing adverse effects through newspapers, journals, and books, and other reasons of the modern times negatively affect the children, youth and the society itself and cause identity changes ethically. This issue reflecting one's negative attitudes or opposition toward the self, one's environment which was effective in one's development, and national, spiritual, and cultural values of the environment shaping the national characteristics was seen in different forms in our society before. The state of feeling alienated from social, ethical, national, and spiritual values of the relevant environment, which was the case for the intellectual section of the society in the past, can be easily observed in all sections of the society in the modern times as communicational means have become common and are used by everybody constituting societies. Therefore, corruptions in our ethical values occur, which results in a clear degeneration in our ethical structure including our addressing and dressing style, behaviors, and love and respect toward each other.

The concept of alienation, the effects of which can be felt more in modern times, can be observed in Yahya Kemal in his first ideological work, which is also the case for many intellectuals of the past.

2- Stages of Alienation in Yahya Kemal

Alienation takes part in two stages for Yahya Kemal. The first is the alienation from the self, family, environment, the neighborhood, and the culture while the second is related to internalizing the alienated values and initiation of a critical and ideological fight against the concept of alienation.

a- Alienation Toward the Self, Family, and Neighborhood

Yahya Kemal had a great interest in Islam and even became a religious young man with the influence of his mother who had deep faith and prayed continuously during his childhood years in Skopje and with the effects of Rifai lodge, the mosque next to their house and adhan from this mosque, historical and peaceful structure of Skopje, spiritual aura of the graveyards close to their houses and his mother's death. "The place where I spent my childhood was spiritual... That place was full of spiritual aura... I was 13 and my first intentions of religiousness started when I lost my mother. I started to read Surah Yasin for the spirit of my mother almost every night in Isa Bey Mosque. I can say I entered the world of Islam through that door."⁴

⁴ Yahya Kemal, *Çocukluğum, Gençliğim, Siyâsî ve Edebî Hâtıralarım*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyet Yayınları, Third Edition, İstanbul 1986, p. 35. (This book will be hereinafter referred as ÇGH.)

Yahya Kemal, spending his first years of childhood in such a national and spiritual environment, came to Istanbul for his high school education in 1902 upon his father's advice and stayed in the mansion of Ibrahim Bey who was a relative. When he was 18, he had a love for Paris just like the other children of the generation with a European style.⁵ There were certain reasons affecting Yahya Kemal's love for Paris. Poems and proses of the artists, the members of the movement of Edebiyat al-Jadida, in the journal called Sarwat al-Funun and depictions of Europe and Paris in the translations of these artists were among these reasons. The independence-related aura of Paris caught his attention on one hand, but the work of detectives arising from the pressure of Sultan Abdul Hamid concerned him on the other. Due to these circumstances, Yahya Kemal said "I see my home country as a prison while Europe was like a place full of lights." He was disturbed by the eyes of everybody including gangsters and elite people in the streets, ferries, or somewhere around town. He stated that he hated the morals of Asian people and added: "I wanted to escape from the pressures of my own neighborhood and experience the environment I saw in the poems of Tevfik Fikret, proses of Halid Ziya, the work of the young people following these two innovators, and in the novels translated from French."⁶

One of the reasons for his interest in Paris is the enthusiastic depiction of Paris by Shekib Bey, a family friend who lived in Paris for a long time. "Shekib Bey gathered the young members of the family of Ibrahim Bey, told them about the ideas of European philosophers and depicted Paris with a great enthusiasm. He stated in his specific style and excitement that there were no civilized societies except the European nations." He was like a model to us as he had proper morals, ethics, and attitudes and he spoke French like a native. However, he opposed Islam, the Ottoman Empire and even the Turkish nation. He was a cosmopolite. His greatest deficit was his national characteristics. What was worse was that he had difficulties in this regard. He suggested his ideas. According to him, what young people should do to escape to Paris and live there somehow."⁷ Another significant reason was the Young Turks performing activities in Paris.⁸

Yahya Kemal acted without thinking about his actions due to the excitement and inexperience in his young age and looked for ways to escape from Istanbul, his own world of culture which he hated, to the foreign environment of culture which he

⁵ Yahya Kemal, *ÇGH*, p. 74.

⁶ Yahya Kemal, *ÇGH*, p. 74.

⁷ Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Yahya Kemal'in Hatıraları*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyet Yayınları, Second Edition, İstanbul 1997, p. 41. (This book will be hereinafter referred as YKH.)

⁸ Yahya Kemal, *ÇGH*, p. 74.

was fond of at those times. He had an illegal but exciting voyage to Marseilles, France, and immediately went to Paris from there. "This man (Shekib Bey) had a great role in my escape to Paris with a low amount of cash and many risks when I was just 18."⁹

It is clear that Yahya Kemal was ready to be alienated from the Turkish Islamic environment before moving to Paris. This process gained pace and reached severe levels when he escaped from Istanbul to Paris, according to his statement. All Turkish intellectuals residing in Ottoman borders at that period were alienated from their own cultures and nationalities at a great level, which was like an epidemic among them. Yahya Kemal was influenced by the conversations and work of the Turkish philosophers in Paris and thought that alienation from the self and his own culture was a necessity for civilization. As he noted, the reason behind this alienation was "the psychology of residing out of the national borders."¹⁰ Accordingly, staying within national borders and national culture education are among the most important reasons which could terminate alienation.

These Young Turks were at the center of alienation from the Turkish nation and culture, and they acted in antagonism to terminate religious emotions and ethics. Yahya Kemal rapidly learned French in Meaux College upon the suggestion of Abdullah Cevdet during his first months in France, returned to Paris in 1904 and resided in the town of Quarter Latin. After settling in this town, Yahya Kemal started to adopt an approach contradicting the religious and ethical education he received from his mother and environment. The following statement by him reflects the case more authentically: "I had a severe reaction against the religion when I left Istanbul. I became less religious in Paris. 1904 was a year when opposition toward the church and religions increased and socialist movements were active. I took part in meetings and protests. While listening to "International" in the streets, my heart was filled with love for people and I was shedding tears. I became excited while listening to the speeches of Jaurés, Pressencé, Vaillant, anarchist Sebastian Faure and Malato. I became a fanatic follower of anarchist Jean Grave while I was getting less religious and my revolutionary ambitions increased. Dr. Abdullah Cevdet heard of certain lines which I stuttered in this regard and he actually liked those... My revolutionary ambitions lasted until 1905 and faded out later. I immersed myself in the joys of Paris."¹¹ These statements are of paramount importance to show the extent to which Paris engulfs him in alienation. With all these influences,

⁹ Banarlı, *YKH*, p. 41.

¹⁰ Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Eve Dönen Adam*, Ötüken Neşriyat, Second Edition, Istanbul 1996, p. 23.

¹¹ Banarlı, *YKH*, p. 80-81.

he began to get away from not only his religious and moral feelings, but also his national feelings he created with historical stories he listened to his henchmen Hüseyin when he was a child in Skopje. Yahya Kemal was then both psychologically and socially alienated from the Turkish culture just like other Turkish philosophers in Paris.¹² In another speech he gave of his situation in Paris, he states how the people there influenced him as follows: "I may not be a complete Muslim. My faith was shaken before Allah as I was raised in Paris at a period when materialist ideas were dominant. I finally thought that Muhammad was a guide raised in Arabia."¹³

It can be understood from all these that during the early days of his life in Paris, Yahya Kemal became completely alienated against all his emotions and became insensitive to his society, culture, faith, morality and even nationality.

b- His Stance Against Alienation

After his education in Meaux College and coming to Paris, Yahya Kemal was interested in socialist movements, participated in meetings and enrolled at the School of Political Sciences, and he was influenced by Albert Sorel, one of his teachers there. Not only did he listen to Sorel of whom he was almost a fan in the classes, but he also visited and listened to him for hours in his mansion in Assace Street with 104 students who said they were in love with him. The historical information Sorel gave and his styles of "seeking Frenchness in history" gradually caught the attention of Yahya Kemal who had an interest in history. This affection caused Yahya Kemal to question his hatred toward his own culture he formed in Istanbul and to adopt an attitude toward certain negative influences he faced during his first years in Paris, and he even started to get interested in "seeking Turkishness in history" in the style of Sorel. However, he also understood that he needed to have more knowledge to do so because he knew that he was both scientifically and ideologically far behind his French classmates. He saw that they read more than him and started to go to libraries to read books with the influence of his classmates. He did his best to overcome his lack of historical knowledge by reading books.

He read French books before but upon the dissatisfaction from these, he started to read Turkish books and thoroughly learned the history of the Ottoman Empire and Seljuks. As a result, he recognized the impropriety in the meanings attributed

¹² For detailed information about Yahya Kemal's alienation from his culture and how he escaped from this alienation, see: Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Yabancılaşma Karşısında Yahya Kemal", *ibid*, p. 79-85.

¹³ Nihad Sami Banarlı, "Yahya Kemal ve İman", *Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü Mecmuası I*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, İstanbul 1959, p. 2.

by Young Turks and Balkan societies to the Balkan events of the era, and he understood that the main purpose of these societies was to demolish the Ottoman Empire controlling them. Therefore, his ideas regarding Young Turks totally changed.¹⁴

Yahya Kemal stated the following: "After this change, the idea of Young Turkism — the claim that Turkish nation would be saved by revising Kanun al-Asasi in 1876 — was a bit outdated for me. The idea of Young Turks was not based on concrete grounds. Their dream was a bit weak for me. I was claiming that our nation should be awoken, that a national movement should be initiated, and that the concept of Turkish should be understood."¹⁵ According to him, Young Turkism was then nothing both in ideological and actual fields.¹⁶ Yahya Kemal had ideas reaching this point so he started to have more faith in his own nation. As his interest in history increased and he studied more historical periods, he understood how himself and many Turkish intellectuals had become alienated from their own cultures and national values better, and his commitment and trust in his nation increased.¹⁷

His faith in his nation increased his respect toward it. "I believe in the Allah and Prophet believed by the Turkish nation. I am a believer (Muslim) of this belief. I think such a belief was living in me secretly when I was in Paris. Different incidents shook my beliefs back then in Paris. What saved me from atheism and established my ties with God once again was the Turkish nation because failing to believe in the Allah and religion believed by such a great nation would make no sense."¹⁸

It is beyond a doubt that the national and spiritual education Yahya Kemal had during his childhood had a great role in this ideological and spiritual return. Childhood is the period, the traces of which are vivid the most in one's memory. Yahya Kemal remembered the love for Allah and Prophet taught by his mother during his childhood and felt that certain values were still alive in his spirit. He states that the adhan from mosques came to his ears during the moments when he deviated from Islam as follows: "These sounds have not left me all my life. I believe in the great effect of adhan sounds for the religious and national education for the Muslim Turkish children. When I was in Paris, I had moments when I remembered the adhan sounds in Skopje and felt a bit nostalgic even if the state I was in had

¹⁴ Banarlı, *YKH*, p. 42-45.

¹⁵ Banarlı, *YKH*, p. 44.

¹⁶ Yahya Kemal, *ÇGH*, p. 191.

¹⁷ Bolay, "Yabancılaşma Karşısında Yahya Kemal", *ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁸ Banarlı, "Yahya Kemal ve İman", *ibid.*, p. 2.

nothing to do with adhan.”¹⁹ These childhood memories returned his essence and the process of remembering the national values started.

The first stage in this regard was seen in poetic ideologies. He renounced his interest in the Neo-Greek movement indicating that Turkish poems can become complete only when they are based on Greek-Latin values and aesthetics when he discovered that the simplicity and pleasures in the Greek-Latin poems were also present in the ancient Turkish poems. From that moment, he had made an effort to ensure that Turkish poetry could advance in its own national phonetics without the influence of foreign effects, and he had used the Turkish of the era in all of his poems.

When he was in Paris, the reading activities he conducted helped him become a historical expert. He immediately fulfilled the idea of “seeking Turkishness in history” with an influence from Sorel, and Camille Julian’s statement “French soil has created the French nation in 1000 years” encouraged him to examine Anatolia. Accordingly, Yahya Kemal stated that the Turkish nation adopted Anatolia as the home soil following the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 and had a new historical progress after that period, and he claimed that “Anatolia has created the Turkish nation in 1000 years.”²⁰

3- Alienation in Turkish Society and Solutions for Terminating it

Yahya Kemal witnessed the alienation of intellectual people including authors and poets who had a higher education in Paris and other European cities to be more beneficial for their countries but instead turned out to be the people alienated from their own national values. He experienced the same himself.

He heard from the foreign historians in his schools that Turkishness had not been discovered yet, which shaped his studies. He started to disregard alienation from himself and history of his nation, and he understood that the solution for this state is related to recognizing his own history and he returned to his essence. He had used the topics related to Turkish history in his proeses and poems from then on and made an effort to ensure that Turkish people love their history.

He came back home with different emotions and discovered that alienation from Turkish culture, which he had experienced years ago, started to spread among the people living in certain neighborhoods and expressed this in his article called “Ezansız Semtler (Neighborhoods Without Adhan)” as follows: “I ask myself

¹⁹ Banarlı, YKH, p. 26-27.

²⁰ For detailed information about Yahya Kemal’s historical approach, see: H. Ömer Özden, *Estetik ve Tarih Felsefesi Açısından Yahya Kemal*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 2001, p. 143-150.

whether the Turkish children raised in neighborhoods such as Şişli, Kadıköy or Moda would have a national perception when they grow up. There are no minarets or adhan sounds in those neighborhoods, and holy days are not felt there. How will the children experience the childhood dreams related to Islam there?"²¹ Yahya Kemal was so right in stressing that Turkish children who were raised in places where adhan was not heard or holy days were not felt spiritually could not have a complete idea of nationality and that this failure would cause a generation that would not be aware of its own culture. It is a fact that there are many young Turkish people who have not developed national and religious emotions and who are indifferent to the culture of the Turkish nation in the modern times. In this case, another way of preventing alienation is to maintain the national and religious feelings and keep these alive.

Yahya Kemal states that not only children and young people but also Turkish adults and anybody forgetting their own customs and traditions are in a form of alienation from their national and cultural values. Accordingly, he advises that anybody including women, men, shopkeepers, artists or religious authorities who deviated from their own cultures, supported Greeks in the War of Independence and bought goods from the foreigners should return to their essences and organize their lives accordingly.²²

In his article entitled "Ezansız Semtler", Yahya Kemal indicates that modernization and alienation are not synonymous, and that modernization is misinterpreted, causing the emergence of alienation, as follows: "If you would like to see the spiritual differences between the ancient and modern Turks, you should compare the neighborhoods of Istanbul which have been formed in the last century. People who consider deviation from Islam while becoming more civilized natural and pleasant can migrate to the cities of Balkan states. They can see bell towers in every corner of these renewed cities... This scenery would remind them about their religion and nationality. Those cities are not free from their national spirits just like our new neighborhoods."²³ Accordingly, Yahya Kemal states that failing to maintain the mosques and historical houses, which are the basic indicators of our national architecture, in the new neighborhoods and cities may cause alienation, and that alienation causes cultural changes and imperialism. According to Yahya Kemal, modernization is not an alienation from our own values but to fulfill the necessities of the era.

²¹ Yahya Kemal, *Aziz İstanbul*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 126.

²² Yahya Kemal, *Mektuplar Makaleler*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, Second Edition, İstanbul 1990, p. 137-140, 141-143; *Eğil Dağlar*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, Fourth Edition, İstanbul 1992, p. 107-109.

²³ Yahya Kemal, *Aziz İstanbul*, p. 128.

Yahya Kemal indicates the other reason of our alienation from selves as the deviation from our essences, essential characteristics and national roots.

“We have deviated from our essence.

Those who heard about this mention about an insoluble issue saying
that rootlessness is a deep wound.

This is a limitless and sorrowful orphanage in the world.

An unbearable pain strikes at some time,
just like a tree cut with its roots remaining in the soil.

Spirit searches another consolation in each wind.

Alas! We are not born anymore on those soils.”²⁴

Despite all these negative cases, Yahya Kemal kept his hopes for the Turkish nation. The solution for getting rid of alienation is actually hidden in the characteristics of the Turkish people. He believed that Turkish people would return to their essence and roots. “Did the spirit of the Turkish people fly away like a scent? No! Masses still have the same spirit. However, we as the last generation deviated from the masses and got lost, but we will not go too far. We will return and join the masses again.”²⁵ It is clear that this return will not be easy but it will not be impossible either. According to Yahya Kemal, the Turkish nation will overcome alienation as long as it recognizes itself, values its national and spiritual concepts, or in other words, trusts itself more than before. This does not mean rejecting the new methods of Western societies or adopting the ideologies of the East. With the following statement, Yahya Kemal indicates that the Turkish nation can overcome all sorts of problems by raising people who will mix national values with modern life and by ensuring that these people also take part in the educational activities: “No teachers, poets, scholars or preachers who would mix the new lifestyles with the theological approach of our ancestors and save us from this aridity, darkness and wrongness were not raised but we will return back to our essence with a natural but great attitude.”²⁶ This is a sort of social reconstruction. Turkish people should also recognize their own national characteristics and culture to return back to their essence, which is related to recognizing the foundations of Turkish culture.

These grounds are related to learning and using Turkish well, recognizing our history correctly and thoroughly, and learning and using the scientific methods of the Western world instead of adopting their lifestyle, and they are also related to

²⁴ Yahya Kemal, *Kendi Gök Kubbemiz*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, Sixteenth Edition, İstanbul 2002, p. 51-52.

²⁵ Yahya Kemal, *Aziz İstanbul*, p. 128.

²⁶ Yahya Kemal, *Aziz İstanbul*, p. 128.

adopting our spiritual values once again including the process of creating an artistic perception.

Conclusion and Remarks

The ideological development of Yahya Kemal who was raised in a religious neighborhood and interested in Western ideas, had a longing for the independent environment of Western countries, became alienated from his society but adopted the national and cultural values of his society once again after his historical studies indicates the alienation of a Turkish intellectual and how he escaped from this alienation.

The most important factor enabling people to avoid alienation is to know the history, be aware of the cultural values, and maintain the aliveness of national and religious emotions for the young people, children and anybody who emulates the Western people while forgetting about their own customs and traditions. Modernization should not be misinterpreted. In addition, transforming this concept into the action of deviating from Islam and relevant essences should be prevented, and the requirements of modern life should be fulfilled through our own values. According to Yahya Kemal, alienation can be overcome as long as Turkish society recognizes itself, values its national and spiritual concepts, or in other words, trusts itself more than in the past.

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Puritanism and Religious/Moral Corruption: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne*

İsmail ÖĞRETİR**

Abstract

Puritanism, theologically rooted in Calvinism, has an important place to evaluate the current religious, cultural, political, economic, and social panorama of the U.S. The first Puritans who came to America in 1620 settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in the 1630s a second immigration wave began. This group established a community called Massachusetts Bay Colony in an area known today as Boston. This Puritan community which did not tolerate any dissenting religious or world views is the very center of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne who produced original works as a moralist in the period known as the American Renaissance was distressed and had a guilty conscience because of cruelty and unfair accusations and executions by his great great father and great father as judges at that time. Perhaps due to this fact, he tried to describe the moral law against the Puritan history and to show the corrupted aspects of Puritan faith while reproducing the gloomy Puritan world literally in his works. In this study the relationship between the life of Hawthorne and his work, his criticism of Puritan America, and religious/moral corruption are treated through his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*.

Keywords: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Puritanism, religious/moral corruption

Püritanizm ve Dinî/Ahlâki Yozlaşma: Nathaniel Hawthorne'un *Kızıl Damga'sı*

Özet

Teolojik kaynağını Kalvinizm'den alan Püritanizm, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin bugünkü dinî, kültürel, siyasî, ekonomik ve toplumsal panoramasının değerlendirilmesinde önemli bir yer tutar. 1620'de Amerika'ya ilk gelen Püritanlar Plymouth, Massachusetts'de bir koloni kurmuşlar, 1630'lu yıllarda ikinci bir göçmen dalgası başlamıştır. Bu grup

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Puritanism and Religious/Moral Corruption: The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

günümüzde Boston olarak bilinen bölgede Massachusetts Bay Colony adını verdikleri bir cemaat kurmuşlardır. Kendi dışındaki din ve dünya görüşlerine müsamaha göstermeyen bu Püritan cemaat, Nathaniel Hawthorne'un *Kızıl Damga*'sının tam da merkezini oluşturur. Amerikan Rönesansı olarak bilinen dönemde bir ahlâkçı olarak özgün eserler veren Nathaniel Hawthorne, dedelerinin koloni yıllarında Püritan olmayanlara karşı yargıç olarak gerçekleştirdikleri zulüm ve adil olmayan suçlamalar ve infazlardan dolayı her zaman sıkıntı duymuş, kendisini suçluluk duygusundan kurtaramamıştır. Belki de bu yüzden *Kızıl Damga* adlı eserinde kasvetli Püritan dünyasını aslına uygun biçimde yeniden üretirken, Püritan tarihine karşı ahlâk yasasını betimlemeye ve Püritan inancının bozulmuş yönlerini gözler önüne sermeye çalışmıştır. Bu çalışmada Nathaniel Hawthorne'un yaşamıyla yazdığı eser arasındaki ilişki, Püritan Amerika eleştirisi ve dinî/ahlâki yozlaşma, başeseri *Kızıl Damga* üzerinden ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Kızıl Damga*, Püritanizm, dinî/ahlâki yozlaşma

“...it is impossible to fill the gap sins create in one's spirit in this mortal world.” *Kızıl Damga*, 190

Nathaniel Hawthorne who produced authentic works in a period known as the American Renaissance in the 1850s with famous authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville¹ is recognized as a moralist and artist. He is regarded as an ethical icon in assessing the ethical complexity of American life, a supporter of universal and timeless basic ethical values and a master in literature. The main topics he was interested in as a moralist included pride and isolation or main sins and downfall through theological terminology. His romance theory and symbols, parables and images he used are also interesting.² These are actually closely related to one another. Hawthorne's internal and ethical world is actually integrated with the external and aesthetic world. He resides in both ethical and aesthetic worlds. While addressing serious messages as a moralist, he meticulously reviews these messages as an artist.³ Hawthorne, defining his novels as “psychological romance”, states that “he has dug a tunnel into the depths of our common nature”.⁴ He attempts to depict the ethical law against the Puritan history in his works ranging from *Twice Told Tales*⁵ (first volume: 1837, second volume: 1842) to uncompleted *Dolliver Romance* (1863). He recreates the gloomy Puritan world in line with its

¹ Milton Meltzer, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography*, Twenty-First Century Books, 2007, Minneapolis, p. 9.

² Keiko Fujie, “Hawthorne's Light & Dark in *The Scarlet Letter*”, *Osaka Literary Review*, 1980-11-30, p. 116.

³ Harry Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, Vintage Books, New York, 1958, p. 68.

⁴ David Levin, “Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*”, *The Voice of America, Forum Lectures, The American Novel*, United States Information Agency, Washington DC., 1977, s. 11.

⁵ Hawthorne's works which have been translated to Turkish will be cited with their Turkish titles while untranslated works will be presented in their original titles.

original form. Hawthorne states that this Puritan world is actually a world in itself.⁶ This study examines the relationship between Nathaniel Hawthorne's life and his works and reviews the Puritan America criticism and religious/ethical corruption through his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter*.⁷

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of the leading novelists and short story writers of the United States, was born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts and died on May 19, 1864 in Plymouth, New Hampshire. He is a master in allegorical and symbolic story writing, and he is well-known with his works *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). Hawthorne's literary career was shaped through the milestones in his life. These milestones can be briefly examined. After Hawthorne's father, a ship captain, died in 1808, his mother returned to Mannings, her family, together with his son and two daughters. Hawthorne spent the period between 1816 and 1819 along with his mother and daughter in Raymond, Maine. They returned to Salem later, and Hawthorne both studied to go to college and worked in Mannings' office. He received education in Bowdoin College between 1821 and 1825. He was influenced by the Scottish philosophers there and had interest in the idea that wills are organized when awake rather than sleeping and that a total mental ideology with separate but interactive powers (perception, mind, memory, ideological association and imagination) and the concept of estimation require activeness in all skills and senses, which can be felt in his novels. His relationship with three classmates from Bowdoin College lasted throughout his life: Franklin Pierce became the fourteenth president of the United States; Horatio Bridge helped publish the first book; and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow revised his first book. He published *Fanshawe*, a novel reflecting his college experiences, through his own means in 1828, but he rejected the same work later. He aimed to publish some of his short stories as compilations but as he found no publishers, he demolished some of these while sending some to the journals. He served as the editor of *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* with his sister's assistance in 1836 and wrote *Peter Parley's Universal History*, a bestseller book for children.⁸

⁶ Kahhoul Imene, *Puritanical Dimensions in The Scarlet Letter: Moral Demands Versus Individual Needs*, Mohamed Khider University – Biskra Faculty of Letters and Languages Department of Foreign Languages English Branch, 2011/2012, Algeria, p. 6.

⁷ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Kızıl Damga*, trs. Z. Gülümser Ağırer Çuhadar, Arion Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2002. The references to the novel will be reflected as *SL* along with the page numbers in parenthesis.

⁸ http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/early_nineteenth/hawthorne_na.html, (06.01.2016).

Puritanism and Religious/Moral Corruption: The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

When Hawthorne published *Twice-told Tales* in 1837, Longfellow — one of the well-known literary figures of the era — complimented Hawthorne for his poetic abilities, style, and contents specific to New England. *The Minister's Black Veil*, an anecdote on the crimes people hide from each other and the dangers arising from one's business with oneself only is like an indicator of *The Scarlet Letter*. However, *My Kinsman, Major Molineux* and *Young Goodman Brown*, two more complicated stories which are not included in *Twice-told Tales*, reviews one's complicated internal experiences and mutual relationship with society, warns people against the simple ethical judgments, and opposes the symbolic assumptions regarding Puritanism. Hawthorne aims to go beyond superficial reality and convey the incoherent information through his works.⁹

Hawthorne started to work in Boston Custom House in 1839 and left his job in 1840. He married Sophia Peabody in 1842 and moved to Concord. Hawthorne became friends with the leading transcendentalists of the era such as Emerson and Thoreau but he did not agree with them in regard to their optimism about the potential of human nature. After living in Concord for some time, he returned to Salem in 1845 and was assigned as the supervisor of the Custom House. However, due to the governmental change in 1849, he lost his job and published *The Scarlet Letter* as a result of his hard work in a couple of months in 1850. The sorrow he felt upon his mother's passing and his anger arising from losing his job can be clearly felt in the phrase of "Custom House" in the introduction of the novel. The author criticizes Puritan America and his own society through the plots in the Custom House. Hawthorne moved to Berkshires in 1850 and published his second novel *The House of the Seven Gables* reflecting a Salem family which undertook a crime committed by its ancestor. He served as the Consulate of Liverpool between 1853 and 1857, lived in Rome and Florence during the next two years after 1857 and completed his latest romance *The Marble Faun*. He came back to Concord in 1860 and faced medical issues. He was very concerned as his expectations did not take place and the United States suffered from civil war between 1861 and 1865. Although he considered slavery wrong, he did not believe the possibility of success for the anti-slavery supporters. He died on May 18, 1864. He was regarded as an intelligent author who had a broad perspective and who questioned the state of humanity and American identity in the period ranging from the Puritan era to his own era.¹⁰ Therefore, briefly examining Puritanism will be beneficial for assessing *The Scarlet Letter*.

⁹ http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/early_nineteenth/hawthorne_na.html, (06.01.2016).

¹⁰ http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/early_nineteenth/hawthorne_na.html, (06.01.2016).

Calvinism, Puritanism and America

Puritanism started as a religious reform movement during the era of Queen Elizabeth I in 1560s. This reform movement is called Puritanism because its followers aim to purify¹¹ the Anglican Church from corrupted forms. Puritans believe that people are obliged to work, suffer, and die due to their major sins. Puritanism opens the religious position of anybody to questioning.¹²

Calvinism, a concept in which Puritanism is theologically based, can date back to a British priest named Pelagius who lived in the fifth century. Pelagius rejected the doctrine of “major sin” and claimed that people have an absolute “free will” they can use to believe or disbelieve in God. Augustine, the opponent of Pelagius, stated that humans will could never be free and that people would choose to serve God when God shows mercy to them. He also noted that humans lost their chance to select when Adam committed a sin and was dismissed from the paradise. Augustine’s idea was accepted by the Catholic Church but Pelagius was announced as a disbeliever and was banned. The Catholic Church had focused on the doctrine of “Sacraments” in time and central power of the church caused the rise of Protestants. The issue had clearer lines at the end of fifteenth century and Erasmus, a humanist theologian who was committed to Rome Church, critically stated that people have free will in deciding whether they should believe in Jesus or not. Martin Luther, a Protestant Reformist, responded to this statement with the thesis “Captivity of Human Will” and Protestant Reformation was initiated by the figures such as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli who had a Catholic education, questioned and protested the practices of the Catholic Church through the independent Bible studies and wanted a reform. He left the Catholic Church around 1530 and published *Institutes of Christian Religion* in 1536. He aimed to develop these ideas throughout his life but this work laid the bases for a sect known as Calvinism later. Calvin’s doctrines were accepted as the official religion of Netherlands in the second half of the 16th century¹³.

Calvinism is known with the strong emphasis on God’s control over everything. This final doctrine is formed through five points summarizing Calvinism:

1. There is an almighty God that created and manages the world but cannot be grasped by the human mind.
2. Salvation (selection) or the destruction of us (being cursed in this regard) has already been determined by God and people cannot change their pre-determined destiny.

¹¹ The verb “to purify” in English means cleaning or refining something to make it pure.

¹² J. A. Leo Lemay, *An Early American Reader*, United States Information Agency, Washington DC, 1993, p. 173.

¹³ Kevin Hall, *Calvinism, Introduction to the Study of Calvinism*,

<http://www.biblestudyguide.org/ebooks/kevinhall/calvinism-te.pdf>, (07.01.2016).

3. God created the world for His own glory.

4. One's duty in this world, whether one is selected or cursed, is to work for God's glory and establish God's dominance all over the world.

5. Salvation can only occur through divine mercy for people. Salvation is not possible through the assistance of churches and rites. Only God can grant salvation. This power cannot be assigned by the Church and Priests.¹⁴

Calvin's most important characteristic in regard to the ethical system is the insistence on the divine decision. God cursed some people eternally. However, some people are rewarded by God's forgiveness when they are born. Therefore, Calvin supports an idea that is similar to that of Augustine. The human mind cannot explain the reason why some people are selected for benevolence or malevolence. People cannot change their destiny no matter how hard they try. Calvin's divine decision theory is highly beneficial for the study. Although Calvin states that people cannot decide whether they can achieve salvation, he strictly recommends people to work for salvation.¹⁵ As seen in Arthur Dimmesdale's case in *The Scarlet Letter*, one's professional achievements are regarded as an indicator that one is among the selected ones.

Puritanism arising from Calvinism emphasizes the divine decisions and follows the guidance of the Holy Book in collective prayers. First Puritans consider the religious authorities of Elizabeth's era as political; they claim that these authorities are too Catholic in rites and religious hierarchy. They believe that rites should be simpler and that religions should include an intense spiritual relationship between people and God. However, at that time, in England, the clergy mediated the relationship between the government, the individual and God. Puritans were punished in England as they opposed this. Some of them went to Netherlands and some fled to America to escape from punishment.¹⁶ The Puritans, who embarked on the Mayflower ship to Plymouth to build a separate colony in Massachusetts, believed that this would be a new beginning for history and religion, the beginning of a thousand-year bliss before the apocalypse. They actually experienced a new beginning in the process of establishing new cities and countries, teaching virtue and corrected actions which were unjust.¹⁷

The Puritans who came to America for the first time in 1620 founded a colony full of natural and social threats in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Half of the colonists

¹⁴ İshak Torun, "Kapitalizmin Zorunlu Şartı 'Protestan Ahlâk'", *C.Ü. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 2002 III/2, 93, see: Michael Horton, *For Calvinism*, Zondervan, Michigan, 2011, p. 15.

¹⁵ Adnan Güriz, "Avrupada reform hareketi ve mülkiyet sorunu", <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/38/335/3397.pdf> 256-257, (05.01.2016).

¹⁶ Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: a History of American Literature*, Penguin Books, New York, 1991, p. 8.

¹⁷ Ruland and Bradbury, *ibid.*, p. 8.

lost their lives in the first year while the others were saved with the arrival of spring and the intervention of the Native Americans (called Indians during this time). A second wave of immigrants began in the 1630s, and by 1640 the number of settlers in New England exceeded twenty-five thousand. The second group established a congregation they called the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the region known as Boston in 1630s.¹⁸ Puritanism, the movement that does not tolerate any other religious or mortal ideas, serves as the center of *The Scarlet Letter*.

Many assumptions regarding God's promises to the selected American people were transformed into myths and transferred from generation to generation. John Winthrop and William Cotton Mather, two early Puritanism figures, had great influences. Although their religious effects decreased, their social ideals have been conveyed to many Americans for years. Cotton Mather's prose *Magnalia Christi Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702), which reviews Christianity while reflecting the deficiencies in Europe and the effects over the formation of the American essence, can still be felt in many religious and political speeches in the United States. This Christian American utopia dream was first mentioned by John Winthrop (he came to Salem with Puritan migrants in a ship called Arbella in 1630) who was mentioned in *The Scarlet Letter* (141, 143, 148, 149) in 1630s.¹⁹ *Manifest Destiny* and *American Dream* of the 19th century can be regarded as the American devolution of early Puritan ideals.²⁰

The term Open Destiny means a spread ordered by God over an area that is not clearly defined. This is America's clear destiny. Behind this view are their arguments to justify American expansion. These arguments can be summarized as follows: a) Americans have a special mission of spreading democracy and freedom over the entire continent. b) America is closer to these non-inhabited lands than other major countries. c) Americans use the lands more efficiently than the people living there. d) These lands need to feed the American population which doubles every 25 years. e) Americans have to modernize and develop the primitive people living on these lands. These arguments were largely accepted in the 1830s and 1840s and promoted America's initiatives over the continent.²¹

The concept of the American Dream was first used by the historian James Truslow in 1931 to define what was attracting millions of people from every nation to America. The concept itself is certainly older. The first people migrating to

¹⁸ Wendy C. Graham, *Gothic Elements and Religion in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Fiction*, Tectum Verlag DE, Marburg, 1999, p. 60.

¹⁹ Emory Elliott, "The Legacy of Puritanism, Divining America", TeacherServe®, National Humanities Center, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/legacy.htm> (10.01.2016).

²⁰ Wendy C. Graham, *Gothic Elements and Religion in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Fiction*, Marburg: Tectum Verlag DE, 1999, p. 59.

²¹ Thomas Ladenburg, "America's Manifest Destiny", *Digital History*, p. 40-41 http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/teachers/lesson_plans/pdfs/unit5_8.pdf, (15.01.2016).

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America hoped for a better life than what they had in Europe. As noted before, the main reason for their departure was religious oppression, political pressure, and poverty. These migrants had (a) personal hopes of freedom, self-accomplishment, personality and happiness; (b) economic hopes of wealth and success; (c) social hopes of equality in a class-free society; (d) religious hopes of religious freedom, and (e) political hopes of democracy. Collectively, this American Dream was reflected in the basic beliefs and values, and today it is the common dream of many people, not just Americans.²² Puritans who emigrated to America were dragged into the idea of “Manifest Destiny” and the “American Dream” on the “promised” lands as the people selected by God, which was depicted in *The Scarlet Letter*, and they severely punished the Native Americans who were regarded as opponents and people who had different religious and world views. It should be noted that Hawthorne’s works can be assessed as criticisms toward Puritanism. These works are essentially historical narratives. They reexamine Puritanism and seek deeper meanings for the social place of art and concepts of sin, feeling of guiltiness, crime and punishment.²³

Salem, the town where Hawthorne was born, is one of the earliest places of residence for the English Puritans in 1600s. William Hathorne,²⁴ the first migrant out of Hawthorne family, settled in Salem in 1630 and became one of the pioneers of the colony that was based on theocratic social principles. William Hawthorne, who held many offices, served as a judge and as a major in the wars fought to banish Native Americans from their own lands. For early Puritan settlers, innocence means purification from those whose political or religious beliefs differ from theirs. William Hathorne is known for his mercilessness by separating Native Americans, Quakers,²⁵ ‘witches’ and criminals of any crimes from one another by applying violence. John Hathorne, his son and a judge, was as tough as his father. He aimed to purify New England by burning or hanging witches.²⁶

Although Puritan separatists passed the Atlantic to find a new paradise in America, there were thieves, killers, and adulterers among them. They were violently punished by merciless judges such as William and John Hawthorne when they were captured²⁷ or exposure piers were full of them. The interesting point here is that the graveyards and prisons were full of people although the residential

²² http://home.arcor.de/vhailor/413_FF_Fact_file_3_NRW.pdf, p. 1, (14.01.2016).

²³ Imene, *ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁴ Nathaniel Hawthorne added the letter “w” to his surname “Hathorne” in 1827 probably to ensure easiness in reading or because of feeling guilty due to his family.

²⁵ Quakers, also known as Friends, are the supporters of social activism, pacifism, fair treatment of Native Americans and equality for women, the concepts which emerged in Great Britain and spread in Northern America.

²⁶ Meltzer, *ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁷ Meltzer, *ibid.*, p. 11.

places were new. This case is expressed in the first section entitled "Prison Door" in *The Scarlet Letter* as follows:

No matter what kind of utopia, full of happiness and wellness, the founders of a new colony dreamed at the beginning, they soon discovered the necessity to spare some of these lands for a graveyard and prison. The first residents of Boston bordered the grave of Isaac Johnson in his own land and formed the beginning point of the graveyard of King Church later in the same period when they constructed the first prison around Cornhill, which is a clear example in this regard. After fifteen or twenty years following the establishment of the city, the wooden prison carried the traces of weather conditions and its age, which added more pessimism to the cold and dark appearance of the building. The rust on the metal parts over the oak door made people think that the prison was the oldest thing that could be found in the New World. Like everyone or everything related to crime, the prison seemed to have never had a youth. (SL 48)

Nathaniel Hawthorne always had problems due to the oppressions and unfair treatments and executions of their grandfathers and he had never overcome the feeling of guiltiness although it had been more than a hundred years since the death of their grandfathers and Hawthornes were almost forgotten. Moreover, a problematic awareness arising from his deep ties with his Puritan grandfathers can be felt in his works.²⁸ The moral message that emerges in *The House of the Seven Gables*, for example, is that a generation repents the sins or mistakes of its previous generations.²⁹ *The Scarlet Letter* is regarded as Hawthorne's best representation of tough and gloomy Puritans characterizing the New England colony.³⁰ Hawthorne's problematic awareness is reflected in the following citation included in the first chapter (Custom House) of *The Scarlet Letter* as follows:

As far as I can remember, I would visualize Briton, which was domestically transferred with glorious memories from one generation to another, in my dreams as a child. I can still remember, and I would feel the sense of being home. It is now hard to compare those times with the current form of the city. I believe my great grandfather who was an earnest person with a beard, dark-color cloak, topper hat and a lofty appearance and who was a pioneer that walked over these non-inhabited lands with the Holy Book and sword and that was mentioned with compliments in both war and peace times deserved to reside in here more than me as a person who is not known as much as him. He was a soldier, law-maker, judge, and an administrator in the church; he had all positive and negative Puritan

²⁸ Meltzer, *ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁹ "The weaknesses and mistakes, malevolent passions, vulgar orientations and ethical issues are transferred from one generation to another". *The House of the Seven Gables*, Airmont, New York, 1963, p. 112-113.

³⁰ Deborah L. Madsen, "Hawthorne's Puritans. From Fact to Fiction", *Journal of American Studies*, 33.3 1999, p. 516.

characteristics. He is remembered with his violent attitudes toward a woman from his sect, which Quakers reflected in their stories, and this was what concerned me thinking that his benevolent acts would be mentioned less. His son seemed to have inherited his father's cruelty through genes; he was one of the leading witch hunters and he carried their blood. This was such a great blemish that his dried bones in the graveyard in the Charter Street must still have this blemish if they have yet to become soil! I do not know whether my ancestors regretted and begged pardon from God for their torments toward people or whether they are paying the results of what they did in a different dimension. Me as an author and their grandson undertake the responsibility for what they did and pray for the termination of all curses over them. (SL 16-17)

Perhaps that is why Hawthorne emphasized Puritanism more vividly than other writers, conveying the complexities of Puritanism and the dead and living dimensions of the heritage of the 19th century to the reader in such an effective way.³¹

The Scarlet Letter

The Puritan society depicted as “the successors of Puritan gloom” (SL 217) in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a harsh, cold, and dark society ruled with strict laws. Each person living in this society, determined through the religious norms of human and the natural attitude cycle, has to accept the limitation on their freedom as ordered by Calvinism.³² They have to avoid all sorts of entertainment, and they must only work and pray. The narrator in *The Scarlet Letter* reflects this as follows: “...The generation following the first migrants embraced the darkest colors of Puritanism and faded the national appearance to such a degree that this had not been reverted for many years. We need to relearn the art of being happy that we have forgotten (SL 219).

The Scarlet Letter starts with a long introduction entitled “Custom House: Introduction to Scarlet Letter” (SL 11-47). The interesting point here is the perfect similarity between Hawthorne and the narrator. As stated above, Hawthorne works as an inspector in the Custom House and loses his job due to political changes, which is also the case for the narrator. Like his narrator, he has Puritan ancestors who leave a cursed legacy. Therefore, the unnamed narrator in this section appears as the author himself. The author defines himself as an inspector in the Custom House in Massachusetts. As noted by Joel Pfister, the term “custom” means both the house for goods and traditions or habits. The author/narrator is literally both a

³¹ Millicent Bell, *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*, Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2005, p. 85.

³² Imene, *ibid.*, p. 2.

custom inspector and a figure critically examining the customs, habits, and interpretation patterns. He goes beyond his ideological preferences and presents a personal criticism to self and society.³³

The narrator also mentions how he started to write the novel when starting his social criticism. He sees a pile of documents in a non-used room of the Custom House. There is an A-shaped scarlet cloth with a golden pattern and a package with a manuscript among these documents. An event that took place approximately a century before the time of the narrator (around the half of the 17th century) is narrated in the manuscript, which was written by an inspector Jonathan Pue, in the pile of documents (*SL* 37). After the narrator loses his job in the Custom House, he decides to write a fictional explanation of the events recorded in the manuscript and creates *The Scarlet Letter*. The narrator does his best to add a realistic sense to the fiction to such a degree that the readers doubt whether this introduction is included in the book. "I still hold the original forms of the documents including *The Scarlet Letter*, the most interesting book to me, and my doors are totally open to those who are affected by the story and want to see these" (*SL* 37). However, it should be noted that realness and dreams can meet with artistic and literary activities and they can present something to one another, as also reflected by the narrator/author" (*SL* 39).

The four main characters in the novel are strictly committed to one another in a circle of unsolvable issues. These characters are Roger Chillingworth, Arthur Dimmesdale and Pearl. Hester, a young married woman, illegally gives birth to Pearl when she was living in Puritan New England far away from her old husband who was a scientist of the 17th century. Her husband, Roger Chillingworth, who is thought to have died, finds his wife being punished and thus obligated to wear a scarlet cloth with the letter A on it throughout her life and standing in the exposure pier with her baby in her hands before the public because of her illegal relationship and as she rejected saying the name of the father when Chillingworth comes to³⁴ New England. The novel opens with this incident. The depiction of a prison door in the opening paragraph of the novel indicates the merciless faces of the people who gather before the door: "a wooden building with an oak door full of sharp metal pieces" (*SL* 48). The prison door is a symbol of Calvinism according to Glazier. Both this door and people's prohibitor characteristics refer to the unethical power of Calvinism and "the early-blooming black flower of that modern society" (*SL* 48).³⁵

Chillingworth vows to take revenge and finding the father of the baby becomes an obsession for him. "I will search for this guy like I look for the information of

³³ Joel Pfister, "Hawthorne as Cultural Theorist", *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 35-36.

³⁴ The letter "A" reflects the adulteress, meaning a woman having sex illegally.

³⁵ Lyle Glazier, *Decadence and Rebirth, Hacettepe Lectures in American Literature*, Hacettepe University Publications, Ankara, 1971, p. 19.

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reality in books or gold in alchemy. I will instinctively recognize him when we meet. I will see him shaking before me and I will shiver for no reason one day. I will find him one way or another! He can hide before his so-called honor if he can. But I will find him in the end" (SL 74). He hides his identity and introduces himself as a doctor. He gets a promise from Hester not to disclose him (SL 75). He searches for traces like a detective and finds that Hester's father is Arthur Dimmesdale, a young priest who is regarded as sacred, as a saint among the Puritans in Salem. Ironically, priests are some of the leading people among the Puritans "who are responsible for ensuring the social order at that time" (SL 190).

During the times Puritanism spread over America, people believed that churches should include the living saints or sinless people. Therefore, priests' attitudes were largely restricted by the social rules, principles and even the bias" (SL 190). This doctrine is a refutation of the authority claiming that the church should support the government as in England. Puritans opposed the hierarchical system (priest, bishop, archbishop) in the church. The congregation of the church should have the right to select and assign their own religious authorities.³⁶ Puritans believed that they could present religious expressions in an ignorant world. For that purpose, most of the members consisted of a group who was educated in Oxford or Cambridge. These religious authorities were believed to have known God's words sincerely. According to them, not only did these religious authorities study God's words, but they also adopted these words as some of their parts. As noted by William Perkins, these authorities should have an inner emotion regarding the doctrine to be declared. They should be affected religiously so that they could awaken the same feelings of others.³⁷ The Puritan congregation thought that there was nothing more important than saying God's words with piousness and that their priests glorified Jesus Christ.³⁸ Moreover, "priesthood was an occupation requiring more intelligence than policy; ...as the society respected and adored the priests, this position evoked an attraction which could draw the attention of even the most ambitious people." Accordingly, Increase Mather, who is mentioned in the novel, is the father of Cotton Mather and among the priests "holding the political power" (SL 225). Arthur Dimmesdale who has no political ambitions is a priest loved and respected by the congregation. People call him "a man deserving the paradise": "Here, an angel on the world!" (SL 136). He is a "priest who reached the status of a saint in the church" (SL 233). His feeling of guiltiness increases considering the love and respect of Dimmesdale people toward him. Whenever he wants to confess his sins, his weakness prevents him.³⁹ Thus, he will never find

³⁶ J. A. Leo Lemay, *An Early American Reader*, United States Information Agency, Washington, DC, 1993, p. 173-174.

³⁷ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reform According to Scripture*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2002, p. 79-80.

³⁸ Imene, *ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁹ Imene, *ibid.*, p. 81.

peace due to this feeling and pricks of conscience." Priest Dimmesdale, who could reach the top level of faith and holiness, had to bow down to his destiny overwhelming him. This destiny reduced the level of a man, whose position was in the skies and whose voice could be heard and responded by angels, to the lowest people. However, the feeling of guiltiness was what enabled him to understand his sinner siblings and help them. His heart shook with them. He felt their pains and made thousand of people feel his own pains through tragical and persuasive words. These sincere and persuasive words sometimes became terrible. The public could not understand what the power that affected them to this degree was but people considered the young priest a holy miracle. (SL 134-135)

After being educated by three tough and grim teachers called "shame, hopelessness and loneliness", getting better and better and learning many correct and wrong things or actions (SL 189), Hester becomes a character full of compassion and self-confidence at the end of the novel. Dimmesdale, on the other hand, witnesses the feeling of guiltiness and his sins surrounding his self (SL 210), gets overwhelmed by this feeling, confesses his sin to the "hard-hearted" (SL 186) congregation after standing on the exposure pier like Hester did while holding his baby seven years ago, begs Hester's pardon, hugs his daughter Pearl and takes his last breath. Chillingworth who wants to take his revenge on the young priest, who already feels guilty, by psychologically tormenting him and says "You just managed to escape!" for several times when the priest takes his last breath (SL 241) ethically falls to lower degrees in his seek for revenge. After Dimmesdale dies, Chillingworth's "strength and energy, will to live, and mental abilities" all "disappear, dry and shrink" at once (SL 245), and he dies, too, in almost a year. He bequeaths what he has to Pearl, Hester's daughter. Only Hester can look at the future optimistically. He goes to Europe with Pearl who marries an aristocrat there. Hester comes back and dedicates his life to charity work. The letter "A" is no longer a source of shame for him. After the years of "thinking, suffering and sacrificing", the scarlet letter becomes something other than a letter drawing everybody's hatred and turns into a "sign" remembered with grief, fear, and respect (SL 247). After Hester dies, he meets with Dimmesdale under a single gravestone. The letter "A" is engraved on the stone like an emblem (SL 248). Pearl, a living symbol of her mother's sins for the Puritan society,⁴⁰ is the spokesperson of the social criticisms in the novel. Pearl asks significant questions to her mother as the conscience of the Puritan society. It is clear that the novel includes Puritan congregation's interpretation of ethical laws and a serious criticism toward this interpretation.

Hawthorne, among these four characters, indicates Chillingworth as an unforgiveable sinner because Chillingworth crushes another spirit or heart just to see how it reacts. He observes Dimmesdale and seeks a perfect revenge. He appears

⁴⁰ David Levin, *ibid.*, p. 15.

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as the best friend to his worst enemies.⁴¹ He tries to prevent Dimmesdale from getting on the exposure pier to confess his sins before passing away. Chillingworth's depiction is interesting here: "Old Roger Chillingworth was advancing among the crowd. His facial expression was so dark, concerned and evil that he looked as if he came out of hell. He tried to prevent this poor man from doing what he wanted to do" (SL 238). Hawthorne indicates Chillingworth as the main symbol of ethical and religious corruption. Chillingworth reflects this when he talks to Hester: "I do not have the power to forgive you. I do not have that you mentioned. My beliefs that I have forgotten for some time are coming alive now and they indicate the reason for what we did and suffered" (SL 163). Chillingworth is already a deviant person even before making his revenge an obsession because this old man commits a greater sin than Hester and Dimmesdale my marrying Hester though he does not love her and observes the weakness of the young priest.⁴²

Dimmesdale, the second symbol of ethical and religious corruption according to Chillingworth, thinks that his sin cannot be expressed and tolerated. This sin absorbs his energy and hurts and destroys his self. While living with the feeling of guiltiness and pricks of conscience, Dimmesdale gets overwhelmed by the feeling of hypocrisy arising from the idealization of himself by his own congregation and carries the load of his secret silently.⁴³ He tries to justify this silence as follows:

They avoid displaying their darkness and sins for the purpose of protecting people's peace and glorifying God although they are guilty. If they display their darkness, they will not be able to do favors and pray to God for forgiving their sins by performing benevolent acts. Therefore, they wander among people believing that they are as pure as a fresh snow although they suffer from great psychological torments and carry the traces of the sins which they cannot escape in any ways. (SL 125)

As noted by the narrator, "Nobody can have different attitudes against the self and people for a long time because they cannot understand which of these attitudes is real in the end" (SL 204). After his effective sermon, he can confess his sins and takes his last breath at the end of the book. The narrator indicates one of the ethical interpretations of the novel as follows: "Be honest! Be honest! Do not avoid revealing a quality, rather than your worst side, that will help you disclose your worst side clearly!" (SL 244-245). In the Puritan community, the words "Listen as if it were coming out of God's mouth" (SL 181), Dimmesdale was afraid of revealing such a trait and refrained from revealing the "black secret of his soul" (SL 136). He also tries to maintain his image as a priest who clears the religious and ethical

⁴¹ David Levin, *ibid.*, p. 14-15.

⁴² Glazier, *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴³ Benjamin Kilbourne, "Shame Conflicts and Tragedy in *The Scarlet Letter*", *Japa*, 53/2, p. 473.

doubts of his congregation: "For them, Mr. Dimmesdale was a spokesperson who reports the messages of wisdom, love, and warnings from the skies. The soil he stepped on was sacred for them (SL 135). However, he gets stuck in this image to such a degree that he cannot confess his sin although he wants to do so:

He wants to speak for once, no, at least a hundred times. But how can he? He tells his audience that he is a despicable person, maybe the most despicable person, the worst among the sinners, a person deserving all sorts of hatred, and somebody who is unbelievably malevolent. He says he is surprised how he has not been burnt by God yet before the people due to his sins. Can there be a clearer speech than this? Should not the people have reacted and dragged him down from the position he blemishes? This was not the case. People listen to these and become more committed to their priest. They cannot understand the secret fearsome message hidden in the words of the priest who punishes himself like that. (SL 136)

This priest regarded as a saint in this world uses different inappropriate ways to punish himself: "He had a couple of bloody whips in his locked secret cabinet. This Protestant and Puritan priest often whips his shoulders and smiles while doing so, and he whips himself harder thinking that he can smile (SL 137). He also fasts for the redemption of his sins and prays for nights either in darkness or under some light, "but he cannot save himself from this sin" (SL 137). People's respect toward him and his numerous favors for the people "cause nothing but more pain" (SL 181); he knows that he looks as if he is doing favors but that is nothing but deceiving the self. He asks himself and Hester: "How can a ruined spirit like mine save other spirits? Or how can an impure spirit purify the sins of other spirits? " (SL 181). He gets overwhelmed by the load of his sins and hypocrisy to such a degree that he even envies Hester who is punished to wear a cloth with the letter "A" in scarlet on it over her clothes for a lifetime.

I paid the price of my sins already. However, I have not done anything for showing my regrets. This is the truth! If this was not the case, I would have already left my position and stood before the people in the way they would see me in the Judgment Day. You are lucky Hester as you can carry that scarlet letter on your chest! My letter is secret, burning me gradually. (SL 181)

What he says about his letter is physically true because the narrator mentions the audience swearing that they saw a scarlet letter that was perfectly similar to that of Hester on the chest of the priest" (SL 243). This was actually reflected in an act between Roger Chillingworth and Dimmesdale before. While Chillingworth examines Dimmesdale as a so-called doctor, he sedates him using the medicine he has made with the plant he has collected, opens the buttons of his shirt and sees his chest. The narrator asks "What about the astonishment and joy in his face?" and adds the following: "It looked as if an extreme joy that cannot be reflected only through the facial expressions or eyes was erupting from all parts of his

(Chillingworth's) ugly body (*SL* 130). There is an admiration with astonishment in this joy" (*SL* 131). It is clear that Dimmesdale engraved the letter "A" on himself, an example of the torments he does to himself.

Chillingworth and Dimmesdale violated the principle of honesty, the basic principle of Puritan ideology. This principle, in other words, explaining what has happened to God and people, is the basic obligation for becoming a real believer and confessor.⁴⁴ Chillingworth hides his identity to take his revenge, ensures that Dimmesdale trusts him and even lives with him as his doctor in the same house. He never shows regrets at the end of the novel and proves, according to the Puritan ideology, that he is an already-cursed one. Dimmesdale cannot be honest until his last breath and makes all realities around him a lie because "For a false person, the whole universe is false, untouchable; it shrinks when you want to grasp it by hand. That person becomes a shadow as long as he/she stands under a fake light and disappears in the end" (*SL* 138). What makes Chillingworth real is his ambition to take revenge while it is the pain to be tolerated for the priest. While reflecting the psychological state of Dimmesdale in detail, the author does not tell about Chillingworth that much.

Hester doesn't keep a secret, in fact, the letter A, which she carries as a punishment, ironically gives her an insight into other people's secrets. The real meaning of this letter is forgotten in time, and people start to believe that this letter is the initial of the term "angel" reflecting her favors or the initial of "able" indicating her capabilities. However, as Dimmesdale hides himself from the sights of people, the reflections of his sinner conscience are provided throughout the novel.⁴⁵ The interesting point here is the different interpretation of the people when Dimmesdale shows the letter "A" on his chest and confesses his sins before his last breath. Some admit to seeing this letter, while others deny that they have seen it or that the priest has made a confession. They believe that Dimmesdale died in the arms of a fallen woman and turned his death into an instructive anecdote. He is a saint and his last confession has nothing to do with the "crime causing Hester to wear the scarlet letter." This attitude of the priest, "according to certain elite witnesses", carries the purpose of indicating "how futile the process of achieving the highest honesty status is." "After his life ended following his efforts he made for the spiritual wellness of people, his death turned into a lesson and the priest gave a strong but tragic message indicating that we are all sinners before the Eternal Purity" (*SL* 244). Such an ideology is totally natural for the Puritans of the era because Arthur Dimmesdale, a respected priest, is among the selected creatures of God and one of the living saints of the Puritan church.

⁴⁴ David Levin, *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁵ Ian Ousby, *An Introduction to Fifty American Novels*, Pan Books, London, 1979, p. 53.

In conclusion, Hawthorne did not criticize Puritanism totally while assessing the Puritan history in *The Scarlet Letter*. The author criticized the corrupted features of Puritanism. He opposed to Puritans' adoption of their own dogmatic beliefs which could distort the human spirit, indicated their strictness which resulted in tragic cases, and attacked the Puritanism form which was distorted to protect the so-called Puritan quality. Hawthorne objects strict activities in social fields arising from depersonalization, self-alienation or identity loss, and in the social concepts such as religion, policy or occupational fields arising from these social fields. However, he supports Puritanism's stress on conscience, self-determination and privacy of separate human spirits. The key that will open the hidden depths of human nature is love. The human aspects of this love are present in the sympathy and empathy of a spirit toward another spirit in pain.⁴⁶ In addition, Puritanism's emphasis on responsibility cannot be neglected. Hawthorne reflects the theme of self-realization through Hester, self-destruction through Dimmesdale, and revenge through Chillingworth.⁴⁷ Chillingworth represents the Unforgiveable Sin here because he does not regret anything contrary to Hester of Dimmesdale and he distorts the human spirit, symbolizing the distorted Puritan belief.⁴⁸ Hawthorne aims to settle accounts with the sins and crimes of his grandfathers under the concept of religion in his works, particularly in *The Scarlet Letter*, but he still tries to protect the essence of Puritanism. He acted as the historian and critic of the Puritans⁴⁹, focused on the traditions of New England and Puritan lifestyle, and clearly criticized the distorted aspects of Puritan ideology. Although he criticized the Puritanism implemented by his grandfathers, his criticisms are still relevant today.

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⁴⁶ Glazier, *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Glazier, *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Glazier, *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Ousby *ibid.*, p. 47.

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Puritanism and Religious/Moral Corruption: The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel
Hawthorne

“Is it God’s Will in This Business?”: Will on Query in William Golding’s *The Spire**

Seda ARIKAN**

Abstract

William Golding’s fifth novel, *The Spire*, set in the fourteenth century, tells the story of Dean Jocelin, who desires to erect a spire on the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary. As Dean Jocelin claims that his will is the God’s will that has been inspired to him by vision, he adheres to his will acquiescingly. However, all of the people around him, especially the master builder Roger Mason who doubts the endurance of a 400-foot-high spire, are against the idea of constructing it.

The problematic proposition in the novel is whether Dean Jocelin is right or wrong trying to actualize his will that is going to result in material and spiritual losses. Is Dean Jocelin an especially faithful servant of God? Is he a latent or overt solipsist, sacrificing many lives for his will? Or is he just an ordinary person and as such, in possession of the human nature that is considered inherently evil by William Golding? This study will try to answer these questions by adopting the eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant’s ethics, which use good will, reason, and duty as measures of moral action, and which claims that all of these together bring freedom for human beings.

Key words: William Golding, *The Spire*, Kantian ethics, good will, freedom

“Bu İş Tanrının İstenci mi?”: William Golding’in *Kule Romanında İstencin Sorgulanması*

Özet

William Golding’in on dördüncü yüzyılda geçen beşinci romanı *The Spire*, Virgin Mary Katedrali’ne bir kule dikmek isteyen başrahip Jocelin’in öyküsünü anlatmaktadır. Başrahip Jocelin, bu istencinin kendisine bir vahiy ile iletilen Tanrı’nın istenci olduğunu öne sürerek, istencine sorgusuzca bağlanır. Fakat etrafındaki tüm insanlar, özellikle 400 fit yüksekliğindeki bir kulenin mukavemeti konusunda şüphe eden yapı ustası Roger Mason, bu kulenin inşasına karşıdır.

Romandaki sorunsal önerme, Başrahip Jocelin’in maddi ve manevi kayıplar ile sonuçlanacak istencini gerçekleştirmeye çalışmasının doğru mu yanlış mı olduğudur. Başrahip Jocelin gerçekten Tanrı’nın sadık bir hizmetkârı mıdır? İstenci için birçok yaşamı feda eden gizli ya da aleni bir tekbenci midir? Yoksa William Golding’in tabiatı gereği kötü

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olarak tanımladığı insan doğasına sahip sadece sıradan biri midir? Bu çalışma, on sekizinci yüzyıl filozofu Immanuel Kant’ın hepsi bir arada olunca insan için özgürlük getirecek iyi niyet, akıl ve ödev duygusu üzerine kurulu ahlâk felsefesini kullanarak bu sorulara cevap vermeye çalışacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: William Golding, *The Spire*, Kantçı ahlâk felsefesi, iyi niyet, özgürlük

Introduction

The Spire (1964) by William Golding, the Nobel Prize-winning English writer, as described on the cover of Faber’s 2005 edition, is “a dark and powerful portrait of one man’s will, and the folly he creates”. This man, Jocelin, is the dean of a medieval English cathedral of the early Middle Ages. He wants to add a 400-foot spire to the cathedral despite the building not having a strong enough foundation to hold it. Jocelin, who claims that he is actualizing the will of God, spearheads the construction, going forward even at the cost of losses and sacrifices both material and ethical. To build a spire taller than any other building, “he sacrifices people (...) to achieve his ambition, justifying it on the grounds that his ambition is a vision of God’s will”. Although the story is narrated from Jocelin’s point of view, Golding casts doubt on the righteousness of his steady conviction to construct the spire, and puts his will in the first order of scrutiny. In the novel, “the only proof that the erection of the spire is carried out in response to God’s intention is Jocelin’s word, but frequent doubts are cast on his sanctity and his very sanity”. Indeed, Golding’s main question in this novel is whether Jocelin’s will originates from good intentions and if it does, whether it is a moral deed, given that his deeds result in many losses. In its questioning of ethical issues in terms of good will, reason, duty, freedom, egoism, and altruism, *The Spire* can be examined within the realm of ethics and especially that of the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Kantian ethical system, as a deontological ethical theory, is based on the idea that good will is the only intrinsic good. Kant’s ethical questioning was shaped by several influences, one of which is Pietism, a Lutheran Church sect to which his parents adhered. “Pietists emphasized honesty, deep feeling, and the moral life rather than theological doctrine or orthodox belief”. In this respect, he established his ethical thinking on good will or inner goodness: “The idea is that if we live within our lights, we will be given more light and that God judges us not on how lucky or successful we are in accomplishing our tasks but on how earnestly we have lived according to our principles”. Furthermore, to Kant, an action is good if

¹ Jean E. Kennard, “William Golding: Island”, (Ed. Harold Bloom), *Sin and Redemption*, New York, Infobase Publishing, 2010, p. 128.

² Jesús Saavedra-Carballido, “Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding’s *The Spire*”, *Atlantis Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies*, 2014, p. 72.

³ Louis P. Pojman and James Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, Boston, Wadsworth, p. 122.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

its maxim is valid within reason-governed ethical law, not only intuition. Kant argues that good will and reason together result in freedom and moral action in life. So, as a novel that discusses the morality of the protagonist Dean Jocelin's action, *The Spire* reveals some Kantian concepts of ethics, of which good will is the most prominent.

The main question in the novel is that of whether Jocelin is right or wrong for trying to make a spire built on a medieval cathedral, despite its predicted lack of proper foundation. Kantian ethics dictates that the first thing that should be examined is the intention of the doer; whether the deed springs from good will or not. In the novel, Jocelin tries to justify his plan by calling it God's will: "You'll see how I shall thrust you upward by my will. *It's God's will in this business* [emphasis added]"[°]. So certain of his righteousness is Dean Jocelin that when he overhears the conversation of workers below, he does not even imagine that they are talking about him:

"Say what you like; he's proud."

"And ignorant."

"Do you know what? He thinks he is a saint! A man like that!" (13)

He responds by saying, "Who is this poor fellow? You should pray for him, rather" (13). His belief in his own will is so strong that he does not anticipate the possibility of the sacrifices that occur later on. Based on Golding's intended theme of human nature as mostly solipsist and evil rather than altruistic and good, many critics problematize Jocelin's will and mention the wrongness of his deeds. Erkan states that "[i]n *The Spire* Jocelin's will is a false will"^ˆ. Saavedra-Carballido indicates "[f]or everyone except himself, it is soon obvious that behind his conscious motives lies a demonic impulse that tends towards excess and disruption, an almighty drive that takes no account of human morality and needs"[˘]. Hallissy defines "the key element of the novel's medieval background [as] the theology of sin"[^]. The data in the novel direct many critics to comment on Jocelin's will as a false will. Thus, if his will and his later deeds to accomplish it are examined in terms of an ethical questioning based on Kant's "categorical imperative", a similar but more detailed analysis which illuminates Golding's ethical stance emerges.

[°] William Golding, *The Spire*, London&Boston, Faber and Faber, 1990, p. 40. Subsequent references to *The Spire* will be to this edition and will be included in the text in brackets.

^ˆ Mukadder Erkan, "A Critical Study on Golding's Novels, 1954-65: 'Literary Features and Human Conflicts' ", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Edebiyat Bilimleri Araştırma Dergisi*, Erzurum, 1999, Number 25, p. 202.

[˘] Saavedra-Carballido, "Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding's *The Spire*", p. 81.

[^] Margaret Hallissy, "'No Innocent Work': Theology and Psychology in William Golding's *The Spire*", *Christianity and Literature*, 1997, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 37.

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Kant’s emphasis on “good will” and its power to decide the rightness or wrongness of an action goes parallel to his notion of moral law. In this process, the prominent determinant is referred to as “categorical imperative” or “absolute command”. Instead of a hypothetical imperative related to certain conditions, Kant defends a categorical imperative that universalizes principles of morality. Kant, affected by some versions of intuitionism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, adopts a rule-intuitionism in his ethics. Rule-intuitionism

maintains that we must decide what is right or wrong in each situation by consulting moral rules that we receive through intuition. Rule-intuitionists accept the principle of universalizability as well as the notion that in making moral judgements we are appealing to principles or rules.¹

Although it may seem incoherent to bring intuition and rule close together, Kant, “a rule-intuitionist of a special sort”, believes that “moral knowledge comes to us through *rational* intuition in the form of moral rules”². So, his notion of intuition is strongly related to his belief in the power of reason. To test the moral validity of a deed, Kant forms his categorical imperative based on good will, reason, intuition, and duty. In Kantian ethics, “[c]ategorical imperatives are the right kind of imperatives, because they show proper recognition of the imperial status of moral obligations. Such imperatives are intuitive, immediate, absolute injunctions that all rational agents understand by virtue of their rationality”³. In this sense, the categorical imperative (the formula for which is simply “Do X”) that universalizes principles of conduct is to: “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law”⁴. The maxim is the general rule according to which the actant will act. So, Kant establishes the categorical imperative as the determinant of any action’s being moral or immoral. In this process, he suggests first to form the maxim of action, second to universalize the maxim, and third to accept a successfully universalized maxim and to reject unsuccessful maxim. Given this ethical system, is Jocelin’s will, which he identifies with the will of God, a good will, and does it justify his deeds? Kant’s categorical imperative can be applied to this problem. As the first step, the maxim of Jocelin’s action can be formulated as follows:

“When I believe that something is God’s will, I should do whatever is necessary to actualize it.”

¹ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 125.

² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge & New York, Cambridge UP, 2006, p. 31.

To test the ethicality of the action after formulating the maxim, this maxim should be universalized as:

“When anyone believes that something is God’s will, s/he should do whatever is necessary to actualize it.”

Kant believes that if the maxim can be universalized, the action in question proves itself as a moral action; otherwise, it is immoral. So, if the universalized maxim above is correct, then Jocelin’s action is moral according to Kantian ethics. Kant formulates his categorical imperative on three principles which are tied by the theme of universalizability. In order to evaluate the validity of this universalization, three principles which are tied to the Kantian theme of universalism –the principle of the law of nature, the principle of ends, and the principle of autonomy– will be utilized.

The Principle of the Law of Nature

The categorical imperative principle of the law of nature is: “Act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature”¹³. “The emphasis here is that you must act analogous to the laws of physics, specifically insofar as such laws are not internally conflicting or self-defeating”¹⁴. When the maxim of Jocelin’s action is considered, it would be morally right if everyone would act on the maxim without any conflict or self-deception and vice versa. Then, let us consider this maxim: “When anyone believes that her/his will is the God’s will, s/he should do what should be done to actualize this will”. What happens if this maxim is practiced? In fact, the answer lies in the novel: chaos.

Golding structures *The Spire* on several contradictions, two of which are “Jocelin’s Christianity versus the workers’ pagan rituals” and “God the Father versus Dia Mater”¹⁵ (Saavedra-Carballido, 2014: 82). Those contradictions conflict with each other throughout the novel and as a result, a terrible sacrifice occurs –the murder of Pangall. Dean Jocelin employs the pagan workers to construct the spire on the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary in order to actualize his will. These workers, who do not share Jocelin’s Christian belief in the essentialness of a spire, continue to build it just with the lure of money: “The will itself opened Jocelin’s lips and promised them more money among the flames of love; and they hugged the lean body that was the vessel of the will” (152). However, even more money is not able to make them carry on the nearly impossible task and so they activate their own pagan belief that results in a sacrifice. “As the spire rises and the risk increases, the absence of Christian ritual coupled with a lack of belief in Jocelin’s personal faith

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 129.

¹⁵ Saavedra-Carballido, “Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding’s *The Spire*”, p. 82.

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lead the workmen to resort to a substitute ritual”¹¹. The pagan workers choose Pangall, the impotent caretaker, as a scapegoat, to propitiate their pagan gods and to strengthen the structure. The sacrifice scene in which the pagan workers put the model of the spire between their legs is a clear representative of the ritual sacrifice to a phallic deity that happens on the pagan holy day of Midsummer’s Eve. Besides, “the mistletoe used in the foundation sacrifice of Pangall underlines the relationship between infertility and the spire”¹². In this ritual, where “Misshapeness and Impotence are ritually murdered”, “the sacrificial victim is built into the pit to strengthen the inadequate foundations”¹³. Thus, the pagan workmen’s anxiety about the foundation of spire, in other words its physical impotence, is relieved in a way. It is apparent that “[t]he atmosphere in *The Spire* [which] is both pagan and spiritual”¹⁴ is conflicting and results in a disastrous sacrifice.

In this sense, the maxim of Jocelin’s action and its universalizability should be reconsidered in relation to the action (sacrifice) by the pagan workers. The maxim “When anyone believes that her/his will is the God’s will, s/he should do what should be done to actualize this will” can be read as “When the pagan workers believe that their will is their pagan deity’s will, they should do what should be done”. Actualization of this maxim brings in the sacrifice of Pangall. To please their deity against the evil showing itself with the church’s groaning and creaking under the surplus weight, they “do what should be done” and sacrifice Pangall. To Korsgaard, with the principle of the law of the nature, Kant implies “a *practical contradiction*, where my action would become ineffective for achieving my purpose if everyone tried to use it for that purpose”¹⁵. Similarly, Jocelin’s maxim becomes ineffective for achieving his goal when the pagan workers use it for the same purpose, namely to actualize their will, identified in their case with that of their deity. So, the categorical imperative of Jocelin presents a practical contradiction in his action as it shows that he is trying to get away with something that would never work if others did the same thing, because “it exposes unfairness, deception, and cheating in what [he is] proposing”¹⁶. Thus, the maxim of actualizing a will that is identified with that of God or any accepted creator fails the universalizability criterion. As the society will be dragged into chaos and anarchy like in *The Spire*, this maxim tested with the principle of the law of the nature is clearly immoral.

¹¹ Margaret Hallissy, “Christianity, the Pagan Past, and the Rituals of Construction in William Golding’s *The Spire*”, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 2008, No: 49-3, p. 326.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 328.

¹³ Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study*, London, Faber, 1984, p. 211, quoted in Margaret Hallissy, “Christianity, the Pagan Past, and the Rituals of Construction”, p. 327.

¹⁴ Erkan, “A Critical Study on Golding’s Novels, 1954-65”, p. 199.

¹⁵ Christine Korsgaard, “Kant’s Formula of Universal Law”, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 1985, Vol: 66, 24, quoted in Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 130.

¹⁶ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 130.

Now, the second principle –the principle of ends– should be applied to Dean Jocelin’s assumed maxim to evaluate his actions.

The Principle of Ends

In Kantian ethics, the principle of ends is: “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means”¹¹. To Kant, because human has dignity and worth as a rational being, s/he should not be used as a means for any end. “In accordance with this principle a human being is an end for himself as well as for others, and it is not enough that he is not authorized to use either himself or others merely as means (since he could then still be indifferent to them); it is in itself his duty to make man as such his end”¹². In terms of the notion of value, Kant not only evaluates human as the source of values but he also accepts her/him the maximum value¹³. Furthermore, “[w]e, as valuers, must conceive of ourselves as having *unconditioned* worth”¹⁴. When this second principle is applied to the maxim of Jocelin, both his intention and his deeds can be evaluated from other-oriented point of view.

Although Jocelin tries to justify his deeds both to relieve himself and to legitimize his mistakes sounding in the words of an Easter song as “*This have I done for my true love*” (137), his solipsism unveils itself before long. “Jocelin chooses to be an instrument of his vision, and he chooses others to be his instruments”¹⁵. His treating all people, even the closest to him, mostly as means not as ends shows itself in many cases. Primarily, as Hallissy mentions, “Jocelin acts alone, in violation of the communal rituals of a communal activity. Jocelin’s behavior shows not only his self-absorption but also his isolation from the group”¹⁶. Though he is the dean of the cathedral, he overlooks the cancelling of services by laity who did not “dare to worship” (165) in the cracking cathedral. “Priests and congregants alike are diverted from their routines of worship by [the master builder] Mason’s ‘army’ of workers who all but take over the cathedral”¹⁷. Dean Jocelin claims that he strives at a spiritual aim but he ignores the spiritual rituals or any other spiritual aims in the cathedral. Just to sustain the construction, he ignores first the warnings of Pangall who foresees that the pagan workers will do him harm, and second the adultery

¹¹ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 38.

¹² Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge&New York, Cambridge UP, 1991, p. 198.

¹³ Ahmet Arslan, *Felsefeye Giriş*, Ankara, Adres Yayınları, 2009, p. 173-4.

¹⁴ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 135.

¹⁵ Julianne Fowler, *William Golding’s Definition of the Irrational: A Study of Themes and Images* (Master’s Degree Thesis Kansas State Teachers College, 1970, p. 96, <https://esirc.emporia.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/2785/Fowler%201970.pdf?sequence=1> (13.08.2015))

¹⁶ Hallissy, “Christianity, the Pagan Past, and the Rituals of Construction”, p. 329.

¹⁷ Lawrence S. Friedman, *William Golding*, New York, Continuum, 1993, p. 88.

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between Goody Pangall (the god-daughter of Jocelin) and Roger Mason, believing that Goody will keep Roger in the Cathedral. His ignorance of the advice of his former friend Father Anselm results in a falling out and Anselm airs his grievances when Jocelin is in his deathbed saying:

(...) to see you dean of this church when you could hardly read Our Father; and to be tempted, yes tempted—for where the horse goes, the wagon must follow—and one must admit that the great world is necessary since we’re none of us saints—tempted towards a sort of ruin. I admit it freely. I might have remained where I was and done some good. You tempted me and I did eat. (201-2)

Father Anselm accuses Jocelin not only of tempting him but also of using him and the others as means to actualize his vision. Father Anselm knows the most about Dean Jocelin as he is Dean Jocelin’s confessor: “And after that, to have to hear your confessions, your partial, self-congratulatory confessions— (...) What about Ivo, Jocelin? A boy canon. Just because his father gave timber for the building” (202). Dean Jocelin noticeably behaves in an unfair and careless way towards the people around him which results in heavy losses including a workman’s falling through the hole above the crossways, Goody’s death when she is giving birth to her illegitimate baby, Roger’s becoming an alcoholic, losing his dignity as a master builder and so attempting to hang himself, and his wife Rachel Mason’s being left with the responsibility to look after Roger, “blind and dumb like a baby” (220). In this sense, “[o]ther people are similarly regarded as extensions of himself rather than as valuable in themselves. Tools to be manipulated in a self-aggrandizing project (...)”¹⁴.

Dean Jocelin’s solipsism operates in his actions that conceive other people just as means who should serve for his aim. Until the end of the novel, he does not even take a step back to evaluate the material and spiritual costs in the cathedral: “He said dizzily to himself: It’s the cost! What else should I have expected? And I can’t pray for them since my whole life has become one prayer of will, fused, built in” (105). Saavedra-Carballido mentions that though Jocelin’s vision of God may have been real and so his intentions sincere, his concern does not include the other, “worldlier modes of cognition”: “For Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, this makes it extremely dangerous: under the influence of his vision, Jocelin remains oblivious of human needs, neglects his ecclesiastical duties, falls out with the other priests and the builders, and, worst of all, puts everyone’s lives in danger”¹⁵. So, Dean Jocelin’s maxim on which he bases his actions does not satisfy Kant’s principle of ends arguing that “we have unconditional worth and so must treat all such value-givers as valuable in themselves—as ends, not merely means”¹⁶. The maxim of “When

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹⁵ Saavedra-Carballido, “Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding’s *The Spire*”, p. 73-4.

¹⁶ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 135.

anyone believes that her/his will is the God's will, s/he should do what should be done to actualize this will" contradicts with the principle of ends even though it aims at a good and ideal thing such as the embodying of God's will and power. When the question of "Does the maxim involve violating the dignity of rational beings?" is applied, the answer for Dean Jocelin's case is exactly yes. "[I]dentifying his own will with God's, Jocelin treats other people as mere tools in order to ensure that the spire gets built"^{xx} and his maxim cannot pass the end test of Kant. While it is not reasonable to presume that one person and her/his will has unconditional worth while another does not, Dean Jocelin asserts the contrary. He "rejects all versions of reality but his own"^{xx}:

I have so much will, it puts all other business by. I am like a flower that is bearing fruit. There is a preoccupation about the flower as the fruit swells and the petals wither; a preoccupation about the whole plant, leaves dropping, everything dying but the swelling fruit. That's how it must be. My will is in the pillars and the high wall. (97)

His self-obsession reveals that "[a]s arrogant as he is self-righteous, Jocelin reduces his fellow human beings to building material. Alison's money, Anselm's friendship, Mason's sanity, and the lives of the Pangalls are sacrificed to the spire"^{xi}. Especially by sacrificing the four people who were "nearer to him than the floor" (62), he demolishes the representative pillars of his soul and will.

At the beginning, he tries to convince Roger about the spirituality of his will declaring:

My son. The building is a diagram of prayer; and our spire will be a diagram of the highest prayer of all. God revealed it to me in a vision, his unprofitable servant. He chose me. He chooses you, to fill the diagram with glass and iron and stone, since the children of men require a thing to look at. (...) it isn't my net. It's His. (120)

However, when Roger tries to stand against the continuation of constructing the spire as he claims there are no foundations but just mud and he begs Jocelin to let him go, these following sentences pass through Jocelin's mind: "He will never be the same man again. I've won, he's mine, my prisoner for this duty. At any moment now the lock will shut on him" (88). It is clear that "[i]n Jocelin's eyes the reluctant Mason is no more than an 'animal' to be trapped"^{xo}. In terms of Goody, Jocelin uses

^{xx} Saavedra-Carballido, "Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding's *The Spire*", p. 80.

^{xi} Friedman, *William Golding*, p. 89.

^x *Ibid.*, p. 89.

^{xo} *Ibid.*, p. 93.

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her first to satisfy his latent and oppressed sexual desire by marrying her to the impotent Pangall and so keeping her nearby. Then by shutting his eyes to the adulterous relationship between Goody and Roger for a year to make the master builder stay working, he sacrifices Goody for the sake of the spire. Only “when Jocelin realizes his men have sacrificed Pangall, he is stunned by the revelation that he has himself sacrificed Goody”^{r1}. Kant’s main focus on good will in terms of a moral action is problematic in *The Spire* as Jocelin’s maxim does not supply the principle of ends either. In fact, Golding implies Jocelin’s problematic good will at the beginning by Jocelin’s own words uttered to the erection of the spire: “I didn’t know how much you would cost up there, the four hundred feet of you. I thought you would cost no more than money. But still, cost what you like” (35). So, Jocelin’s willingness to venture the lives of the others by using them as mere means reveals that his intentions and actions do not pass Kant’s principle of ends test.

The Principle of Autonomy

Kant’s third formulation of the categorical imperative is the principle of autonomy. He declares that the principle of autonomy is “to choose only in such a way that the maxims of your choice are also included as universal law in the same volition”^{r2}. In other words: “So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxims”^{r3}. This principle indicates the significance of ethical autonomy. “That is, we do not need an external authority—be it God, the state, our culture, or anyone else—to determine the nature of the moral law. We can discover this for ourselves”^{r4}. In this respect, Jocelin’s maxim of “When I believe that something is God’s will, I should do whatever is necessary to actualize it” ought to be evaluated in terms of its autonomy. To Kant, autonomy is “the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature”^{r5}. So, his emphasis on the universalizability of a maxim is related to its autonomousness; as “the Kantian faith proclaims, everyone who is ideally rational will legislate exactly the same universal moral principles”^{r6}. However, when a maxim depends on outer forces instead of the inner rationality of a person, it is not possible to obtain the same universal moral principles. In this case, instead of autonomy, it is heteronomy that emerges. Yet Kantian ethics warns that heteronomy should be abstained from; because “the heteronomous person is one whose actions are motivated by the

^{r1} Kevin McCarron, *William Golding*, Plymouth, Northcote House Publishers, 1994, p. 23.

^{r2} Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 47.

^{r3} Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 137.

^{r4} *Ibid.*, p. 137.

^{r5} Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 43.

^{r6} Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 137.

authority of others, whether it is religion, the state, his or her parents, or a peer group"¹⁷.

Analysis of Dean Jocelin's actions makes it clear that he is much more heteronomous than autonomous. Contrary to establishing his own moral principle by using his reason, he is blindly subservient to the illusionary will of God with whom he identifies. When Dean Jocelin once climbs to the growing point, the top of the spire, he feels "the same appalled delight as a small boy feels when first he climbs too high in a forbidden tree" (101) and in a short while he identifies with God eyeing the outer world and even making decisions to punish the ones whose actions Jocelin detects from the tower as sinful. The God-eye position he adopts is the source of his actions originating not from his rational decisions but from the illusion that his will is somewhat in line with that of God. When he tries to convince Roger that his will to erect a spire is pious and necessary, he says, "I am about my Father's business" (67). This is also problematic according to Kantian ethics, as it does not fulfill his notion of good for goodness' sake. Dean Jocelin asserts that he serves primarily to the will of God, and not to good will itself, which is the main determinant in Kantian ethics. By claiming that what he does is the will of God; he consciously or unconsciously frees himself of the responsibility of his actions. The vision Jocelin describes as "[w]hat's closer than hand and mouth, closer than the thought to the mind" (85) is the justification of his obsession to erect the spire. He clearly says that the responsibility of his actions belongs to God, not to him:

The net isn't mine, Roger, and the folly isn't mine. It's God's Folly. Even in the old days He never asked men to do what was reasonable. Men can do that for themselves. They can buy and sell, heal and govern. But then out of some deep place comes the command to do what makes no sense at all—to build a ship on dry land; to sit among the dunghills; to marry a whore; to set their son on the altar of sacrifice. Then, if men have faith, a new thing comes. (121)

By identifying himself with a prophet, even with Jesus Christ (he frequently uses Father for God and your son for himself), Jocelin tries to assure his faith and his deeds. "Most striking, and most damning, of all is Jocelin's certainty that he, like Oedipus, possesses knowledge so privileged as to be more divine than human"¹⁸. Kant, a believer and a follower of Pietism, asserts the idea that God does not charge people of accomplishing the tasks or not but He mainly evaluates the good will and honesty in their actions. So, instead of carrying out a given task, the person should evaluate it using her/his rationality and grounding it on good will. In this sense, even though it is accepted that Jocelin's vision of God is real, Kantian ethics would

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁸ Friedman, *William Golding*, p. 90.

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not find his actions morally justifiable as they are motivated by the external authority of this will, in other words the authority of God, rather than by his own rationality and good will.

In fact, Golding throws great suspicion on the purity of Dean Jocelin’s vision in *The Spire*. Although Jocelin presents the construction of the spire as “ultimate prayer”, there are many indications implying that his desire to accomplish his will is just the result of his pride, hubris and lust for power. E. R. A. Temple mentions that Jocelin “knew himself to be imbued with the cardinal sin of Pride, from which he was praying to be delivered immediately before receiving his ‘vision’”⁴⁴. To William Friedman, *The Spire* “records the dire consequences of pride” and “his pride so estranges him from his flock and from his priestly duties as to drive him to enact the very tragedy it is his vocation to prevent”⁴⁵. That being the case, the motivation behind his will appears as his pride much more than his vision. When he sees the stone model of the spire that is carved by the mute sculptor at the beginning of the novel, his comments on the craving of his own image which will be “built in, two hundred feet up, on every side of the tower” (24) reveal his latent hubris which he attributes to the sculptor by asking “Don’t you think you might strain my humility, by making an angel of me?” (24). Here, the presented humility that “he had all along professed in theory but denied in practice”⁴⁶ appears as a pseudo humbleness when his later actions are considered. His denial of the details on the face of the image asserting he is “not as beaky” and has not got “as much air as that” (24) reveals his misconception about himself. Furthermore, “the wide, blind eyes” (24) of the craved profile stand as a metaphor not only for the wrongness of his vision but also for the later sacrifices he clearly shuts his eyes to. When he thinks about “the sermon he was going to preach when the spire was finished, and the pulpit built against the pillars he would preach it from” (154), his pride, not God’s will, rises to the surface. In simple terms, Dean Jocelin, whose actions are motivated by his pride rather than his reason to which Kant attributes great significance for moral actions, does not act according to Kantian principle of autonomy. Rather, in Kant’s words, “it is heteronomy and dependence of practical reason upon sensibility, namely upon a feeling lying at its basis, in which case it could never be morally lawgiving”⁴⁷.

The scene in which Jocelin embraces the model of the spire “devoutly” and caresses it “gently”, “cradling it in his arms, and looking at it all over, as a mother might examine her baby” (55-6), inspires another motivation in his actions, that is the psychological lack he needs to compensate with an immortal substitute. The eighteen-inch-long model, “a typical length for a newborn”, stands as a child figure that would sustain Jocelin’s lineage afterwards. Hallissy suggests that “[w]ere

⁴⁴ E. R. A. Temple, “William Golding’s *The Spire*: A Critique”, *Renascence*, 1968, Vol. 20, Issue 4, p. 171.

⁴⁵ Friedman, *William Golding*, p. 89-90, 93.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴⁷ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 64.

Jocelin not rendered infertile by his vow of celibacy, he would not have to substitute the spire for a child as his claim on immortality"¹⁸. So, "his vision of the spire [which] seemed far away as a dream remembered from childhood" (67) is again problematic and his will heteronomous as it comes from an external authority; the authority of his pride and psychological pursuit. In addition to Jocelin, Roger, who is presented as the representative of reason, behaves in an irrational way and with an external authority; his desire for Goody. Though he does not believe in either Jocelin's will or the probability of the spire's staying standing up, he carries on the construction. So, "[a]fter staying on the job for the wrong reasons, continuing to build against his own better judgment, and failing to impose either his will on the client or order on his workers, Roger's life is ruined"¹⁹. To Kantian ethics, "each of us—as a fully rational, autonomous legislator—would be able to reason through to exactly the same set of moral principles, the ideal moral law"²⁰. However, to accomplish this aim, people should combine good will, duty for other rational beings and ethical autonomy, all of which are problematic for Dean Jocelin in *The Spire*.

Conclusion

In an interview, Golding said: "[Y]ou might say *The Spire* is about building a spire. In fact, it's about making anything"²¹. Indeed, *The Spire* might be read as about making a moral or immoral premise as well. When Dean Jocelin's premise is applied to Kant's categorical imperative and tested with its three principles of the laws of nature, ends and autonomy, it is clear that the maxim of "When I believe that something is God's will, I should do whatever is necessary to actualize it" is invalid as a moral imperative. As a result of his invalid imperative, Dean Jocelin sacrifices both people around him and his own faith. Golding explains that "the book is about the human cost of building the spire"²² and this cost violates Kant's principle of ends the most. "In any case, for Kant, it is our ability to use reason in universalizing the maxims of our actions that sets rational beings apart from nonrational beings. As such, rational beings belong to a kingdom of ends"²³. Kant's assertion is that by using reason and good will, people can achieve freedom. In this sense, the actions resulted from inner goodness as the sole intrinsic good and duty are moral actions regardless of their results.

Kant makes an ontological distinction between the fields of phenomenon and noumenon and gives priority to the latter, in which only rationality, conscience and

¹⁸ Hallissy, "Christianity, the Pagan Past, and the Rituals of Construction", p. 328.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

²⁰ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 138.

²¹ MaryLyn Scott, "Universal Pessimist, Cosmic Optimist: William Golding", *Aurora Online*, 1990, <http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/50/63> (25.08.2015)

²² William Golding, *A Moving Target*, London, Faber, 1982, p. 83.

²³ Pojman and Fieser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, p. 138.

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good will are valid. It is significant when a human enters into the noumenal field, as passions and tendencies of phenomenon disappear in this field, but the rules of reason and conscience stay, which means that following them brings freedom^ε. Freedom based on ethical rules does not seem probable for Dean Jocelin. However, the end of the novel presents at least a potential for salvation and freedom for Dean Jocelin in terms of his realization of the faults he has made. The end of the novel functions as a kind of epiphany and confession in which the “Dean’s monomania endures (...) when he acquires sight and finally insight”^ο. By confessing his faults first to Roger then to Father Adam, saying that he thought he was doing great work but all he was doing was bringing ruin and breeding hate (209), he begs to be forgiven: “Once you said I was the devil himself. It isn’t true. I’m a fool. Also I think—I’m a building with a vast cellarage (...) I injure everyone I touch, particularly those I love. Now I’ve come in pain and shame, to ask you to forgive me” (210-11). In fact, Jocelin begs “[n]o forgiveness for this or that, for this candle or that insult”; he wants forgiveness for “being what he is” (203). It is at this point where the ideas of Kant and Golding come to common ground in order to analyze the tension between human nature and ethical behavior. The question is: if human nature is essentially rational and if the ethical imperatives result from reason, then why do people object to them? Kant’s answer is: humans are not only rational beings but sentimental and emotional, and ethics requires the obedience of the latter aspect of human beings to the former^ν. Similarly, although Golding defines the irrational tendency of human beings mostly towards evil, he distinguishes “between the universe, as the sum of man’s empirical knowledge, and the cosmos, as the totality of all there is, including God and man”^υ. These recall Kant’s phenomenon and noumenon fields. To deprive of the illusion of the universe, or phenomenon, humans should always remember the cosmos, or noumenon, in which good and evil contradict, but the probability of the sovereignty of goodness does always exist. In this respect, though *The Spire* reveals Golding’s central theme of “the original sin or the intrinsic human depravity”^α once more, it also depicts the conflicting nature of human being; good and evil, rational and irrational together. In this novel, “[l]ife itself is a rickety building” (190) in which humans try to find their way.

The Spire, based on the building of the spire of Salisbury Cathedral in the 14th century that is 404-foot (the tallest in Great Britain) and visible from Bishop Wentworth’s School for Boys, where Golding worked as a teacher, ends with the scene of dying Jocelin observing the finished spire. To Friedman, “[b]uilt on human

^ε Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, *Felsefeye Giriş*, Ankara, Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2013, p. 321.

^ο Saavedra-Carballido, “Will, Suffering and Liberation in William Golding’s *The Spire*”, p. 74.

^ν Arslan, *Felsefeye Giriş*, p. 172.

^υ Scott, “Universal Pessimist, Cosmic Optimist: William Golding”.

^α Erkan, “A Critical Study on Golding’s Novels, 1954-65”, p. 196.

sacrifice but also on human faith, the spire is emblematic of man's dual nature"⁹⁴, a theme Golding states frequently in his fiction. By realizing "his true nature on the verge of death", Jocelin dies as "the victim of his own vision and self-obsession" and "[a]t the end he understands that man is alone in the universe and there is no guide in chaos"⁹⁵. At this point, the only guide according to Kantian ethics could be goodwill, rationality and feeling of duty which Jocelin cannot comprehend until his deathbed. Hereafter, he is aware of the fact that "no matter how high he rises" (221) materially like in the biblical story of Tower of Babel, human will not achieve spiritual ascent if s/he does not behave in a moral way. At the end, realizing the cellarage, the "filthy" pit of his nature, Jocelin captures "a gesture of assent" (223) symbolized with bluebird and apple tree. "*The Spire* is a view of existential man not damned by God not saved by God; it is a view of man damned by his own Self and his illusion of choice"⁹⁶ and Jocelin comprehends his wrong choices on his deathbed mentioning: "If I could go back, I would take God as lying between people and to be found there" (220). When "he no longer senses God's presence in the spire"⁹⁷ and is now totally aware of his pride-rooted sin, Jocelin utters the headstone sentence of the novel: "*There is no innocent work. God knows where God may be*" (222). As Kennard mentions, "[f]or Golding, to forget oneself in another reality is the chief good; it is indeed necessary for salvation"⁹⁸. By realizing his irrationality and the reality of other people sacrificed by his will, Dean Jocelin achieves a kind of salvation and freedom. Golding states that when the spire is finished, Dean Jocelin "cannot bear to look at it because of the folly and wickedness the job forced on him. Only when he is dying does he see the spire in all its glory; and the sight reduces him to understanding that he had no understanding"⁹⁹: "Now – I know nothing at all" (223). To have the knowledge of human imperfection but also human potentiality, like the view of the stumbling but still standing spire, brings an illuminating knowledge for Dean Jocelin and "[o]nly the present knowledge [becomes] a kind of freedom" (221) at the end of the novel.

⁹⁴ Friedman, *William Golding*, p. 102.

⁹⁵ Erkan, "A Critical Study on Golding's Novels, 1954-65", p. 202.

⁹⁶ Fowler, *William Golding's Definition of the Irrational*, p. 96-7.

⁹⁷ Friedman, *William Golding*, p. 102.

⁹⁸ Kennard, "William Golding: Island", p. 129.

⁹⁹ Golding, *A Moving Target*, p. 83.

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Impact of Alienation in Certain Modern Fatwas*

İbrahim Salkini**

Abstract

The research discusses a number of fatwas affected by the westernization and western thought which have changed some firmly-established fiqh rules and have contradicted formative texts and classical scholars. The research presents and studies these new opinions and reviews their effects on the Islamic reality in general and the fiqh movement in particular. The research examines the following issues: permitting interests in banks, hijab as optional not compulsory, female travelling without a company, forbidding polygamy, and denying all of jizya, hudud (Islamic punishment), and jihad obligation (commandment). The research also explores their evidences but without discussing them since the discussion requires a separate study for each issue, which are out of the scope of this research about westernization. Finally, I ask Allah to save us from mistakes or misguidance as He saved His Din, and Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Keywords

Westernization, Fiqh-Based Westernization, Fatwa, Fatwas, Jihad, Hijab, Interest.

Güncel Fetvalarda Yabancılaşmanın Etkisi

Özet

Araştırma, yabancılaşma ve batı düşüncesinden etkilenen ve sabit fıkhi hükümleri değiştiren, naslara ve cumhuru ulemaya muhalefet eden bir kısım fetvaları kapsamaktadır. Araştırmada o fetvalar ele alınıp incelenmiş, İslam genelinde ve fıkıh özelindeki etkileri üzerinde durulmuştur.

Araştırma şu konuları ele almıştır: banka faizlerinin mubah oluşu, başörtüsünün farz olmadığı, kadının mahremsiz sefere/seyahate çıkabilmesi, çok eşliliğin yasaklanması, cizyenin inkâr edilmesi, had cezalarının inkâr edilmesi, cihad farızasının inkâr edilmesi.

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Ayrıca arařtırmada deliller tartıřılmaksızın ele alınmaktadır. Zira delillerin tartıřılması ve deęerlendirilmesi, her bir konu için m¼stakil bir arařtırmayı muciptir. Bu ise konumuzun dıřındadır.

Allah'tan, dinini koruduęu gibi bizi de kusur ve hatalardan korumasını diliyorum. Her t¼rl¼ g¼ lemlerin rabbi olan Allah'a mahsustur.

The Reason for Authoring this Study

Westernization is an ideological movement that has been continuing for centuries. It has emerged in theology, materialism and extremist ideologies. Overlooking Arabic in the field of literature has resulted in the objection of certain hadiths which have not been rationally accepted by people or being doubtful of Sunnah collectively.

The impact of westernization can be seen in certain modern fiqh-based fatwas in the present time. However, such an aspect of the topic has not received much interest from researchers as much as the topic of westernization in regard to ideology and theology. As the present issue has been neglected in terms of the discipline of fiqh, it has also been disregarded ideologically. Fiqh should not be neglected in revealing the main essence.

Accordingly, this study was authored to meet such a deficit that was not examined before anybody from the relevant literature.

Context and limitations of the study

This study contains the fiqh-based aspect of westernization studies within the following limitations:

1. It has fiqh-related provisions while containing no fiqh or affiliation-related aspects.
2. The present study also reviews the researchers and ideologists who are interested in judgments and religious works while assessing the concept and legislation regarding westernization in detail. It does not include the ideas of those who declared their opposition to Islam and Islam's way of legislation and called Islam as outdated. As these people do not embrace and trust Islam, their ideas were not regarded as fatwa.
3. This study assesses the issue of rejecting Islamic provisions and clearly opposing religious works, but it does not review the detailed provisions of certain religious works. because these provisions are the topic of jurisprudence discussing the judgments and topics containing fiqh-based provisions. Many articles and books were authored in this regard, so these provisions were not preferred for the assessment in this study.

4. These afore-noted provisions review the fiqh-related aspect of the topic instead of the practical side. However, they do not include the failure of certain groups and congregations in practicing certain obligatory provisions, although these groups do not reject the afore-noted provisions. Ideological orientations cover such approaches rather than the discipline of fatwa and judgments.

Certain previous movements reached outside the borders of Islamic provisions by abandoning and overlooking Islamic legislation and works to improve shariah. These movements acted against the essence and works of shariah. They neglected certain works while focusing on others in this period, or they preferred their ideological and rational assumptions over religious works, which they limited in time.

Through fatwas, fiqh-based provisions and religious works, and canon obligations, according to them, they promote western ideologies by showing commitment just like the Prophet, who committed himself to revelations.

This study has two sections.

First Section: Review of the topics including westernization: Reflection of relevant fatwas and evidence without discussing the provisions and evidence. Such an action should belong to a fiqh-based discussion works. The first section serves as a preparatory part for the second section.

Second Section: It includes a brief review of the westernization-based inclination seen in fatwas, which constitutes the main purpose of this study and is a brief compilation from the fatwas of the first section.

1. Section: Assessing the issues impacted by westernization.

Certain fatwas that were read by muftis, popular throughout the previous century, and impacted by westernization are presented below.

1. Permissible quality of bank interests
2. Absence of obligation to wear a hijab
3. Women's ability to travel without veiling
4. Prohibition of polygamy
5. Rejecting jizya
6. Rejecting fixed penalties
7. Rejecting the obligation regarding jihad.

1. Permissible quality of bank interests

This fatwa emerged as Jamal ad-Din Afgani considered interest as permissible without multiplying the main figure.¹ Moreover, it was partially supported by Muhammad Abduh, who regarded internal interest as permissible to avoid borrowing from foreigners at interest.² Accordingly, Muhammad Rashid Riza stated that interest is not unlawful as long as it is not multiplied by multiple times.³ Muhammad Abu Zaid, a scholar from following generations, noted that the revenue exceeding the capital is the interest that is unlawful. He also explained that the sum in this regard is determined by the traditions of every society.⁴ Abdallah al-Alayli considered bank interest as a usurer payment.⁵ Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi regarded bank interest as a type of canonically lawful revenue in his fatwa dated 21/03/1991.⁶ In his fatwa dated 2010, Ali Juma considered bank interests is among the controversial topics and stated that these discussions could be overcome only through the ideas of people with authority.⁷

Only the idea of Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi will be reviewed in detail. He stated that bank interests are unlawful in his fatwa numbered 121/279 and dated 08.10.1987 when he was a mufti in Egypt. The fatwa is as follows: *“The following should be stressed when it comes to depositing a certain capital at a certain interest to a bank: A certain amount of interest given in return for a sum deposited to banks is defined legally as the money loaned in return for interest. Thus, this is actually the excessive unlawful interest reflected in the works, sunnah and compilations. Besides, depositing money to banks at an interest determined for every six months is not lawful.”*⁸

Similarly, he said the following in his fatwa dated 13.04.1988 and numbered 123/97: *“Earning revenue by depositing money in return for interest for a pre-determined period and amount is regarded as usury. The revenue gained in this regard should be considered an excessive interest that is unlawful for shariah.”*⁹ Many similar fatwas from him were issued on 15.01.1989 and on January 20, February 19, and March 20 of the same year.

¹ Nabighatu ash-Sharq Jamal ad-Din al-Afgani, Muhammad Abu Rayya, Cairo, 2006, p 98.

² Tarihu al-Ustaz ash-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Riza, Cairo, 1931, v. 1, p. 944.

³ Tafsiru al-Manar, Muhammad Rashid Riza, Cairo, h. 1373, v. 4, p. 123; v. 10, p. 944.

⁴ al-Hidaya wa al-Irfan fi Tafsiri al-Qur’ani bi al-Qur’an, Muhammad Abu Zaid ad-Damanhuri, Cairo, 1930, p. 53.

⁵ Ayna al-Hata’, Abdallah al-Alayli, Beirut, 1978, p. 68-69.

⁶ al-Fatawa al-Islamiyya, Daru al-Iftai al-Misriyya, popular muftis from the period between 1895 and 1996, Cairo, 1431/ 2010, v. 4, p. 347-371.

⁷ al-Fatawa al-Islamiyya min Dari al-Iftai al-Misriyya, Cairo, 1431/ 2010, v. 35, p. 81-82.

⁸ al-Fatawa al-Islamiyya, Daru al-Iftai al-Misriyya, popular muftis from the period between 1895 and 1996, v. 3, p. 115.

⁹ al-Fatawa al-Islamiyya, Daru al-Iftai al-Misriyya, popular muftis from the period between 1895 and 1996, v. 17, p. 247-249.

The following points that are briefly provided below catch attention in this regard:

1. There is a contradiction between the fatwas of the same person. How can bank interest be unlawful and permissible at the same time?
2. If he nullified his previous fatwa, why did he not explain the mistake in his previous fatwa while he was preaching his new fatwa?
3. If his provision changed in time, what is the reason for the change in his fatwa?
4. Nothing regarding the unlawful quality of bank interests was found in press organs despite the disinformation on the fatwas reflecting interest as permissible.

These points indicate that the fatwa reflecting interest as permissible is problematic, that this fatwa is related to the westernization movement seen in Islamic world at that period, and that it is not based on religious works and canon methods.

2. Absence of obligation to wear a hijab

Although Qasim Amin is the first person fussing against the topic of a hijab, his fiqh-based role in this regard was limited due to the following reasons:

1. His role was limited to his actions of deactivating the canon qualities of a hijab without providing any evidence in this regard and of assessing a hijab from a historical and philosophical perspective. In brief, he interpreted the statements of canonists based on the legislation period of the era.¹⁰ He neglected the directive wordings in the religious works. He also did not consider the fact that the religious works he referred to emerged later than the legislation period, which contradicts with his historical perspective in this regard.
2. His expertise is only in literature, so he is not an authority in law, which caused him to assess the topic from literary and philosophical perspectives. He clearly confused the topics of veiling and joining the society when he reviewed the topic.
3. Contrary to statements regarding him, it was surprising to see that he only discussed the topic of opening the face and hands. He stated the following in this regard: *“If there were Islamic works and orders directing people to veil as how certain Muslims do, I would not need to mention this issue and I would not author even a single letter opposing these works and orders no matter*

¹⁰ See: Tahriru al-Mar’a, Qasim Amin, Muassasatu Hindawi li at-Ta’lim wa as-Saqafati, Cairo, nd., p. 39-40.

how harmful they were. As you know, divine orders are to be followed without question. However, we could not find a religious work obligating veiling as mentioned... The things we mentioned about the harms of veiling are among the points of wisdom arising from the Islamic permission for women to open their faces and hands. We do not mean more than that."¹¹ This discussion is not within the context of this study. What this study assesses is limited to the rejection of veiling.

It is clear that the modernist orientation and "westoxification" are the basis of his perspective. He stated the following in this regard: "The veiling tradition we follow is not specific to us, and veiling was first performed by people other than Muslims. It was known by almost all nations. However, this tradition was lost to follow social necessities and to advance and develop socially. This important topic should be reviewed in regard to its religious and social aspects."¹²

He presents his ideas and makes efforts to adapt the religious works to his progressive opinions. However, he does not discuss the issue of veiling in his statement. He only reviews the topic of al-ihtilat, meaning covering the body from men, which is outside the context of this study. I do not know what made him use a hijab-related wording. He made the following statement which was difficult for the people of his era to explain: "What readers should do when they need to understand what I say about the harms of wearing a hijab without having any doubts is to compare an educated woman from their family with a rural woman or an educated woman who does business in an urban area."¹³ He then mentions the weakness of educated women who cannot join men and the ability of educated women who can act alongside men to conduct their own businesses.

There are two important names indicating that wearing a hijab is not obligatory: Dr. Husein at-Turabi with expertise in canon sciences and Husein Ahmad Amin, who bases the issue on canon works. Accordingly, wearing a hijab is specific to the wives of the Prophet. Dr. At-Turabi relates this claim to the fact that Surah al-Ahzab is entirely related to the wives of the Prophet, and he neglects other works on the hijab.¹⁴ Ahmad Amin claimed that there were many female sahabah members who traveled without facing any opposition and accused the early tafsir authorities of doing many wrongs. He also stated that these authorities have Persian roots, that they were affected by excessive veiling of the pre-Islamic period, that they had demanded from women more than what the Quran

¹¹ See: Tahriru al-Mar'a, Qasim Amin, Muassasatu Hindawi li at-Ta'lim wa as-Saqafati, Cairo, p. 39-42.

¹² Tahriru al-Mar'a, Qasim Amin, Muassasatu Hindawi li at-Ta'lim wa as-Saqafati, p 38.

¹³ Tahriru al-Mar'a, Qasim Amin, Muassasatu Hindawi li at-Ta'lim wa as-Saqafati, p 49.

¹⁴ al-Mar'atu Bayna al-Usul wa at-Taqlid, Dr. Husein Abdallah at-Turabi, Khartoum, 2000, p. 14.

wanted women to do, and that they reflected everything obligatory for the Prophet's wives, according to the Quran, as valid for all women.¹⁵

The most bizarre work authored in this field covers the following statement by Halis Jalabi: "The native women in Australia wear nothing on their breasts without any disorders arising from such action. People in the caves of the Philippines live nakedly with their children, and their preachers do not say anything like the following: "What you do is inconvenient." However, if women from certain places of the Arab world totally veil themselves in black and then show their bare hands, Arab men who experience sexual hallucinations of all women are aroused."¹⁶

The following can be understood when these fatwas are assessed ideologically without making an ideological assumption based on religious works:

1. The presence of certain women traveling does not mean that veiling is or is not obligatory, which indicates that women have the freedom to follow or neglect the provisions regarding prayers.

2. If veiling is not obligatory, then did the female sahabah members present an unnecessary innovation and act against the shariah by veiling?

3. The evidence indicating that veiling was performed during the time of the Prophet confirms that veiling was not a late tradition, as claimed by these researchers. Accordingly, the Prophet stated the following in a narrative conveyed from Ummu Salamah: " When the verse *يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَ مِنْ جَلَابِيهِنَّ* (tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments) was revealed, Ansar women wandered around as if there were crows flying above their heads due to the clothes they wore."¹⁷

This narrative constitutes the reason for the revelation of the afore-noted verse, and this study reviews the historical aspects of the topic to prove the rootlessness of the claim that veiling was not performed in the late periods. However, there is a question arising in this regard: Is there anything other than following the strong westernization trends that reflects rejecting the history and facts as permissible to nullify the order of veiling?

4. Prof. Halis Jalabi's statement indicates that people propagandizing westernization use fictional and emotional words while spreading their own ideas and jurisprudences. Their words do not have any powers and make

¹⁵ Dalily al-Muslimi al-Hazin, Husein Ahmad Amin, Cairo, 2007, p. 266.

¹⁶ Jadalyyatu ash-Shi'i wa as-Sunni, Halis Jalabi, eṣ-Ṣarku'l-Evsat Dergisi, 22.04.1423/ 03.07.2002, Issue no: 8618.

¹⁷ Sunanu Abi Dawud, *Libas*, the section regarding the verse {اولدندنن علهن من جلابهن}, hadith no: 4101.

any assumptions from religious works. However, their speeches affect the public, although they do not represent any facts.

3. Women's Ability to Travel Without Veiling

This fatwa was issued by Dr. Muhammad Aqqam and supported with the following hadith: *"God will finish this process. In other words, women in howdah will be able to go from Sanaa to Hadhramaut alone."*¹⁸

The following points regarding this fatwa are interesting:

1. The hadith supporting the fatwa was not found. There are actually two hadiths in this regard:

- Adiy ibn Hadim conveys the following from the Prophet: *"God will help and bless you or grant you the chance to conquer whatever you please so that a woman in howdah will be able to go from Hira to Madinah and fear nothing but any possible theft of her howdah."*¹⁹

- Habbab ibn Arat conveys the following from the Prophet: *"God will surely finish this process. In other words, one who rides one's animal from Sanaa to Hadhramaut will not fear anyone but God and have any fears related to one's sheep flocks other than wolf attacks. However, you are hurrying for no reason."*²⁰ This hadith does not mention women and howdah.

The term "alone" was not found in any narratives regarding these two hadiths. The hadiths mention women's fears rather than the presence or absence of their comfort.

2. This fatwa has not caused much sensation in the present time because it is common for people to act in a manner they know of these issues. They do not question the topic as long as there is a monetary obligation arising from opposing such topics.

3. People displaying such an approach related to the provision in this regard to the time, instead of the place, mentioned in the hadith.

*"One does not travel to a two-day distance with a woman whose husband or a relative that cannot marry her is not around her."*²¹

Orientations of those who adopted this fatwa vary from westernization inclination as seen in women's case and following their own desires in relating the provision of traveling to time without any privacy in this regard. This second group considers women's journey to

¹⁸ <http://www.akkam.org/?type=1330t>, fatwa no 545.

¹⁹ Sunanu at-Tirmidhi, *Tafsiru al-Qur'an*, Surah al-Fatiha, hadith no: 2953; Musnadu Ahmad, hadith no: 19381.

²⁰ Sahihu al-Bukhari, *Manaqib*, the section entitled *Alamatu an-Nubuwwa fi al-Islam*, hadith no: 3416.

²¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, *Ihsar wa Jazau as-Said*, the section entitled *Hajju an-Nisa*, hadith no: 1765; Sahih al-Muslim, *Haj*, the section entitled *Safaru al-Mar'ati maa Mahramin ila Hajj wa Ghayrihi*, hadith no: 3326.

the furthest point of the world without privacy, as permissible. However, they accept the points of shortening prayers and fasting during journeys based on the rule of distance. The case does not change even when the journey is made by car to a village at a thirty-minute distance.

4. Prohibition of Polygamy

Fatwas that clearly and canonically prohibit polygamy were not found. However, due to three Islamic countries whose laws absolutely prohibit polygamy, this topic was assessed in this study. These countries are Tunisia, Turkey and Azerbaijan. Iraqi Kurdistan also prohibits polygamy. The provision of prohibition is in the legislation of these countries, but there are more than 187,000 polygamy cases in Turkey.²² In other words, people actually oppose laws while failing to practice them.

Muslims' approach that polygamy is permissible in Islam is opposed by these laws, but they do not affect human life. Although these laws have more authority than fatwas, they have been neglected almost totally in people's attitudes and practices.

5. Rejecting the Jizya

It is interesting to see that modern Muslims pay taxes that are a couple of times higher than jizya. Moreover, they have canon responsibilities of spending their goods (as alms) and life, which are not obligatory for others. Obligations for other people, on the other hand, are not canon but legal.

The method of this study is not to discuss and establish judgments, but to reveal the anomalous fiqh issues caused by people following the trend of westernization.

This fatwa was first presented by Fahmi Huwaydi, who considered jizya as a specific provision generalized by canonists. He even says the following: "the legal concept of jizya is not present in the modern century".²³ The hadith of the Prophet indicates that jizya will be abolished when Jesus descends. In a narrative, the Prophet states the following, according to Abu Hurayra: "I swear to God Almighty with all powers that Ibni Maryam is about to join you as a fair arbitrator. He will break the cross, kill pigs, and abolish jizya. The goods will reach such a degree that nobody will accept the abolishment of jizya."²⁴

Fahmi Huwaydi reviewed the ideological differences between the canonists regarding the legislation-based wisdom of jizya and assessed why jizya was

²² A study by Hacettepe University, Ankara, 2011, <http://serrakaracam.blogspot.com.tr/2011/06/cok-eslilik-dinler-ve-bireysel-haklar.html>

²³ Muwatinun La Zimmiyun, Fahmi Huwaydi, Cairo, 1999, p. 128-129, 144.

²⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari, *Buyu*, the section entitled Qatlu al-Hinzir, hadith no: 2109; Sahih al-Muslim, *Iman*, the section entitled Nuzulu Isa ibn Maryam, hadith no: 406.

preached.²⁵ He neglected the fiqh-based jurisprudences that do not have religious works in this regard. Therefore, these jurisprudences cannot be the issues that abolish relevant provisions when they are abolished.

Accordingly, *jizya*, in its general sense, is a payment paid by modern Muslims and other people to finance government bodies or meet the expenses of military mechanisms in a specific sense.²⁶ However, this does not mean rejecting the *jizya* provision to protect Islam against the western trends opposing Islamic legislation. These points do not go beyond justifying the legislation of provisions and expressing the wisdom in this regard. These are not the reasons for the nullification of provisions.

The most interesting point he reflected is that Umar replaced *jizya* with doubled alms.²⁷ Alms are already higher than *jizya*. Then, how will the public be when the alms is doubled? The last point he reflected is the authorization for changing the name of *jizya* and multiplying the figure in this regard, which is totally against the purpose of the researchers.

6. Rejecting fixed penalties

Certain modernists stated that fixed penalties could be used only when other penalties become irrelevant.²⁸ Abdallah al-Alayili and Muhammad Abu Zayd reflected this idea.²⁹ Husein Muhammad Amin explained that the meaning of the verse on theft is metaphorical and that the fixed penalties are the provisions that can be changed in time.³⁰

After these calls failed, the movement of Jawdat Said, who only rejected the concept of apostasy, emerged. Halis Jalabi, his student and son-in-law, followed him in this regard.³¹

The following points are interesting in regard to these ideas and fatwas:

1. There are no canon evidence relating the provision of fixed penalties to the irrelevance of other penalties.
2. The followers of westernization made the action of misusing wordings and implications a habit to justify their demands and ideas. Thus, people who turn facts into metaphors and metaphors into facts without

²⁵ Muwatinun La Zimmiyyun, Fahmi Huwaydi, p. 131-137.

²⁶ Instead, this is the idea of Fathi Usman in terms of the authority to reduce *jizya* after paying alms and subsequent taxes. He detailed this issue in the study entitled "Murajaatu al-Ahqami al-Fiqhiyyati al-Hassa bi Wad'i Ghayri al-Muslimin". This is just a change in name. Fahmi Huwaydi adopted the first part of this idea in his book entitled "Muwatinun La Zimmiyyun", which is reducing the *jizya*. He did not focus on the obligation regarding alms and taxes, which is the second part.

²⁷ Muwatinun La Zimmiyyun, Fahmi Huwaydi, p. 142-144.

²⁸ Ayna al-Hata', Abdallah al-Alayili, p. 91.

²⁹ al-Hidaya wa al-Irfan fi Tafsiri al-Qur'ani bi al-Qur'an, p. 274.

³⁰ Dalilu al-Muslimi al-Hazin, Husein Ahmad Amin, p. 54, 263-264.

³¹ Sayqulujjyatu al-'Unf wa Istiratijjyatu al-Halli as-Silmi, Dr. Halis Jalabi, Beirut and Damascus, 1998, p. 126-127.

providing any rational or ideological evidence limit the borders of publicly-known concepts while expanding the specific points.

3. Followers of westernization do not content themselves when they cannot abolish the provisions totally. Nullification and change of the provisions seem to be the main purpose of these people.

4. As this provision is only within the responsibility of judges, the practice of this provision cannot be discussed in modern times when there are no practices of penal codes in any places of the Islamic world.

7. Rejecting the Obligation Regarding Jihad

Qadiyanis adopted this idea and their leaders stated the following in this regard: "It is unlawful for Muslims to resist the British government controlling India."³² He even authored a particular work in this regard.

The explanations he made for the reasons are not significant but this fatwa is among the most extreme fatwas issued in this field. Three relevant inclinations emerged after this idea was forgotten.

1. Limiting jihad to defense without demand. This is a legislative point reflecting a canon provision, and this does not nullify the provision. This is outside the context of this study because this study does not include the people who gloss jihad from certain aspects, which is nonsense but some scholars accept the case and include it to their fields of research. The present study reviews the people who reject and nullify provisions. However, it would be better for the adopters of this idea to practice what they preach and perform defense concepts, which they use to limit the borders of jihad.³³

2. The second group consists of the congregations and groups that do not reject jihad but avoid making statements about jihad and jihad provisions. They present the acquittal of the self, which does not end for them, as an excuse and prevent their followers from performing jihad, which is also outside the context of this study because such a topic is related to practice rather than the provisions.

3. This group expands the borders of jihad in a manner to cover guarding the opposition and preventing all sorts of torments, which includes fighting against tyrant Muslims alongside the disbelievers. Accordingly, if Muslims and disbelievers face one another to fight, then the place for both will be hell. This idea was adopted by Dr. Halis Jalabi and those who understand what sahabah members did not from the religious works.³⁴

³² See: al-Huqumatu al-Injiliziyya wa al-Jihad, Mirza Gulam Ahmad al-Qadiyani, London, 2013.

³³ For the works reflecting this idea, see: Ruhu al-Jihad wa Haqiqatuhu fi al-Islam, Muhammad Fathallah Gulan, Cairo, 2008; al-Jihad fi al-Islam Qayfa Nafhamuhu wa Qayfa Numarisuhu, Muhammad Sa'id Ramazan al-Buti, Damascus, 1993.

³⁴ Sayqulujiyyatu al-'Unf wa Istiratijiyyatu al-Halli as-Silmi, Dr. Halis Jalabi, p. 14-16, 172, 198.

This inclination has many issues:

1. Weakening the fiqh-based provisions by abolishing the rules separating jihad from other war types.

2. Weakening the rules of torment was arbitrarily explained by the western media. Muslims' jihad has turned into the fights for the interests of the west and our enemies, which is also the case for the Iraqi War. These were initially extreme fatwas neglecting the verse ³⁵ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا (And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able.)

3. This movement does not clearly reject jihad. However, they accept the rule of Qadiyanis. Accordingly, Halis Jalabi states the following: "What is more important than freedom is freeing the self from the malevolent acts of the British government before they left India."³⁶

2. Section: A Brief Review on the Inclination of Westernization in Fatwas

Protection of Shariah from Fiqh-Based Westernization

Going beyond the orders in religious works to suit the west (fiqh-based westernization) is a condemned innovation in Islam. The difference in innovation motives does not change the essence of innovation and its presence in fiqh-based provisions.

There are many religious works reflecting warnings regarding the presence of innovation in Islam. Some of them are as follows:

1. The evidence from Aisha, the Prophet stated the following: "Whoever brings anything that is out of Islam, that cannot be accepted and is to be instantly rejected."³⁷

2. According to a narrative from Arbad ibn Sariya, the Prophet stated the following: "I advise you to fear, listen to and obey God even if you are managed by a slave from Ethiopia. It is obvious that people among you will have many disputes after my time. I advise you to follow my sunnah and distinguished caliphs. Follow them strictly and avoid anything that is formed later. What I meant by anything is innovation, all sorts of which is a perversion."³⁸

³⁵ Al-Baqarah, 217.

³⁶ as-Siyam qa Tadribin ala Adami Mumarasati al-Unf, Halis Jalabi, er-Riyâdu's-Suûdiyye Dergisi, 09.09.1418/ 08.01.1988, year 34, Issue no: 10790; he repeated the same idea in his article entitled "Dirasatu at-Tahaqqumi ad-Dahili". el-Ittihâdü'l-Îmârâtiyye Dergisi, 15.09.1434/ 24.07.2013, year 44, Issue no: 13897.

³⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari, *Sulh*, the section entitled Iza aslahu ala sulhi jawrin fa as-sulhu mardudun, hadith no: 2550; Sahih al-Muslim, *Aqziya*, the section entitled Naqdu al-Ahqami al-Batila, hadith no: 4589.

³⁸ Sunanu Abi Dawud, *Sunnah*, the section entitled Luzumu as-Sunnah, hadith no: 4607.

What is important for us during the times when ignorance became common is our method of separating the corrects and wrongs in fiqh-based fatwas and avoid from the attractive western approaches in deriving fatwas and ideas from the period of disorder. This is especially important when there is a possibility to mislead people. Muaz ibn Jabal summarizes these in the relevant hadith as follows: "There will be malevolence among you. Goods will increase then. Moreover, the Quran will be open to believers, disbelievers, men, women, slaves, free people, young and the elderly. One of them will say: "Why do not they follow me? Although I read the Quran, nobody followed me. They will not follow me as long as I do not present them anything divine other than the Quran." Avoid following anything from these people! What they present are perversion and anomaly. I warn you against the abnormal acts from knowledgeable people because the devil will invite the knowledgeable to perversion and anomaly through language.

Muaz was asked: "How can I know whether a knowledgeable person caused perversion or a disbeliever spoke facts?"

He replied: "Avoid the popular words of a knowledgeable person so that he will not deviate you from your path. Maybe that person would abandon his wrongs one day. Accept whatever is true and follow it because facts result in benevolence."³⁹

Motives of Westernization for Fatwa

It is clear from the fatwas above that the instigating elements of the people issuing fatwas within the westernization movement differ, as noted below.

1. Defending Islam against the western attacks by banning the topic of assaults. When the west defends its ideas against the topic of veiling, certain muftis reject veiling to defend Islam.
2. Presenting unnecessary innovations to make Islam equal to the western approach, which is developed according to them. However, they confuse the concepts of novation and legislation performed to issue new provisions for new issues with the process of manipulation conducted to change the fixed provisions. Thus, they are inclined to establish a new legislative system without even being aware of the case.
3. Failure in separating the corrects and wrongs in issuing provisions due to scientific weakness. They set their claims based on the general lines of the manipulation called novation by others and satisfy themselves with their wrong fatwas. Fatwas issued by young

³⁹ Sunanu Abi Dawud, *Sunnah*, the section entitled Luzumu as-Sunnah, hadith no: 4611.

people who act without taking their time/thinking extensively and who do not have any expertise in canon discipline to show themselves and become popular. These young people act in accordance with the media organs that are promoted to make great efforts to westernize fatwas and expand the fatwa sessions in media for these young people.⁴⁰

4. They state that Islamic laws have been manipulated since the early centuries, that Muslims are all affected by deviance, that people have been failing to perceive such a distortion in their minds, and that only they have the superior quality to realize such deviance. Some of them clearly indicated these points while some hinted by opposing historical facts by making assumptions and directing plenty of accusations.

In addition to the points noted above, Fahmi Huwaydi stated the following: "Religion has a divine quality while fiqh, which is the religious revelation, has been formed historically."⁴¹

A General Definition Regarding Westernization Fatwas

Westernization-based fatwas have the following quality:

1. Focus on social and financial fields. Their fatwas on fixed topics impact the social field and disintegration of social structure.

2. These fatwas were initially written in books and textual fatwas, but they were later compiled as extemporaneous fatwas in journals and media organs, which made it difficult to trust them and resulted in momentary and temporary effects for these works.

A General Definition Regarding the Adopters of Westernization Fatwas

Adopters of westernization fatwas possess the following qualities:

1. They have different ideas from the scholars and students in their times, and their fatwas have been passed down to following generations in a sequence of extraordinary approaches. Every student conveyed fatwas literally from their instructors who impacted their ideas. None of these fatwas received any reactions and they did not spread among the students of Islamic science other than those in sequences.

2. Most of them have no expertise. They are only some Islamic scholars, and some of them are the philosophers who do

⁴⁰ al-Iftau bayna at-Taqwizi wa at-Tawfiz, Abdallah ibn Fahdi al-Waqid, A Friday sermon, 20.08.2010, <http://goo.gl/p8B8hw>

⁴¹ Muwatinun La Zimmiyun, Fahmi Huwaydi, p. 8.

not follow the Islamic trends. Some even follow the modernist or secular trends, issue relevant fatwas and reflect religious works as evidence.

History of Fiqh-Based Westernization

Movement of westernization actually emerged in the same period when the Islamic world was occupied. This movement mimics the west in its external acts and invites people to join the civilization side.

Due to the natural religious characteristics of Muslims, it was not accepted much by people. Thus, people making these calls started to issue fiqh-related reasons to make sure their ideas were accepted. The majority of these reasons were related to the law-based fiqh concepts, as explained before. Each topic was justified separately from other topics and from a fiqh-related perspective, which continued until a new movement emerged. This new movement is the method of making an assumption from maqasid in a manner that is independent of comparisons. This is the first movement to strengthen the roots of fiqh-based westernization. Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri states the following: "It is not possible to totally clarify the concept of 'qulli' in the discipline of fiqh because comparisons constitute the basis for fiqh. Comparisons indicate relating fascicles to fascicles. Such a relationship indicates reviewing the concepts that justify fascicles through assessments and classifications. Then, the representatives of this movement support this methodological management by accusing Imam Shatibi of adopting this in his book entitled *Muwafaqat*.⁴²

Modernists present their fiqh-based ideas in certain topics such as freedom, women-related provisions, relationships with non-Muslims, non-Muslims in the Ottoman era and fixed criminal points. The claim that these were all formed to understand the concept of maqasid that was indicated, justified and made a rule by Shatibi in *Muwafaqat* and they praise Shatibi. Experts of fiqh and fiqh methodology know that these westernization-related ideas regarding the concepts of freedom, women, jihad and fixed laws have no association with Shatibi because he was among the pioneers of sectarian conservatism. Moreover, the topics he reviewed can be regarded as evidence. These topics are as follows: Praising Salafi imams and following them in an excessive manner, overvaluing the principle of Sadd al-Dharai, presenting severe statements regarding considering the opposition as hujjat, showing no tolerance solely in terms of preventing the action of following the licenses and well-known fatwas of sects, valuing insignificant canon issues and stressing that these issues should not be

⁴² Bunyatu al-Aqli al-Arabiyyi, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, Marqazu Dirasati al-Wahdati al-Arabiyyati, Ninth edition, Beirut, 2009, p. 547-548.

neglected for qulli issues, valuing the affairs of eternal life more than the mortal ones, preferring narration to intelligence, coverage of all provisions by canon works, paying attention to the point that scholars are the authority to consult and considering the statement “those who issue fatwas are equal to the Prophet in the ummah”⁴³, giving warnings about objection the pioneers of Islamic science and overlooking philosophy.

Shatibi was accused of being harsh and challenging when it comes to fiqh-based fatwas, which was also reflected by him.⁴⁴ He made the following statement as a response to those who directed the accusations: “I am sometimes accused of being harsh and demanding in terms of Islam. What makes people say these is that I prefer the well-known sectarian ideas regarding responsibilities and fatwas and that I stay within limits in this regard. However, they neglect the well-known points and issue fatwas that are easy to understand and issue and that suit the demands even if there is an extraordinary idea in the followed sect or in the approach of other people. Imams of Islamic science act contrarily. This issue was reviewed in detail in the book *Muwafaqat*.”⁴⁵

All scholars from the ummah accept the maqasid of shariah. Therefore, Shatibi refutes the accusations of abandoning the relevant comparisons and well-known statements of scholars.

Westernization fatwas reach a new phase from then on, which is the generalization of awareness among people through the modern social communication instruments within the internet network and decreasing the role of particular media instruments controlled by the authorities. Thus, people’s resistance against this ideological battle has gradually increased. This issue will be detailed in the following section.

Current Conclusions of Fiqh-Based Westernization Movement

Efforts of westernized systems and Islamic media to highlight the people who issued these fatwas and results of westernization in fiqh discipline, despite the promotions by the eastern and western media, are different and interesting at the same time.

1. Their fatwas were only followed by their followers and supporters and received no attention from the Muslims. Those who

⁴³ See: Al-Muwafaqat, Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Lahmi ash-Shatibi, Ed. Mashur ibn Hasan Al-i Salman, Daru Ibni Affan, First edition, Hubar, 1417/ 1997, v. 5, p. 253. He even assessed it as a separate topic and brought a lot of evidence.

⁴⁴ Qayfa Ashama al-I’lamu al-Librali fi Ta’zizi Shariati al-Ghulat, Ibrahim ibn Umar as-Saqran, Saydu al-Fawaid web site, 02.07.1437/ 10.04.2016, <http://www.saaaid.net/Doat/alsakran/87.pdf>

⁴⁵ al-I’tisam, Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Lahmi ash-Shatibi, Ed. Salim ibn ‘id al-Hilali, Daru Ibni Affan, First edition, Hubar, 1992/ 1412, v. 1, p. 36.

issue fatwas are extraordinary among the other scholars in addition to these extraordinary fatwas.

2. However, the result was not expected. Islamic banks and veiling became popular. Moreover, the timidity of traveling women increased, and the impact of strengthening the practice of shariah in the street was boosted.

Fiqh-based westernization is more radical and has a greater impact than the lawful fiqh within the movement of westernization. The adoption of lawful fiqh indicates that they cannot attack the field of methodology. However, these limited results with unexpected impacts indicate that the westernization of lawful fiqh resulted in failure. Moreover, this failure is not less important than what was experienced during the westernization of methodology, which indicates that the general awareness among Muslims increased and became popular in regard to the methods and basic provisions. However, the awareness regarding the complicated topics requiring expertise is not extensive.

In brief, exceptional ideas are inevitable and present in every century. The essence of fiqh-based westernization is based on the introduction of exceptional statements. An extraordinary fatwa that reflects any malevolent acts as permissible is always present. A clerk benefiting from shariah for his propagandas or a scholar who earns a profit by using relevant religious concepts and preaching are always ready to issue such a fatwa. Such a person may be among the Islamic scholars because this person deviates from the truth and correct path. He is not aware of the harms he gives to the benefits of shariah as a result of the fatwas he issues. He also thinks that shariah is under the pressure of the atmosphere affected by defeat and weakness. There are many muftis who understand how dangerous the extraordinary fatwas are at a later period.⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ al-Baqri warns people about the dangers of fiqh-based westernization. Abdallah ibn Umar al-Bakri, el-Vatanu'l-Katariyye Dergisi, 16.04.2011, year 14, p. 5704, p. 5, <http://www.al-watan.com/viewnews.aspx?n=385B69E2-67CA-49FC-AF5C-F55479723A91&d=20110416>

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Interview

“Religious Abuse from Different Aspects”*

Adil ÖZTEKİN**

M. Hayri KIRBAŞOĞLU***

A. Öztekin: Mr. Kırbaşoğlu, we are examining the topic of “Alienation and Religiousness” in this issue of the Theological Academia Journal. Accordingly, could you please inform us about “Religious Abuse” which is considered as means of alienation?

M. H. Kırbaşoğlu: Setting the conceptual borders of religious abuse is not easy as you can imagine. However, the verse “make religion specific to Allah” — مخلصين له الدين (al-Muminun 40/14 and the rest) in the Quran is the most trustworthy source in this regard and can be a reference point for us. What is meant here is making religion totally specific to Allah and avoidance of including any types of ideas to religious issues without Allah’s permission. The essential meaning of religion indicates the “occurrence of everything depending on Allah’s permission and decisions.” The concepts or actions out of this framework are included in the context of religious abuse, at different degrees.

However, the ideological and actual examples of religious abuse are not at the same level. Some can be included within the borders related to religious abuse, but some may be more relative in this regard. Therefore, assessing the examples of religious abuse at the same level may be wrong. One of the most important forms of religious abuse being a current issue is in regard to the religious abuses of non-Muslims. The use of Islamic doctrines for different purposes by non-Muslims is generally called religious abuse. This issue is mentioned in recent discussions between the Islamic and others, regarded as secular. The Islamic side responds to claims from the secular side that Islamic section commits religious abuse stating that praying, fasting, giving alms and performing other visible Islamic practices cannot be a religious abuse. However, the Islamic side should criticize themselves more here. Performing Islamic duties is an obligation for all Muslims for sure, but as we noted before, these duties are only fulfilled for Allah’s approval. However,

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when a person or politician prays to get people's approval or votes, their prayers become religious abuse even if their religious action is an obligation.

In addition, a speaker's reference of religious symbols more than is necessary, causes certain issues which results in doubts of religious abuse. Thus, it should be noted that abuse can be done by believers of a religion. We can briefly explain the concept of religious abuse as using religion for irrelevant purposes. This concept is not limited to actions of those who do not believe in that religion. Even the believers of that religion can abuse their religion for different goals. There are historical evidences, and this case is still relevant today. These can be referred to later.

A. Öztekin: Sir, does abuse take place only in the field of religion or does it occur in other fields, too?

M. H. Kırbaçoğlu: The answer to the question of whether abuse is specific to religion, is that it is certainly not specific to religion. Almost anything sacred or valued can be abused. The luxurious and wealthy lives of communist leaders who ask for self-sacrifice and renunciation from people supporting them in a communist system, which contradicts the communist ideology, can be an example in this regard, or the economic actions of a person who adopted the liberal ideology or their relationships with the workers in their factory may contradict with personal liberal ideologies, which can be another example in this regard. Accordingly, it is fair to say that abuse occurs in the actions of Islamic people, left-wingers, Kemalists, Alawis, nationalists and all sorts of social actors, as you can imagine. We know that various religions, sects, cults and ideologies are used by people to open space through the associations established via the Sunni and Alewi ideologies, to show themselves as leaders, and to get unearned income before the government.

There are more examples than that for sure. Religions, ideologies and everything beneficial are used to achieve goals related to global imperialism. Moreover, we see that the capital-related branches of capitalist actors abuse Islam during Ramadan to increase profit by abusing people's religious feelings of love and respect for religion to encourage them to consume more but these capitalists have no love or respect for Islam, so this is another type of religious abuse. Thus, the concept of abuse can be related to all religions and ideologies, states and governments, and formal, public and religious institutions at a social and global level. Accordingly, it is not fair to state that abuse is specific to the religious field, but, the worst forms of abuse occur in the field of religion.

A. Öztekin: So, what sort of abuse occurs in the hadiths?

M. H. Kırbasoğlu: First of all, we should ask the question of what sort of abuse-related differences are present between the Quran and the hadiths. The abuse of the Quran is largely indicated by twisting the meanings of the verses and causing misinterpretation, as it is not possible to change the text of Quran. In this case, it is fair to say that almost all Islamic groups, sects, cults, congregations and similar formations have made efforts to abuse the Quran one way or another. However, Sufism is regarded as the field where this abuse occurs most intensely, and congregations and cults take part in this process of abuse. Other important examples of religious abuse include people's action of assigning irrelevant meanings known as "esoteric comments" to the Quran and using the Holy Book to justify their own doctrines.

There are many forms of abuses related to the Quran in modern times. Moreover, many verses are used or abused for commercial purposes in the advertisements of many goods including foods, such as honey. Similarly, the Quran is often abused for political purposes not only in Turkey, but also in other Islamic countries and in their political movements. Therefore, these topics should be handled more carefully. There are clear examples of abuse occurring in the publication of the Quran text. For instance, people have the purpose of earning money and do business by selling the Quran or religious texts, instead of making sure that the Quran reaches more people and that the Quran's doctrines are fulfilled, in the commercials and propagandas such as "Quran with Tewafuq", "Odorous Quran" or "Quran with this/that feature". The Quran can be published in printing houses and this will be done for a price, so there is business in this regard. However, this process is transformed into a trade of the Holy Book, performed in a flamboyant manner with false statements, which is not appropriate for Muslims. Therefore, it can be stated that delivering the Quran and religious texts to people for free and in honesty, which is done by certain countries such as Saudi Arabia, would be a better approach in this regard. The efforts to sell certain verses, prayers and similar materials, which can be easily accessed by Muslims, for excessive prices, by specially pressing them with different materials or conducting certain commercial activities indicating the Quran or religious texts with certain false or unreal qualities, which are different from those which the Quran uses to characterize itself, are among the common examples of abuse related to the Quran.

One of the most significant forms of abuse is by cherry-picking verses from the Quran and neglecting other verses, which is performed by people when they consult the Quran to learn about orders in an issue, although this is not regarded completely as abuse. Naturally, abuses of the Quran are not limited to these. It is fair to state that the Quran has been turned into the means of abuse at a greater degree, including the fields of trade, policy, society and formation of certain congregations and groups. Unfortunately, many examples of this case can be seen in all sections of the Islamic world.

Hadiths, or more precisely, the “Hadith Narratives”, suffer from a broader context of abuses. Abuse of the Quran is rather related to twisting the meanings of the verses instead of distorting the texts, but the abuse of the hadiths have two aspects. These abuses are either in the form of false hadiths created to fulfill personal interests in policy, economy and society, or twisting the meanings of certain hadith narratives. I think we published a relevant article entitled “İstismara Elverişli Münbit Toprak: Hadisler (Efficient Lands Suitable for Abuses: Hadiths)” in the *İslamiyat Dergisi* (Journal of Islam). There is more detailed information and further examples about how hadiths can be turned into forms of abuse. As I mentioned in the forms of abuses related to the Quran, hadiths are also used as goods sold and purchased in commercial activities, similar to the fields of abuse for the Quran, and many narratives are used to realize political purposes or group-based interests. It should be noted that most of the narratives used in these abuse efforts are false, while some can be regarded as true. However, these true narratives can be abused, too, and misinterpretations of them can be reflected to people. People generally choose to use the narratives which will be helpful for their own benefits according to them.

Moreover, there are many “modern falsifications” created to abuse the authority of the Quran and the hadiths, which may sound odd to many people. Although Muslims have not attempted to create a new Holy Book thus far, there are many forms of abuse regarding the hadiths at the moment, and people sometimes create false hadiths which are even included in legislative books. Thus, religious abuse is performed on both the Quran and the hadith texts, and by using Allah and the Prophet for this purpose, which was also the case in the past. The most typical modern examples in this regard are the false statements of a certain congregation, cult or Islamic group members who say that they saw and spoke with Allah or the Prophet in their dreams, which is clearly slanderous against Allah and his messenger. There are many people in the visual or written media making this critical mistake. In addition, not only are Allah and the Prophet being used, other sacred beings are also used and abused religiously. More precisely, the concepts which are sacred to people are abused, which includes assigning holiness to mausoleums, graves or anything mortal although these have no divinity in themselves, turning these into business organizations, abusing people’s feelings, and promotions and practices of religious congregations and other formations

which encourage people to seek assistance from people rather than Allah, although the Quran, the Surah al-Fatihah, clearly orders humans to serve Allah and seek help from Allah. Therefore, the issue of abuse has been the most important problem for religions. The issue of religious abuse is not specific to Islam. There are examples of abuses in Christianity and Judaism. One of the best examples in this regard is Jesus' fight against Jewish rabbis. The Prophet Jesus severely criticizes them saying that they are vipers as they turn temples into business places.

The religious institutions and classes of religious people can also be a part of this abuse process. There are many examples indicating that religious institutions are used in political approaches of Turkey and in other Islamic countries. Regarding political issues, particularly the Middle East policy and sectarian movements, formal religious institutions can give any sort of religious declarations and sermons upon the desires of governments. It is clear that religion is occasionally used by governments to neutralize, terminate or encourage people to terminate opponents to authority in society. The concept of takfir has most typical relevant examples. The recent campaigns against the late Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid in Egypt and abjuration-related accusations of an Azhar sheikh toward Hasan Hanafi, which I learned from the press yesterday, are examples of abuse used by religion and religious authorities to suppress critical opposition and ideologies which object to the system. There are similar historical cases in this regard. The Ottoman practices toward the Alewi people and the fatwas of Abu Suud in this regard are political, rather than being religious. In addition, Sheikh Badrattin, the qadi of Simavna, and many other people were executed upon the fatwas or encouragements of many religious authorities, including Shayk al-Islam. Most of these incidents are based on political reasons, instead of religious ones. Regarding the earlier periods, for instance, during the oppressions applied under the cover of the "Halk al-Quran" issue, people — such as Ahmad ibn Nasr al-Huzai I reckon — were killed upon the order of the caliph of the era as they said "The Quran is a creature", which is an example of religious abuse based on excuses as understood from *History* by at-Tabari. In addition, it is mentioned by at-Tabari that this person obtained permission from the people of Baghdad to spread benevolence while preventing malevolence, that he was getting prepared to resist to the caliph in Baghdad, and that he was killed by the caliph under the cover of religious reasons. These are the clear indicators that religious abuse takes place in the political field more for political purposes.

A. Öztekin: Sir, what kind of relationship exists between abuse and sacred beings?

M. H. Kırbasoğlu: This is an important question because it means the things that are not sacred are not suitable for abuse. However, the sacred concepts of Islam are quite limited. Therefore, people have created new sacred beings to expand the borders of abuse. These sacred beings have been created in both the Islam of classical medieval times and modern periods so that religion, which is called as opium by Marx, can be used more easily to sedate or direct people. The most typical examples in this regard include adding the titles of “hazrat”, “efendi”, “hodja” and “sheikh” before the names of people who are not religious authorities, have no serious works in the field of Islamic ideology but become the leaders of certain congregations and cults when they are alive or after their death. Moreover, the expressions such as “radiallah al-anhu”, “rahmatallah alaiyh” or “quddisah sirruh” are added after their names. These are the steps which aim to set the grounds for the masses to be directed by these people or those around these people. For instance, the same qualifications are never used for a doctor, physicist, engineer or even a theologian because adding “hazrat” before the name of a doctor or saying “rahmatallah alaiyh” while mentioning him is not an action that could enable people to abuse this profession, but people’s ignorance can be abused by adding similar titles before or after names as religion is quite suitable for abusing. It can be said that the number of sacred beings is constantly being increased, or many sacred facts or actions that are not included in Quran are now produced. Therefore, people who can illuminate society should explain what is sacred in Islam and what is not.

For examples, expressions like “quddisah sirruh” are quite common in the Sufism literature. However, Allah does not bless the soul of a dead man, according to the Quran and the Sunnah. These reflect nothing but the people called as awliyiah being blessed before the public, and having an interest in this regard. People need to be more and more careful to guard against these.

A. Öztekin: Sir, what is preventing people from learning religious abuse from different perspectives?

M. H. Kırbasoğlu: The most important reason is ignorance. Therefore, ignorance has always been common in the Islamic world and people have been prevented from reaching the sources of Islamic information in time. Accordingly, the class of religious people including the leaders of the formations such as congregations and cults make people dependent on this class. The culture of imitation or blind imitation has been made dominant. Domination of this imitation culture, which is generally verbal, works for both the people benefiting from this system and administrators and politicians because as we all know, leaders of certain political parties in the past make agreements with the leaders of certain congregations or cults before elections, which is also relevant today. They are

offered certain quotas. Moreover, members of these congregations or groups are notified about the party which they will vote for, as per the instructions, which sounds similar to the slavery system, and people give their votes to these parties. Thus, a sort of religious abuse or abuse of the system is established here. There are similar practices too these days. Therefore, people should be told that they need to build their own aspects of religiousness with their free wills.

For that purpose, Islamic information can be accessed in the present times more so than in the past. In addition, people who have college degrees and can make their own decisions in many fields should inform themselves by reading many works related to the Quran, hadith, Sunnah, fiqh and other Islamic topics and cross check the information coming from the people regarded as religious authorities. Accordingly, people should be taught about critical thinking so that they can understand that everything said about Islam may not be true. When questions arise in the sermons or conversations made in mosques, imams should be asked about the verses or hadiths as the sources of these sermons. If sermons are not based on any verses, they should be asked about whether there are any similar verses in this regard, or they should investigate those issues based on their own interpretations. Regarding the hadiths, unfortunately, most of the hadiths used in the sermon-guidance activities are quite problematic. 1) Their sources should be asked, and narratives with no sources should not be considered. 2) The type of the source is important, too. Narratives should be conveyed with imputations in the sources. Narratives with no imputations should not be considered. 3) Imputations are not solely enough. They should be reliable. 4) Reliability is not enough, either. The text should suit the basics of Islam.

Accordingly, people should be informed about how the narration materials can be used. It is fair to state that the works in the market are not sufficient. The number of works which can be advised to people is quite limited. The people of congregations and cults should be told that narratives should not be used without adequate scientific investigations regarding the sources, imputations and texts. However, it is hard for this wish to come true because these organizations and their leaders do not want people to question, investigate or criticize them. They prevent people from reaching basic sources, investigating, questioning or thinking, as they fear that people can understand the false positions or authorities when they question, criticize or examine what they do. Thus, we can see people's intense efforts from the past which prevent others from reaching the studies directly conducted on the Quran, the Sunnah and the Quran-Sunnah relationship which is also the case for the sections objecting to reading Quran text directly.

Therefore, to enlighten people in the movements we call ‘popular Islam’ or ‘public Islamic movements’, we need an enlightened conservatism which is also noted as Fazl ar-Rahman. Enlightened conservatism means critically reviewing traditions and questioning people’s works or comments over the relationship between the Quran and the Sunnah. The following statement by Ibn Taymiyyah — May Allah have mercy on him — should be taught as a wise statement or proper quote to Muslims when it comes to sacred books: ‘ لا يَسْتَلَمُ كِتَابٌ مِنَ الْعَلَطِ إِلَّا الْقُرْآنُ . This statement by Ibn Taymiyyah in his work on Ulum al-Quran means that there is no faultless book other than the Quran. Unfortunately, people’s works which are full of errors, let alone being faultless, can be blessed for their contents and religious trade. All publications of congregations and cults, particularly Risalah al-Nur, can be included in this scope. Although these need to be seriously criticized in regard to Islamic sciences and the authenticity and correctness of their information is controversial, we know that these are sometimes even regarded as a second revelation. Accordingly, people should be taught this statement of Ibn Taymiyyah and told that there is no faultless book other than the Quran. Moreover, the Quran clearly indicates in many verses that even the Prophet, as a human being, makes mistakes. According to certain narratives, the Prophet says he can make mistakes himself. Prophet’s statements meaning *“I may sometimes give decisions in favor of one of the parties, considering the more effective speech of that party when I review disagreement-related issues. If I give unfair decisions regarding that party, that party should not have a right.”* Issues of mistaken prostration when leading people while praying have been broadly reflected in usul al-fiqh books and Af’alu ar-Rasul works. It is clear that the Prophet makes mistakes as a human. (كل بني آدم خطاؤون) (وخير الخطائين التوابون) The proverb *“All people may make mistakes, but the most benevolent ones among those making mistakes are the ones who recognize their mistakes and make efforts not to do so again”* is said in this regard. People can make mistakes even if they are prophets. Therefore, as prophets do not make mistakes only while they perform their duties or declare the revelations, sahabah, tabiun and other generations are not faultless either. Unfortunately, Sunni people regard the Prophet and the sahabah as faultless people. This faultlessness was associated with the imams of sects in the past and is associated with the people who regard themselves as the religious leaders today, who facilitate abuse-related actions and malevolent acts. Therefore, Muslims should be told that there is no faultless book other than the Quran and we should question and confirm the correctness of religious books, statements, sermons or any speeches on TV or radio offered to us just like the sahabah who asked the Prophet *“O! Muhammad! Is this your personal order or a revelation?”* when he took action. After making sure that these really suit the Quran and the Sunnah and that interpretations are proper, we should fulfill what we see or hear.

A. Öztekin: Sir, could you please give examples about the abuse forms you mentioned?

M. H. Kırbaşođlu: There are actually many clear examples. I can easily say this as a person who has followed and been in Islamic movements for 40 years. Unfortunately, the religious abuse committed by the Islamic people in the last years has reached terrible levels. Political leaders abuse religions from many aspects, especially during election time. However, there is such a degree which shows that people have been fed up and that politicians have not been making speeches without mentioning religion, religious symbols and terms, is not a service to the religion. Instead, these should be regarded as malevolence, and people should be prevented from instrumentalizing religion in the political discussions and propagandas in Turkey. This is valid for both the sections considering themselves religious and for the sects performing political actions through religious opposition or by conducting social movements. Thus, preventing religious abuse from all aspects and blocking people from abusing religion in all sorts of political, economic and social interest-based activities is a necessity. Accordingly, Muslims should be the ones to lead in this regard. Therefore, the issue of religious abuse should be examined urgently. I should add that an objection such as "I am already a Muslim. How can my prayers and fasting activities be an abuse?" is not valid here. If somebody prays, and takes a photograph when praying and shares this on social media, this contradicts with the principle that religion is specific to Allah. Other people doing this of course, but overlooking these actions means participation.

Religion should be properly assigned the position that it deserves, and that will not let people abuse religion. It should be noted that the academia of theology, religious authorities, cult organizations, politicians and press members should show sensitivity in this regard. Otherwise, religion will be instrumentalized as it will lose its reputation. Therefore, people will not be prevented from turning religion into an institution which cannot fulfill expected targets or will transform religion into a form as depicted like opium by Marx. Readers are encouraged to read "Dine Karşı Din (Religion Against Religion)" by Ali Şeriati in this regard. In addition, we can say that the new generation should read almost all the books of Nureddin Topçu who directs the most intense criticisms toward religious abuse.

Regarding the methods of abusers, we mentioned this issue while answering other questions but as we stated before, it is clear that abusers generally use false information in this regard. Their materials include false religious information and a religious depiction. Therefore, the most effective way of preventing their abuse is to recommend a skeptical approach, encourage them to ask about sources, and to perform cross-checks in terms of the sources of religious information. Therefore, we should not confine ourselves to a single person or a source when we need information on an issue for the purpose of preventing religious abuse. Moreover, we should consult more than one religious authority for an issue and think that we are on the correct path if our questions have things in common. However, if there are serious differences and contradictions between the answers, the research should

be deepened and advanced. Mechanisms which will prevent people from abusing religious information in an uncontrolled manner should be established.

Accordingly, the Presidency of Religious Affairs is responsible for enlightening society, considering its capabilities. This is actually its constitutional duty, which is constantly discussed as people doubt whether the Presidency of Religious Affairs actually fulfills its duties. However, it is obvious that some efforts by the Presidency of Religious Affairs have become significant parts of the problem regarding religious abuse. The field research performed in the “Diyane” issue of the *İslamiyet Dergisi* (Journal of Islam) indicate that central preachers in Ankara use weak and false hadiths at 15-17%, and a similar rate was found in a master’s thesis, conducted to examine the Sunnah and Hadith knowledge of the imams and preachers in Ankara and Şırnak. A graduation thesis undertaken on approximately 200 imams and preachers in Trabzon seven or eight years ago indicated that the rate of weak or false hadiths used in preaching and guiding activities did not fall below 15%. This evidence show that one in every seven narratives used during preaching and guiding programs is weak and false. Another problem is that the Presidency of Religious Affairs is doubted, as these false narratives are seen in the offices of the organization of this institution however the Presidency of Religious Affairs has yet to publish a guide about the hadiths to be used by the religious authorities in the preaching and guiding activities and deliver the translation of relevant works, such as *Tanzihu ash-Sharia* by Ibn Arrak, to the religious authorities and preachers. The institutions that should be a source of solutions become a part of the problem, as the governmental bodies also become a part of the issues related to religious abuse. The reason is actually clear. Formal religious institutions will keep on serving the goals of political authorities and be the means of religious abuse, unless they are excluded from the control of policy and become fully independent, free and autonomous. Thus, all religious institutions and organizations, particularly the Presidency of Religious Affairs for Turkey, should be freed from policy and become autonomous as soon as possible.

A. Öztekin: Sir, we would like to present the latest work “*Hadislerle İslam (İslam with Hadiths)*” published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs for the attention of our readers. We hope this publication will help overcome the issues you mentioned. Well, what can be done to prevent religious abuse?

M. H. Kırbaşoğlu: Firstly, religious education for society should be maintain clearly and transparently. People now need to learn how to say “no” or to reject. For instance, our children are provided religious education schools and this educational activity is performed through certain books. We should check the information in these books as parents and raise objections when the religious points that is not regarded as appropriate are taught by the governmental teachers of our children and take necessary actions in this regard.

We should not hesitate to take legal actions against these issues which we consider as contradictory to religious principles, seen in all sorts of preaching, guiding, and religious education-training activities conducted in mosques, masjids and Quran classes managed by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. There are certain basic laws formed in line with the European Union adjustment laws. Unfortunately, our people are not aware of the rights assigned to them by these laws. There are many basic legal amendments such as the law on the right to get information, and to walk and protest, or the law on consumer protection in this regard. These laws are perfectly in favor of citizens in practice. Actions can be taken to fight against the religious abuse using these laws.

For example, *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs is behind almost all of the religious interpretations in the market, and does not have any new features or contribute to current knowledge on this subject. This book is nothing but a copy and paste from the items related to the Quran in the Encyclopedia of Islam, from the religious guides-related to fiqh written by the author who wrote this tafsir, and from the interpretations of the author who wrote that tafsir. Thus, two separate critiques have been presented by myself in my book named *İslami İlimlerde Metot Sorunu* and by Mustafa Öztürk in his book named *Meal Kültürü*. My criticism is for the first edition and Mustafa Öztürk's is for the second edition, and both critiques contain almost a hundred pages. The Presidency of Religious Affairs have later announced that they corrected some mistakes; however, the situation did not change. Additionally, Zira Öztürk made a critique about the third and fourth editions of the interpretation. Unfortunately, not only the first edition but also the following editions have serious problems. Serious inconsistencies exist between editions as the same thing was considered as positive in one and negative in another. This interpretation is still being published. However, it is possible to symbolically file a lawsuit by applying to the consumer court with the reason that the Presidency of Religious Affairs sells fraudulent and unhealthy products to the public. When I asked lawyers about this, they said they were not sure about its possible legal outcome. However, this may enable the Presidency of Religious Affairs to correct themselves and make them present a more qualified interpretation than those in the market, to people who trusted them and bought the interpretation. In any case, Muslims should seek for their rights on every legal ground, and people should be explained that we are not slaves of governmental or religious agencies, communions or cults and we are not obliged to accept everything that they have said.

The abovementioned work should be more detailed and authentic. The Presidency of Religious Affairs should conduct more successful works with scientists and increase the quality of religious services provided to public. We, as the public, have the right to ask for this. We also carry the responsibility of making efforts to ensure that the Presidency of Religious Affairs present more qualified works by being more aware about this subject.

The Radio and Television Higher Council has a responsibility regarding this issue. Unfortunately, we are unable to state that the Radio and Television Higher Council has fulfilled its duty. There are various examples of religious abuse especially on visual media in every level and way, and such abuse forms are widespread. At this point, for the government to ignore the fact that the public is deceived and have become the object of abuse, conflicts with the constitution as it is the government's duty to provide support to citizens about this. We should improve the concept of public opposition. Then we can respond to such sections. For instance, e-signature campaigns have been conducted against governmental agencies, persons and non-governmental institutions about religious abuse to ensure they take a step back. Singing e-signature campaigns about these issues is just as easy as any other e-signature campaigns. When you start a campaign, you set a goal. It is impossible not to be taken into consideration when you get thousands of signatures and submit these to related governmental or non-governmental agencies. Such cases should not be regarded only as a conflict of interests. This type of campaigns can be carried out to help the governmental agencies. Even if some institutions such as the Radio and Television Higher Council and Presidency of Religious Affairs want to take steps based on the authorization given by the constitution and law, they may refrain due to public pressure. Therefore, by gathering thousands of signatures and conducting signature campaigns, we may encourage and enable these institutions to take bolder steps and implement them. Additionally, we, as the public, should not expect everything to be carried out by the government, and we should get involved, support the positive steps taken by the government, fill the gaps where government lacks and conduct necessary opposition against governmental agencies when mistakes are made, and all of these should be carried out within the scope of the legal regulation.

One of the actions to be performed is to raise the public's awareness on their legal rights. Through the activities conducted by the non-governmental organizations, lawyers and lawmen in every city of Turkey, the public should be informed about the primary laws enacted within the frame of the European Union adjustment laws and notify them about their rights, and then direct them to request these rights on legal grounds. In fact, all these steps are necessary to make the public more equal, transparent, decent and peaceful as well as reducing religious abuse.

At this point, it is beneficial to add the statements of various masters. One of them is Dr. Ali Şeriati. He says "when the critiques end, idolatry starts." All of these abuse forms result from the absence of cross checking, critiquing and questioning. Thus, critical thinking has the utmost importance. We should put this statement of Ali Şeriati as the headline. Another good statement belongs to Cemil Meriç. He says "In Turkey, people are not right or left wing (herein, we can regard this as that people are not separated as Alewi or Sunni, Kurdish or Turkish); people are either honest or dishonest." We have to make sure that honest people are powerful in

Turkey. Although they lack in number, dishonest people are more powerful and organized. Honest people need to be organized and work with more sophisticated methods against dishonesty.

The third statement which is referred to İsmet İnönü is as follows: "Honest people in a country should at least be as brave as dishonest people." In this context, we should come together regardless of our religion, ethnicity, religious sect, disposition and opinion, and develop a reflex to fight against all public implementations which are contrary to morals, conscience and Islam such as religious abuse, social injustice, corruptions, profanations, fraud, bribery, theft, favoritism, nepotism, rentiers, etc. to form a good future for the next generation, our children and our grandchildren. We need a new vision enabling us to be on a mutual moral direction by getting rid of this fragmentation and polarization.

At this point, Islam is sufficient for us, but the question of which and what kind of Islam is important. We need the Islam defined by Aliya Izzetbegovic: "The second name of what is good, beautiful and right in this world is Islam." Therefore, the segregation should be based on qualities not on identities. That is my personal opinion. We should part ways with people not because they are religious or not, Alewi or Sunni, socialist or liberal, Turkish or Kurdish, and they are on the right or left wing, but because they are honest or dishonest. We can say that morals do not belong to only Muslims; lots of Muslim people can be dishonest and people who are far away from religion can be very honest. The word should be "are" rather than "can." I, as someone who worked with non-governmental organizations in Turkey and Middle East, I personally witnessed this. We can see that morals does not pertain to Muslims. There are numerous good and honest people who are Christians, Jews, atheists, Marxists, socialists, Alewi, Shiite, etc. In fact, although being a Shiite, Ali Şeriati is able to present perfect Islamic behaviors that can make various Sunni people pray for him. Similarly, the doctrine of Alewi sect "be careful about your hand, waist, tongue" is an important precept. These should be supported. In today's society, people on the left are more sensitive about the oppressed classes and working class. Islamic people also need a new culture and point of view enabling them to put up a fight with the people on the left to ease the sufferings of the working class, oppressed, bedeviled, and poor people. I hope that these current discussions and studies will contribute to the formation of a new culture which has morals, virtue, honor, justice and equality in its center in Turkey. This culture is not unfamiliar for us to use in terms of Islam because we grew up in line with the doctrine of *Hilf al-Fudul* which includes the Prophet. We are the descendants of a civilization which founded the Islamic State in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah together with the Jews and displayed the will to live together with them. Additionally, we lived together with Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Parsees, Dehrs, and atheists in Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, Istanbul and Isfahan in a friendly environment. We are the descendants of a civilization which responded to opinion with opinions, critiques with critiques but never acted according to the logic of a

janissary: "hit them and do not let them talk." However, the children of this civilization are so alienated to wisdom, logic, morals and conscience that they can kill their Muslim brothers in front of the entire world just because they do not share the same opinion with them.

Accordingly, it is fair to state that we have a long, difficult and rugged path ahead of us. It should be noted that the people leading others in overcoming this issue should be theologically developed and "responsible intellectuals" as noted by Ali Şeriati. However, intellectuals are far behind the policy-makers and people and fail in what they are doing these days. We need to change this problematic structure, and we all have great responsibilities in forming a period when philosophers and scientists guide the masses and policy-makers, and when religion is organized by competent people and institutions instead of ignorant people. Then, let us work!

A. Öztekin: Sir, thank you very much for your precious time.

M. H. Kırbaşođlu: You are welcome. I wish you success in your work.