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Publication Principles



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## Editörden/ Editorial

Religions are among the main social systems that have been significant affecting social life throughout the history. As seen in the history of all religions, sectarianism / fractionalization has happened throughout the history of Islam, the last religion, which is also the case for other religions. It is a fact that the concept of sectarianism that inevitably emerges in the natural flow of life has certain positive aspects. However, in the case that sects are abused, these concepts of mercy may turn into the mechanisms of conflicts.

Muslims have been experiencing severe existential crisis in the fields of culture and civilization in the last two centuries. New developments which have occurred following the Arab Spring have deepened this crisis. One of the greatest Islamic issues in the modern times is the abuse of sects, the institutionalized version of the sense of religious commitment. Sects have turned into the means of conflicts for the international powers. International issues occur in the form of sectarian conflicts in the geographies where Muslims live, and Islam is assessed through the political sovereignty instead of freedom and religion meanings.

Sects play a key role in correctly interpreting the religious issues experienced in the modern Islamic world and generating proper solutions for these issues. Sects are the human organizations which occur due to the institutionalization of religious differences. The basic points to be considered in approaching the sects include the principles that these human formations cannot be equalized with any religions no matter what they are called, faith and responsibilities are personal, reality cannot be controlled by any groups, congregations or cults, and the important goal is the unity and integrity of Muslims.

*The Journal of Theological Academia* that has aimed to draw attention to Muslims' important issues such as Salafism, Alienation and Religiousness, and Migration and Religion is honored and happy to be before its readers with the topic of Sects. Many important authors have contributed to this issue with their valuable articles. I extend my gratitude to them on behalf of myself and *The Journal of Theological Academia* family.

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*The Journal of Theological Academia* which aims to determine the issues emerging in the field of theology and to contribute to the correct interpretation of Islam will continue examining important topics in the upcoming issues. Islamophobia, Sunnah and the Quran are among the topics which are planned to be reviewed in future.

Asst. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhyettin İÇDE  
Faculty of Divinity, Gaziantep University  
Issue Editor of The Journal of Theological Academia

## Sect and Sectarianism\*

Mehmet Ali BÜYÜKKARA\*\*

### Abstract

Our article is defining sectarian understanding by differentiating having a sect and sectarianism and it is offering solutions to problematic characteristics of sectarian understanding. Modernism, which highlights universal and common identities, criticizes having a sect as irrational and inconsistent although this is a natural choice. On the other hand, according to postmodernism, the possibility of having mutual identities is not an option anymore and it fosters the understanding of having different sub-identities. Muslim people should go beyond the duality of modernism and postmodernism to offer solutions for the problem of sectarianism because postmodern approach that favors partial identities in favor of holistic Islam identity is not Islamic. But at the same time, it is not fair under any condition to ignore the sects by having a strict modernist approach.

**Keywords:** Sect, Sectarianism, Modernism, Postmodernism

## Mezhep ve Mezhepçilik

### Özet

Makalemiz mezheplilik ile mezhepçiliği birbirinden ayırmak suretiyle mezhepçi anlayışı tanımlamakta, sorunlu karakterini ortaya koymakta ve bu soruna çözümler önermektedir. Evrensel ve kollektif ortak kimlikleri mutlaklaştıran modernizm, mezhepli olmayı tüm doğallığına rağmen akli ve tutarlı bulmayıp eleştirir. Postmodernizme göre ise ortak kimliklerin varlığı artık mümkün değildir ve bu nedenle mezheplilik gibi alt kimliklere olduğunca fazla yer açmak gerekir. Konumuz olan mezhepçilik sorunu üzerine düşünüp çözümler üreten müslümanların bu modern-postmodern ikilemini aşmaları beklenir. Zira postmodernce bir yaklaşımla tikel mezhep kimliklerinin tümel İslam kimliğini aşındırması ve onun zararına olacak şekilde kendine bir özgürlük alanı açması, tabir caizse onu parçalaması kuşkusuz İslami değildir. Fakat aynı zamanda, tümel kimlik esastır diye doğal olan tikel mezhep kimliklerini tektipçi modern bir yaklaşımla yok sayma veya yok etme tavrı gerekçesi ne olursa olsun adil değildir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mezhep, Mezhepçilik, Modernizm, Postmodernizm

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\* This paper is the English translation of the study titled "Mezhep ve Mezhepçilik" published in the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of *İlahiyat Akademi*. (Mehmet Ali BÜYÜKKARA, "Mezhep ve Mezhepçilik", *İlahiyat Akademi*, sayı: 5, 2017, s. 1-10.) The paper in Turkish should be referred to for citations.

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## **Introduction**

The word sect, which, in Arabic, derives from the verb “to go” and “the way to go”, is used in Turkish to describe “each of the branches of a religion that arise due to differences of opinion, interpretation and understanding”. On the one hand, the word describes a “concrete” sociological formation by specifying the members of these branches, and on the other hand, it refers to the “abstract” principles and thought system on which the bond of affiliation develops. Of course, this abstract system will have abstract outputs such as prayers, temples, and books, and these will be considered as parts of that sect. The meaning of sect in Turkish covers all religious formations such as Hanafism, Shafiism as a fiqh-related/juridical denomination, Sunnism, Shiism as an faith-related/political movement, etc.

### **Where does the sect belong to religion and what does it correspond to?**

Sects are not the manifestation of religion itself or the divine revelation because it expresses the difference of interpretation and understanding of believers in understanding and experiencing the divine revelation and experience of the Prophet, the sect no longer represents the divine one and takes on a human character. The political parties in the first centuries of Islam played a major role in the emergence of many sects, not the religious and high conflicts, but also the political language was inevitably religious in the process, as religious arguments were employed in these conflicts. People then cluster around these understandings and eventually the sects gain a social and institutional identity. They become a sociological part of that religion. Thus they become the subject of sociology and community psychology as well as theology.

The religious problems related to faith and practical life that emerged during the time when the Quran was revealed and the messenger of Allah was still alive were easily solved, and were often not carried to a level that would require conflict. In later years, this situation has changed. Of course, there have been conflicts with various reasons of social, political and religious quality, and some of these issues have become fully religious in the process and turned into separation that caused social divisions because the limits of the Quran and Sunnah, which are now the main sources, were clear and they were incapable of being the source of judgment and fatwa by themselves “as a text” in the face of the constantly emerging issues, but they kept being the main sources by means of methods such as interpretation, comparison, jurisprudence, and opinion. These rational methods, which are operated with the participation of humans, were undoubtedly present in the time of the Prophet, though in a narrow scope.<sup>1</sup> But in later periods, the use areas were compulsorily expanded. Therefore, the resulting differentiation became systematic over time, getting institutionalized and forming the sects.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Muadh ibn Jabal’s hadith, Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Aqdiyah: 11.

The second and third centuries of Islam, in which sects emerged, were a period of high levels of prosperity, especially in the big cities. These cosmopolitan cities were places where a multicultural life was lived in all its dimensions. The Islamic scholars of this period made great efforts to answer and solve important questions and problems in matters of faith, worship, everyday life, law, morality, politics, and culture. It was a serious responsibility on their shoulders. These answers and solutions were often shaped in free debates by interpreting religious texts and engaging the guidance of reason, and thus more than one theological and legal way of thinking was developed. It should also be noted that the sects are the products of such a sincere effort.

As we can see, sectarianism is a natural and ordinary phenomenon. The otherwise is not an option for mass religious organizations. Although there are certainly negative consequences of sectarianism, it would be better to look at the positive aspects of it at first because these are large social structures, sects gain their members a sub-identity. They discipline them in their religious and social lives. They bring vitality and wealth to religious thought and life as they offer different options to people of different character, culture, and understanding. Since it is not fitfully possible and realistic to compel people into one opinion and behavior, and to put them into one pattern, sects comfort the believers in this aspect. They open up material and spiritual spaces for them to develop themselves in. Thus, they perform a facilitative duty in the realization and practice of religion. Thanks to this feature, the sects have moved Islam to very different sections and enabled it to be massed. With organization and institutionalization, of course, they have provided the societies with civil values such as education, cooperation, solidarity and internal control.

From this point of view, religion serves an important role in the formation of identity not only of individuals but also of groups. The thoughts and actions of various social groups, sects, congregations, and cults that gain identity by various forms of devotion to and interaction with a religion are, of course, effective in the understanding, exercise, notification, representation, and reflection of that religion into society. In other words, it is often not possible to consider and evaluate a religion independently of groups that have already demonstrated or at least not denied its affiliation with that religion. In summary, although a sect is not a religion itself, we cannot completely isolate the religion from sects. Therefore, the thoughts and actions of these groups, including sects, are positively or negatively influenced by the religion.

### **Possible negative outcomes of sects**

In this context, the negative effects of sects have always been a matter of discussion. Although they belong to the same religion, it should be considered natural for members of a religion to be involved in a race or struggle among

themselves, and there are different theories of sociology and psychology on the reasons for this. It is at this point that sects can quickly and dangerously become the focus of conflict. This negative character of sects has been a factor empowered by politicians throughout the history of Islam. Some governments seeking to arbitrate their political authority or pursue an expansionist policy have not hesitated to use sectarian fanaticism as a weapon against their opponents.

While the historical outcome may have seemed like 'a war of sects', what has actually happened is nothing more than a political power conflict. When they are left to their own state, we see that sectarian structures find ways to live together, even if they are at very opposite poles. The sects that learn mutual tolerance under the umbrella of the same religion and show us good examples of this in the pages of distant and recent history can quickly and easily turn into mechanisms of conflict and destruction if abused. Given that common hatred is a powerful emotion that unites even the most incongruous elements, we have a better understanding of how increasingly sectarian hatred can easily influence a wide range of communities and mobilize them against one another.

### **Sectarianism**

Again, sectarianism is a completely natural phenomenon, just as attachment to a sect is. The primary reason for this is that people are born into a sectarian communities. This result of divine providence is often continuous. A person born into a family, environment, and society where people are attached to a sect becomes a disciple of it. And this attachment turns into an identity, which is generally permanent. Although there are cases where people convert from a sect to another, these are often exceptional. As a result, the sect becomes one of the identities of a person such as family, ethnic affiliation, and religious attachment. It takes its place in the mind as one of his answers given to the question "Who I am?/Where do I belong?" It is also considered as a natural consequence that the people and groups with whom we share a common identity are given priority in our lives.

Connolly says, "identity needs difference to exist and transforms difference into otherness to secure its own certainty".<sup>2</sup> This situation, which is so normal, pure, universal, and perhaps obligatory, including the process of "creating the other", which is an expression of the phrase "without contraries, there is no progression", varies from person to person, from society to society in terms of how the attitude and behavior towards the "other" will be. For example, if the existential awareness in question leads to the contempt and humiliation of the other, then it poses a

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<sup>2</sup> William E. Connolly, *Kimlik ve Farklılık: Siyasetin Açmazlarına Dair Demokratik Çözüm Önerileri*, Trans. Ferma Lekesizalın, İstanbul, 1995. 93.

problem.<sup>3</sup> If we continue to discuss over the identity of the sect, this negative attitude towards the other turns a natural situation such as sect affiliation or, in other words, “sectarianism” into a morbid situation that we call “sectarianism”.

We can define sectarianism as follows: The fact that the followers of a sect or members of a different interpretation of a religion create a strong solidarity among themselves and declare the other believers who do not join them heretical, and more importantly, discriminate the others in social, political, cultural, and even daily life. In fact, the move to the position of sectarianism by “confronting other sects” may in theory be seen as an instinctive attitude. But here there is a fact: The identity of religion constitutes a superior identity over the sect. If we speak for Muslims, Islam refers to an identity above the identity of each denomination. It is said in the Quran that “Allah named you “Muslims” before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people.”<sup>4</sup> The Islamic identity set by Allah can undoubtedly not be left behind by the sectarian identity.

### **Sectarianism as a state of division**

Sectarianism, in this case, is itself a division. Allah speaks to his prophet: “Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allah ; then He will inform them about what they used to do.”<sup>5</sup> If “becoming sects” is condemned in this verse, did the concept of “sectarianism” which we regard as “natural and ordinary” not have to be condemned at first? If we look at the subject in the integrity of the Quran, it is seen that the condemnation and warning in this verse goes not to “being attached to sects” but to “sectarianism”, because the conflict in religion and the resulting sectarianism, even the kind of sectarianism that has turned into division, seems to be a part of the creation/nature, in other words, a law of this world, Sunnah and a part of the divine trial.<sup>6</sup> As the verse says, if God had willed, He “could have guided you all.”<sup>7</sup> And again, if He had willed, He “would have made you one nation.” But He didn’t will because it is “to test you in what He has given you”.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See: Hasan Onat, “Kimlik-Teoloji İlişkisi Bağlamında Alevilik-Bektaşilikle İlgili Kimlik Tartışmaları Üzerine”, *Alevilik – Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1 (2009), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> al-Haj, 22/78.

<sup>5</sup> al-An’am, 6/159.

<sup>6</sup> See: Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmi*, İstanbul, 1988, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> al-An’am, 6/149; an-Nahl, 16/9.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Mai’dah, 5/48.

Another verse states, "He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ."<sup>9</sup> And in the following verse,<sup>10</sup> we see that "whom your Lord has given mercy" will never divide but live in unity and solidarity. Another phrase in the same verse, which is "and for that He created them" is interpreted as "Allah has created mankind to divide".<sup>11</sup> In this world of tests, for alliances to take place, there will have to be conflicts first. Beings who think uniformly, who do not disagree, who go along the same lines will never have human characteristics. Only angels are reported to be such beings. The theological explanation of these verses concludes that conflict and controversy are instrumental in the testing people are subjected to. But those who followed the commandment "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided"<sup>12</sup> will pass the test.

The conflict, which is a cause for the development of legitimate alternative ideas, thus facilitating religious and worldly life, and the enrichment of thought, is therefore a source of mercy. However, it is becoming a cause of oppression at the hands of fanatics of sects because these people put sect in the position of religion and see only the one from the same sect as a brother in religion. In this case, their whole endeavor is for the triumph of the sect. They do not mind spending big money on it. For them, this spending is the most meritorious charity. They put the education system on a purely exclusionary level of sectarian education and training. The person who comes out of this system becomes a fanatical sectarian and looks at members of other sects as if they were adherents of other religions. Again, the sectarian man puts forth all his effort to gain people for his sect. He does not take into account the reaction that this aggressive attitude will create on the other side. He does not consider whether it causes sedition. He does not think that it will result in backlashes.

The most obvious image of sectarianism is *takfirism*. The *takfirist* understanding, which excludes Muslims from Islam based on the views of a self-styled, marginalized and non-social sect, considers it permissible to use violence against the people and the section it classifies as infidels in the next step, to confiscate their property and wealth, and even to intend to end their lives. When we look at history, we see that sectarian conflicts are incidental. Most of the time, Muslims, no matter what sect they were from, lived together in peace. They have not been involved in sectarianism, not declared one another as infidel and they have respected each other. They intermarried and stood behind each other in the same mosque to pray.

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<sup>9</sup> Hud, 11/118.

<sup>10</sup> Hud, 11/119.

<sup>11</sup> Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmi*, p. 160-1; Ahmet Saim Kılavuz, "Dini Açıdan Mezhepleşme ve Gruplaşma", inside [H. Hökelekli, V. Bilgin (ed.), *Kur'an ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Bursa, 2015], p. 221-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ali 'Imran, 3/103.



But the political rivalries that recurred from time to time have also made sectarian communities a part of this struggle. Unfortunately, politicians do not leave the sects to their own state, they seek ways to benefit from it. They are aware of the ravaging and destructive power of sectarian fanaticism, and they want to use it. Sectarian resentment and enmity are thought to be due to competition over the sharing of social resources rather than the difference of religious beliefs and doctrines. It is also known that the person, whichever identity is most attacked, tends to identify himself with that identity and to develop prejudice, discrimination, hostility and aggression towards other identities in an oppressive way.<sup>13</sup> In this manner, it is not difficult to mobilize the members of the sect for political purposes in an environment of tension that may increase sectarianism. Such conflicts, which have political purposes at their core, go down in history as sectarian wars.

### **What can be done against sectarianism?**

a. Scholars and intellectuals are the pulse of a society. If they go beyond bounds, the society does so. They should always act reasonably. They should lead activities that may reduce the tension.

b. The cautionary indoctrination of scholars and intellectuals to politicians can be useful in tense environments.

c. Scholars of different views should strive to come together at every opportunity. The dialogue often softens the tensions. In dialogue meetings, problems should be spoken honestly, neither quarrels nor the path of struggle should be resorted to, *musaarahah* should be essential.

d. Using takfirism as a pretext for sectarianism, or resorting to the gun of takfirism because sectarianism is being done, are both acts of evil. These can't be used as excuses. They are nothing but escalating tensions.

e. Takfirism and sectarianism should be regarded in the scope of hate crimes and must be punished. The scholars can be decisive and provide support in this matter.

f. The “unconditional adherence to ancient texts” that we see in both takfirist and sectarian groups must be questioned. These texts are not divine or prophetic texts, no matter which respected scholar may have authored them. Attention should be paid to this in the training process.

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<sup>13</sup> Murat Paker, “Psikolojik Açıdan Önyargı ve Ayrımcılık”, inside [Kenan Çayır, Müge A. Ceyhan (ed.), *Ayrımcılık: Çok Boyutlu Yaklaşımlar*, İstanbul, 2012], p. 48-50; Paker, “Önyargı ve Ayrımcılığa İlişkisel Psikanalitik Bir Bakış”, inside *Id*, p. 57-8; Amin Maalouf, *Ölümcül Kimlikler*, Trans. Aysel Bora, İstanbul, 2008, p. 17-9.

g. It is important for our discussion that the “painful memories of the past” seen in takfirism and sectarianism are frequently brought up and that the present is designed through some narrations that “inform the future and are mostly related to the end of the world”. Muslims are responsible for the present day in the sight of Allah, so it would be right for them to accept the present situation as essential data and to determine their style of politics accordingly.

### **As Conclusion: Sects and sectarianism between modern and postmodern approaches**

Modernism, which absolutizes universal and collective common identities, criticizes sectarianism for not being rational and consistent despite its being natural. In postmodernism, however, the existence of common identities is no longer possible, and therefore it is necessary to create as much room for sub-identities, as is seen in adherence to sects. Muslims who think about the issue of sectarianism and come up with solutions are expected to overcome this modern-postmodern dilemma. It is certainly not Islamic because, with a postmodern approach, partial sectarian identities erode the whole Islamic identity and open up a space of freedom to its detriment, so to speak, to break it down. But at the same time, the attitude of ignoring or destroying partial sectarian identities with a monotheistic modern approach, which is natural because holistic identity is essential, is unfair and evokes persecution, regardless of the rationale.

The middle of this antagonism is sectarian pluralism and acceptance of differences. There is no doubt that Muslim individuals and groups have the right to consider their own sect correct and to propagate it. Of course, each of them will continue to say that the path they have taken is the path of salvation. But in doing so, they do not have the right to treat other sects as non-Islamic in a wholesale way and to violate their fundamental freedoms. It is known that this is the correct Islamic attitude towards those who say, “I am one of the Muslims” and there are many good examples of this habitual behavior in the Prophet’s life.

The approach of the messenger of Allah to the hypocrites can also illuminate our way. It is a religious obligation to keep those who speak the word of Islam within the Islamic society as long as they do not cause corruption and anarchy, and to live with them in peace. In the struggle against anarchy and corruption, the law comes into play, and the legislations and sanctions are fulfilled. What is beyond that, and who is right, should be left to God. God will anyway judge in the hereafter. The unity of the *ummah* is essential. The principle of “the ahl al-qibla cannot be considered infidel” is a very important value produced by this point of view in the past. The question of how to keep the *ummah* despite all its differences, how to have a healthy management and politics is the most important issue that Muslims must solve today. Focusing on this difficult issue and producing its models and values should be one of the primary tasks.

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## Sect and Sectarianism

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## Commonality of Islam and the Truth of Sects\*

Hasan ONAT\*\*

### Abstract

The importance of the sects emerges when considered history and contemporary events in the Muslim world. All of the sects are the organizations established after the death of the prophet Mohammed. Ignoring the sects or shutting our eyes to it can be considered, escaping from reality but at the same time considering sects as the essence of religion will result in a problem. Understanding the problems on the field of religion in our age and offering solutions for them are strictly related with analyzing the fact of sects truly. For that reason, it is necessary to realize that the sects are social facts and the Quran is the only milestone to explain it.

**Keywords:** Commonality, Sect, Religion, Tawheed, Takfeer

## İslam Ortak Paydası ve Mezhep Gerçeği

### Özet

Gerek tarihi süreçte gerekse içerisinde bulunduğumuz şu günlerde İslam aleminde meydana gelen hadiseler, mezhep olgusunun önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Mezheplerin tamamı Hz. Peygamberin vefatından sonra ortaya çıkmış beşeri oluşumlardır. Mezheplerin varlığını inkar etmek veya hiç yokmuş gibi davranmak gerçeklerden kaçınmak olacağı gibi, onları din ile bütünleştirmek de büyük bir yanlış olacaktır. Günümüz dünyasında din alanında yaşanan problemleri anlama ve bu meselelere çözüm üretebilmenin en önemli yollarından biri mezhep gerçeğini doğru anlamaktan geçmektedir. Bunun için Mezheplerin tarihi süreçte ortaya çıkan beşeri oluşumlar olduğunun farkına varmak, Kur'an'ın ortaya koyduğu kurucu ilkeler çerçevesinde konuyu anlamlandırmak gerekmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ortak Payda, Mezhep, Fırka, Din, Tevhid, Tekfir

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## Introduction

Islam is first and foremost the name of a religion that has shaped the world of faith of more than one billion six hundred million people today and is the basis for their worldview. When Islam is mentioned, a system of belief, worship, morality, culture, and civilization produced by this religion and worldview comes to mind. These sophisticated sets of meanings, both independent and connected to each other, which are loaded into the content of Islam, make the already ambiguous, unallocated "religion" more "ambiguous". Perhaps that is why Muslims have not been able to make a "judgment" on what "Islam" actually is. The fact that every Muslim has a unique understanding of Islam is a requirement of human existence; it should be considered natural. However, different understandings acquire a social dimension from time to time, and can even be institutionalized. So much so that the sects, congregations and denominations that emerged under the pretense of representing Islam are formed; organic ties with the founding principles of Islam are weakened, and such formations can take the place of the religion itself. Different understandings of what should be a wealth, prevent Islamic integrity from being seen. In order for differences of opinion and different ideas to become wealth, at least a "knowledge and consciousness of Islam as a common denominator" is needed. As this consciousness has recently wasted away, the fundamental functions of religions, such as being "a symbol of unity", "socialization", "meaningful construction" and etc. have been degraded to human/sociological organizations like sects, denominations and congregations. Therefore, some separatist groups have been legitimized abusing the religion.

On the other hand, sects, congregations, denominations, and etc., which have been formed as a natural result, have begun othering Muslims by centering only their own groups around the perception of an elitist "group of salvation". This has made it easier for Muslims to declare one another as an infidel in the name of groups, sects, and community. *Takfir* (declaring someone an infidel), on the other hand, has become a means of legitimizing the bloodshed in the geography where Muslims live, and even the brutal slaughter of innocent people. If anything is to be done today in the name of Islam, whatever way it is, the first thing to do is to stop the bloodshed. In particular, the blood of innocent people turns into a bottomless lake that can drown humanity beyond being only a black mark. Muslims kill each other with weapons they did not produce, and both the killer and the victim shout "Allahu Akbar". No one cares about the fact that the unjust killing of a single human being is equivalent to the murder of all mankind (5/32). If so, the first thing to do is to prevent the legitimization of the bloodshed. It seems a little difficult to think that such a movement could be possible without creating an awareness of the common denominator of Islam.

The immoral practice of the takfir mechanism is one of the reasons for the lack of critical approach and thinking among Muslims. Practicing takfir retrospectively prevents the understanding of the past and the fear of being

declared as an infidel makes it difficult even to breathe, let alone to questioning the right and wrong. The Quran, however, wants us to act with knowledge and proof in all matters concerning mankind, not to pursue the unknown (17/36), to be open to learning, to listen to every word, to understand and to follow the best and the most rightful (39/18). The belief that the Quran wants, is based on knowledge; a person becomes a believer when the knowledge of faith lies in his mind. Faith is not meant to blindly believe in certain dogmas. Faith is achieved through reason and free will. In order to prevent takfir, we need to know and accept that "faith" is only a matter between Allah and man, that no one has the right or authority to question the faith of another, and that Islam does not give anyone a duty to convert another to Islam. Faith is individual; "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion" (2/256); whoever wills believes, whoever wills denies.

If we can understand correctly that the basic founding principle of Islam is *Tawhid* and that faith is individual, we will think that we can at least prevent the arbitrary practice of the takfir mechanism and the people killing each other in the name of religion with such ease. Ignoring the central place of Tawhid, which is the core of the call of all prophets, results in the religionization of almost everything, especially traditions. The relationship between deeds and faith, which emerged in the early period of Islam and which has been sufficiently discussed with different interpretations, is being re-updated in such a way that only takfir is nourished by ignoring the discussions and interpretations of the past.

The political conflicts the Muslims were dragged into after the death of the Prophet led to great sin and controversy over the relationship between deeds and faith in the circumstances of the time. In this process, due to the contribution of these discussions, sects such as Kharijites, Murji'ah and Mu'tazila had the opportunity to systemize their own views. If we can understand and interpret these kinds of discussions and the ideas generated in this process without prejudice, we can draw some lessons that will be useful for the present day. However, the sanctification of the past provides the opportunity for those who want to marginalize those who do not think the same way as themselves in the name of groups, sects, communities, or denominations. However, these discussions and the resulting experiences could enlighten us as to the difference between the deeds and the fulfillment of them. We could better understand Abu Hanifa's words, "a person prays because he is a believer; he is not a believer because he prays." Whether a person prays or not is a matter of concern only to him. There is no earthly sanction in the Quran concerning anyone who does not pray. Allah has not given anyone a duty or responsibility such as "prayer inspectorate". When the consciousness of Islam as a common denominator does not develop, some people forget about themselves and engage in things such as Islamizing others or the claim of representing Islam. Even worse, politics can be turned into a tool to Muslimize people, and religion can be turned into a kind of political ideology.

The fact of the matter is that one of the most important reasons behind the spiral of violence that has gripped the Islamic geography can clearly be seen as the struggle for power. The Takfir mechanism functions as an instrument that legitimizes death and killing in combat which is based on the principle that “the strong shall survive.” We think that the problem is largely about seizing political power, the power to rule, with the impact of “oppression.” There is no doubt that politics is a way to solution; it can even be said to be the most effective solution but not the only one. It is possible to say that in almost every part of Islamic geography, politics is seen as the only way to change and transform society. In this context, it is thought that the realization of the fact that Islam leaves political issues to the responsibility of man will facilitate the exit from the spiral of violence, as it will prevent the legitimization of political violence. If the consciousness of Islam as a common denominator can be reconstructed, it will be better understood that “justice should be the religion of states. Besides, Muslims will be able to use their energy for better reasons, as the Quran says, for “the good”, instead of fighting against each other and be able to be the actors of the religion once again. For this reason, the first step is to raise awareness about the knowledge dimension of Islam.

### **1. The knowledge base of the common denominator of Islam and the consciousness of history**

Being a Muslim depends on having knowledge of Islam, although those who embrace Islam readily do not want to be aware of it. Both the facts that man is a creature of knowledge and the Quran puts emphasis on knowledge, proof and learning require that even faith should be knowledge-based. It is obvious that we have serious problems in this regard. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say that even those who need to know Islam have enough knowledge. A significant number of those who have knowledge do not survive being sentenced to common beliefs. More grave is the attempt to legitimize ignorance with religion that is seen from time to time. It is clearly seen that the esoteric opinions put forwards instead of understanding the Quran, such as that the meaning is also revealed by Allah, have opened the way to underrating the reason and science. Unfortunately, it is not at all controversial that such an understanding disables the Quran itself. We think that the problems related to the knowledge dimension of religion have been instrumental in the melting of the consciousness of the common denominator of Islam, in the inability of Muslims to create a healthy culture of reconciliation and especially in the fact that they have been excluded from the competitions of civilizations for the last two centuries.

Having proper knowledge of Islam is first and foremost a responsibility that comes with being a Muslim. The faith introduced by Islam is based on knowledge. The realization of faith depends on the knowledge of what is to be believed. If a person finds this information logical, if there is sufficient evidence for



its accuracy and reliability, then the person becomes a Muslim with his own free will, as he finds the faith and the matters to be believed to be reasonable and meaningful. As a matter of fact, faith, no matter how it is understood or expressed, is eventually a matter between God and man. Only the person himself and God know who truly believes. In this respect, Islam does not open the door to imitative faith, nor does it make room for faith in the name of sect and community. If he wants to believe, if he finds the principles of faith reasonable and meaningful, if the evidence of this subject has convinced him, a person can decide to believe of his own free will without any pressure and become a Muslim. It is not possible for any instrument of faith to come between God and man.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, all people who became Muslim after the death of Prophet Muhammad began to understand and live Islam as they saw it through the influence of the ways and understanding of those who had accepted Islam before them. Although the Quran has reached later generations unchanged and intact, it is easy to understand that even in the way the Quran is understood, the understanding of the earlier ones has an effect. Later Muslims found Islam ready and perceived many cultural elements and traditions that were not directly related to Islam as religions. Of course, each generation may interpret, understand, and experience Islam in the context of their own means, taking advantage of the understanding and experience of the previous generations. In this process, some misinterpretations may be institutionalized and some of the beauties that Islam cares about may be neglected. The traditional issue of "two female witnesses are required against one man" can be given as an example of a special situation in the Quran that has been generalized and traditionalized with some coercion. Likewise, when the Quran asks for two witnesses to divorce (at-Talaq), the authority to divorce is left to the two lips of the man. However, just as the legitimacy of marriage can be achieved by marriage, that is, by legal guarantee, the end of marriage must be realized only by legal means and under legal guarantee. It is only possible with a proper knowledge of history and consciousness and critical thinking that the ways of understanding Islam in the historical flow, the traditional understandings and the specific perceptions of a particular time and place are prevented from being considered religion. All forms of understanding of Islam and the institutional structures associated with it cannot be identified with Islam in any way.

Life continues by changing, transforming, differentiating, and re-forming at every moment, just like a river. In the human dimension of life, almost everything, especially "religion", is built in human memory, and is always rebuilt, even when it is claimed that it is based on the facts, there is an aspect of it that has "interpretation" in it, which can sometimes be called culture and tradition. Even the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Maturidi, "faith is a religious act, and religions consist of believed principles." (Maturidi, 2002, 292); the place of faith is the mind, the heart, which is the only place of no coercion, force or pressure can be effective. (Maturidi, 2002, 492, 493)

most firm ones are recreated in human memory. This fact, gains more importance in the formations such as “religions” that are embodied in a sense when they are institutionalized, even though they are essentially abstract. Are attitudes and facts such as knowledge, actions, attitudes, attitudes and etc., which are defined as “religion” or “religious” in everyday life, actually “religious”? We face a more important ball of questions and problems: Is everything we call “knowledge”- whatever it is - real knowledge? If yes, how much does it correspond with the truth? Is what we know actually true? How do we know if the information that exists only in our minds is true? These and similar questions lead us to question the nature of what we know, how accurate they are, and to seek the criteria for accurate, sound, and reliable information. In this context, Maturidi's epistemological approach to the introduction of *Kitab al-Tawhid* centuries ago is truly eye-opening and guiding. According to him, the source of knowledge is either the five senses (*iyān*), or “*akhbar*”, that is, all kinds of information, news, or intelligence that were produced before us and reached us. We can know with intellect whether any information that comes to us from all three sources is true at the final stage. (Maturidi, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, 9-15) To summarize in the context of our subject, all knowledge in the field of religion is either Divine, believed to come from God, or human knowledge. All the information that can be treated as a revelation from the point of view of Islam has been collected in the Quran. All knowledge, other than the Quran, is human knowledge, no matter what source it is contained in or from whom it comes; it is open to all kinds of criticism and analysis until the end. The language of the Quran is Arabic, which is the product of human beings, and all forms of understanding and interpretation of the Quran must be human. Allah has addressed “man” in the language of “man”. Trying to understand the Quran with justice and truth is one of the most important elements of the test of life.

If the consciousness of Islam as common denominator is to be rebuilt, the decisive source of knowledge must be revelation, namely the Quran, and reason. Allah has sent revelations to support reason. The cooperation of reason and revelation, with the consciousness of justice, will form the infrastructure of the reliable knowledge that man needs. The mind knows what is reasonable and what is rational wherever it concerns a person. It can also be known by the mind whether any issue is beyond the limits of reason. But the mind has no sanctioning power; knowing what the truth does not mean preferring the truth and doing the good.

The cooperation of reason and revelation will make possible both the reliable knowledge necessary for the proper understanding of Islam and the motivation that will facilitate “remaining on a right course” (46/13) for humans as Allah wishes. The fact that it is necessary to believe that the Quran is the word of Allah. The Quran also states that the Prophet is “an excellent pattern” (33/21) for humanity. Although the Prophet dictated the verses of the Quran and had them written, he did not ask Muslims to note his words, nor did he intend to do so. All kinds of information other than the Quran that came to us from the Prophet must

be included in the category of human knowledge. First of all, the Quran does not allow any knowledge other than its content to be considered equivalent to it. Accordingly, the prophet and his illustrious companions did never equate it with the Prophet's own words or other information. The prerequisite for talking about Islam as a common denominator is to reach a consensus on the sources of information about Islam. Believing that Muhammad is the last prophet and that the door of revelation has been closed with Him requires not to hold any knowledge other than the Quran as equivalent to its content.

It is indeed critical to create a new awareness of Islam and its function as the common denominator in terms of the future of Islam and Muslims. For this to be achieved, it is useful to draw more attention to certain issues:

1. A proper understanding of the early period of Islam, that is, the time period in which Muhammad and His companions lived, and a common understanding of history, is an important need. However, there are different opinions of history about the post-Prophet period. While *Ahl al-Sunnah* regard the order of the caliphates as an order of virtue and sanctify the period of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali as the century of bliss, *Shiites* see the periods of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman as an illegitimate period of rule, as Ali's right was, allegedly, usurped. They also put the idea of *Twelvers* forward by idealizing the term they have lived. *Zaidiyyah* claim that the caliphate was Ali's right as he was the most virtuous one, while accepting the rule of Abu Bakr and Umar as "legitimate" although they are less virtuous. *Kharijites*, on the other hand, mentions the periods of Abu Bakr and Umar as the ideal terms. According to them, Uthman, after six months of rule, and Ali, after Al-Tahkim, fell into disbelief. These facts we are trying to identify are typical examples of different historical constructions that have become apparent about the early period of Islam and which have found basis in societies. The fact of the matter is that each denomination has built its own history of this period of time. Interestingly, no group is aware that the ideas of history have been constructed by others. If a common history has not been built and planned to be built even about the early period of Islam and no suggestion has been put forward to declare it as a problem, it will not be more than a wish to talk about the unity of Muslims. Our belief is that the perception of "Ummah" in the past and today is not based on facts, and that the pan-Islamist approach developed especially among Turks is entirely utopic. The "pan-Islamist" quests that are revived from time to time is pretty much an empty thought. For this reason, we feel the need to talk about the common denominator of Islam and its consciousness. If the epistemic foundations of this common denominator are firm and its founding principles are clear, it will always have its feet on the ground, even if the utopian dimension develops.

2. In order to raise awareness about the common denominator of Islam, we think it is useful to draw attention to the perception of "process" and the relation between "past" and "history". "Past" means everything that is left behind,

everything that happened and lived in history. History, on the other hand, is a “construct”, a “discourse” that is the product of an effort to understand the “past” based on information, documents and findings that can be passed from the “past” to later generations. Although “past” and “history” are concepts used interchangeably from time to time, they never overlap each other. In more explicit terms, the information that is present in our mind of a given time frame never means the whole of what is happening in the “past”... It is of course not possible to relive the “past”, to live it, or to change it; but our thoughts and understanding of the “past” are always rebuilt in every different time frame.

3. Every sect, even every denomination, every congregation that emerged during the history of Muslims over fourteen centuries, in some way referred itself to the time period in which the Prophet lived. In some cases, people fabricated hadiths as if told by the Prophet; in others, they resorted to them to dispraise their enemies. This situation, which initially seemed quite innocent, has led to the emergence of different histories. If each denomination builds its own history, the common denominator may not be seen, and the door is opened for sects to identify themselves with the religion itself.

4. One of the most serious obstacles to the correct understanding of the common denominator of Islam is that every sect considers itself to be the “al-Firqah an-Najiyah”, that is, the only party that has been heralded the salvation. Almost every sect, denomination and congregation claims that it is the “only party that has achieved salvation” mentioned in the famous hadith about the 73 parties. However, Islam is a religion based on individual salvation. Whosoever wills believes, and whosoever wills denies. No one suffers for somebody else’s sins. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. For man is only “recompense for what he deserves” in this world and the hereafter. Accordingly, we would like to remind that the phrase “Four Sects of Rights” refers mainly to a political determination and four living sects of jurisprudence. In fact, classifying sects as “truth” and “falsehood” is incompatible with the universality of Islam and the founding principles of the Quran because, since all denominations are human organizations, regardless how they are called, the truths and wrongs of each denomination exist spontaneously. Since it is the individual essential in Islam, “trueness” or “falsehood” of individual views can only be determined by taking the Quran as the criteria.

5. Although in our tradition there are also other organizations besides the schools of *fiqh*, if we take the Quran and the Prophet as the model as the baseline, it will not be possible to find a place for imitative faith or denominations in Islam. There can be neither a total belief in the principles of faith, nor faith in the name of sects, congregations, or denominations. Faith is something individual; one can either believe or disbelieve with free will. However, these findings cannot prevent people from feeling attachment to a sect in practice and belief, even if they often declare this

of words. It wouldn't be right to ignore the difference between "the necessary one" and "the present one". Here, while respecting individual preferences at the furthest level, it can be useful to point out that differences in belief lead to institutional structures that may replace religion rather than being pure interpretations. If there is an irreplaceable "root" and a "core" to be a basis for interpretations, it should certainly start from the principle of *Tawhid*.

## **2. Tawhid Is The Most Basic Founding Principle Of Islam**

Islam is a religion based mainly on Tawhid, that is, belief in the unity of Allah. In this aspect, Islam is the common name of the one religion that all prophets have offered humanity since Adam. Indeed, the Quran states that all prophets call people to Tawhid. Islam is not a new religion; however, it is the last link in the revelation-based religious tradition.

There is no doubt that Tawhid constitutes the essence of Islam. However, besides Tawhid, the Quran also calls people to believe in the resurrection and the fact that Muhammad is the last of the prophets. Belief in the other principles of faith can only be a matter if Tawhid exists. Tawhid is the main determinant. In this respect, Tawhid, which comes to mind when Islam is mentioned as a common denominator, is followed by the belief in the Hereafter and the Prophethood. If a person believes in these basic principles set out in the Quran, no matter who he is, no matter where he is, no matter what sect, denomination, and community he belongs to, he is accepted as a Muslim and in the circle of Islam.

The most important source of information regarding the common denominator of Islam is the Quran. Whether a matter is a basis for faith or not is directly determined by Allah. The main framework of knowledge related to these principles of faith has also been determined by the divine revelation. This means that just as a person may decide to become a Muslim by his own free will, he must also take the founding basic knowledge of faith from the Quran. Similarly, the forms of worship are determined directly by the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad has brought neither a new basis of faith nor a new worship.<sup>2</sup>

The basic founding principles of Islam present in the Quran are also the founding principles of reason. When a man uses his mind, he can find the truth. The mind always shows the truth to people. However, the mind has no power of sanction. Knowing the truth does not mean doing or choosing the right. Perhaps that is why man's need for revelation comes into the scene as an existential need. When the truths that can be found through the mind are supported by revelation, a power of sanction is put in place for its realization. The happiness of man depends

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the subject, see: Hüseyin Atay, *Kur'an'a Göre İman Esasları*, Ank. 1999.

on the effectiveness of reason and revelation together. The basic common denominator of Islam requires that reason and revelation be effective together.

The basic principles of Islam in the field of faith, worship and morality, which are present in the Quran, have clearly been exhibited during the life time of the Prophet Mohammad, through the model He practiced and the cooperation of reason and revelation. There can be no more talk of a new faith or of a new worship. Since the gate of revelation has been closed with Mohammad, all that remains is understanding and living the existing religion. For this reason, when Mohammad was alive, there were only one Muslim community; there was no group, no organization, nothing was centered upon sects, denominations, communities or a specific religious understanding.

At the point of understanding and realization of the basic common denominator of Islam, Muhammad, with his "supreme morality", has been placed as "an excellent pattern". The "pattern" that the Quran points out is one that contains "infallibility" only in the point of the revelation being delivered to the people, except that the "human" aspect is clearly known. In this respect, adherence to Sunnah is not to imitate the prophet, but to follow his model. Seeing this pattern requires first knowledge and then understanding. We cannot take the example of a prophet we do not know or understand.

Revelation is the only source of knowledge that is decisive in the knowledge dimension of Islam as the common denominator. The Quranic manuscripts were written down by the companions just after being revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. They, at the same time, memorized the verses told by the Prophet. In this way, the Quran has reached the present day both as a written text and by being transmitted from memory to memory.

The words and acts of Muhammad that have been narrated to us, namely Hadith and Sunnah, are "exemplary" in the realization of the founding principles of the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad has always kept the Quran in the forefront in His life. All the information that have reached us from Muhammad has to be evaluated in the light of the Quran and reason.

During Muhammad's life time, a group of believers accepted him as a prophet, believed that the Quran was the word of Allah, believed in Tawhid and resurrection after death. And it is not possible to say that this community belongs to any sect, community or denomination. Just as the Quran does not mention any sect, congregation or denomination, it is a known fact that such organizations did not exist at that time. If so, the period of companions is a time lived by people who were shaped by Islam as the common denominator. It is a period that contains the pure experiences that guide us and allows us to properly understand the greatness of Muhammad's work. It is possible to find in the example of companions the first

traces of how the common denominator of Islam, the ideal of creating a society dominated by morality and justice, was realized step by step. However, the period of the companions was much idealized later, and the fact that they were also "human" was ignored.

The common denominator of Islam is based on the fact that the man, who has reason and free will, been created from the "land" in the "most beautiful way", is a value in essence. The Almighty has created "man" in the most beautiful way. He called the man as the "caliph." He taught the man all the names. Man is an entity equipped with a number of creative abilities besides reason and free will. Man has a power on matter. The teaching of names also means the ability to produce words and concepts and think with them. This is where the process of becoming human begins. Allah has supported the human mind with his revelation and presented life to man as a test. In this respect, the common denominator of Islam is built on fundamental rights and freedoms. Men and women are created from the same essence. There is only one measure of superiority among people: Taqwa, that is, the consciousness of responsibility based on a high level of knowledge.

"O mankind!

We created you from a man and a woman (as equal individuals); We have divided nations and tribes for you to meet each other and to help each other. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."<sup>3</sup>

Islam is the submission of a person to Allah with a high level of knowledge and consciousness, with his own sanity and free will, in accordance with the basic principles of belief set out in the Quran: Tawhid, the hereafter and the prophethood. In other words, Islam means the surrender of man to Allah with the help of the Quran. The most basic founding principle of Islam is Tawhid, which forms the core of the call of all the prophets. Tawhid brings with it the belief in the hereafter and the prophethood. It is only possible for a person to enter into the circle of Islam by believing in these principles with his own free will. A person who enters into the circle of Islam, that is, a believer, tries to fulfill the commands and prohibitions of Allah by his own free will.

Since the gate of revelation has been closed after the death of the Prophet, no one has the right to claim that he has a special knowledge from Allah which is generally valid and whose truth cannot be disputed. The universal principles of Islam as a religion have attained the ultimate form during the Prophet's life time. For this reason, the understanding of religion exhibited in the period of the Prophet has two dimensions, universal and local. The dimension, which is not dependent on time, which is binding in terms of the future and evident especially at the point of faith, worship, morality, and ultimate goals is the universal dimension. The one which is

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<sup>3</sup> al-Hujurat, 49/13.

not universal concerns the time period in which the Prophet lived. It is not possible for this to be carried into the future as it is, and to be binding in terms of the future. However, the understanding of religion that emerged in the Prophet's life time, as a whole, is a yardstick for determining the direction of later religious formations.

All the religious formations that emerged after the death of the Prophet are forms of understanding of Islam. At this point, what matters is the forms of understanding the religion. Based on the environment they live in and the knowledge they have, people have to try to understand and live Islam in the direction predicted by the Quran. Since all human beings and phenomena are naturally open to all kinds of analysis and criticism, considering the ways of understanding of religion as religion, for whatever reason, means turning tradition into religion and narrowing the field of activity of religion. This would be against the universality of Islam, as it will lead to an understanding of religion based on the past.

It is stated in many parts of the Quran that "those who believe and do good deeds are the dwellers of paradise." The essence of faith here is Tawhid, and the backbone of righteous deeds is "to be straight headed". There is no good without faith and righteousness without honesty.

To explain Islam in the shortest way, we can remember the 13th and 14th verses of al-Ahqaf: **"Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do."** We may find similar words in Fussilat as well: **"Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], 'Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.'"**<sup>4</sup> These verses present the core of Islam to us.

As we have tried to express before, the basis of Islam in its belief dimension is Tawhid, that is, the belief that Allah exists and is one. All the prophets invited people to Tawhid. The Almighty has sent revelation as a sign of his mercy and compassion, and the prophets have warned people with this revelation. Revelation confirmed the basic truths that the human mind could easily find, made clear the belief in resurrection after death, and showed people the ways of true happiness and bliss. Islam's faith-related basic/founding principles were formed in this way. And these principles are also principles of reason. For a person to enter into the circle of Islam, it is enough to believe in these basic principles. Therefore, whoever believes in Allah with his own mind and free will, that Muhammad is his servant and messenger and that there is resurrection after death is a Muslim and is in the circle of Islam.

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<sup>4</sup> Fussilat, 41/30.



Tawhid enlightens man's world of belief and liberates him. A free man must have a sense of responsibility in order to use his energy efficiently. Tawhid also facilitates the development of a sense of responsibility. Accordingly, the Quran says that "there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives." Whoever does an atom's weight of good and an atom's weight of evil will be recompensed. In order to convert energy into righteous deeds, one must first nurture his thought, learn to think correctly with sound data, and then know what he can do and how. In short, remaining on a right course is the essential condition of being human, of being a principled human. The man who becomes conscious with the contribution of worship places the principle of "remaining on a right course" on the basis of all his thoughts, behaviors and actions and remains on this path.

Remaining on a right course depends on the consistency and harmony between the subconscious and consciousness, consciousness and word and discourse and action. Muslims have to know that the most important matter that Islam wants from us in terms of behaviors to "remain on the right course". Basic Islamic devotions enhance individual awareness and consciousness of one's own existence, making it easier to live "as if you see Allah". When justice, the founding principle of creation, is transformed into a way of life, a culture of high trust is created; it becomes a natural behavior to "remain on the right course" in the individual and social aspects. Let's also note that before Muhammad became a prophet, he was a "confident", straight forward, credible, and trustworthy person. The Quran says that He is the excellent pattern and orders Him to "remain on a right course as you have been commanded."<sup>5</sup> Is it possible not to miss righteousness and remaining on the right course? Seemingly, we've lost this feature in the essence of religion.

### **3. Sects are Human Formations that Emerged after the Death of the Prophet**

The sects that we can call Islamic "schools of thought in the field of belief and deeds" are manifestations of the ways the religion is understood. Political, social, economic, geographical, historical, and similar other reasons have led to gatherings around specific ideas or individuals in terms of understanding the religion. Thus, there have been some differences in this understanding. The fact that these differences started to affect thoughts and behaviors by gaining systematic characteristics over time, and continue to exist by becoming institutionalized and leaving deep traces in social life introduces the phenomenon of "sect" to us. We can briefly describe this as follows: Sects are the human organizations which occur due to the institutionalization of religious differences.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hud, 11/112.

<sup>6</sup> Hasan Onat, "Mezhep Kavramı ve Mezheplerin Doğuş Sebepleri", *Osh İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Osh, 2005. Cf. E. Ruhi Fıglalı, *Günüümüz İslam Mezhepleri*, İzmir, 2008, 15-16.

The most important point that draws attention in this definition is that sects are **human** formations. The fact that sects are often perceived as “religion” and that the phrase “non-sectarian” is sometimes used in the sense of “non-religious” is often caused by ignorance. The fact of the matter is that the nature of man's being requires every person to have a unique approach in his/her understanding of religion. Individual different understandings, however, are by no means seen as sectarian. To speak of sects, different styles of understanding must be adopted by a community.

The second important consideration is that differences of understanding should go beyond individual approaches, become the common perspective and leave a mark in social life. This is the institutionalization phase of different understandings. At this point, the differentiation in understanding that has emerged in society becomes visible. In other words, a common mindset forming the thoughts of the people who came together comes to existence and some of its manifestations and effects in social life begin to be seen clearly. The sectarianization of any form of understanding depends on its creation and institutionalization of a distinctive mindset. Institutionalization is a sign that the sect's existence is gaining continuity. Differences that do not have continuity cannot be called sects.

After the death of Muhammad, for various reasons, Muslims began to understand religion differently and to produce different opinions. These differentiations can be taken as the first phase of the process that prepares the formation of denominations. Since every human being is a world in his own right, a unique dimension in the understanding of religion is inevitable. Moreover, this unique dimension can provide enormous wealth in an atmosphere of love, respect, and tolerance. However, the natural desire for organization, politics, economics, social change, in short, some reasons arising from the structure of the human being and the conditions in which he lives, lead the process starting with differentiation towards the institutionalization stage. As a result, thousands of different understandings and sects emerge.

In the history of Islamic thought, the term refers to both political and faith-related formations, as well as fiqh-related and practical ones. Especially in Turkish, the term sect is used to express both fields. In Arabic, the differences in political and religious areas are more often expressed by the word “**party**”. The word “*firqah*”, which derives from the root of “*faraqah*”, which means “to distinguish two things, to reveal that one is different from the other”, can be said to be used in a sense “to denigrate and disparage the beliefs that lead to the factionalism and the ideas that lead to the separation of Muslims”. The Quran commands in Ali ‘Imran, Verse 103, “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided” and condemns separation, division, and factionalism.

The history of Islamic sects is a branch of science that studies the political and religious sects, which are mostly defined by the concept of “*firqah*”, and explores the “schools of Islamic thought”. The history of Islamic sects is only interested in the fiqh-

related and practical denominations in terms of their faith dimensions that bring a dominant color and unique mentality. To put it by example, the tradition of thought from which Abu Hanifa came, his understanding of Islam and the formation of Hanafism as a sect are investigated by historians of Islamic sects. The fiqh dimension is the subject of the scholars of fiqh.

The sects of jurisprudence have emerged due to differences of opinion in the field of fiqh regarding its name and, more clearly, the differences in jurisprudence that leave a lasting mark on society. However, this does not mean that the sects and their founders do not have views on faith issues. From the example of Hanafism, we more easily explain what we actually mean. Abu Hanifa, one of the greatest scholars of his time, makes a living by trade, and educates students, produces solutions to people's problems on religious issues, and answers their questions. These problems and questions are more about the flow of everyday life. The answers on these issues should address the needs of the community so that its power may even be felt in the future (the present day). His disciples, especially Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, made the views of Abu Hanifa more understandable, and by following his path and tradition and by applying the method he had set out, they established Hanafism as a permanent sect. In this context, we know that from time to time his students oppose some of Abu Hanifa's views, that he asks why and what evidence they are based on, and that he agrees with the views of his students when he finds them reasonable. This makes it clear that neither Abu Hanifa nor his disciples regard his views as the religion itself. It is also important to understand the relationship between religion and fiqh that Imam Al-Shafi'i changed some of his earlier views after going to Egypt.

There was no such sect as Hanafism in Abu Hanifa's life time. Hanafism emerged after his death. These points we are trying to explain show that the sects of jurisprudence are not reactionary, and that the ground upon which the sectarian understanding sits have already been established. A distinctive "procedure" is formed during the development process of the sect. This ensures that the new jurisprudence of the fiqh-related sects is in accordance with the understanding of knowledge it is based on, as well as its basic principles and the methods applied, leads to an accumulation. In short, in fiqh sects, the theoretical framework becomes ready even before the sectarianization process begins.

In the emergence of sects with political and belief dimensions at the forefront, the negativity of politics and the current environment has always been more decisive. First, people put out their reactions in some way, the events increased the build-up of anger, and then the sect's views became systematic, especially in the quest of legitimacy. Kharijites are the best example to this description. After the Battle of Siffin and the appointment of an arbitrator, those who broke away from Ali's force gathered in a place called Harura. The search for reconciliation had failed, they fought against Ali's force in Nahrawan and a considerable number of them were slaughtered. Later, gradually, the theory of external differentiation in the dimension of belief was formed and opinions became more systematic.

#### **4. Sects Are not the Religion, They cannot be Substituted for Religion**

Because sects are manifestations of the way religion is understood, for whatever reason, it is not possible to identify the concepts of sect with the religion itself. First of all, this is impossible according to the science of history; for, there was no sect in Muhammad's life time.

Since the gate of Revelation has been closed with the death of the Prophet, no one has the right to claim receiving special knowledge from Allah which is generally valid and whose truth cannot be disputed. If so, whoever, whatever he says about religion in the name of religion, expresses his own interpretation and understanding in the human aspect. No interpretation of Islam is Islam itself.

The universal principles that constitute the essence of Islam are clearly stated in the Quran. The Prophet understood, explained, and implemented Islam both as an "exemplary" person who conveyed the revelation from Allah to the people and as a "pattern", as it is narrated by the Quran. For this reason, the understanding of religion exhibited in the period of the Prophet has two dimensions, universal and local. The dimension, which is not dependent on time, which is binding in terms of the future and evident especially at the point of faith, worship, morality, and ultimate goals is the universal dimension. The one which is not universal concerns the time period in which the Prophet lived. It is not possible for this to be carried into the future as it is, and to be binding in terms of the future. However, the understanding of religion that emerged in the Prophet's life time, as a whole, is a yardstick for determining the direction of later religious formations.

The the religious formations that emerged after the death of the Prophet are forms of understanding of Islam. The identification of such formations, which are completely human, with Islam would be contrary to both the universality of Islam and the nature of human. At this point, what matters is the forms of understanding the religion. Based on the environment they live in and the knowledge they have, people have to try to understand and live Islam in the direction predicted by the Quran. Since all human beings and phenomena are naturally open to all kinds of analysis and criticism, considering the ways of understanding of religion as religion, for whatever reason, means turning tradition into religion and narrowing the field of activity of religion. This would be against the universality of Islam, as it will lead to an understanding of religion based on the past.

On the other hand, as the identification of a sect with the religion itself would mean converting denominations into religions, it would lead to the closure of differences of understanding, new pursuits and new thoughts, which are the products of human effort. Every sect naturally has its rights and wrongs. Accordingly, sects are dynamic formations, although people don't want to see; as long as they survive, they become rebuilt in every time frame. In this process, some mistakes can become permanent if they are perceived as religion. Dynamism is provided by jurisprudence in the fiqh-related sects, and *mujtahids* sometimes do not hesitate to change their

jurisprudence. In faith-related sects, when comments about faith are perceived as religion, it is forgotten that it is only interpretation, and if it is wrong, it can last for generations.

Furthermore, the fact that Muslims easily declare one another infidel because of sectarian differences also stems from the perception that religion and sect are identical. A person who thinks that only his own sect is Islam can easily push those who do not think like him out of the Islamic circle.

**5. To be a Muslim, one doesn't need to be affiliated to any sect, community or denomination.**

The people who embraced Islam in Muhammad's life time developed an understanding of religion directly based on the Quran and the pattern exhibited by the Prophet Muhammad. Thus a tradition was built that later generations would find themselves in. Everyone born of a Muslim parent is born into this tradition and has the opportunity to learn and experience a lot of things about Islam even without being aware of them. In the historical stream, some new traditions have formed within or on the edge of this tradition. The formations that we call sects have continued to exist by leaving a mark in social life with their mentality, knowledge, and institutional structures. It seems that despite everything, whether we are a party or against this tradition, such institutions will always exist. The important point here is to know which tradition we come from and which tradition cannot be identified with Islam in any way.

To be a Muslim, there can be no obligation to be connected to any sect, community or denomination. Above all, faith is individual. No matter what sect/community we are in, no matter what tradition we come from, we decide with our own free will whether or not and how and why to believe. In the words of the Quran, "whoever so wills may believe and whoever so wills may deny." There is no belonging to a community among the basic principles of faith mentioned in the Quran. It is also necessary to state that there is nothing as believing in Islam as a community. We cannot believe collectively as a community, nor can we trust collectively in a set of principles to believe in. The fact that faith is individual requires firm and reliable knowledge of what is to be believed, and then "affirmation", which is to be realized by free will. Man can only believe in what he knows; there is no faith without knowledge. Such that even when we think we believe without knowledge, knowledge comes into the scene even if at the lowest level.

Being adherent to any sect, community or denomination has nothing to do with religion itself, nor does leaving or abandoning it have. A person who, though without intention, finds himself in any community should be able to leave without hesitation if he does not like the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of that community.

The groups that try to prevent their followers from leaving makes clear that their views are not actually sound. Devoid of mental foundations, forms of belief attempt to maintain their existence by neutralizing the mind.

Being affiliated with any sect, community or denomination does not mean being better Muslims, nor being independent is a lack. From Islam's point of view, faith and responsibility are individual; whoever deserves it goes to heaven. Being adherent to a group never means being heralded with the heaven.

If a Muslim is able to reach the level of *ijtihad*, understand the Quran and the accumulation of Muslims and thus make judgments, and can produce permanent solutions to new problems, he does not have to follow any sect in the field of fiqh. However, it is worth remembering that it is not easy to get rid of the whole circle of influence of the tradition that the man comes from. Even those who think that sects tear Muslims apart have to remember that their understanding of religion is influenced by the tradition they are exposed to.

## 6. The 73-Sects Hadith and the Matter of "Four True Sects"

In some narratives attributed to the Prophet, it is stated that the Jews will be 71, the Christians will be 72 and the Muslims will be 73 different groups. The hadith that mentions this fact is called "73-Sects Hadith". The version of this hadith as narrated by Ibn Majah is as follows: "The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell. It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He said: "The main body."<sup>7</sup> Tirmidhi, on the other hand, mentions this one sect as: "What I am upon and my Companions."<sup>8</sup>

It is of course debatable whether this hadith is true or not. Indeed, there are those who say that it is fabricated, just as there are those who say that it is true.<sup>9</sup> What concerns us here is the importance of this hadith in terms of the history of Islamic sects. Almost every emerging denomination, every sect, sub-branches of the sect and every congregation claims to be the "group of salvation" based on this hadith, and those who author work in this area have tended to keep the number of sects as 73 most of the time.<sup>10</sup> The only acceptable aspect of the hadith is seen only if

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<sup>7</sup> Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, ed.: Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi, Beirut 1975, V. II, p. 1322.

<sup>8</sup> Tirmidhi, *Jami*, ed.: K. Yusuf al-Hut, Beirut 1987, V. V, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> See. Mevlüt Özler, *İslam Düşüncesinde 73 Fırka Kavramı*, İstanbul 1996; Ahmet Keleş, "73 Fırka Hadisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme", *Marife*, Year 3, Issue 3, Winter 2005, 25-45.

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis in terms of the History of Sects, see. Kadir Gömbeyaz, "73 Fırka Hadisinin Mezhepler Tarihi Kaynaklarında Fırkaların Tasnifine Etkisi", *Uludağ Ü. İlahiyat Fak. Dergisi*, Vol.: 14, Issue: 2, 2005, 147-160.

it is understood as a warning to Muslims. The narratives stating that 73 sects will go to hell are indeed against both to the Quran's call for unity and to the fact that only the deserving individual will go to heaven or hell. It is also contrary to the statements of the prophet who likened Muslims to the organs of a body or the tines of a comb. Moreover, considering that the Prophet has no knowledge of "the unseen" outside of the Quran, we can say that at least the part of this hadith about those who will go to heaven or hell was made up later. Indeed, early scholars have pointed out that narrations about the apocalypse and the future, especially the news about "fitan", may have been fabricated.

Beyond the matter regarding whether it is true or not, the 73-sects hadith contradicts with the truth that "faith" and "responsibility" is only individual according to the Quran. In Islam, there can be no collective belief in the principles of faith, nor belief in a specific community. Every man believes or does not believe of his own free will. While the Quran points out that "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion" (2/256), it also states that no one can suffer another's sin. There is no guarantee of going to heaven with a specific group, sect, group, community or sect, nor is it possible to say that people are going to hell in communities. Whoever does an atom's weight of good and an atom's weight of evil will be recompensed.

On the other hand, a classification of the right and wrong sects can only have a meaning in determining sects whose basic principles are clearly contrary to the Quran. However, since sects are human-made, every sect, regardless of its name, may have true, Quranic views and opinions, and may have views and ideas that are completely contrary to Islam. There may be people who choose the category of "infidels" among the members of the so-called true sects, and there may be people who are able to become "a human being as Allah wills" among groups considered as "evil".

What is meant by the phrase "four true sects" is the four schools of fiqh alive. These are Hanafism, Malikism, Shafiism and Hanbalism. However, hundreds of schools of fiqh and hundreds of sects have emerged among Muslims. But few of them have had the chance to react to the present day. Limiting the number of true sects to these four would mean ignoring hundreds of others that have emerged throughout the history of Islam.

We can see that the formation processes of the sects mentioned in the expression "the four true sects" are a period of about one hundred years between the second half of the second hijri century and the first half of the third hijri century. Hundreds of schools of fiqh have emerged in this time period and later. We know that a significant number of them have no supporters left in a short time. Some of them shaped the religious understanding of Muslims for a long time, then melted into

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different sects. We can cite Awza'ism as an example. Awza'ism is a sect that has been decisive in shaping the religious understanding of Andalusian Muslims. In Andalusia, another school of fiqh called al-Zahiriyyah also emerged around Ibn Hazm's views.

The “four true sects” have historically been a politically prominent concept, with the aim of narrowing the field of Shiite thought and strengthening the Sunni base after the collapse of the Fatimid Caliphate in 567/1171. Eventually, only the belief of the individuals, not the denominations, may be right or evil. And it is no one's business to judge that. It is against Islam and reason to justify and condemn people over their sectarian affiliations.

As we have stated before, the religion of Islam is based on individual salvation. Every person who believes in the basic principles of Islam set out in the Quran, no matter what sect he adheres to, is in the circle of Islam. A Muslim is a member of the “true sect”, regardless of its name. More clearly, a person who sincerely believes in the basic principles of faith set out in the Quran is on “as-Sirat al-mustaqim”, as the Quran says, that is, he is on a straight path, the path those whom Allah has bestowed his favor upon. Since the term sect refers to the way to go, can one think of a sect that would be more “right” than that?

### **Conclusion and Remarks**

When Muhammad passed away, with the most optimistic estimate, there were around 16000 people living in Medina. The population of Muslims living on Earth today is above 1.600.000. The founding principles of the Quran, which met mankind in the Cave of Hira with the command “Read!” and Islam, which began to be institutionalized around the “pattern” of Muhammad, formed the core of a civilization and culture by meeting with different cultures and values system in different geographies, and also responded to people's need for “religion”. One of the most important issues that we should be aware of in this context is the fact that the “religion” in its core and its institutionalized states, the former of which being subject to change and transformation by weaving with tradition, culture, and different values, are not identical. There is clearly only one Islam, but a great number of Muslims, form of understanding of Islam have emerged in the historical process, and will emerge thereafter. The most obvious evidence of this finding is the “human” formations that emerged under the name of sect, community and denomination, which in no way can be identified with Islam. The reason we are talking about “Islam” in its core and various forms of understanding regarding it is that certain institutional structures of religious quality attempt to establish themselves in place of religion or that some people identify their own sects, communities, and denominations with Islam.



The presence of all kinds of sects and similar religious formations is not a matter of debate. Even the claims that they do not have a place in Islam and the efforts to fight against them would not change this reality. However, the problem is not the existence of sects and similar organizations; it is their identification with Islam. The identification of such organizations with the religion itself must be largely related to the consciousness of the common denominator of Islam, which has no impact today. The fact that "the understanding of process" has not had the opportunity for healthy development in the Islamic world also seems to have hindered the proper understanding and evaluation of the processes of change and transformation. No sect, which is only a form of the understanding of Islam, has reached the later generations as it was born, nor can any form of understanding resist change. The views and opinions of every denomination of any time period can be right or wrong. In this respect, it is not meaningful for Islam to say that a sect is "right" or "wrong". Sectarian affiliations can neither guarantee a man's faith nor require his being considered un-Islamic.

What has happened in the Islamic world, especially in the last two centuries, has led Muslims into a serious existential crisis. This crisis is turning into a conflict over ethnic and religious affiliations. It is not wrong to say that the search for identity lies at the heart of what is happening today in the Arab world. The colonial environment that has marked the last two centuries has led to the reduction of Islam to a kind of liberation ideology and the reading of religion not over meaning and freedom but political sovereignty. A significant number of Muslims think that political sovereignty is everything and that religion and politics cannot be separated from each other. Politics is inherently discriminant. When the language of religion was integrated with the discriminant language of politics, Muslims began to move away from the common denominator of Islam. Thus, religion, which should be unifying in its essence, has become a door to legitimacy for some separatist positions. In this process, perhaps for the first time in the history of Muslims, the negativity experienced began to be read through Shi'ism, or Sunnism, and to be blessed and legitimized in the name of blood, Sunnism, or Shi'ism. Open or secret sectarian controversies and conflicts over religious affiliations continue in various geographies. Unfortunately, the worst part is that the problem is indeed a problem of freedom, that ignorance and hammock prevent self-criticism, and that the solution lies primarily in the consciousness of individuals and the true knowledge to think freely about religion. Muslims' view of Islam is largely akin to the famous definition of a visually impaired of an elephant. It is forgotten that religious formations like sects, congregations, denominations and etc. appeared after the death of the Prophet, and these are substituted for religion.

On the other hand, although some of the problems in the geography where Muslims live are related to "religion" in some way, the neglect of "human" in the focus of the process, the consumerism embraced a way of life and the internalization of oppression make it easier to legitimize all kinds of problems and

distortions abusing the “religion”. In this context, it is a necessity to raise serious awareness on two issues: First, what is religion or what is not, and second, whether or not to be a Muslim at the ultimate stage is a decision that an individual will make with his/her own mind and free will. No one has the right and authority to determine whether a person is a Muslim or not. Allah has never given anyone, including the Prophet Muhammad, a duty to convert another to Islam. Muslims strongly need “critical thinking” that will be effective in all areas of life. Otherwise, we will lose our religion, Islam, while trying to religionize matters.

These words do not mean that Muslims do not have problems in other areas, such as economy and education. It is always possible to overcome these and similar other problems. But without the awareness of freedom and justice, no problem can be permanently resolved. When religion is at the center of conflict and dissociation, the mind and the will that are necessary to solve the problems lose their power. On the downside, the possibility of realizing that the wrongs that have been done are wrong has disappeared. In the Islamic world, religion, unfortunately, acts only as a legitimizer; as a result, problems that can be easily overcome turn into gangrene, and some power elites maintain their existence by feeding on problems. The interpretation of power struggles and conflicts of interest through sects both facilitates the work of those who feed on problems and also provides the legitimization of attitudes, thoughts and actions contrary to reason and revelation. It is possible to prevent both sectarian conflict and religious abuse. For this reason, first of all, it is necessary to know that faith and responsibility are individual. Thus, it will be understood that it is not appropriate for Islam to convict anyone on the basis of their belonging to the sect. In our opinion, it is difficult to avoid a conflict that will affect the whole Islamic world without understanding Islam through freedom and developing a healthy individual consciousness. Awareness of Islam as the common denominator may provide insight about the fact that marginalization due to religious affiliations can never be seen as legitimate. Regarding something wrong as legitimate is more dangerous than doing the wrong itself.

In order for the consciousness of Islam as the common denominator to be effective, to be able to understand the sectarian conflict that the Islamic world is being dragged into, and to develop proper solutions, the following significant measures can be taken into consideration:

1. Whatever category they are considered in, religious sects are human organizations that emerged after the death of the Prophet and were instrumental in shaping the religious understanding of Muslims. The institutionalization of different Islamic understandings has created sects. Opposing sects does not diminish their power of influence, but complicates the problem further. It is necessary to see them as a sociological reality, a fact, and to avoid opposing them. There was no sect, community, or denomination in Muhammad's life time. Such human organizations cannot be identified with religion. Sects are human but the religion is divine. Every sect naturally has its rights and wrongs. Each

denomination has changed and transformed and reached later generations. Trying to understand sects through the consciousness of the common denominator of Islam means understanding different religious understandings put forward by Muslims.

2. When the consciousness of the common denominator of Islam dissolves, it becomes easier for sects and similar organizations to put themselves in the place of religion. Every religious formation falls under the illusion that it represents Islam itself. As a result, society begins to divide into sectarian groups. People who believe in the same religion, when it comes to sectarian beliefs, transfer the inclusive nature of the religion to the sect they adhere to and read and evaluate the adherence to the religion through sects. More clearly, traditions in general, and sects and similar formations in particular, begin to be sanctified.

3. The issue of political sovereignty was the primary determinant in the formation process of the sects and their continued existence. Sovereign powers want to legitimize their actions in order to continue their activities. In this process, the legitimizing dimension of religion can be used more effectively through sects. In the same way, the opposing forces looking for an opportunity to dominate, look for the support of the sects in order to be heard better, to erode the authority and to open the way to political power. The support that religion does not want to give, can be obtained more easily through sects. Positions contrary to common sense about legitimacy in individual conflicts of interest can easily be rendered invisible within thought patterns related to any denomination.

4. The structures of sects, communities, and denominations can allow some individual and social demands that Islam does not approve of to gain some kind of legitimacy-albeit fake - by settling into tradition. For example, Islam does not allow a goal to be achieved by forbidden means, no matter how high it is.

5. Almost every sect, denomination, and congregation claims that it is the “only party that has achieved salvation”. However, in fact, they are nothing but human organizations. Not only does it exacerbate the othering of those who do not think the same way, but it also encourages people not to hesitate to kill each other because of their sectarian differences. In addition, since people learn about religious sects, it is hardly noticed that sects are human formations. Sects and other religious formations facilitate the legitimization of separatist opinions.

6. The dissolution of the consciousness of the common denominator of Islam has made it easier for sects to be identified with religion. As a result, the consciousness of Islam as a common denominator has been neutralized, and made it difficult for Muslims to comprehend the differences in their knowledge about religion and the veins of critical thinking have started to clog up.

7. To prevent the legitimization of takfir is directly related to the development of Islamic common denominator consciousness. No one who says “I

am a Muslim” can be considered otherwise. And sectarian differences can never be the reason.

8. We believe that the concept of “four true sects” causes the consciousness of Islam as a common denominator to lose its meaning. This understanding reduces Islam to Hanafism, Malikism, Shafiism and Hanbalism. Islam cannot be under a monopoly of a sect, nor will it allow any sect to be identified with Islam. There may be people far from the “truth” even in groups regarded the most “righteous”; while, there can be people highly close to it though being adherent to denominations that are categorized out of the “four true sects.” It is worth remembering that faith and responsibility are individual.

9. The consciousness of Islam as a common denominator can also shed light on the understanding of where some religious formations and mentalities, which has not been institutionalized, stand in terms of Islam. When we read the past correctly and properly, we can more easily identify that many of the formations that claim to bring “innovation” are fed from the past. None of the formations that break loose from the integrity of Islam and institutionalize the views that are contrary to it have been able to live for long terms. The roots of a significant part of the problems that afflict us today lay in the past. The mindsets and movements such as “Salafism”, which are the focus of discussions, often feed on the past, but they do not produce permanent solutions to the current problems. On the contrary, they prevent the understanding of the universality of Islam. Islam is a religion based on life and peace.

10. If the consciousness that accepts Islam as a common denominator is developed, people may see that understanding the different sects is a responsibility that comes with being a Muslim, and sects can be understood as a wealth.

There have been hundreds of sectarian conflicts in the history of Muslims over fourteen centuries. These conflicts were not only between Shiites and Sunnis, but also between Hanafis and Shafiis. However, they have always remained local; the suffering has not tarnished the future of Muslims by turning into chosen trauma. Today, the Islamic world faces the risk of a sectarian conflict that could easily spread through the domino effect. In Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, sectarian conflict is de facto ongoing. Hundreds of people are brutally murdered just because they are of different denominations. When blood is spilled in the name of a group, real blood feuds begin. The blood thickens the wall between adversaries and feeds the hatred and anger. At a later stage, it causes suffering to turn into chosen trauma.

Moreover, it is important to remember that those who are unable to produce meaning and value by using the creative abilities bestowed by Almighty Allah will find it very difficult to comprehend that Islam is a religion based on life and peace and that accepts justice as the founding principle, and that such people will see themselves and others as “objects” under the influence of oppression. The high

universal values of Islam are needed not only by Muslims, but by all humanity. Islam asks people to be aware of their own existence, to use reason effectively and to produce value by converting their energy into righteous deeds. Those who cannot participate in the universal creation process with “righteous deeds” will only burn, destroy, and kill.

Islam is a religion based on life and peace, which places science and world reconstruction on Muslims as a responsibility. In the processes we have been passing through, Muslims have been excluded from both knowledge and value production. They almost do not hesitate to use all their energy and scarce resources to consume each other. In fact, the high universal values of Islam are needed not only by Muslims, but by all humanity. In this context, being a Muslim requires being aware of this heavy responsibility. If we are to claim a new civilization, we have to see there is no other way out but to possess the power of science and produce value on a universal scale. As long as the blood of innocent people continues to be spilled, what is spoken in the name of religion, what is written and what is done will not be meaningless. For this reason, the mechanism of takfir, which legitimizes the bloodshed, needs to be eliminated as soon as possible. And this would not be possible without an awareness of Islam as a common denominator. For a new civilization, a new understanding of science, a new technology is needed; this cannot be possible without getting rid of the hypotec of the history and understanding the past properly and without seeing the achievements of humanity. Individually and socially, there is a need for an understanding for the sake of Muslims and their futures that accepts “human” as a value. This understanding should also contain the awareness that religion itself is only for mankind and to serve a decent life to him. The first step of this is to develop a consciousness of Islam as a common denominator and to be aware of our own existence; to know that we can be Muslim as we know and that we can be valuable as we produce values. Islam is not a monopoly of anyone or any group; Allah has not given anyone a duty to convert people to Islam. No one has the right or authority to determine how someone else will become a Muslim. In order for a person to become a Muslim, it is sufficient to believe in the basic principles of faith (Tawhid, the Hereafter, and Prophethood) as set out in the Quran.

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# The Nature of Religious Grouping: Personalities, Mentalities, Religious, Communities, Sects

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## Abstract

Religious grouping, which includes practical and political sects, has life cycle which is open to transformations similar to a human life. Humans and some fundamental concepts of society, which take place at the center of religious groupings, gain importance in that context. In that sense, personalities and mentalities are held separately in this article. The reasons that pave the way for the emergence of the sects, are examined from the psycho-social and socio-politic aspects. Besides, some explanations are given on sociological stages of the formation of sects. All these efforts are the key data to understand the unknown nature of religious groupings which consists of sectarianism.

**Keywords:** Religious Grouping, Sect, Community

## Dini Gruplaşmanın Doğası: Kişilikler, Zihniyetler, Cemaatler, Mezhepler

## Özet

İtikadi ve siyasi mezhepleri de ihtiva eden dini gruplaşmalar, çok yönlü etkileşimler içinde ve tıpkı bir insan hayatını andırır biçimde bir yaşam döngüsüne sahiptirler. Dini gruplaşmaların merkezinde yer alan insan unsuru ve toplum ile alakalı bazı temel kavramlar bu bağlamda önem kazanır. Kişilikler ve zihniyetler bu açıdan çalışmamızda ayrı ayrı ele alınmaktadır. Mezheplerin doğuşunu hazırlayan nedenler ise psiko-sosyal ve sosyo-politik yönleriyle incelenmektedir. Ayrıca mezheplerin oluşumunun sosyolojik aşamalarına açıklamalar getirilmektedir. Bütün bunlar, mezhepleşmeyi de içine alan dini gruplaşma olgusunun çok bilinmeyen doğasını bizlere açan verilerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dinî Gruplaşma, Mezhep, Cemaat

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It should be noted first that religious groupings, including religious and political sects, are in multifaceted interactions and in a life cycle similar to a human life. What we mean is that behind the events that led to a birth, births and of course deaths later on; growth, developments, mergers, changes from state to state, countless interactions between birth and death; or the break ups, shrinkages, wastes, and similar other formations and phases are natural phenomena that relate to these social entities. Before we move on to our main issue, which is sectarianism, we will need to open up some basic concepts related to the human element and society, which we consider at its heart. The first of these is the concept of personality. The dynamics of religious grouping and sectarianism cannot be understood without understanding the nature of the human personality.

### 1. Personalities

All of the continuous psychological characteristics that distinguish one person from another and make him or her that person form the personality. In terms of our subject, personality should be dealt with in two aspects. First, the mentality we will explain in the next section is a concept that is in contact. Personality drives our movements and indirectly becomes one of the factors that constitute the mindset, which is “the common reference pattern internalized by a society.” Mindsets can also be defined as “social personalities”. The second point is that different personality types are an implicit determinant of which group structures people will participate in. *The Psychology of Religious Sects: In the classical Comparison of Types* (New York, 1912), McComas bases the birth of religious groups on the fact that different people have different spiritual needs and seek places suitable for their emotions, personality, and character to meet these needs. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that various groups of violent, conciliatory, reformist, rational, traditionalist, and reclusive types have been formed and developed in the hands of individuals who are relatively more capable of these qualities.<sup>1</sup>

If we further our discussion, without going into any technical discussions on the basis of the theory of the five most accepted and most used factors (Big Five) in personality psychology today, we can see that different personality traits are classified around the following five main factors given below:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a study classifying the differences in Islamic discourse based on this theory, see. Sönmez Kutlu, “İslam Düşüncesinde Tarihsel Din Söylemleri Olgusu”, *İslamiyat*, 4/4 (2001), p. 15-36.

<sup>2</sup> For more about the Five-Factor Model, see. J. M. Digman, “Personality Structure: Emergence of the Five-Factor Model”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 41 (1990), p. 417-440; Robert R. McCrae, Oliver P. John, “An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and its Applications”, *Journal of Personality*, 60/2, p. 175-215. For use cases of this theory in religious psychology, see. Vassilis Saraglou, “Gençlerin Dinleri ve Kişilikleri: Belçika’da Yapılan Yeni İncelemeler”, Trans. Veysel Uysal, *Marmara Ü. İlahiyat F. Dergisi*, 19 (2000), p. 123-144; V. Saraglou, A. Munoz-Garcia, “Individual Differences in Religion and Spirituality: An Issue of Personality Traits and/or Values”, *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 47/1 (2008), p. 83-101.



a. Extraversion Factor: The factor that represents extravert and dynamic attitudes in social relations. It reflects the personality of people who are light-hearted, sociable, energetic, social, talkative, warm-blooded, approachable, like to be on the move and carry positive emotions. In extreme cases, it manifests as an obsession with interest and an appetite for being dominant, while in low cases it refers to a cold, apprehensive, timid, shy, isolated, nerdy, conservative, and imitative personality.

b. Agreeableness Factor: It is the factor that indicates positive characteristics in one's relationships with other people. Being friendly, helpful, empathetic, generous, and compassionate are the most obvious attributes in this case. In its extreme states, it displays pure, naive, and submissive themes, while in its low states it exhibits a skeptical, discriminative, objector, argumentative, ambitious, and hostile personality.

c. Conscientiousness Factor: It is the factor that indicates responsibility, self-controlled, orderly, systematic, methodical, planned thinking and acting. The will to succeed reflects the personalities of people who are proactive, who have a sense of duty and who are therefore trusted, also, who are able to do productive work in an organized manner. In its extreme state, headstrong and assertive, obsessive personalities appear, while in their low state people show unstable, variable, disorganized, careless, reckless, and easygoing themes. These people are often considered not reliable as they are not systematic and planned and tend to think and act spontaneously.

d. Emotional Stability Factor: It is the factor that references both balance and imbalance (*neuroticism*). Individuals with this balance are calm people who can control their natural urges but on the one hand can experience their natural sensuality and project it outwards. Indifference, on the other hand, is an extreme state and leads to very faint, apathetic personality images. If the balance is not in place, this factor results in anxiety, depression, uneasiness, vulnerability, anger, and outburst.

e. Openness to Experience Factor: It is the factor that represents curious and creative thinking and attitude. People who are proponents of innovation, who are open to adventure and new experiences, are those who have a strong but realistic imagination that is influenced by this factor. In extreme cases, an unpredictable personality condition occurs, which makes their lives a gambling game as if they are taking serious risks. In its low state, the factor manifests itself through attitudes of stability and measure, but this conservative situation manifests as a hostility to innovation and change.

Where are these personality traits born, developed and turn into stable states? Two factors are mentioned in the answer to this question. The first of these is hereditary transmission and the second is environment. By environment, we are talking about family, friends, school and education, culture, geography and climate. It is stated that the effect of heredity and environment on personalities is about half

as much, personality is open to change in a certain extent until thirties, but it becomes permanent and does not change much.<sup>3</sup>

The concepts of temperament and character should also be brought up in this context. Temperament refers to the way of affectivity and is more concerned with the hereditary side of personality, besides being more or less related to the chemistry of the body. Impatient, cold-blooded, cheerful, witty, introverted, excited, etc. states of being is a variety of temperament symptoms. Characters are learned properties and more susceptible to change. Personal traits that emerge in accordance with accepted and moral social values refer to the good character, while the opposite points to the bad character. Truth, falsehood, honesty, dishonesty, envy, sedition, kindness, and etc., are various manifestations of the character. Here personality is a combination of the temperament that comes genetically and the character that is acquired later.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that people adherent to the same religion or sect have different religious thoughts and attitudes is related to personal traits and mentalities. For example, some of the different personal traits mentioned above can be seen more in some sects and religious groups and less in others.

## 2. Ideologies

Mucchielli describes the mindset as “the implicit reference system of a social group”. A social group can become homogeneous through a shared common understanding. With this reference system, society begins to “see things in certain ways” and therefore to show behaviors and reactions appropriate to this perception.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, mentality creates a dynamic and vibrant synthesis of each community, and the elements of this synthesis are inherent in each of the members of the society. Thus, the mindset governs the thoughts and creativity of individuals in particular and of society in general; demands, problems and concerns appear and are shaped according to this mindset.<sup>6</sup>

The immanence of the mindset in people is defined as follows: “Before knowing what kind of origin it comes from, we absorb it together with the particles of air we inhale. These particles we inhale naturally survive and become the

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<sup>3</sup> See: K. Jang, W. C. Livesley, P. A. Vemon, “Heritability of the Big Five Personality Dimensions and Their Facets: A Twin Study”, *Journal of Personality*, 64/3 (1996), p. 577-591; Thomas Bouchard, Matt McGue, “Genetic and Environmental Influences on Human Psychological Differences”, *Journal of Neurobiology*, 54/1 (2003), p. 4-45.

<sup>4</sup> Aslıhan Sayın, Selçuk Aslan, “Duygulanım Bozuklukları ile Huy, Karakter ve Kişilik İlişkisi”, *Türk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 16/4 (2005), p. 277; Bedri Katipoğlu, “Din Psikolojisi Açısından Kişilik ve Karakter Analizi”, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 5/23 (2012), p. 343.

<sup>5</sup> Alex Mucchielli, *Zihniyetler*, Trans. Ahmet Kotil, İstanbul, 1991, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Gaston Bouthoul, *Zihniyetler: Kişi ve Toplum Arasında Zihin Yapısına Dair Psikososyolojik Bir İnceleme*, Trans. Selmin Evrim, İstanbul, 1975, p. 5.

dominant idea. It's always what we have in our conversations, in our thoughts every day. Even a baby internalizes the ideas and attitudes he/she observes within the society he/she is born into".<sup>7</sup> But in order to be defined as a mindset, this "form of suggestion" or "world view", which settles into both the conscious and subconscious mind, needs to be transformed into a set of norms of movement and behavior. It doesn't simply mean inner content or belief mentality.<sup>8</sup> In this context, it may be necessary to emphasize the difference between mindset and ideology: "the mindset is deeper than the ideology and gets formed over a much longer period of time, settles into the subconscious, then intuitively directs individuals to a behavior. This is the important point that distinguishes ideology from mindset; ideology is a structure related to consciousness, whereas mentality is a structure coming from the subconscious".<sup>9</sup>

Bouthoul materializes all these definitions and evaluations with the title "characteristic of the mindset" while emphasizing that the mindset is a common reference. He also underlines that the mindset is the most durable link that binds one to his group. Mindset, which is the most stable element of our self, is the internalized epitome of social life in us, an *a priori* form of our knowledge, if expressed in a Kantian discourse. Mentality does not only manifest itself in our attitudes and behaviors but even leads to conditional reflexes and reactions.<sup>10</sup> There are some elements that we follow in order to understand and explain a mindset avoiding distractions. That is to say that the mindset manifests itself with these elements. Moral principles, traditions, rules of law and public preferences are among these. In addition, the qualifications of the institutions created by a society, contacts with individuals and groups, interviews, memories, biographies and autobiographies are the most reliable criteria to be applied in mindset analysis.<sup>11</sup>

As can be seen, mindset manifests itself at a position where the cognitive world of mind intersects with social conditions. Here, a number of volatile conditions come into play in relation to geographical, linguistic, economic, religious, political and social forms of relations. It becomes difficult to distinguish whether the mentality or these conditions are cause or effect.<sup>12</sup> However, it is not difficult to determine the conditions that are more dominant among them, and therefore cause rather than result in the formation of mindset. For example, language, among them, has been found to be interestingly very effective in thoughts and attitudes of people. Of course, what is in question here is the first language, and even its grammatical phrase structure can influence personalities,

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<sup>7</sup> As cited by T. Suranyi-Unger, see. Sabri Ülgener, *Zihniyet, Aydınlar ve İzm'ler*, Ankara, 1983, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Ülgener, Id, p. 20, 24-5.

<sup>9</sup> Sefer Yavuz, "Zihniyet ve Din", inside [Niyazi Akyüz, İhsan Çapcıoğlu (ed.), *Din Sosyolojisi El Kitabı*, Ankara, 2012] p. 590.

<sup>10</sup> Bouthoul, *Zihniyetler*, p. 21-2.

<sup>11</sup> Ülgener, *Zihniyet, Aydınlar ve İzm'ler*, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Mustafa Macit, "Çalışmayla İlgili Tutumlar, Zihniyet ve Din", *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, 9/23 (2005), p. 260-1. See also Ülgener, Id, p. 21.

ways of thinking, and therefore cultures and mindset.<sup>13</sup> According to the comparative studies conducted based on this theory, East Asians, mostly Japanese, Chinese and Korean people, tend to be holistic, while Western Europeans tend to be analytic.<sup>14</sup>

Mucchielli examines the impact of geography in the same context. Peasants are his first samples. A peasant busy with his garden, field, farm, and animals is primarily a traditionalist who respects the order and seeks stability. The information he has acquired is practical and concise, and this information is based on instinct and observation rather than theory and belief. He is fiercely individualistic and attaches importance to organizing his work life alone.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the way of thinking and mentality of the natives of the tropical forest geography are quite different. Apparently, they live under favorable conditions. They have an environment that never cuts off its provisions for mankind. But the horizon of life is always closed. It is unnecessary to strive against the nature of the forest that covers all sides, because the efforts are not of much use, and it is not possible to stand against the expansionism of the forest and the great power of rain and flood. According to Mucchielli, this climate forms the basis of a fatalistic mindset and manifests itself through deadlocks, indifference and submission.<sup>16</sup>

Konuk's depiction of the desert people is a reference to the social character, or mindset, of the Salafist Arabs of Najd. According to him, "Aren't theories and philosophies too luxurious for the desert fact that the boundary between life and death is so easily transcendable? Are practical solutions and directions that protect you from deadly risks not more important and primary? Clarity of water and clarity of direction...Others are not really important for the Arabic character".<sup>17</sup> Watt, who brings up the tribal bedouin culture that outsiders come from, issues the influence of the mindset in congregationalist forms that are far from individualism on external communities (Kharijites). In fact, Kharijites discusses a lot of religious issues with a simple and tribal mindset and within the group and congregation. For them, the other groups were full of unbelievers, polytheists, and people of the fire, while they were believers and people of the heaven, and they were righteous Muslims.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For discussions and examples, see. Per Durst-Anderson, "Language, Cognition and Mentality", inside [Per Durst-Anderson, Elsebeth F. Lange (ed.), *Mentality and Thought: North, South, East and West*, Copenhagen, 2010], p. 36-8.

<sup>14</sup> Durst-Anderson, Id, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Mucchielli, *Zihniyetler*, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> Mucchielli, Id, p. 48-50.

<sup>17</sup> Yahya Konuk, *Cihadın Mahrem Hikayesi*, İstanbul, 2007, p. 236.

<sup>18</sup> Montgomery Watt, *İslam Düşüncesinin Teşekkül Devri*, İstanbul, 1998, p. 42-3.

### 3. Mentality - Religious School and Sect Relationship

Examples given above actually touches this subject. Whatever the thought and behavior which the mind, which does not settle when it thinks otherwise, is unsatisfied when it behaves otherwise, is happy, comfortable, excited with, that person probably belongs to the mentality that directs that thought and movement. We look at our environment through that mentality, and it shapes our relationships with others. In short, the mindset leaves its mark on every field. And religion is one of them. What criteria do we approach, what glasses do we use for reading the source books, what paths do we follow when we sail back to the history, how do we reconcile the old and the new? These and similar other questions are critical in the sense that their answers lay the foundations of methodology for the explanation of religious issues and the interpretation of events in terms of religion. If this reference system, called mindset, constantly plays a role in decoding the received news and continuously influences the reasoning process<sup>19</sup>, it is natural that, despite reference to the same principles, the same historical events, the same source books, the same scholars, different conclusions are concluded.

What we call the spirit of time and space, with its geography and language, people with different personalities, tradition, values, religion, culture, and etc. is the sum of the variable elements involved in the formation of the mindset, thus affecting the mindset, as well as being affected by it throughout the process. The values and global trends of the age agree with this, and as a result, forms of mindset that are not limited to any society emerge. Societies perform these mindsets in their own way.<sup>20</sup> The **quaternaly mindset**<sup>21</sup> as described by Aydın in the context of the source and scope of knowledge refers to the typologies that occur in such a mechanism and can be apparent in every society.

The first of these is the **mystical/intuitive** mindset. It is a style of understanding that is not based solely on sensations derived from reason, objects, and facts. This alone does not mean that it has never resorted to reason and sensations, it refers to a situation that is beyond them. Accordingly, the entity has a mysterious structure. Events cannot necessarily be explained in a mechanically qualified cause-and-effect chain. The subject is comprehended internally and intuitively. The second type, **empirical/sensual** mindset, is a more experience-based view and a form of practical approach from within life. It is empirical, that is, based on experience. The third type, the **rational** mindset, is driven by the assumption that the world can be explained by reason. The experimentation it refers to is not a process of experience, but a mental/fictional process. Hence it has a theoretical character. The rational mindset carries a more centrist characteristic. It

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<sup>19</sup> Mucchielli, *Zihniyetler*, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Zihniyet Sorunu: Mahiyeti, Oluşumu, Türleri ve Günümüzdeki Bazı Problemleri", *Tezkire*, 11/2 (Aralık 1997), p. 97.

<sup>21</sup> Aydın, Id, p. 107-111.

shapes all institutional structures, especially the authority, the type of society and the legal system.

Aydın states that the institutionally intuitive mindset is predisposed to religion, the sensuous mindset to technique, and the rational mindset to science.<sup>22</sup> Considering the Islamic societies; Sufism, Illuminationism (Ishraqi philosophy) and Batinism developed under the influence of the intuitive mindset; the Islamic tradition of science, led by Abu Bakr Razi, Ibn Sina, Biruni, al-Khwarizmi, was born under both sensual and partly rational mindset; Hanafism, qalam schools, and the Peripatetic Islamic philosophy was sustained under the influence of the rational mindset.

The fourth type, the **imitative/scholastic** mindset, is the understanding that an absolute correct knowledge exists and that all other types of knowledge can be reduced to it, and that no type of knowledge can be considered correct and valid unless this axis is referenced. It represents a scholastic mindset in the fields of politics and science, Marxism, which reduces all other knowledge to a kind of scholasticism of political information, and again science, which reduces all knowledge to logical positivism.<sup>23</sup> The Ahl al-Hadith/Salafiyya movement, which accepts and presents the verses of the Quran, the hadiths, and the history of the first three generations of Islam (al-Salaf al-Salih) as the only references of religious knowledge and wisdom and rejects Ahl al-Ra'y and the schools of qalam that produced answers to the experienced developments and changes by means of ra'y, qiyas and ijihad, represents the imitative/scholastic mindset in Islam.

Of course, it is not possible to say that these categories are completely independent and isolated from each other. On the contrary, they are intertwined in some cases and the way they are realized are complicated. We can find a rational line in the intuitive mindset and mystical elements in the rational mindset. Again, we see that experimentalism is not the property of advanced mentalities, and that the ancient communities also benefit from this method.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, if we take into account that the mindset is formed in the combination of the variable conditions of societies, it will be realized that it is not realistic to limit these categories to certain numbers and patterns. The rational mindset, for example, has created a new form in the modern era, called the modern mindset. In order to emphasize itself better, this new type of mindset divided the existing space into "self" and "the other", leaving no space to a third, and put the traditional mindset against itself. So much so that even postmodern manifestations are considered within the modern mindset. The modern mindset distinguishes from the rational mindset from which it comes, based on the measure of whether it "provides power

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<sup>22</sup> Aydın, Id, p. 108.

<sup>23</sup> Aydın, Id, p. 110-1.

<sup>24</sup> Aydın, Id, p. 111.

and influence” to man, rather than ascribing a value to the “trueness” of the thought it reaches and advocates.<sup>25</sup>

In studies regarding the history of Islamic sects, the way the mentalities and groups, schools and sects are related to each other occasionally leads to some methodical inaccuracies. We think that eliminating this problem should not be too difficult in the context of the explanations we have made. First of all, we have to point out that the sects themselves are not mindsets. So we can't talk about a Shiite or Sunni, Kharijite or Salafi mindset. It would also reflect a reductionist approach to say that each of the sects is the product or part of a special mindset. However, as mentioned above, we can easily place Islamic denominations and groups within the main categories of mindsets related to the scope and source of information according to their proximity to these categories. The main reason for our thesis that Shiism, Sunnism, or other sects and schools themselves cannot be considered a mindset is that these structures and ideas have not exhibited an integrity that can be reduced to a single mindset since history until the present day. On the contrary, these religious social structures can show different manifestations in abstract or concrete ways without losing their sectarian/communal/intellectual affiliation through the influence of different mentalities from time to time.

It will be easier to understand the subject with the examples to be given. For example, Usuliyah, under the impact of the rationalist mindset, and Akhbariyah, under the imitative/scholastic mindset, were raised within the body of Shi'a, which was born and developed in an environment largely influenced by the mystical/intuitive mindset. Then as a reaction to them, Sheikhiyya emerged with the claim of “returning to the origins” and appeared in a shape that absolutely displays the mystical/intuitive mindset.

As another example: In Islam, The mystic/intuitive mindset first manifested itself in Sufi organizations, became a guide and determinant in the birth of Shia, and in some Shia groups it felt itself at extremes and laid the groundwork for Batinism. The Ikhwan al-Safa' community emerged by the hands of people with rational and an empirical/sensual mindset, Batinism found an intense relation with philosophy through this channel, and therefore opened the door for the emergence of the Ishraqi school to come into existence among the representatives of the rationalist Islam, or at least facilitated the process.

Lastly, the example given below will shed more light on the subject: The Tartar innovativeness, one of the two movements born into Hanafism, which can be regarded as a product of the rationalist mindset within the Sunni school of thought, were under the influence of modernism from time to time, going beyond rationalism; the Hanafism in the Indian world could not avoid the imitative/scholastic thought in Diya'bandiyyah schools and the extreme edges of

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<sup>25</sup> Aydın, Id, p. 112-3.

the mystical/intuitive mindset raised by the schools of Bar'alwiyyah, though having been developed almost in the same period of time. As we can see, not only are mentalities influential in the birth of religious groups and sects, but they also give different intellectual/ideological colors to the developed group and sectarian structures, thus providing the basis for the birth of sub-groups and sometimes the break from the main structure.

#### 4. Reasons Behind the Birth of Sects

The religious problems related to faith and practical life that emerged during the time when the Quran was revealed and the messenger of Allah was still alive were easily solved, and were often not carried to a level that would require conflict. In later years, this situation has changed. Of course, there have been conflicts with various reasons of social, political and religious quality, and some of these issues have become fully religious in the process and turned into separation that caused social divisions because the limits of the Quran and Sunnah, which are now the main sources, were clear and they were incapable of being the source of judgment and fatwa by themselves "as a text" in the face of the constantly emerging issues, but they kept being the main sources by means of methods such as interpretation, comparison, jurisprudence, and opinion. These rational methods, which are operated with the participation of humans, were undoubtedly present in the time of the Prophet, though in a narrow scope.<sup>26</sup> But in later periods, the use areas were compulsorily expanded. Therefore, the resulting differentiation became systematic over time, getting institutionalized and forming the sects.

When the processes that produce the denominations are evaluated properly, it will be seen that these processes are not one-dimensional, nor do they progress in a single linear pattern. There are often multiple reasons in question. Thus, it would be a reductionist approach to link the birth of sects to a single individual or event, as is often done in our classical sources. In order to reach healthy and holistic conclusions, it is necessary to know, examine and understand all the elements that have been directly and indirectly effective in this process. It is appropriate to analyze these elements within the framework of two distinct factors, psycho-social and socio-political, which are closely related to each other.<sup>27</sup>

**Psycho-social factors** are basically elements that relate to the human being and his perception. Because of this aspect, it can be said that sects are different ways of understanding religion developed by people. Sects are created by people and maintained by them. In this process, human beings take an active role in both

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<sup>26</sup> See: Muadh ibn Jabal's hadith, Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Aqdiyah: 11.

<sup>27</sup> See: Ömer Faruk Teber, "Mezheplerin Ortaya Çıkış Nedenleri", inside [M. A. Büyükkara (ed.), *İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi*, Eskişehir, 2010], p. 27-8.



individually and collectively.<sup>28</sup> In this context, first, the **unique nature of man** should be considered a factor. We have discussed this issue broadly above in the context of personalities and mindsets. Second, the **nature of the religious orders** comes to the agenda. These orders refer to the verses of the Quran and the hadiths. These order can be examined in different categories, such as sahih-da'if (weak): ahad-mutawatir, specific-general, mujmal-mufassar-mubayyan, truth-metaphor, abrogator-abrogated, absolute-conditional, implicit-explicit, and etc. They are texts that are far from being uniform. As a matter of fact, the diversity prone to the mentioned conflict constitutes the basis for the emergence of different beliefs, ideas, judgments and jurisprudence when these resources are referenced to.

Many verses invite people to use their minds.<sup>29</sup> The concepts of contemplation, taaqul (prudence), tazakkur, tafaquh, which are frequently seen in the Quran and refer to freedom of opinion, are various aspects of reasoning. It is inevitable that a man that uses his mind concludes different outcomes. For example, the fact that some groups infer from sequential verses in the Quran that man is "obliged" in his actions and others that he is "free" is a result of the variety of nature and process of reasoning. On the other hand, beliefs and ideas formed for various reasons other than the fundamental orders were supported by these orders by turning to religious sources, so that the differences that did not actually originate from the fundamentals were attributed to them by nature. This is another dimension of the same subject.

When it is said that man is a being of reason and will, it comes to mind that conflict and interpretation are part of the divine test, because conflict and interpretation are part of the creation/nature, in other words, a law of this world, the *Sunnat Allah*.<sup>30</sup> As the verse says, if God had willed, He "could have guided you all."<sup>31</sup> And again, if He had willed, He "would have made you one nation." But He didn't will so because it is "to test you in what He has given you".<sup>32</sup> Another verse states, "He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ."<sup>33</sup> And in the following verse,<sup>34</sup> we see that "whom your Lord has given mercy" will never divide but live in unity and solidarity. Another phrase in the same verse, which is "and for that He created them" is interpreted as "Allah has created mankind to divide".<sup>35</sup> In this world of tests, for alliances to take place, there

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<sup>28</sup> Teber, Id, p. 28-9.

<sup>29</sup> "And they will say, "If only we had been listening or reasoning, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze" (al-Mulk: 67/10). Here, the verb "listening" refers to listening to the narratives, or the rules, and "reasoning" is suggested as the way of eternal salvation.

<sup>30</sup> See: Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmi*, İstanbul, 1988, p. 160.

<sup>31</sup> al-An'am, 6/149; an-Nahl, 16/9.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Mai'dah, 5/48.

<sup>33</sup> Hud, 11/118.

<sup>34</sup> Hud, 11/119.

<sup>35</sup> Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmi*, p. 160-1; Ahmet Saim Kılavuz, "Dini Açıdan Mezhepleşme ve Gruplaşma", inside [H. Hökeleki, V. Bilgin (ed.), *Kur'an ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Bursa, 2015], p. 221-2.

will have to be conflicts first. Beings who think uniformly, who do not disagree, who go along the same lines will never have human characteristics. Only angels are reported to be such beings. The theological explanation of these verses concludes that conflict and controversy are instrumental in the testing people are subjected to. But those who followed the commandment "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided"<sup>36</sup> will pass the test.

The third of the psycho-social factors is the **interaction of Islam and Muslims with different religions, cultures and civilizations**.<sup>37</sup> Not long after the end of prophethood, the borders of the Islamic country reached the Atlantic Ocean in the west through conquests, and the borders of India and China in the east. Muslims had intense contacts with Judaism and Christianity in the North and south of Arabia. They also contacted established Eastern religions and sects in Iraq, Iran and beyond. For example, gnostic influences often came from geographies. The collective conversions from the Indian, Turkish, Persian, Mesopotamian, Anatolian, Egyptian and African tribes spontaneously brought the diversity of mentality and culture. In addition to neighborhood and trade with groups that did not accept Islam, intellectual exchanges inevitably gave rise to mutual interaction.

On the other hand, especially during the time of the Abbasids, there would be fluctuations in the mind worlds of Muslims who were acquainted with the deep-rooted philosophical currents of the East and West through translation studies, and this development would bring about deep internal divisions over contentious issues. Besides the developed cultures and civilizations, even the simple bedouin culture has an influence on Islam. When evaluating the first Kharijite groups, the homogenous structure of rural tribalism and the introverted and exclusionary logic of rural tribalism, in a way that is completely contrary to the heterogeneous and introverted structure of urban culture, are therefore definitely on the agenda.

It is undoubtedly easier to explain the **socio-political factors** that are in the second main framework. Starting from the discussions on the caliphate that took place immediately after the death of the messenger of Allah, the seditions emerging in the period of Uthman and finally the civil wars of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan, beginning in the 36th Hijri year, have not only been political events but also led to deep breakdowns in the Muslims' world of mind. What is the basic criterion for who is to be the successor of our Prophet? Did He appoint someone for this duty while He was alive? Or did He leave it up to the people's choice? What is the situation of those who died in internal conflicts and wars and those who killed them in the world and the hereafter? If the crime of wrongdoing is a great sin (*al-kabirah*), did those who commit this crime (*al-murtakib al-kabair*) desist from faith as stated in some verses and hadiths and deserve eternal hell? What is the nature of

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<sup>36</sup> Ali 'Imran; 3/103.

<sup>37</sup> Teber, "Mezheplerin Ortaya Çıkış Nedenleri", p. 30-1.

faith and Islam? Can faith be diminished or improved by rewards and sins? Can it disappear completely? Did the killers and the victims commit these acts with their own will and force, or did they perform the roles their fates assigned to them because the divine providence was determined so?

It is possible to ask more similar questions. As can be seen, various political developments that emerged in the first centuries of Islam, peace situations, wars, elections, appointments, riots, rebellions, arrests, prosecutions, and similar other events laid the foundation for the first sects such as the Khawarij, Shia, Mu'tazila, and Murjiah. Similar socio-political developments would play a role in the formation of sectarian formations such as Durziyyah, Yazidism, Babism-Baha'ism and Ahmadism in the following centuries.

### 5. Sociological Phases of the Formation of Sects

When the reasons mentioned above come together, do these conditions immediately result in the emergence of sects? In fact, many sects claim that they have existed as the main structure of Islam and true face of religion from the very beginning, without taking these conditions into consideration. This means that other sects have deviated from the right path. It is for the same reason that every sect considers itself as "the saved group", as it is mentioned in a hadith<sup>38</sup>. Of course, that's not the truth. Again, we should mention that these conditions are not enough for the emergence of sects. The formation of sects requires a long process and many other conditions. They are often preceded by intermediate group forms. So, what are these forms? How does the initial separation occur and what follow-up developments prepare the conditions for the formation of sects?

**Birth:** According to Michel, who explained the subject through Christianity, the first sign of a religious group formation is the appearance of the tendency. A group formed within the main body insists on something other than what had not been done until then in regard to *aqidah* (faith), morality, rituals or another means of orthodoxy.<sup>39</sup> Hodgson, who analyzes the subject from the perspective of the birth of religions, describes this stage, which he calls "creative action/event", as the first of the "three impetus". Such things as a new opening to discovery and inspiration, the discovery of a new value, the development of a new constitution or new styles of government are often the "first driving force".<sup>40</sup> In Wach's words, this phase is a "radical protest" and objections arise in the areas of doctrine, worship and organization.<sup>41</sup> According to Bilgiseven, objections to the main organization appear in four subjects: Objections to deviance in the theory of religion; objections to ritual and worship procedures;

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<sup>38</sup> Abu Dawud, Sunnah: 1.

<sup>39</sup> Aime Michel, "Mezheplerin Psiko Sosyal Yapısı", inside [Mehmet Aydın (trans. ed.), *Din Fenomeni*, Konya, 1993], p. 69.

<sup>40</sup> M. G. S. Hodgson, *İslam'ın Serüveni*, Trans. İzzet Akyol, İstanbul, 1993, I, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, Chicago, 1958, p. 186-193.

## The Nature of Religious Grouping: Personalities, Mentalities, Religious, Communities, Sects

objections to the morality, principles and doctrines of religion; and objections to the organization.<sup>42</sup> Sometimes it is the founding person who created this first movement and community.<sup>43</sup> That is, a leader takes on the role of a charismatic spokesperson of new values and the lead of the objectors. It is customary to mention a “revelation” or a “genius” in the invention of values. Those who have experienced this often focus on the periods of depression they experienced before their radical decisions. They say their thoughts are clouded by a problem.<sup>44</sup>

**Formation and socialization:** The second impetus Hodgson explains is the group commitment that comes from creative action. In other words, creative action is made a point of departure and reference in all works by a mass of people who share a common consciousness that this is very important. “Submission” towards creative action turns into “commitment” at this stage.<sup>45</sup> Loyalty is now demonstrated by some symbolic behavior. Rituals of participation in the group, forms of common martyrdom and oath, forms of collective worship or compulsory payment and taxation, certain forms of dressing are among these behaviors.

Often members are given a sense that they are communities that have taken on a special task.<sup>46</sup> Due to the nature of groups, members develop a sense of commitment and sympathy towards them, and a sense of contradiction and difference towards the outside of the group. This type of behavior can range from a mild antipathy to a deep sense of hatred and can be defensive or offensive.<sup>47</sup> In addition, religious groups establish some psychological barricades between themselves and the outside world, forming a special group identity, drawing the boundaries of the group if necessary, or fortify their loosely drawn boundaries.<sup>48</sup> It is known that certain prohibitions, regimen forms and supererogatory rituals specific to groups feed the group in terms of establishing identity and drawing boundaries. But the most effective way to achieve the same goal is the attempt of one group to create “the other” by positioning itself at the center. Fortifications are formed in a more robust and permanent manner by othering others.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Amiran Kurtkan Bilgiseven, *Din Sosyolojisi*, İstanbul, 1985, p. 278-9.

<sup>43</sup> Michel, “Mezheplerin Psiko Sosyal Yapısı”, p. 70; Adem Efe, *Dini Gruplar Sosyolojisi*, İstanbul, 2013, p. 47-8.

<sup>44</sup> Bouthoul, *Zihniyetler*, p. 80.

<sup>45</sup> Hodgson, *İslam'ın Serüveni*, I, p. 12-3.

<sup>46</sup> Nils G. Holm, “Sosyal Bir Fenomen Olarak Din”, Trans. A. Bahadır, *Selçuk Ü.İ.F.D.*, 14 (2002), p. 283.

<sup>47</sup> Sulhi Dönmezer, *Sosyoloji*, Ankara, 1984, p. 190.

<sup>48</sup> R. F. Paloutzian, *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*, Needham Heights, 1996, p. 166; Vamık Volkan, *Körü Körüne İnanç*, İstanbul, 2005, p. 203.

<sup>49</sup> For detailed information and examples regarding grouping and loyalty in this context, see. Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, “Dini Grup Yapılarında Dine İlişkin Muhtemel Anlama ve Temsil Sorunları”, *Usul: İslam Araştırmaları*, 7 (2007), p. 111-9.

So why do believers join such groups? Let's now answer this question. According to Yapıcı, there are several reasons:<sup>50</sup>

a. The sense of attachment and the need for belonging drive people into religious groups. This feeling and need performs a function that enhances the sense of self-esteem and self-worth in the person.

b. The desire to acquire an identity and the need for social acceptance provide the same motivation. The most important feature of religious groups is that they can provide their members with a strong identity as well as the possibility of social acceptance.

c. With the desire to ensure the continuation of the religion they believe in its original form, the religious people come together in certain groups and carry out activities.

d. Similarly, they engage in solidarity within religious groups in order to strengthen their faith and to practice the religion better, as we have seen in cults, for example.

e. Meaningful answers to questions such as what is the meaning of life, why people exist and what purpose they live for can connect people to religious groups.

f. The feeling of deprivation and loneliness in people, who feel lonely in crowds, can be eliminated by the support of religious groups, especially in the case for the "others of society". Their spiritual situations can become healthier in this way.

g. People with physical and mental problems sometimes have the power to deal with them by religious groups.

h. In periods of rapid social changes, these groups can be a refuge for the people who are left unprotected, and they can help them financially and spiritually.

i. Feeling compelled to choose between different religious interpretations, the person chooses a group for various reasons and develops an ethnocentric attitude, believing that "the truth is there".

j. In a secularized and globalized world, they turn towards religious groups with motives such as maintaining their religious identity and resisting imperialism.

On the other hand, we can see that these groups seek salvation in some way. Eternal salvation is perhaps the greatest of these goals and requires an effort towards the afterlife. The search for freedom and a just political order is an expectation of political liberation. Positive social and economic improvements can be added to this. Believing in a transcendental and spiritual power and entrusting

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<sup>50</sup> Asım Yapıcı, "Biz ve Onlar: İç ve Dış Dini Grupların Oluşumunu Besleyen Faktörler ve Aidiyet Psikolojisi", inside [H. Hökelekli, V. Bilgin (ed.), *Kur'an ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Bursa, 2015], p. 270-3; See also and cf. Büyükkara, Id, p. 109; Efe, *Dini Gruplar Sosyolojisi*, p. 93-6.

yourself to him provides therapeutic relief and this resembles a psychological salvation.<sup>51</sup> For people seeking salvation for various purposes, religious groups ensure that a very important need is addressed.

**Separation:** The formation of subgroups does not necessarily require a definite separatist process. A certain period of tolerance is always present. Those who do not comply with the norms of the main body are first criticized, then warned and condemned. If ideas and actions perceived as deviance are considered as a threat to the most fundamental characteristics of the main body, those involved in such thoughts and activities are explicitly excluded and othered.<sup>52</sup> As Michel says, "the bud that grew in the body of the orthodoxy" becomes more and more intolerant of being attached to the body.<sup>53</sup>

While some of the sub-groups that emerged in this process remain committed to the basic principles, some of them may become completely detached from the main structure over time, as they emerge with very deep-rooted objections. This disconnection is accepted by the certain groups. However, sometimes it may be unacceptable.<sup>54</sup> We can explain this through the acts of showing strong will to remain committed or resisting exclusion. That is, separatist ideas and behaviors are balanced by the will to commit. There are political, social and economic risks in breaking away from the main structure, and it is not easy to take this risk. But if the will to separate is strong or if the resistance to exclusion is insufficient, we can now talk about different subgroups, communities and movements.

**Doctrines and Formation of Literature:** Hodgson's third impetus is the start of an intense process of interaction and dialogue around group engagement.<sup>55</sup> Those who created the first values work in exuberance. They see themselves as the bearer of a message, the representative of a mission.<sup>56</sup> This extraordinary effort of theirs brings about the doctrinalization of first values and objections in a process of intense interaction and dialogue. Doctrine is the total and systematic expression of a belief. The doctrine also implies more or less dogmatism. Then literature forms on these doctrines. Or thinking the way around, ideas, verbs and objections are finalized and decided by the literature created and they transform into doctrines. In other words, literature serves both in the formation of a doctrine and in the explanation of an established one.

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<sup>51</sup> Bryan Wilson, *Dini Mezhepler: Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma*, Trans. Ali İhsan Yitik, A. Bülent Ünal, İstanbul, 2004, p. 29-30.

<sup>52</sup> Yapıcı, "Biz ve Onlar", p. 266.

<sup>53</sup> Michel, "Mezheplerin Psiko Sosyal Yapısı", p. 70.

<sup>54</sup> Yapıcı, "Biz ve Onlar", p. 266.

<sup>55</sup> Hodgson, *İslam'ın Serüveni*, I, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Bouthoul, *Zihniyetler*, p. 80.

**Formation of Hierarchy and Institutionalization:** Groups and congregations, which strengthen loyalty among their members and become crowded and socialized rapidly with new gains, form a hierarchical structure for the effective management of this social structure and go for an institutionalization based on the distribution of responsibilities. With the passing away of the first founders, the exuberant and charismatic bond that has held the members of the congregation together until then inevitably loses this characteristic. Therefore, more formal and rational social bonds need to be built to fill the void. A number of organizational elements that have developed over time are the most natural manifestations of this development.<sup>57</sup>

In summary, in order to talk about the sectarianization of a religious community, the following four conditions are expected to mature:

- a. Socializing/crowding.
- b. Institutionalization based upon a hierarchical order.
- c. The deepening of the differentiation in belief and thought into a certain doctrine.
- d. Formation of a coherent literature explaining the doctrine.

Congregations that do not meet these requirements remain in the same social status. But this often does not last long. They melt/become absorbed or disappear spontaneously within other congregations and sects.<sup>58</sup>

Shahristani, famous historian of religions and sects (d. 1153), adds “to have political and military power” to the above conditions. In his words, “each sect has its own ideas, books it classifies, states that support it, and authorities they obey to.”<sup>59</sup> Political and military power is the pinnacle of hierarchy and institutionalization, and this evokes a sectarian state or empire.

In the same way and in which processes a denomination is broken from the main structure, a similar process is required to break loose from sects. Intra-sectarian sub-groups may evolve into new denominations, provided they meet the requirements. The birth of Durziyya from the Ismailiyya sect took place at the end of a similar process. Even the formation of a new religion may be at stake. In the 1840s, a divergence in the Shaykhiyya community, which emerged from Shiism in the early 1800s and still exists today, resulted in a split, and in a century-long period, first the Babylonian sect and then the Bahá’í religion came into existence.

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<sup>57</sup> Efe, *Dini Gruplar Sosyolojisi*, p. 49.

<sup>58</sup> The processes where the sects *develop into an ecclesiastical body or split into lesser groups or be merged with different other groups or be absorbed* by them are compared to with the analyses based on the studies regarding Christian denominations within the context of the relevant terminology. (Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, p. 199-200).

<sup>59</sup> See. Abu al-Fath, Muhammad al-Shahrestana, *Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, ed.: E. A. Mahna, 'A. H. Fa'ur, Beirut, 1419/1998, p. 56.

## The Nature of Religious Grouping: Personalities, Mentalities, Religious, Communities, Sects

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It is possible to detect some different characteristics in comparison between the “established” sects, which gains this status by socializing, and thus earns a substantial distance in the path of sectarianization and those continuing to sustain in a narrow and unsociable manner. These differences can be seen between a sect separated from the main structure and the main structure it has left, as well as between the formations and sub-sectarian groups (*factions*), which we can now literally call a sect.<sup>60</sup> To explain these differences using sectarian-group specific terms;

a. While supporters of the factions live primarily based on their beliefs, in other words, try to keep up with their beliefs; the representatives of sects reconcile their beliefs and practices with the life they live, and thus their religious lives, from time to time, become intertwined with secular culture. Shahristani's emphasis on the “states that help the sects” mentioned above essentially points to an advanced dimension of secularization.

b. Factions (religious groups) are often egalitarian but sects are hierarchical.

c. Factions are often radical, while sects are conservative.

d. Factions are non-privileged, while sects are based on the ruling classes.

e. A faction has a social relationship system that works from bottom to top. A sect, on the other hand, sees itself as a superstructure, both socially and religiously.

f. Membership to the factions is a conscious act based on free choice and voluntary submission is essential in this respect. In sects, on the other hand, membership is the natural result of being born in that community and being with that community.

g. Factions are formations that are far from apparent shapes, and that are spiritual, moral, and secretive. Sects, on the other hand, attempt to distance themselves from spiritualism, to rationalize themselves and to be seen as an object of respect.

h. Factions are often at odds with the world because they reject many of the existing institutions and cultures. Sects, on the other hand, are mostly integrated with the world.

i. Factions have often taken on a totalitarian character. They don't accept differences. For this, they have difficulty adapting to changing circumstances. In sects, however, there is a division of labor. The status of those above and below the hierarchy is different. While the clergy at the top have certain and heavy religious obligations, those ordinary members at the bottom are less and lighter.

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<sup>60</sup> Wilson makes this comparison in the context of Christianity between *church* and *sect* formations. See. Wilson, *Dini Mezhepler*, p. 13, 29-33. Here the *church* corresponds to the main body or sectarian main body, which we call “the established”, while the sect corresponds to the separatist formations.



This study examines the nature of social-psychological relationships, transformations and changes from personalities and mindsets to groups, factions and sects. And as a result of the findings given above, it may be necessary to emphasize the following methodological fact: Understanding and examining all religious group structures, including sects, as fixed and unchanging ideas and practices will open the door to serious methodical mistakes. What is needed in this regard is to treat these formations on a process-centric basis. Because these are passive frameworks, their content or acceptance can change in parallel with the change of temporal and spatial contexts. Over time, there may be new formations and syntheses, and the presence or representation of these social groups and structures can be reshaped in line with these syntheses.<sup>61</sup> The fact that religious groupings are in a life cycle resembling human life, as we discovered at the beginning of the study, both tells us that the natural process is more complex than thought, and also reminds us of the methodological difficulties in investigating this process.

### **Conclusion**

Before considering sectarianism as a religious case, it is necessary to investigate and evaluate this phenomenon with its human and sociological dimensions. In order to understand the nature of religious grouping, our first starting point in the process is the person, then the society formed by these individuals. Our study concludes that personalities such as a psychological factor and mindsets that reflect social personality have a observable effect on the process of religious grouping and sectarianism. The fact that people adherent to the same religion or sect may have different religious thoughts and attitudes is on one hand related to personal traits, and a result of personalities, on the other hand. The examples we have examined indicate that not only are mentalities influential in the birth of religious groups and sects, but they also give different intellectual/ideological colors to the groups and sectarian structures, thus providing the basis for the birth of sub-groups and sometimes the break from the main structure.

When the processes that produce the denominations are evaluated properly, it will be seen that these processes are not one-dimensional, nor do they progress in a single linear pattern. There are often multiple reasons in question. Besides personality and mentality, the conflict-prone nature of religious texts is very influential in this process. When Islam's encouragement to reason and freedom of opinion is considered within this context, the question regarding whether the interpretation is a foregone conclusion for Muslims or not arises. In this respect, the thesis that division is part of the divine test becomes remarkable when supported

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<sup>61</sup> Mehmet Kalaycı, "Mezhepleri veya Dini Hareketleri Tamamlan(ma)mış Kimliksel Süreçler Olarak Okumak", [H. Hökelekli, V. Bilgin (ed.), *Kur'an ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Bursa, 2015], p. 240.

with certain doctrines. Besides these, the intense interaction of Muslims with different religions, cultures and civilizations since the first century, the political divisions they experienced and the civil wars were also factors that facilitated religious grouping and sectarianism.

Since the sects were not born as a sect at their origins, there must be some stages in the birth and development of these formations. Our study examines these phases in five categories: birth, formation and socialization, break-up/separation, doctrine and literature creation, and finally hierarchy formation and institutionalization. While the phenomenon of socialization was explained, many of the reasons that led people to enter religious groups were summarily identified. This study also reveals the four conditions of sectarianism, socialization, institutionalization in a hierarchical order, conversion of belief and thought, transformation into doctrines, and the formation of a consistent literature explaining those doctrines. In the context of these conditions, a comparison between religious formations and sectarian structures, which may be referred to as "factions" and but can not yet be considered sects, has taken place in the last part of our study. Similarly, it was also emphasized that the dissent and disengagement among the sects, which are likely to take place in advanced stages, were the product of a process similar to the sects' initial departure from the main structure. The picture regarding the nature of the sociological stages in question, which we added at the bottom of the study, will probably make the subject more clear.

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The Nature of Religious Grouping: Personalities, Mentalities, Religious,  
Communities, Sects

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## On the Binding Status of the Fiqh Sects\*

Tevhit AYENGİN\*\*

### Abstract

The Fiqh sects, institutionalized to determine legal rules regulating human beings and social life, are still considered valid for determining the rules in the lives of Muslims. The scholars of Islamic Fiqh adjudge according to the methodology of their Fiqh sects based on different sources. However, individuals have problems with using this framework in their daily lives. This necessitates that individuals follow a sect. In this article, the legal binding status of sects; what is meant by the Fiqh sect, its formation, its functions, and the theoretical basis for following the sect are explored.

**Keywords:** Sect, Fiqh Sects, İjtihad

## Fıkhi Mezheplerin Bağlayıcılığına Dair

### Özet

Müslümanın Yaratıcısıyla, diğer insanlarla ve toplumla alakalı fiillerine dair hükümleri belirleme amacıyla teşekkül eden ve gelişen fıkıh mezhepleri bugün için de güncelliğini ve alternatifsizliğini devam ettirmektedir. Bir mezhebe müntesip olan müçtehitler içtihatlarını müntesibi oldukları mezhebin sistematığı içerisinde ve nass dışındaki kaynakları da dikkate alarak oluşturmaktadırlar. Ancak tek tek fertlerin bu çerçevede hareket etmeleri zordur ve dünyevi meşgaleleri buna imkân tanımamaktadır. Bu durum onların bir mezhebe bağlı olarak hayatlarını sürdürmelerini gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu makalede mezheplerin bağlayıcılığı; fıkhi mezhebin ne anlama geldiği, oluşumu, fonksiyonları, bağlanmanın teorik temelleri ve gerekliliği ekseninde ele alınmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mezhep, Fıkıh Mezhepleri, İctihat, İctihatta İsalet, Mezhebin Bağlayıcılığı

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## Introduction

A sect is a religious concept and a reality that exists in almost all religions. In Islam, since the earliest times, there have been differences of ideas that have laid the foundation for the emergence of sects. As a result of these differences, sects have survived to the present day in the areas of faith and jurisprudence. Since man is a creature that can think and interpret independently, the emergence of sects, which are basically based on differences in opinions, has been inevitable. The main question that is expected to be answered here is focused on the connection of these sects with religion and whether they are binding on all Muslims. In other words, the question that needs to be answered is whether people's allegiance to a sect is mandatory. The main framework of this study is a discussion of the binding status of Islamic sects, which are a sociological reality and which have an important place in the culture and history of Muslims.

Sect relates to the opinion of a mujtahid on a Fiqh issue in a narrow sense. In a broad sense, on the other hand, it is the sum of the opinions of those who adopt a particular approach and accept this approach as binding on their legal reasoning. It is, of course, incomplete to consider a sect only as a "whole of jurisprudence" approach. The concept of a sect implies a multidimensional whole including imams, mujtahids, associates, basic works, procedures and institutions.

### 1. What a Sect Means

The word "sect", which is the infinitive form of the root "*zahaba*", which means to go from one place to another, refers to the meanings "to go", "place to go" and "time to go" in Arabic.<sup>1</sup> The word sect is generally used by Muslims to describe religious, political and Fiqh sects. The concept of a "Fiqh sect" refers to Fiqh views or the views of Fiqh scholars in its most general sense. What is emphasized here is, of course, the opinions of the *mujtahid*, who are subject to a sect, within the classification of that sect. On the other hand, what makes sects different from each other is that, in addition to their methods of jurisprudence, each of them has a common denominator in their own right, that is, each of them has a history and resources that include the jurisprudence of the sectarian mujtahids. In this respect, the works that form the basis of the sect are largely composed of the jurisprudence favored among the sect's faqihs, meaning that they are shaped based on the axis of the sect's "mufta bih" views.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Manzur, Muhammad ibn Mukarram Jamal al-Din Abu al-Fadl, *Lisan al-Arab*, Dar al-Sadr, Beirut 2010, I, 393.

<sup>2</sup> Ali, Muhammad Ibrahim Ahmad, "al-Mazhab Inda al-Hanafiyyah", *Dirasat fi al-fiqh al-Islami*, Mecca, 1977, p. 77.

In general, there are differences between Fiqh knowledge and other Islamic sciences, and in particular among the Fiqh sects, in terms of definitions, concepts, patterns of expression, outcomes of education, fatwa and qaza' activities, classification and copyright of Fiqh texts, and the hadiths narrated.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, sectarian differences are not just a reality arising from differences of judicial reasoning. The most obvious reason for the differences are, of course, the differences in approach to issues related to *usul*. Therefore, the most important feature that distinguishes one sect from another is that the adherents of that sect have come together around a common jurisprudence. Thus, different opinions of the mujtahids based on the same jurisprudence within the sect, and even different jurisprudences of the same mujtahid on any particular subject, do not contradict the logic of the sect and its integrity.

## 2. Background of Sectarian Formations

The generation of the *tabi'un* raised by the Companions and the Companions themselves who lived during the same period and in the same place as the Prophet, were scattered throughout the expanding Islamic lands and did not remain silent in the face of the legal situations experienced in various places but rather produced a jurisprudence related to those situations. Again, the Companions and the following generations became involved in scientific activities, and made an intense effort in understanding and interpreting the fundamental principles, and pioneered the formation of generations with sufficient knowledge and skills in these matters. The Companions were often not aware of each other in the places to which they had migrated and the fact that their efforts in the field of Fiqh resulted in differences indicates that religion can adapt with different legal reasoning, especially in subjects related to Fiqh.

Second generation (*tabi'un*) scholars also developed and continued the activities initiated by the Companions. Their precedents were based on two basic methodological approaches. The first is to have a kind of methodological proximity by making a choice between the jurisprudence of the Companions, which may differ among them, or by preferring the opinion of the Companions or of the next generation in the case of differences between their opinions. The second is to contribute to the development of the jurisprudence on the particular disputed issue through personal jurisprudence. This approach is the basis for the formation of Fiqh differences and thus the formation of the Fiqh sects. As Ahmet Hasan rightly stated, the science of Fiqh began to be established professionally in the period of *tabi'un*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kaya, Eyyüp Said, *Mezheplerin Teşekkülünden Sonra Fıkhi İstidlal* (PhD Dissertation), Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul 2001, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Hasan, "İlk İslam Mezheplerinin Kaynakları", Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, Ankara 1987,29/1, p. 319.

The Companions made a great effort to conform legally to the Sunnah of the Prophet. If the basic sources made any judgment regarding situations they encountered, they tried to be sensitive about their conduct.<sup>5</sup> However, if they tried to find a solution to issues that they could not connect directly to these basic sources, this situation made them quite happy when the narratives coincided with the case law that was referred to them at a later time.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the same sensitivity was learnt and maintained from the Companions. This sensitivity is the basic characteristic of the ulama of Fiqh. Jurisprudence is the effort that is made based on all available resources to reach a conclusion and to establish the truth in the sight of Allah. The concrete proof of the conformity of the jurisprudence to the fundamental sources will, of course, please its practitioners and encourage them in their future jurisprudential efforts.

In the early years of Islam, there was great tolerance in the field of law. It is known that on many issues, the fact of reaching different legal decisions based on the rule of law was tolerated by the Companions on the basis of mutual negotiations. This constitutes the basis for evaluating a wide range of Fiqh issues from a very broad perspective. If the Prophet had set strict rules that were inflexible, subsequent generations would have been deprived of the ability to reason and to be comfortable about the resolution of issues that might arise at a later time.<sup>7</sup> The same situation is consistent with the fact that the Companions have different case-law on matters that do not have the same concrete source. If they had reached the same conclusion, it would have narrowed the options available to their successors. Even in the time of the Prophet, the Companions had little case law and experienced differences in their decision-making. Some of the Companions, including Amr Ibn al-As, had to take *ghusul* ablutions when they woke up in the morning because the weather was extremely cold and there was no opportunity to heat water, consequently some of the Companions who had the opportunity to perform their prayers with *tayammum* performed their prayers again but some did not. The fact that the Prophet accepted both of these two approaches under the law opened the way for the differing opinions of later generations. While the Prophet's

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra, *İslam'da Fikhi Mezhepler Tarihi*, (Trans. Abdülkadir Şener), Hisar Yayınevi, İstanbul, nd., p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> When the issue of *mufavwida*, that is, the status of a woman, who has married without the determination of a dowry, and whose husband has died before having a relationship, was put to Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, he spent a month focusing on the issue and eventually said, "I judge in this matter according to the case, and if right, it is from Allah, if it is wrong, it is from me and Satan, and Allah and his Messenger are distanced from that." and he stated that a woman in this situation would receive a dowry (*mahr al-mithl*) equal to what was given to women in a similar situation, and that she should wait for a while, and that then she would inherit her husband's estate. Then, Ibn Sinan stood up and said: "I am a witness that you have ruled in this matter as being the messenger of Allah as decreed by Barwa bint Washiq. At that moment, Abdallah ibn Mas'ud experienced joy he had not experienced before. Zaki ad-Din Sha'ban, *İslam Hukuk İlminin Esasları*, (Trans: İbrahim Kafi Dönmez), TDV Yay., Ankara-2012, 16th Edition, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmad Hasan, p. 314.



approval of those who performed their prayers again can be understood as acceptance of their piety, his affirmation of those who did not perform their prayers again has been a guide in terms of teaching that it is not always required in such situations.<sup>8</sup>

Fiqh is a kind of specialization. During the reign of the Four Caliphs, nearly all of the Middle East was under the control of Muslims. In particular, Kufa and Basra, and then Baghdad, are known as centers built by Muslims where intensive scientific activities took place. As they approached the North, different cultures and philosophies were encountered and, naturally, new issues arose in the field of law. This led the Companions and *tabi'un* scholars to come up with solutions to the Fiqh issues and also to specialize in them.<sup>9</sup>

The process of the formation of sects also contributed to the formation of the jurisprudence. On the one hand, the methodological consistency of the case law was questioned, and on the other hand, the position and influence of the mujtahid, who interpreted the case law, became clear within the sect. The mujtahid is considered the leader of the sect that he follows and his legal interpretations are evaluated within the context of the sect which he follows. This largely determines the process of the gaining of the information and presentation of the views of the mujtahid within this epistemic context.

There are schools of philosophy within the field with different perspectives and thoughts. Approaches that are able to evaluate events within the same philosophical school or sect from different perspectives but with the same systematic approaches can undergo partial content changes during the process of history. For example, it is a well-known fact that there are varieties of law schools that can interpret different references without deviating from their essence.<sup>10</sup> The sects of Fiqh are, in part, similar to this. Although the jurisprudence may be different, the mujtahid, who follows a sect using this same methodology, is therefore considered part of the same whole. This is because a sect refers to a structure formed by people who have adopted the view of certain leading scholars and who choose to follow their path. This includes the natural process of these sects which were initially formed based on city lines but were later shaped according to the systems of the *imam* who would later be accepted as the founder. The sects were basically named in three ways:

1. In terms of the region during the first period: the Hijazians (Mecca, Medina), Iraq (Kufa, Basra) and Syria.

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<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra, *İslam'da Fıkhi Mezhepler Tarihi*, (Trans: Abdülkadir Şener), Hisar Yayınevi, İstanbul, nd., p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Hasan Hacak, "Fıkıh İlminin Ortaya Çıkışı ve Diğer İlimlerle İlişkisi", *Temel İslami İlimlerin Ortaya Çıkışı ve Birbirleriyle İlişkileri*, Tartışmalı İlmi İhtisas Toplantısı, İstanbul, 2014, p. 516

<sup>10</sup> Ayengin, Tevhit, Hukukta Köken Problemi Açısından Sosyal Realite Nass İlişkisi, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Erzurum 1999, p. 16-27.

2. Relative to the name of its founder, for example, Hanafism, Shafiism, etc.
3. According to their basic methodologies, such as Ahl al-Hadith and Ahl al-Ra'y

As mentioned above differences between the jurisprudence of each form the basis of the sects. Similarly, the basis of the differences in the jurisprudence is formed by the differences between the Companions and tabi'un scholars, who migrated around the expanding Islamic world after the death of the Prophet, in the interpretation of the fundamental doctrines. These differences in the jurisprudence, which became evident over time, began to be instrumental in the formation of a specific understanding of Fiqh in different cities. Imam Shafi'i stated that the cities where Muslims lived were the centers of knowledge and that people followed the views of the Faqih who lived in their cities in relation to many issues.<sup>11</sup> Imam Shafi'i visited many cities of science, participated in classes, and had the opportunity to get to know the Fiqh scholars in those cities. Therefore, his expression, "intense Fiqh activity and Fiqh conflict" is very important for this topic. It can be seen that some people claimed to have followed one Faqih, and some another, when conflicts arose between them.<sup>12</sup> This indicates a lifestyle in which people resorted to the opinions of the mujtahids rather than relying on their own ideas. For example, in Kufa, some of the people followed the legal philosophy of Abu Yusuf while others followed Ibn Abi Layla.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of his article "Sources of the First Fiqh Sects" (*İlk Fıkıh Mezheplerinin Kaynakları*), Ahmad Hasan states that the understanding of attachment to one's views began in around the middle of the second Hijri century. An understanding of obliterating and replacing regional legal characters and adhering to the *imamate* to a greater extent, and compliance with the principles and methods laid down by him, found a place within this process.<sup>14</sup>

Although the knowledge of Fqh was initially based on the style of the Hijaz and Iraqi schools and was more in the form of Ahl al-Hadith and Ahl al-Ra'y, it began to be remembered by the name of its founder in due course. These designations were realized through the efforts of the students of the founding imams. In this respect, it is necessary to evaluate the pre-formation period and the aftermath separately in terms of sectarian nomenclature. Even after the process of sectarianism began, it was no longer possible to imagine the existence of a mujtahid who rejected the views of his imam, such as an adherent of the Shafi'i sect who ignored the views of Imam Shafi.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> al-Shafii, Muhammad ibn Idris, *Kitab al-Umm*, Cairo 1322, 7, 246.

<sup>12</sup> al-Shafi'i, *Kitab al-Umm*, 7, 257.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Hasan, p. 323

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Hasan, p. 328.

<sup>15</sup> Kaya, p. 30-31.

### 3. The Functions and Characteristics of Denominations

Life is subject to change, and due to the nature of Fqh, one has to be able to offer solutions in a way that will take change into account. The solving disputes is the reason for the existence of laws and jurisprudence. Laws that cannot or do not solve legal problems lose their reason for being. The fact that Islam is a universal religion, and that accordingly the Fiqh aims to provide a solution for every condition encountered in social life, makes it necessary to mention current problems and what solutions can be offered.

Fiqh sects are at the heart of the determinants of Islamic culture and civilization. In addition to being in a dominant position in the transfer of social acceptances and accumulation, the main duty in providing this legacy to the next generation without degradation has always been performed by Fiqh. The effect that the question "Where would we be today if it wasn't for Fiqh" creates in minds clearly demonstrates the importance of this task.

Sects have two basic functions. The first is to set out the rules from which individuals will benefit in their daily lives, and the second is to create the knowledge that an administrator will benefit from in practice. We will partially revisit this issue in the following sections.

It is known that during the formation of the sects, new ones were in touch with the laws of the old mujtahids and the knowledge of these laws that had accumulated up to that time as a whole. This liaison was instrumental in the change and contributed positively to the formation of the sects.<sup>16</sup> As has been previously briefly mentioned, the background that had prepared the way for the emergence of sects was largely based on the efforts of the early period mujtahids to produce jurisprudential reasoning on religious matters and to interpret the fundamental sources in accordance with common practices. The process of sectarianism gained momentum after the mujtahids shared these interpretations with their students and the people around them, and gradually these interpretations began to be adopted by them.<sup>17</sup> Their successors learned about this accumulation and took advantage of that and transferred new approaches to legal issues to later ones, so the development of Fiqh reached the later ones through tradition. Fiqh is the process of understanding religion and the individual, as well as the society that the religion relates to, solving its problems and providing guidance.

The Fiqh sects undertake important duties within a society. First of all, sects are institutions that make life easier and support people to experience peace of mind in their lives. In this respect, sects have been considered as a gift as well as a convenience for Muslims. As a result the difficulties caused by geographical

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<sup>16</sup> Kaya, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Abdülkadir Şener, "İslam'da Mezhepler ve Hukuk Ekolleri", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol.: 26, p. 371.

differences can be eased through the different interpretations of sects. On the other hand, sects offered positive support to the life of the community in that they provided the source texts that administrators could benefit from in practice. In addition, Fiqh and the mujtahids, who are constantly improving them, have been able to minimize potential violations of rights that may be committed by administrators by taking on some kind of civil society role. Moreover, because they take into account individual and social expectations, mujtahids have made efforts to perform this duty by interpreting fundamental sources or by engaging in jurisprudential activities under the principle of *maslahah* in cases where the sources do not specify a clear arrangement.

#### 4. What is Meant by the Term “Binding Nature of Fiqh”?

Part of the Fiqh consists of provisions issued directly or indirectly based on fundamental sources.<sup>18</sup> These sources constitute the main structure and principles of Fiqh. Therefore, there are no major or substantive differences in the basic points and the main principles. For example, there is not much room for *ijtihad* regarding the obligatory parts of a prayer.

The principle of “no space for *ijtihad* in matters clarified in the fundamentals”<sup>19</sup> indicates that the matters clearly explained in the fundamental sources do not allow for *ijtihad*. Partial differences in the application do not affect the essence. For example, alms-giving is an obligatory worship. Although there is some difference of interpretation in practice, there is no dispute about it is mandatory. Therefore, the obligations and the forbidden acts to a large extent indicate the points of alliance in a religion, and the case law is realized in the practice of what is forbidden or haram. Theft is forbidden according to all sects and it is not ever possible to consider it a legal method for the transfer of ownership. However, the definition, scope and content of theft can lead to different legal rules between different sects.

The mujtahid tries to determine the will of Almighty Allah regarding the interpretation of religious matters by relying on the sources of jurisprudence. The origin and sources of Fiqh differ from each other.<sup>20</sup> In its most general sense, Fiqh is a mental activity carried out from source to origin. The aim is to capture what is in

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<sup>18</sup> The statement, “Nine tenths of all jurisprudence and judgments have been produced through *ra’y* and *ijtihad*, as there were no clear sources about the relevant matters”, which is attributed to Imam al-Juwayni, indicates that a significant part of Fiqh is not based on fundamental sources. Karaman, Hayrettin, *İslam Hukukunda İctihat*, DİB Yay., Ankara 1975, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Mecelle, Article 14.

<sup>20</sup> For opinions on the roots of law, see: Yörük, Abdülhak Kemal, *Hukuk Başlangıcı Dersleri*, Tan Matbaası, İstanbul 1946, p. 8-20; Hırş, Ernest, *Hukuk Felsefesi ve Hukuk Sosyolojisi Dersleri*, Adapted to Modern Language by: Selçuk (Baran) Veziroğlu, Banka ve Ticaret Hukuku Araştırma Enstitüsü Yay., Ankara 1996, 2nd Edition, p. 111-129; Çağıl, Orhan Münir, *Hukuk Başlangıcı*, Birinci Kitap, İÜ Yay., İstanbul 1963, 2nd Edition, p. 96; Aral, *Hukuk ve Hukuk Bilimi Üzerine*, Filiz Kitabevi, İstanbul 1991, 6th Edition, p. 92.

accordance with Islam, its values, principles and rules. Discussions regarding “accuracy in jurisprudence” and the determination of truth in jurisprudence can largely be considered to be the result of an origin/root determination process. For this reason, the concern for reaching the origin, a complete match with it, and its relativity, prevents monism and monopolism.

When the Abbasid Caliph Mansur asked Imam Malik to write a book to be sent to Islamic towns when he went on a pilgrimage, Imam Malik refused which indicates the flexibility of the jurisprudence and the need for case-law to be in accordance with the jurisprudence of each region. Due to this diversity in the field of law, it is natural for Fiqh-related disputes to arise. The fact of the jurisprudence or the mufta bih opinions regarding matters that were non-existent in the past but which exist today indicates that jurisprudential activity can be carried out by those who are competent in the field. By staying within the methodology and considering the changes, the task of updating the Fiqh will again be undertaken with the appropriate knowledge.

### **5. Reasons for Differences in Jurisprudence**

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the Companions spread across different parts of the Islamic lands and they became advisers and officials of the religious and political affairs in the places where they settled. They tried to resolve religious issues according to what they understood from the Qur’an and the Sunnah, as well as what they remembered of the Prophet's commandments. In this way, they attempted to contribute to people’s religious education. In addition to complying with the Sunnah of the Prophet Himself, the Companions also provided the sources that He took into consideration in His jurisprudence. The same is also true for subsequent generations.

As is known, the differentiation of sects is not valid other than in the areas where no jurisprudence exists. Different case law can also be developed in different locations. The source itself, or its expression and content, can result in absolute differences in both general and specific aspects.<sup>21</sup> Since the provision of fundamental sources is sometimes abstract and generally qualified, the interpretations are generally left to the jurisprudence of the mujtahids. For example, although witnesses are clearly required for legal and judicial matters, the characteristics of the witnesses are determined by the mujtahids. The convictions of the mujtahids regarding public interest, necessity, custom and tradition were

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<sup>21</sup> az-Zarqa, Mustafa Ahmad, *İslam Hukuk Ekolleri ve Maslahat Prensibi*, (Ed.: Ali Pekcan), Rağbet Yay., İstanbul 2007, p. 80.

reflected in their jurisprudence and differences of opinion occurred in terms of the qualifications that a witness should have<sup>22</sup>.

One of the main dynamics of the differences between the sects, perhaps even the most important one, is centered around the Hadith/Sunnah. This is due to the fact that, aside from whether or not a Hadith reaches one scholar or the other, the practices of the mujtahids based on the given hadith constitutes the main dynamic impacting the differences. That is, since the mujtahids, who take one of the few Hadiths related to the same subject into account and evaluate other hadiths on this basis, are considered generally qualified in their different approaches to the jurisprudence, the hadith which is taken as the basis determines a framework for other reasons of the jurisprudence.

Man is a sentient being. The human element in the case-law stems from the manner and the rate of use of the votes regarding case-law. Some may have kept the application area narrow compared to others. On the other hand, the differences in the jurisprudence of the Faqihs living in each different city have evolved in a united way over time based on the common provisions that are respected by all the people and can be a means for achieving consensus in the neighborhood. This process, formed by excluding *Shadh* opinions, indicates that the strengths of the jurisprudence have improved in terms of their obligatory nature over time.

Imam Malik's focus on the deeds of the people of Medina, Abu Yusuf's cautious approach to *khabar al-ahad* and his emphasis on the importance of the Sunnah al-Masyhur, and al-Awza'i's emphasis on "exercises for the leaders of Muslims" stem from this reason.

The sects of Fiqh owe their existence largely to the Companions and the tabi'un scholars who lived before them. On the one hand, while benefiting from their jurisprudence, they have also contributed to the development of the understanding of Fiqh through discussion. For example, before Imam Malik appeared in Medina, the knowledge and understanding of jurisprudence was already well developed there. 'Umar ibn Hattab, Ibn 'Umar, Aisha and Ibn al-Musayyib form the basis of this understanding. Imam Malik is unlikely to have been affected by this tradition. Again, the Companions and scholars of the tabi'un, such as Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Mas'ud, Alqama, Al-Aswad, Al-Sha'bi and Ibrahim al-Nakha'i made great contributions and had a significant impact on the opinions of Abu Hanifa and Hanafism.<sup>23</sup> Having a deep knowledge of the science of Hadith by reading the books of his predecessors and visiting the centers of knowledge, Imam

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<sup>22</sup> According to all mujtahids, witnesses must have reached the age of reason. According to Abu Hanifa, if two women and a non-Muslim woman are all married to a Muslim before a male witness to the marriage contract, the testimony of the non-Muslim becomes valid. According to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, on the other hand, slaves can also witness such contracts. While Imam Shafii states that it is mandatory for witnesses to be fair, Abu Hanifa does not mention this as being mandatory. Karaman, Hayrettin, *Anahatlarıyla İslam Hukuku*, Ensar Neşriyat, İstanbul 2000, 3. baskı, 3, 89-90.

<sup>23</sup> Abu Zahra, p. 211.

Shafi'i has come to the fore by placing the Sunnah at the center of Fiqh, so to speak. Imam Shafi'i drew attention to the fact that some scholars preferred the jurisprudence or practices of the Companions over the hadith, or that they ignored the hadith by taking into account local practices, and he discussed these matters with them.<sup>24</sup>

During the first two centuries of Hijri, there was no absolute adherence to a single Fiqh authority (imam). There were geographical regions and the Fiqh approach of the region was almost consistent. This first legal understanding of jurisprudence was in conformity with the opinions of the scholars who learned the Fiqh and the teachers from whom they received their knowledge. For example, Abu Hanifa was heavily influenced by Ibrahim al-Nakha'i through Hammad.<sup>25</sup> Abu Yusuf, in many places in his work *Kitab al-Kharaj*, mentions "our teachers" and "our faqihs".<sup>26</sup> The phrase the "adherents of Abu Hanifa" which Imam Shafii applied to some of the Fiqh scholars in Kufa, also support this.<sup>27</sup>

## 6. Do the Sects Represent the Truth?

Each adherent of a sect and every mujtahid considers that their opinion represents the truth, or, at the least, is the opinion that approximates the truth. On the other hand, it is permissible to follow the mafdul opinion (which is less widely supported) despite the existence of an afdal (the most widely supported) legal theory based on more general opinions.<sup>28</sup> Ibn Abidin's statement, based on the ideas of Nasafi, "even if it is still in dispute, the jurisprudence of my sect is the correct one", prevents the validity of the mafdul opinion in light of an afdal thought.<sup>29</sup> Here, questions are raised about what is the truth and whether there is any concrete indication for attaining the truth, and which of the judgments are afdal.

The question is: "Is the truth only one in the sight of Allah, or is it as various as the disparate legal opinions of the mujtahids? Or is every mujtahid right in his own judgment?. On the one hand these questions ensure that the value of the ijtihad activities are tested at a methodological level, and on the other hand they form the basis of a dynamic Fiqh structure. The failure to create this dynamism naturally leads people to be criticized on the basis of contemporary cultural accumulation and thought. Considering the sociological dimensions of the work, it

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<sup>24</sup> al-Shafi'i, *al-Umm*, 7, 247.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Hasan, p. 327; al-Hudari, Muhammad, *Islam Hukuk Tarihi*, (Trans: Haydar Hatipoğlu), Kahraman Yay., İstanbul 1987, 2nd Edition, p. 237.

<sup>26</sup> Abu Yusuf, *Kitab al-Kharaj*, Maktab al-Azhariyyah li al-Turas, (Ed.: Musa Abd al-Rauf Sa'd et al.), Cairo, nd., p. 17, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 34.

<sup>27</sup> al-Umm, 7, 207.

<sup>28</sup> Muhammad Amin Amir Padishah, *Taysir al-tahrir*, Egypt, 1351, IV, 251.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Abidin, *Hashiyat Radd al-Mukhtar*, Kahraman Yayınları, İstanbul 1984, I, 48.

can be seen that the acceptance and expectations of the individuals who make up society differ from time to time based on the provisions of the case law.

The legal system has continued to exist as the most respected institution in the history of Fiqh. From a person who has the capacity to make new case-law to the person who complies with the case-law made by others, jurisprudence has continued to have a function in both shaping social life and in determining direction. It is not possible to perform these functions for understanding that which is not within the sectarian systems.

The value of the jurisprudence is measured by the appropriateness of its affiliations because it is difficult to establish any objective criteria that can determine the authenticity of a jurisprudential system outside of methodological consistency. Even if there is only one truth in the sight of Allah, what should be the measure of it other than conformity with the fundamentals? If conformity with the fundamentals were the only criterion, there would be no differences between the opinions of the mujtahids who judge based on the same reference points.

The jurisprudence of Fiqh cannot be reduced to the level of individual preference and observance. Considering the judicial dimension of jurisprudence, it can be seen that the Qadis have followed the jurisprudence of a particular sect largely based on its systematic consistency. This has not been regarded as a problem by Muslims from the outset.

There are three basic approaches to the discussions regarding accuracy in jurisprudential theory. The first one is formulated as “there is always a judgment in the sight of Allah even before the case law is taken into account for relevant matters”. The judgment is not based on the belief of the mujtahid and the truth is not dependent on the number of cases. Therefore, the judgment of the mujtahid is correct and that of the others is wrong. However we cannot know which one of them is right and which is wrong.

Secondly, the exact opposite of this that “there is no specific provision for these matters before the case law is determined” has been made into a rule. Accordingly, all the outcomes in the case law are equal to each other because they express opinions. Therefore, there is no predetermined truth in the case law.

The third is based on the opinion that although Allah does not judge matters related to the case law, if it were, it would be to follow the way indicated by the case law. Therefore, this approach, which regards specific opinions as the possible truth in jurisprudential matters, expresses the idea that although opinions of all scholars are true, one of them may be closer to the truth that is meant to be achieved.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Abd al-Aziz al-Bukhari, Ala al-Din Abd al-Aziz ibn Ahmad, *Kashf al-Asrar*, (ed.: Muhammad al-Mu'taşim bi'llah), Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut 1994, 2nd Edition, IV, 32-34. For similar resources, see:



The main issue is concentrated on the responsibility of the mujtahid in case law, no matter if there is only one truth in the sight of Allah or if it is as many as the number of mujtahids. Ijtihad is the duty of the mujtahid and this is the occasion for him to receive blessings in the sight of Allah. If so, the mujtahid makes judgments taking accuracy into account and expects his reward from Allah alone.<sup>31</sup>

## 7. Is It Obligatory to Follow a Sect?

From the perspective of “attachment to a sect”, it can be seen that the views relating to “the existence or absence of a provision for the judgement of the mujtahid in the sight of Allah or the existence of any equivalent” do not have much value in the context of individual jurisprudence. What is important here is the value and place of the jurisprudence formed within the axis of these discussions within the sectarian system. It is not the jurisprudence itself, but rather the whole of the case law that is influential in the choice of sect and thus forms the basis of religious affiliation. Jurisprudence that is not subject to testing in the methodological integrity of a sect may not be persuasive.

One of the bases of attachment to jurisprudence, which is formed within the discipline of a sect rather than by individual reasoning, is the concern that the jurisprudence may evolve or be diverted in different ways over time. In early periods after the death of the Prophet, people considered that there would be no harm in adhering to the jurisprudence which they found appropriate, both in its legal and judicial dimensions. Over time, due to regional differences, a rapid increase emerged quantitatively in the jurisprudence, and different and contradictory case law emerged. The fact that Abu Jafar al-Mansur’s, who was an Abbasid caliph, requested Imam Malik to write a book to facilitate consistency in the case law<sup>32</sup> clearly supports this assertion.<sup>33</sup>

Adherence to a sect on an individual level and legislating the jurisprudence of a sect within society constitute different phenomena. While the law maker makes an effort to take into account the needs, and the extent of those needs at the relevant time, the solution can be realized based on the “mufta bih” views of a sect as a

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Abu'l-Husayn al-Basri, Muhammad ibn Ali, *Sharh al-'Umad*, (ed. Abd al-Hamid Ibn Ali Abu Zanid), Maktabat al-Ulum wa-al-Hikam, Medina 1990, II, 235 et al.; İbrahim Kafi Dönmez, “İctihadın Bağlayıcılığı Meselesi ve Fıkıh Mezheplerine Bağlanmanın Anlamı”, *Usul*, I, 1 (2004), 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> “The judge makes a judgment based on the case law, and if he succeeds, he receives two rewards, and if he fails, he receives one reward.” Bukhari, Abu Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Isma'il, *Al-Jami' al-Şaḥiḥ*, Çağrı Yay., İstanbul 1992, 2nd Edition, “Kitabu'l-İtisam”, 21; Abu al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjaj al-Qushayri, (ed.: Muḥammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi), Çağrı Yay., İstanbul 1992, 2nd Edition, “Kitab Al-Aqdiyah,” 15. “If you adjudge based on the jurisprudence and your judgment is accurate, you get ten, if it is not, you still get one.” Ahmed b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, Çağrı Yay., İstanbul 1992, 2nd Edition, IV/205

<sup>32</sup> Ahmad Amin, *Farj al-Islam*, Cairo, 1955, p. 222; Abdul Karim Zaydan, *İslam Hukukuna Giriş*, (Transl. Ali Şafak), İstanbul, 1976; Abu Zahra, p. 301-302.

<sup>33</sup> Dönmez, 42-43.

whole, or it can be realized by adopting the jurisprudence of a sect that has not been transformed into a sectarian view.<sup>34</sup> He may even try to find solutions with the idea of achieving practical benefits from the perspective of the sects. This should not be confused with the idea that a person who does not have the capacity for jurisprudence can shape his life by choosing from within the sects. Attachment to a sect individually is assessed on the basis of otherworldly rewards and concerns the area where there is no connection between the lives of others from a worldly point of view. Therefore, following this or that sect is not directly related to others. For example, there is no problem for some between reciting the *basmala* as a prayer or not.

However, when an issue is considered to be of interest to the general public, arbitrary individual practices would cause legal turmoil. For example, in a region where Shafii Muslims are dominant, "permission of the guardian/parent" is considered a condition of marriage,<sup>35</sup> and opinions such as "I think differently and for me there is no need for parental permission" would ultimately lead to chaos. In other words, it is clear that both following the Shafi'i sect approach and then applying the laws differently in certain matters would result in the breaking down of the unifying function of the Fiqh. As mentioned above, the authority having the legislative power can make a choice according to the region, but allowing the preference of the individual would make the situation difficult because to suggest that someone who does not have any judicial skills ability to act according to any whatever rules that he wishes, would create an impossible situation in terms of practicality and consistency.<sup>36</sup>

Even the debate about what constitutes truth in the eyes of Allah is indicative of the need for jurisprudence. Therefore, in the case of jurisprudence, regardless of the existence of a specific provision revealed by Allah before a judgment is made, this area is unknown to the mujtahid, so the obligation to obey the sect arises spontaneously. In cases where even a mujtahid, who reasons within certain systems, is unaware of the accuracy of a judgment other than for methodological consistency, those who do not have the necessary qualities in the field will lack the logical consistency to see that the results achieved are a reflection of the truth. If so, the disadvantages for those who have not reached a certain level of jurisprudential knowledge will be self-evident.

Being a member of a sect would mean that the mujtahid has already accepted the jurisprudential *acquis* of that sect as binding on him. The information and provisions from these sources must encompass their own studies and jurisprudence

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<sup>34</sup> The system for drafting the *Mecelle* and the Ottoman Family Law Decree differ from each other. While the *Mecelle* was based on the doctrines of Hanafism, the other sects, or the views of Hanafism which are not at the level of *mufta bih*, may have formed the basis for the latter.

<sup>35</sup> 'Abd al-Salam ibn Sa'id Saḥnūn, *al-Mudawwana al-Kubra*, Cairo 1324, 2, 165; Ibn Qudamah Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah, *al-Mughni*, Beirut 1973, 7, 337.

<sup>36</sup> Dönmez, p. 44.

in terms of general approach, principles, systems and procedures. What is decisive here is not to reject the sect as a whole. Disagreements or criticisms regarding some case law does not prevent the adherents from being sectarian.

Those who know and understand Islam and who are able to make judgments based on their sources in a proper manner are not obliged to adhere to a sect. There were no sects during the time of the Prophet. During the period of the Companions, differences in jurisprudential thinking began to emerge. Since it was not obligatory for everyone to know and investigate the provisions in depth, and because they were also engaged in other areas of life, it was easy for them both theoretically and practically to follow the existing jurisprudence, and they had no difficulty in adopting those laws.<sup>37</sup>

Besides the absence of sects, there was no branch of science known as Fiqh during the time of the Prophet. Moreover, there was no distinction between Fard, Wajib, mendub, mubah, haram and makruh, which are terms coined by Fiqh scholars in later periods, in relation to religious obligations.<sup>38</sup>

Islam is a universal religion and it applies to all times and places and offers solutions to every legal conflict that may occur. These solutions are of course fulfilled by jurisprudential determinations. As in all periods of Islamic History, the creation of laws was a compulsory endeavor during the early period. The differences in interpretation of agreed sources, such as the Qur'an and Sunnah, stemming from time, space and cultural differences, have largely influenced the formation of sects. This is because, as is well-accepted, understanding jurisprudence only as judgments based on sources of knowledge, does not reflect the truth. Reducing the Fiqh to mere judgments made by Muslims based on fundamental sources ignores the factors that lay the groundwork for the formation of sects. Jurisprudence is not something that resolves issues to problems that people encounter, but rather a social and religious institution that prepares the ground for people in a specific place, and even in other areas where Muslims live, to be able to live by common rules.

There is a tight link between the binding role of sects and the enrichment of Fiqh. In order to ease the lives of their followers and to increase their numbers, a sect with adherents must rely on a jurisprudence that is in accordance with the truth. On the other hand, rivalry between sects contributes to the development and formation of the most appropriate jurisprudence for the resolution of problems, as well as to the formation of conclusive judicial judgments. There is no possibility of achieving and sustaining this through individual jurisprudence without sectarian integrity.

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<sup>37</sup> Şener, p. 373.

<sup>38</sup> Ahmad Hasan, p. 313.

For those who do not have the authority to determine judgments it is useful to be connected to a sect. However, when connected with a sect, fanaticism and sectarianism are different issues. Although sects are Islamic, they are not a prerequisite for being Muslim. Therefore, theoretically, no sect has superiority over another.

The case law achieved as a result of jurisprudence is an expression of personal opinion<sup>39</sup>. This is because no mujtahid has concrete data or tools that can show or prove that his personal jurisprudence is one hundred percent accurate. Therefore, it is not possible for one set of judgments or the judgments of another of the sects to be philosophically and theoretically superior to the other<sup>40</sup>. The most concrete indication of this is the existence of the numerous Muslim scholars who have passed from one sect to another over the course of history. For example, the well-known faqih, Imam Tahawi, previously had preferred the Shafi'i sect and later converted to Hanafism.<sup>41</sup>

The judicial union has an important role in the binding nature of sects. Those appointed as governors during the Prophet's reign were also involved in judicial affairs. It is a well-known fact that 'Umar also appointed Qadis, in addition to governors, to manage judicial proceedings. Those who were appointed as Qadis, of course, dominated Fiqh matters and also had the qualities of ijthad. It is necessary to make similar decisions regarding similar events to ensure consistency in judicial decisions. The sect is also largely meant to cohesively and to be the subject of similar provisions.

The scholarship that form the basis of the Fiqh sects are known as free mediums in a scientific sense. For example, in the lessons delivered by Abu Hanifa over nearly thirty years, his students were encouraged to adopt a very free attitude to declaring their own jurisprudence. The same situation occurred during the formation and development periods of the sects.

One of the most confusing issues is the idea of why it would be objectionable to understand a provision from the Qur'an or Hadith and to then act accordingly. Of course, there is no harm in a Muslim's understanding, interpretation and application to his life of a provision from the fundamental sources. However, this meaning, which he understands, must be subject to certain conditions in order to become binding, as an intellectual endeavor, on others in the form of jurisprudence. Fiqh represents an effort to understand the Divine Will revealed in fundamental sources. It is of course necessary for the consistency of jurisprudence that the mujtahid uses his whole power to determine the truth in the ways that Allah has

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<sup>39</sup> al-Jassas, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali al-Razi, *al-Fuṣūl fī al-uṣūl*, Kuwait 1994, IV, 17; Seyyid Bey, Muhammed Seyyid, *Medhal*, İstanbul 1333, p. 165.

<sup>40</sup> Dönmez, 41.

<sup>41</sup> İtaş, Davut, "Tahavi", *DİA*, İstanbul 2010, 39, 386.

ordained His servants for the sake His order, and to take into account the non-textual methods that affect the understanding of the judgments in so doing.

On the other hand, someone who has a capacity for making judgments must act according to that jurisprudence. He may also adopt the opinion of another mujtahid whose opinion is in accordance with his own. However, the only thing that a person who does not have a capacity for jurisprudence can do is to follow the jurisprudence of a mujtahid. A person who does not deal with Fiqh in the general sense may not understand the provisions related to the numerous events surrounding his own life. Even if he has knowledge in a specific field or learns a few verses or the Hadith and understands some of them, how can he determine what provisions of the Fiqh are related to all other areas of life? Of course, every Muslim should have knowledge of the Fiqh, that is, a knowledge of the catechism, at a sufficient level to support his daily life. However, the fact that if everyone is engaged in Fiqh/jurisprudence means that they would miss out on other areas of activity in their lives.

### **Conclusion**

Attachment to a sect of Fiqh does not mean accepting it as superior to others. The answer to the question of "why this, but not that?" can be given, but is not necessary because sects are interpretations of the same essence of religion but differ in detail. If so, the main reason is the need for affiliations. History has shown that Muslims have formed many sects of Fiqh, and some of them have survived, some have been short-lived, and some have not been able to survive due to a lack of adherents. History also testifies that Muslims have shown interest in them since the original formation of the sects, have furthered their lives depending on one sect, and have started following another sect whenever they have desired to do so. Sects are not religion, of course, but they are Islamic institutions that help to understand the religion and to facilitate the practice of religious orders. As there are no other institutions currently performing the same function, it remains a necessity for them to continue to exist.

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## On the Binding Status of the Fiqh Sects

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## Different Interpretations of the Holy Qur'an -The Example of Surah Nisa, Verse 86-\*

Halil ALDEMİR\*\*

### Abstract

Exegetes, from the text of the Qur'an, for themselves and for reasons arising from the circumstances that surround them, have expressed different opinions concerning the interpretation of verses. Verse 86 of the Surah Nisa is one of these verses, which has observed different interpretations by commentators. This verse has been interpreted in the context of greetings, grant and peace. Sectarian factors, attention to the context of the Qur'an, linguistic data, assessments and hadiths have been effective in terms of different interpretations of the verse. In this study, the content and the comments in question have been compared, in terms of evidence. While acknowledging that greeting and receiving greetings better or repeating vis a vis is a fixed truth through narratives, it is concluded that interpretation of the verse in the context of peace is more appropriate. It has also been determined that the verse does not relate to grant, as some Hanafis argue.

**Keywords:** Greeting, grant, peace, differentiation of interpretation, exegesis

## Kur'an'ın Farklı Yorumlanması-Nisa Suresi 86. Ayeti Örneği

### Özet

Müfessirler Kur'ân metninden, kendilerinden ve kendilerini çevreleyen şartlardan kaynaklanan nedenlerden dolayı ayetlerin yorumunda farklı görüşler dile getirmişlerdir. Nisa Suresi'nin 86. ayeti de müfessirlerin farklı yorumlarının görüldüğü ayetlerden biridir. Bu ayet, selamlaşma, hibe ve barış bağlamında tefsir edilmiştir. Mezhebî faktörler, Kur'ân'ın bağlamını dikkate alma, dilbilimsel veriler, değerlendirmeler ve hadisler ayetin farklı yorumlanmasında etkili olmuştur. Bu araştırmada söz konusu yorumlar içerik ve delil bakımından birbirleri ile karşılaştırılmıştır. Selamlaşmanın ve verilen selamı daha iyi biçimde almanın ya da aynen tekrarlamının rivayetlerle sabit bir hakikat olduğunu kabul etmekle birlikte ayetin barış bağlamında yorumlanmasının daha isabetli olduğu sonucuna

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varılmıştır. Ayetin bazı Hanefilerin iddia ettiği gibi hibe ile alakasının olmadığı da tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Selam, hibe, barış, yorum farklılığı, tefsir

## Introduction

It is understood that the divine revelations, where one of their purposes is to explain<sup>1</sup> issues where people have disagreed and find solutions<sup>2</sup> to these issues, have become the basis for conflict over time, especially having regard to the negative attitudes displayed by the clergy.<sup>3</sup> Of course, it would be wrong to attribute this conflict in understanding the revelations to the approaches of the clergy alone. This is because the historical context of the text has been affected over a long period of time by<sup>4</sup> the commentator's inability to encompass the language used from the period of the text, a lack of sufficient information regarding the thoughts and practices of society that the revelation came from, the difference in stylistic approaches, preconceptions, and other reasons which are also effective in generating differences in the understanding of sacred texts.

The Qur'an, which is the final point in a series of revelations sent to the people, has been understood and interpreted differently, for the reasons outlined above. As we move away from the revelation process, on the one hand, the number of conflicts has increased, especially with the formation and institutionalization of sects throughout the history of Islam, and on the other hand, they have become more difficult to resolve. This is because each section selected certain arguments to support their own opinions and outlined evidence upon which the other side or other parties could agree. On the other hand, they either ignored evidence that the other party accepted and put forward, or tried to show that they did not support what they claimed. As a result, systematic conflicts that emerged in an institutional sense began.

The existence of different interpretations in the Qur'anic exegesis would unquestionably be revealed as a factor at a glance.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to categorize the roots of these differences in various forms. However, it seems more accurate to link them to the structure of the Qur'anic text than to the conditions where the commentator is involved. For example, the fact that some of the words mentioned in the Qur'an are very meaningful, and the differences in verses are related to the

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<sup>1</sup> an-Nahl 16/39; an-Naml 27/76.

<sup>2</sup> al-Baqarah 2/213.

<sup>3</sup> al-Baqarah 2/42, 79, 174; Ali 'Imran 3/19; al-Jasiyah 45/17.

<sup>4</sup> See: Çalışkan, Necmettin, "Nüzul Sırasına Göre Tefsir Yaklaşımının Kur'an Yorumuna Etkisi (Beyan-ı Hak Örneği)", *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Year: 2017, Vol.: 14, Issue: 40, p. 406-408. (p. 398-422).

<sup>5</sup> Sıcak, Ahmet Sait, "Yorum Farklılıkları Açısından Bir Tefsir Kaynağı Olarak Kur'an-ı Kerim", *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2014, Vol.: III, Issue: 3, p. 642-646. (p. 632-651).

structure of the Qur'an. The qualification of the commentator, their sect, knowledge of linguistic data and narrations, and their view of these sources, plus other similar causes are also among the factors that cause conflict within the exegesis. It is possible to gather these within a heading similar to the reasons concerning the commentator. In addition, there are some other factors such as the situation, political condition, actual discussions around the commentator to consider as well.<sup>6</sup> These are a reflection of the conditions surrounding the commentator. For this reason, different understandings of the verses of the Qur'an are gathered under three main headings.<sup>7</sup>

In this research, how the commentators expressed different interpretations about a verse in *an-Nisa* for reasons that have been categorized previously will be discussed and the topic will be assessed within this context. In the verse in question, Allah Almighty says: "وَإِذَا خِيبْتُمْ بِنَجِيَّةٍ فَخَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنِّ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا". This verse in *an-Nisa* has been interpreted by commentators in the context of salutation, grants and peace.

### I. Interpretation of the Verse in the Context of Salutation

The key role in interpreting this verse in the context of salutation is played by the meaning given to the words *حَيَاةٌ* and *حَيٌّ*. These words are derived from the h-y-y root in past tense, verbal noun and imperative forms. This root has the meaning of *being alive* and *living*.<sup>8</sup> The word 'life' (*hayat*), which is widely used in our language (Turkish), is also a word that comes from this root. The link between living and greeting is formed by the fact that the pre-Islamic Arabs said "حيالك الله" when they met each other.<sup>9</sup> According to this expression, one of the people that meet wishes Allah to keep the other alive. This is why many commentators, especially al-Tabari, interpret this word by giving it the meaning of prayer.<sup>10</sup> Those who attributed this meaning interpreted the verse after stating that when the Arabs met, they greeted each other by saying *حيالك الله* and wished longevity for the other person.<sup>11</sup>

While the commentators gave these words the meaning of salute and salutation, they were not content with just looking at the root of the word and simply one of the pre-Islamic types of salutation of the Arabs. In addition, they made use of the Qur'an itself. At this very point, they say the verse "وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا

<sup>6</sup> See: Cide, Ömer, 2/146 ve 6/20 Ayetlerinin Tebşirat Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi, *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, V.7, I.13, p. 151. (138-153).

<sup>7</sup> Demirci, Muhsin, *Tefsir Tarihi*, p. 43-51.

<sup>8</sup> See: al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, p. 268-270.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, p. 270; Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, X, 183.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Tabari, *Jami al-Bayan*, XI, 188. Also see: Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 297; Al-Alusi, *Ar-Ruh al-Ma'ani*, V, 129.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, X, 183; Al-Alusi, *Ar-Ruh al-Ma'ani*, V, 129.

لَمْ يُخَيِّكْ بِهِ اللَّهُ/And when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allah does not greet you and say among themselves,"<sup>12</sup> again to support their views in question.<sup>13</sup> Because in this verse there is also a verb in the past tense which is derived from the same form, from the root of h-y-y. According to the tafsir sources, this verse was revealed upon hostile acts of the Jewish community in Mecca against the Prophet (s.a.v.). That is to say, the Jews used to call the Prophet السلام عليك instead of السلام عليك . They greeted Him on the one hand, and on the other hand they manipulated the pronunciation of this word to curse the Prophet.<sup>14</sup> In that way, they saved the explicit situation, and they were satisfied in some way by purging their grudges. This Hadith, narrated by the commentators, has also been involved in Hadith sources. For example, these narrations are mentioned in the "Sahih" works of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim, which are among the most reliable sources of Hadith.<sup>15</sup>

The majority of the commentators have described the word used in the verse in al-Mujadilah as an expression of greeting.<sup>16</sup> However, Tahir Ibn Ashur stated that this verse was not revealed upon this incident between the Jews and the Prophet, but on the traditions of the hypocrites or when they started to use some sarcastic words learned from the Jews to give salutations.<sup>17</sup> Although this interpretation differs from others, it does not refute the view that the verse was revealed in the context of salutation. On the contrary, it supports the view that the verse was revealed to clarify this matter. With this information at hand, it can easily be said that according to the commentators, the word derived from the root of h-y-y was used in the sense of salutation.

The commentators also made use of Arabic poetry in interpreting the verse of an-Nisa in the context of salutation. For example, Nabighah al-Dhubyani uses the word derived from the h-y-y root in the present tense to support the opinion regarding the meaning discussed above:

تحبيهم بيض الولائد بينهم      وأكسية الإضريح فوق المشاجب

The white-skinned concubines among them greet them

With red silk<sup>18</sup> robes<sup>19</sup> hung on crooked wands

<sup>12</sup> Al-Mujadilah 58/8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibnu al-Arabi, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, I, 482; Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298.

<sup>14</sup> Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir*, III, 332; Ibn Abi Zamanin, *Tafsir*, II, 395; Al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, IV, 343; Ibn Atiyah, *Al-Muharrar*, XIV, 345; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Zad Al-Masir fi 'Ilm Altafsir*, VIII, 10; Al-Qasimi, *Mahasin al-Ta'wil fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, IX, 169.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Bukhari, "Kitab al-Adab", 38; Muslim, "Kitab as-Salam", 6-12.

<sup>16</sup> Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir*, III, 332; Ibn Abi Zamanin, *Tafsir*, II, 395; Al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, IV, 343; Ibn Atiyah, *Al-Muharrar*, XIV, 345; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Zad Al-Masir fi 'Ilm Altafsir*, VIII, 10; Al-Qasimi, *Mahasin al-Ta'wil fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, IX, 169.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur, *al-Tahrir wa'l-tanwir*, XXVIII; 31.

<sup>18</sup> الإضريح is also described as yellow silk.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298.

Al-Qurthubi and Ash-Shawkani clearly defines the word mentioned in the verse as salutation.<sup>20</sup> In fact, Ibn Al-Arabi stated that scholars and commentators used the word *tahiyya* to refer to salutation until it was given the meaning of property.<sup>21</sup> It is necessary to understand his statement as proof that the majority thinks this way. This is because, when he uses this phrase, he explains that the commentators understood this verse in different way, together with the evidence.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he attributes the opinion that the aim of the assumption here that refers to the salutation form used *السلام عليكم*, to the majority of people.<sup>23</sup>

Although Muhammad Izzat Darwaza's research stated that the commentators did not convey any narration about the reason for this verse<sup>24</sup>, according to a rumor related to the subject, this verse was revealed when some people were reluctant to salute each other.<sup>25</sup> This narration is also one of pieces of evidence supporting the interpretation of the verse in the context of salutation. On the other hand, salutation is one of the important issues of Islam's religion. According to the narrations quoted in the Hadith sources, the first known salutation known among Muslims is that between Adam and the Angels.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, the Prophet says "*O mankind! Spread (the greeting of) Salam!*"<sup>27</sup> and encourages people in this matter. Some of these Hadiths contain various arrangements and directions, especially on the subject of salutation.<sup>28</sup> The content of these narrations supports the interpretation of the verse in the context of salutation. That is to say, in a narrative about Adam's greeting with the Angels, and in some other examples of of salutations that took place during the period of the Prophet, it is seen that the salutation was answered with more beautiful and longer expressions.<sup>29</sup> However, it is also possible to see the opposite. For example, a narrative conveyed by Abu Awanah through Anas ibn Malik says that the Prophet entered Aisha's room and greeted her as "*وبركاته السلام عليكم أهل البيت ورحمة الله*" and she answered Him as "*وعليكم السلام ورحمة الله*".<sup>30</sup> According to this narrative, it is seen that Aisha does not return the salute in the same way, let alone in a more beautiful way.

Another interpretation which has been mentioned regarding the interpretation of the verse, seems initially difficult to relate with salutations. According to the opinion narrated from Imam Malik by Ibn Wahb and Ibn Qasim,

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298; Muhammad ash-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, I, 784.

<sup>21</sup> Ibnu al-Arabi, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, I, 482.

<sup>22</sup> See: Ibnu al-Arabi, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, I, 479-483.

<sup>23</sup> Ibnu al-Arabi, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, I, 480.

<sup>24</sup> Darwaza, *Al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, VIII, 189.

<sup>25</sup> Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir*, I, 245.

<sup>26</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, "Adab Al-Isti'dzan", 1; Sahih Muslim, "Jannah", 28.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Tirmidhi, "Sifat-Al-Qiyamah", 42; Ibn Majah, "Kitab Al-Ath'imah", 1.

<sup>28</sup> See: Sahih al-Bukhari, "Kitab al-Iman", 6; Sahih Muslim, "Salam", 5; Al-Tirmidhi, "Isti'dhan", 10; Abu Dawud, "Adab", 132-133.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, XX, 62; Al-Nasa'i, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, Bab al-Istighfar Ba'd Taslim, III, 409.

<sup>30</sup> Abu Awanah, *Musnad*, XI, 302.

who were adherents of the Maliki sect, this verse is about two men who prayed for people who sneezed.<sup>31</sup> Probably as he was a member of the Maliki sect, Al-Qurthubi attempted to make this interpretation seem closer to his opinion, which is in fact in a contrast. In doing so, he paid attention to ensure a prudent discourse. Therefore, considering the fact that the opinion quoted from Imam Malik is true, he used the method of comparison to make this interpretation look more in line with his own choice. That is to say, praying for people who sneeze, which is a case attributed to Imam Malik, is included in the verse's content only via comparison to respond the salute of the greeter.<sup>32</sup> The Maliki scholars Ibn Atiyyah and Ibn al-Faras stated that the interpretation of the verse as if it mentions a person who prays for another who sneezes, is a weak opinion, and the wording of the verse itself rejects this. They then added that it was necessary to think that Imam Malik may have compared praying for a person who sneezes to a greeting.<sup>33</sup> Ash-Shawkani, on the other hand, mentioned this as an alternative opinion without any interpretation or comment.<sup>34</sup>

We see the advice given by the Prophet to whomever sneezes and to anyone who hears their sneeze in various Hadiths.<sup>35</sup> For example; the Prophet stated the following: *"When one of you sneezes, let him say: all praise is due to Allah in every circumstance. Those with him should say: may Allah have mercy upon you. He should respond to them by saying: may Allah guide you and rectify your affairs."*<sup>36</sup> The case in this Hadith bears similarity with the case of salutation. Firstly, here two Muslims wish goodness to each other, as in salutation. Secondly, the one who sneeze prays for the witness of the sneezing, who wishes mercy for him, to be in a good condition. Therefore, the respondent always responds with better wishes in this case. This can be considered as evidence to justify Al-Qurthubi's interpretation. Therefore, the interpretation of the verse as a dialogue between the one who sneezes and the one who hears the sneeze is nothing more than the analogy of a situation to another situation.

There have also been those who have given this word the meaning of "possession/ownership and prevalence". Some scholars, such as Abdullah Ibn Idris and Ibn Huwayzmandad, have described the word *thayiyya* as property/possession and prevalence.<sup>37</sup> Al-Jassas first mentioned this meaning in the interpretation of the verse and referred it to the opinions of linguistic scholars. However, he did not mention the name of the linguistic scholars, nor put forward any evidence in

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<sup>31</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, I, 480; Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298; Muhammad ash-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, I, 785.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn 'Atiyyah, *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz*, IV, 156; Ibn Al-Faras, *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, II, 220.

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad ash-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, I, 785.

<sup>35</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, "Kitab Al-Jana'iz", 2; Ibn Majah, "Janaiz", 1; Sahih Muslim, "Salat Al Musafireen wa qasruha", 54; ; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, XIV, 125; XIV, 439; XV, 197; XVI, 566.

<sup>36</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, "Kitab al-Adab", 126.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 297.

regards to this.<sup>38</sup> Abdullah Ibn Idris supported this view with the following words of Amr ibn Ma'di Karib:

أوم بها أبا قابوس حتى أنيخ على تحيته بجندي

I'm heading with him towards Abu Qabus

Once I am there, my camel will kneel on his land

Ibn Huwayzmandad, on the other hand, supported his opinion with the following words:

أسير به إلى النعمان حتى أنيخ على تحيته بجندي

I'm going with him to Nu'man

Once I am there, my camel will kneel on his land

Those of this opinion also brought the following words of Zuhayr ibn Janab ibn Hubal al-Kalbi as evidence:

ولكل ما نال الفتى قد نلته إلا التحية

I've reached everything the young man has reached

There is nothing I couldn't achieve but property

Some of those who give this word the meaning of sovereignty still refer to this case as salutation. For them, there are a lot of kings on earth and these kings are greeted in various forms.<sup>39</sup>

Most of the translations in Turkey are based on this meaning and the verse is translated as "*And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better or [at least] return it [in a similar manner]*"<sup>40</sup>.

The conclusion reached by some of those who gave the meaning of prayer and salutation to the words derived from the root of h-y-y in this verse is the same as those who say that these words carry the meaning of property. The view attributed to Imam Malik may be because the situation in the verse is likened to an Islamic practice of praying to anyone who sneezes. Therefore, this interpretation does not harm the verse being in the context of salutation.

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Jassas, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, II, 307.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 297.

<sup>40</sup> Heyet, *Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Türkçe Açıklamalı Meali*, p. 90; Heyet, *Kur'an Yolu*, II, 106; Kandemir, Mehmet Yaşar, Zevalsiz, Halid, Şimşek, Ümit, *Ayet ve Hadislerle Açıklamalı Kur'an-ı Kerim Meali*, I, 302; Duman, Zeki, *Beyanu'l-Hak*, III, 319.

## II. Interpretation of the Verse in the Context of Grant

Under the previous title, it was stated that the meaning of property was given to the words derived from the h-y-y root mentioned in the verse. Although some commentators attribute this interpretation of the words in the verse in terms of property to salutation, it is not possible to say that all scholars are of the same opinion. For example, Imam al-Jassas first centers his interpretation on the Hanafi sect's view in terms of grant. That is, after interpreting the word *tahiyya* as property, he prepared the ground for his own opinion by explaining the Arabic expression *ملكك الله سبحانه*. Al-Jassas, whose expressions and style indicate that he thinks that the real meaning of the word *tahiyya* is property, interpreted the verse according to this view. In this case, if a person gives something to another person free of charge, he or she has the right to take it back, if he or she does not respond to it. He said that this meaning also supported the view of the Hanafi sect. He then listed the Hadiths which he himself explained in a way that supported or became closer to the view of Hanafi scholars. Although he interpreted the verse in connection with salutation as an alternative thought, Al-Jassas mainly focused on the meaning of property and associated it with the Hanafi sect's view of grant.<sup>41</sup>

Adherents of Abu Hanifa's sect said that by the phrase "أَوْ رَدَّوْهَا", what was mentioned in the verse is a grant. Because according to them, it is not possible to respond to the greeting in exactly the same form. However, the revelation of the verse requires that *tahiyyah*, which means the grant, is to be returned in the same way. In this case, if the person accepts the grant, they will pay for it in another form; if they do not, they will return it. But this is out of the question in regards to greeting.<sup>42</sup>

We can see that Ibn Huwayzmandad, one of the Maliki scholars, thinks like the Hanafis. He also said that when the verse is for a response, it will be referred to as a grant. Accordingly, if a person is given something which is to be returned, they need to approve it; if they wish, they can return the grant, also if they wish, they can accept it and pay what it is worth.<sup>43</sup>

Ash-Shawkani attributed this comment only to the sect of Abu Hanifa and stated that it was a vicious opinion that could not be respected in any way. It is noteworthy that Ash-Shawkani did not mention any criticism against Malikis who expressed this opinion. Al-Kiya al-Harasi, one of the Shafi'i scholars, also criticized Al-Jassas' comment after quoting it.<sup>44</sup>

According to the commentaries of some Hanafis, especially Al-Jassas, it is possible to translate the verse as follows: "When you are given a grant, respond with one better than it, or at least return it in a like manner."

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<sup>41</sup> Al-Jassas, *Ahkamu al-Qur'an*, II, 307-309.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298; Muhammad ash-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, I, 785.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 298.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Kiya al-Harasi, *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, II, 251.



The interpretation expressed by Al-Jassas is expressed in the same way in the Hanafi books of jurisprudence. In some of these books, the verse was brought as evidence to this judgment, just as Al-Jassas did.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, this verse is mentioned in *Al-Mausu'ah Al-Fiqhiyah Al-Kuwaitiya* as the first evidence of the Hanafis' judgment on this matter.<sup>46</sup> However, it is seen that some other sources only mention the verse, but do not refer to it as judgment as others do.<sup>47</sup> This shows that it is not possible to say that all Hanafis regard this verse in the same way.

Al-Kiya, an averse critic of Al-Jassas, rejects both the Hanafis' view on this issue, and criticizes Al-Jassas' interpretation of this verse, which is based on the judgment adopted by the Hanafi sect. So much so that his interpretation of this verse is a rejection of Hanafis in general and Al-Jassas in particular.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, with exceptions such as Ibn Huwayzmandad, the commentaries of scholars of other denominations of this verse are different from this.

We may conclude the following thoughts regarding the phrase “أَوْ رُؤُوهَا” which was taken as the basis for Al-Jassas' interpretation: The claim that words derived from the root of r-d-d are not used in the context of salutation, which is also put forward by Al-Jassas', is not true. Because the words derived from this root are often used in the context of salutation in Hadiths narrated from the Prophet himself.<sup>49</sup> For example, in the following Hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari from Abu Hurayrah, the word's infinitive forms a Hadith which has been used in the context of salutation: “سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ خَمْسٌ رَدُّ السَّلَامِ / وَعِيَادَةُ الْمَرِيضِ وَاتِّبَاعُ الْجَنَائِزِ وَإِجَابَةُ الدَّعْوَةِ وَتَشْمِيثُ الْأَعَابِسِ” The Messenger of Allah said, “Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim: to return greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral processions, to accept an invitation, and to respond to a person sneezing.”<sup>50</sup>

As a result, it can be said that the judgment reached by the Hanafi scholars regarding the grant was not associated with this verse by the entire Hanafi Ulama. In addition, both the judgment and the association of this judgment with the verse were subject to criticism by other scholars. The evidence that the word derived from the root of r-d-d in the verse cannot be interpreted as responding to a salutation is refuted by the statements mentioned in the Hadiths.

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<sup>45</sup> Abu Bakr al-Sarakhsi, *Kitab al-Mabsut*, XII, 48; Ala' al-Din al-Kasani, *Bada'i' al-Sana'i' fi Tartib al-Shara'i'*, VI, 128; Ali Haydar Efendi, *Sharh Majallat al-Ahkam*, II, 455.

<sup>46</sup> *Al-Mausu'ah Al-Fiqhiyah Al-Kuwaitiya*, XLII, 148.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Marghinani, *Al-Hidayah*, III, 255; Ibn Abidin, *Radd al-Muhtar*, VIII, 586; Tahmaz, *Al-Fiqh al-Hanafi*, II, 395.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Kiya al-Harasi, *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, II, 251.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, XIV, 125; XIV, 439; XV, 197; XVI, 566.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Bukhari, “*Kitab al-Jana'iz*”, 2.

### III. Interpretation of the Verse in the Context of Peace

The interpretation of the verse in the context of salutation or grant is based on the meaning given to the words derived from the root of h-y-y in the verse, supporting this meaning with various evidence such as Hadith and poetry. However, none of these two interpretations mention the context in which the word is used in the Qur'an. However, some commentators also seem to have taken this context into account as well. Razi, for example, took into account the context given in the verse and focused on two possibilities: The first of these possibilities is that the verse requests Muslims to consent in this regard, if the enemies do the same. In this case, this verse reminds of another verse, which is *وَأِنْخُوا لِمَنْ لَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ سِلَاحًا فَأَنْتُمْ لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ* / *And if they incline towards peace, then incline towards it [also] and rely upon Allah*<sup>51</sup>.

According to the second possibility mentioned by Razi, the verse describes the treatment of a person who fought in a jihad and greeted a Muslim in or near the area of conflict. Therefore, in such a case, the Muslim who is greeted and offered a treat will respond back in the same or better manner. Even if the person who salutes and offers a treat is not a Muslim, it will cause no harm to the Muslim who treats him in the same way. However, if he is a Muslim, a great deal of harm will occur if the one who is greeted kills him.<sup>52</sup> These possibilities of Razi were repeated by Ibn Adil.<sup>53</sup> The second possibility here is mentioned by Al-Qurthubi with similar statements. In fact, he stated that, considering the context, the verse bears a message for those who set out for jihad and were greeted in the Islamic way. In this case, the believers were asked not to say to those who greeted them that they were not believers, but to respond to their greeting. Because a community that salutes in this way is probably adherent to the provisions of Islam.<sup>54</sup> However, the commentators who drew attention to the context in this way also mentioned the form and provision of the salutation within the exegesis of the verse. As stated before, Al-Qurthubi mentioned this possibility, but he used his preference to evaluate the verse in the context of salutation.

Before the revelation of the verse in Surat Nisa, which is the subject of the research, the Prophet had been commanded to fight for Allah and to encourage believers. Allah commanded: *فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِكَ* / *So fight, [O Muhammad], in the cause of Allah ; you are not held responsible except for yourself. And encourage the believers [to join you] that perhaps Allah will restrain the [military] might of those who disbelieve. And Allah is greater in might and stronger in [exemplary] punishment.*<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> al-Anfal 8/61.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, IX, 183.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Adil, *al-Lubab*, VI, 534-535.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 297.

<sup>55</sup> an-Nisa 4/84.

Within the context the verse was revealed, that the command to the Prophet was to fight and to encourage believers to wage jihad. Cyclically, it is understood that the situation depends on the attitude of the deniers and the level of danger they pose. As Hamdi Yazir states, the goal of war in Islam is to ensure peace. After the verse that commands war, it encourages to be pioneers for good deeds. Then came the command to Muslims, "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]."<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the late Hamdi Yazir translated this verse as follows: "When you are given health in any way, give health better than it, or respond with the same."

Moreover, the best reflection of this meaning attributed by Al-Razi, Al-Qurthubi, Ibn Adil and Hamdiz Yazir based on the context given in the Qur'an is seen in Mustafa Öztürk's translation: "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]."<sup>57</sup>

Another scholar who took in account this context is Izzat Darwaza. However, his consideration of the context differs slightly from others. That is, Darwaza mentions that the verse is in the context of jihad, and that when believers are called to jihad, the hypocrites remain in a position of opposition to this call and they make efforts to disrupt it. Relating the issue to salutation, he also states that a Muslim should show the same attitude when he is called to jihad, just as the person responds with the same or better when he is saluted. He then states that the spirit of the verse was inspired by the fact that this guidance on decency covers salutation, saying good words, calling for good and doing good.<sup>58</sup> Thus, he addresses the verse in a more comprehensive framework.

In the context of the salutation, the commentators explained how this would happen when interpreting the *فحيوا بالحسن منها* part of the verse. According to this, the salute of someone who salutes in the form of *سلام عليك* should be answered as *سلام*, while *عليك السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته* should be responded as *سلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته*. It is stated that this is the end of the salutation. Accordingly, salutations in the form of *سلام عليك* should be answered with the same phrase by only adding *و* in the beginning.<sup>59</sup> This statement, which seems to be accurate in the first place, has aspects open to criticism. That is, in the common custom of Muslims, whoever is greeted receives the greeting by using the letter *و*. This is also seen in the narrations mentioned earlier. Thus, receiving the salutation only by placing the letter in question at the beginning means receiving the salutation with a better one. In this case, it goes without saying that the other statements include accepting a better salute. As can be seen in the Hadith narrated by Anas about the interpretation of the verse in the context of salutation, during the period of the Prophet, salutations

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<sup>56</sup> Elmalılı, *Hak Dini*, II, 1408.

<sup>57</sup> Öztürk, Mustafa, *Kur'an-ı Kerim Meali*, p. 125.

<sup>58</sup> Darwaza, *Al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, VIII, 189.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami'*, V, 299.

were sometimes responded with shorter expressions. In the verse, however, it is commanded to take the salute with the same or a better expression.

As a result, salutation is a beautiful tradition encouraged in Islam. It is a fact that saluting and some rules about its ways are mentioned and encouraged in the Sunnah of the Prophet. However, their connection to this verse is not possible in terms of the context in the Qur'an. Therefore, interpretation of the verse in the context of peace is more prominent in this regard.

### **Conclusion**

The situation where commentators interpret verses differently is because of the structure of the Qur'an, the reasons that arise as a result and the circumstances surrounding them. An-Nisa 86 has also been the subject of different interpretations by commentators. The different meanings, narrations, sectarian views and the context given to the root meaning of the words were instrumental in this regard. The interpretation of the verse by the Hanafis, especially that of Al-Jassas, and the one put forward by Ibn Huwayzmandad from the Malikis, both of them suggested in the context of grant, is a reflection of their interpretation of the verse in line with the views of the sects they adhered to. In this regard, especially the phrase "رُدُّوْهَا" to which the Hanafis cling to can not be evidence. Because similar expressions exist in the sense of receiving salutations that were used by the Prophet.

Saluting is a custom encouraged by the Sunnah. Moreover, there is explanation and guidance for the rules of greeting in the Hadith of the Prophet. However, their relation to this verse is not proved by narrations. The case when Aisha did respond the salute by the Prophet with shorter words rather than with the same words does not correspond with the view that salutations should be responded in the same or better way, which is put forward by those who interpret the verse in the context of salutation. In addition, the comments centered on the letter ڤ are not seen as consistent. It is also suggestive of the fact that the narration that relates the revelation of this verse with the context of salutation is only mentioned in Muqatil's exegesis.

On the other hand, the interpretation of the verse in the context of prayer to the person who sneezes was seen as weak by the scholars of Imam Malik's sect and was defined as a result of comparison. Accordingly, Ibn 'Atiyah clearly stated that this interpretation was not in accordance with the wording of the verse.

Ignoring the context in the Qur'an can make commentators be mistaken. There is a similar situation here. Izzat Darwaza is the scholar whose interpretation is the most comprehensive among those who drew attention to the context in the Qur'an. The most beautiful expression of the verse in Turkish was Mustafa Öztürk's. In conclusion, the verse commands people to respond those who bring peace, make favors, salute and etc. in the same or better way.

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## Different Interpretation of Quran -Example of Surah Nisa, Verse 86-

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## Why Did Ash'ari Leave Mu'tazila?\*

Mehmet KESKİN\*\*

### Abstract

Al-Ash'ari grew up in the Mu'tazila and defended this system of thought sincerely for many years. In the age of forties, he left the Mu'tazilah sect and joined the Ahl al-Sunnah thought. He was one of Mu'tazilah's fiercest opponents. In this article, in the context of quitting the band of Ash'ari from Mu'tazilah, the narrations contained in the sources will be handled in different variants.

**Keywords:** al-Ash'ari, al-Jubbâi, The Three Brothers, Mu'tazilah

## Eş'ârî Mu'tezile'den Neden Ayrıldı?

### Özet

Eş'ârî Mutezile içinde yetişmiş ve uzun yıllar bu düşünce sistemini samimiyetle savunmuştur. Kırklı yaşlarda Mu'tezile mezhebinden ayrılarak Ehl-i Sünnet düşüncesine katılmış ve Mu'tezile'nin şiddetli hasımlarından biri olmuştur. Bu makalede Eş'ârî'nin Mu'tezile'den ayrılması bağlamında kaynaklarda zikredilen rivayetler farklı varyantlarıyla ele alınıp incelenecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eş'ârî, Cübbâi, İhve-i Selase (üç kardeş), Mu'tezile

### Introduction

Different ideological experiences of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail al-Ash'ari, one of the leading kalam figures of Ahl al-Sunnah who established Ash'ari movement and after whom the sect was named, have always been discussed because he participated in Kulabi sects, which were once considered Mu'tazila, Hanbali and Ash'ari schools. Evidence indicate that he abandoned Mu'tazila and adopted the ideology of Ahl al-Sunnah, and his relationship with the Hanbali

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school, which is one of the Ahl al-Sunnah sects, caused people to perceive him as a Hanbali and Kulabi (Ash'ari) and to continue discussing which one of these is his final ideological destination until current time. Another issue that is as controversial as the afore-noted is related to why or as a result of what he left Mu'tazila. What acts as a source to these controversies is actually related to the data regarding Ash'ari's life.

Ash'ari is a member of Ash'ar tribe from Yemen, and his origins are related to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, a well-known sahabah member. When Ash'ari was a child, he was taught by Zakariyya as-Saji, a leading Ahl al-Hadith scholar of Basra period, upon his father's recommendation. After his father's passing, he was raised under the guidance of Jubbai when he was a teenager, and he acted as a supporter of Mu'tazila until the age of 40. It was later understood that he left the Mu'tazila and Mu'tazila ideology and ideologically fought against them. He then became a supporter of Ahl al-Sunnah. Both sources and contemporary studies have examined the reasons for his ideological change. Another controversial issue in this regard is related to whether he adopted Hanbali school after leaving Mu'tazila or accepted the concept of Kulabi movement that would be called as Ash'ari school later. Before detailing the reasons why he left Mu'tazila, this study mentions his time as a Mu'tazila member.

### 1 – Mu'tazila Ash'ari

After the passing of his father, Ash'ari had been taught by Jubbai who married his mother during his teenage years, and he learnt the basics of Mu'tazila from him.<sup>1</sup> When he was around 40, he became an authority of Mu'tazila to such degree that Jubbai, the head of the Basra Mu'tazila branch, sent Ash'ari to discussions on his behalf.<sup>2</sup> This era is accepted as the first stage of Ash'ari's ideological development. Although his father told him to receive education from Abu Yahya Zakariya ibn Yahya as-Saji (307/919), one of the leading representatives of Ashab al-Hadith, a hadith authority, and a Shafi fiqh authority, as his last will, the education Ash'ari received from his family and Ahl al-Hadith members such as as-Saji is far from being an ideological stage for him as he was a child during those

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<sup>1</sup> az-Zahabi, Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Osman ibn Kaymaz (748/1347), *Siyaru A'lami an-Nubala*, (ed., Shuaib Arnawut-Muhammad Naim al-Arkusi), Beirut 1413/1992, XV, 86; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, Abu Baqr ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Umar (851/1447), *Tabakatu ash-Shafiiyya*, (ed. al-Hafiz Abd al-Alim Khan), Beirut 1407/1986, II, 113; al-Maqrizi, Taki ad-Din Ahmad ibn Ali, (845/1441) *al-Hitat wa al-Asar*, Cairo, nd., II, 359; Subhi, Ahmad Mahmood, "al-Ashari al-Mutakallim", *Mawsuatu Hadarati al-Islamiyya*, Umman 1993, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> For more details about Ash'ari's participation to discussions in place of Jubbai, See: al-Akhwazi, Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Ibrahim (446/1055), "Masalibu Ibn Abi Bishr", ed. Michel Allard, *Bulletin D'études Orientales*, c. XXIII, Damas 1970, p. 155; Ibn Asaqir, Abu al-Qasim Ali ibn Hasan (571/1175), *Tabyinu Kazibi al-Muftari fi ma Nusiba ila al-Imam Abi al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*, Dimashk 1399/1979, p. 91.

times.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it would be more appropriate to regard the Mu'tazila era as the first ideological stage of Ash'ari. However, the education he received from his family constitutes the basis for his ideological approach. Classical sources indicate that Ash'ari's first ideological stage dates back to the Mu'tazila era.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary studies depend on the classical sources in this regard. Therefore, if the ideas of a couple of scholars are considered as an exception,<sup>5</sup> an agreement would be present between the classical sources and modern studies.

While providing the list of works he compiled in *al-Umad*, Ash'ari mentions about a work entitled *al-Jawabat fi as-Sifat an Masaili Ahli az-Zaygh wa ash-Shubuhah* and says that this is one of his most extensive studies on divine titles. He also notes that he criticized this book, which he wrote to confirm Mu'tazila and a similar form of which was not written before for them, when he was leaving Mu'tazila, and that he understood his mistake and refuted this book with evidences upon the direction of Allah.<sup>6</sup> Considering this point and the fact that he participated in discussions on behalf of his master, the position Ash'ari achieved when he was a Mu'tazila member can be easily estimated.

Considering the fact that the number of sources reflecting the period when Ash'ari was a Mu'tazila member is limited, it is not possible to obtain information about his ideas regarding this period. Although certain sources indicate that the reason why Ash'ari was neglected by the supporters and opponents of his Mu'tazila period is different, they ensured that the result above emerged in this regard. Although not yet certain, Ash'ari supporters did not consider studying the Mu'tazila period of their imam as pragmatist, and they might have even regarded this period as harmful. Instead, they preferred conveying the data about why Ash'ari left Mu'tazila which they considered more critical and beneficial. Thus, Ash'ari members do not mention about Ash'ari's Mutazila period except the time

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<sup>3</sup> Fawkiyah Husein consider the first ten years of Ash'ari's life as the first stage where he learned Quran and Hadith information from Ahl al-Hadith. See: Fawkiya Husein, "Mukaddima" *Ash'ari al-Ibana*, (ed., Fawkiya Husein Mahmood), Cairo, 1987, I, 29.

<sup>4</sup> For more details about Ash'ari being a Mu'tazili member before, see: Ibnu an-Nadim, Abu al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishaq (385/995), *al-Fikhris*, Beirut 1978, p., 257; az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lami an-Nubala*, XV, 89; Ibn Halliqan, Abu al-Abbath Shams ad-Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Baqr (681/1282), *Wafayatu al-A'yan wa Anbau az-Zaman*, (ed. Ikhsan Abbath), Beirut 1968, III, 285; al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p. 153, 155; Ibn Asaqr, *Tabyin*, p. 39-40; Ibnu al-Jawzi, Abu al-Faraj Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ali ibn Muhammad (597/1201), *al-Muntazam fi Tarihi al-Muluq wa al-Umam*, (ed. Abd al-Qadir Ata), Beirut 1992, VI, 333.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Fawkiyah Husein, who extensively analyzed and studied *al-Ibanah* by Ash'ari, claims that the first ten years of Ash'ari's first ideological development dates back to the first ten years when he received Quran and Hadith education from Ahl al-Hadith. See: Fawkiya Husein, "Muqaddima", I, 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Asaqr, *Tabyin*, p. 131; az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lami an-Nubala*, XV, 87; as-Subki, Taju ad-Din Abu Nasr Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ali (771/1370), *Tabakatu ash-Shafiyyeti al-Kubra*, (ed. Abd al-Fattah Muhammad-Mahmood Muhammad), 1992, III, 361.

when he left Mu'tazila. Ash'ari opponents who were not Mu'tazila members and Hanbali followers blamed him for still being a member of Mu'tazila, which drove Ash'ari to continually make efforts to prove he was not a Mu'tazila member. This process caused his supporters to make attempts to prove that Ash'ari left Mu'tazila and became their greatest rival let alone accepting him as a Mu'tazila member. It is fair to state that they reviewed his Mu'tazila period in the process of supporting Ash'ari.

Ahl al-Hadith and extremist work supporters always considered him a Mu'tazila member, which caused his supporters to talk about the period he left Mu'tazila more. Therefore, sources have detailed information about his departure from Mu'tazila instead of his time in this school. Moreover, the fact that Ash'ari left Mu'tazila, became one of their opponents and severely criticized Mu'tazila may be the cause for the absence of the information regarding his Mu'tazila period in the works of Mu'tazila members. Thus, it is almost impossible to find satisfactory amount of information about Ash'ari's Mu'tazila period in the classical sources. We are not sure about the ideas he supported in this period and about whether he has personal Mu'tazila ideas. However, the evidences that he participated in certain discussions on behalf of his master Jubbai and himself<sup>7</sup>, that he compiled works while stating "There has been no similar works for Mu'tazila before."<sup>8</sup> in accordance with the principles of Mu'tazila, and that he offered his personal ideas in certain specific kalam issues<sup>9</sup> indicate that Ash'ari had or might have had his own ideas in this period although it is not known what exactly these ideas were. Considering the facts that he was raised alongside Jubbai and assigned the duty of taking part in discussions on behalf of Jubbai, it is fair to state that Ash'ari shared the same or similar ideas with Jubbai in that period. Otherwise, Jubbai would not have sent Ash'ari to represent him in discussions. Therefore, most, not all, of the ideas from Jubbai are the ones that were also supported by Ash'ari.<sup>10</sup> As also noted by Ash'ari, he did not write anything except a couple of compilations when he was a Mu'tazila member. According to certain statements, Ash'ari was good at disputes

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<sup>7</sup> See: al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p., 155; Ibn Asaqr, *Tabyin*, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Asaqr, *Tabyin*, p. 131; az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lamii an-Nubala*, XV, 87; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiyya*, III, 361.

<sup>9</sup> *Kitabun fi Bab al-Shay* by Ash'ari which examines whether the absent facts are related to objects indicates that he reviewed specific issues in this period. Ash'ari later abandoned his ideas in this work. See: Ibn Asaqr, *Tabyin*, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> For Jubbai's ideas, see: al-Ash'ari, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail (324/936), *Kitabu Makalati al-Islamiyyin wa Ihtilafi al-Musallin*, ed., Hellmut Ritter, Wiesbaden 1980, p. 276, 412-413, 464, 542; al-Juwayni, Imamu al-Haramain Abu al-Muali Abd al-Maliq (478/1085) *Kitabu al-Irshad*, (ed., As'ad Tamim), Beirut 1985, p. 121; Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, Abu al-Hasan ibn Ahmad (415/1024), *Sharhu al-Usuli al-Hamsa*, (ed., Abd al-Qarim Uthman), Cairo 1988, p. 275; Tritton, A. S., *Islam Kelami*, (trans. Mehmet Dağ), Ankara, 1983, p. 140-147.

while being weak at amendments compared to his master. His statements were generally disjointed, and he could not express what he meant when he wrote.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, it would be nonsense to think that Ash'ari wrote many works supporting Mu'tazila ideology instead of his master Jubbai who was the master of Basra Mu'tazila school and one of the best in writing compilation.

Ash'ari wrote a work reflecting the ideology of Mu'tazila about Allah's titles during Mu'tazila period. However, relevant sources do not mention the title of this work. Ash'ari states that he abandoned these ideas as Allah directed him and that he criticized and disaffirmed his work on Allah's titles, which he wrote when he was a Mu'tazila, in his work *al-Jawabat fi as-Sifat an Masaili Ahli az-Zaygh wa ash-Shubuhah*.<sup>12</sup> Another work he wrote in Mu'tazila period is entitled *Kitabun fi Babi Shay*. Ash'ari states in this work he supported the idea that objects occupy a physical space even if they are absent. He also notes that he criticized this work and that it should not be considered.<sup>13</sup> Ash'ari supported ash-Shahkam al-Basri (270/883)<sup>14</sup> who was regarded as the first person stating that absence indicates an object in this work and who was the master of Jubbai.

## 2- Ash'ari's Departure from Mu'tazila

Ash'ari lived in Basra and Baghdad, the center of Islamic science and administration, and he was raised as a Mu'tazila while being taught by Jubbai who also taught Abu Hashim, his son. Therefore, Ash'ari agreed with Jubbai and supported his ideas for many years. When he was 40 years old, his ideological world went through certain changes which we do not know exactly, and he changed his ideological approach. According to certain sources, people witnessed that he suddenly abandoned Mu'tazila and took a stance against them.

Sources reflecting Ash'ari's life agree that he declared he left Mu'tazila in Basra Mosque. The following narrative reporting this change is the oldest one in this regard which was conveyed by Ibnu an-Nadim: "*Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail ibn Abi Bishr al-Ashari is from Basra. He was once a Mu'tazila but he took the steps of the minbar in Basra Mosque saying the following loudly: "Those who know me actually know well. I introduce myself to those who do not know me. I am the son of him and him. I said Quran was a creature, Allah cannot be seen with naked eyes, and I did the canon actions. I know foreswear. I abandon all these I believed once, and I reject Mu'tazila."* He abandoned

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<sup>11</sup> al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p. 155; Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 131; az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lamu an-Nubala*, XV, 87; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiyya*, III, 361.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Tritton, *Islam Kelami*, p. 139.

*the adl and halq al-Quran statement. He then revealed the mistakes of Mu'tazila.*"<sup>15</sup> Another narrative explaining certain points in this narrative of Ibnu an-Nadim is reflected by Ibn Asaqir. This narrative indicates that Ash'ari secluded himself for 15 days after living as a Mu'tazila for 40 years, and stated the following in the minbar of Basra Mosque: "O! People! I examined. Evidences of both sides seemed equally right to me. Thus, I could not prefer the truth to myths or myths to truth. Therefore, I prayed to Allah to make me see the correct path, and Allah directed me to the beliefs I mentioned in my books. Therefore, I have isolated myself from you for some time. I left my previous ideas just like I took of this dress of mine." He also tells that he distributed his books suiting the ideas of Ahl al-Sunnah to the people.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to these narratives, there is another narrative associated to Abu Abdillah al-Hamrani<sup>17</sup>, reported to have occurred in Basra Mosque and conveyed by both Ibn Asaqir and Ibn al-Jawzi. It is as follows: "Abu Abdillah al-Hamrani says: "We did not know what was happening. We saw Ash'ari taking the steps of the minbar in Basra Mosque following the Friday prayer. He had a band around his waist. He cut it, saying "Please witness that I abandoned my previous ideas."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, after becoming one of the best supporters of Mu'tazila, Ash'ari objected to Mu'tazila, became a serious rival to them and directed severe criticisms to Mu'tazila.<sup>19</sup>

The narratives reflecting Ash'ari's declaration that he left Mu'tazila have differences but they generally support one another. However, there are different narratives and ideas reflecting why Ash'ari left Mu'tazila.

In addition to certain Ash'ari sources associating the reason to the dreams Ash'ari saw<sup>20</sup>, some works by some Ash'ari scholars relate the reason for departure to the ideological discussions between him and his master Jubbai. Moreover, Ash'ari's desire for positions and reputation was the reason for the departure,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibnu an-Nadim, *Fikhrisat*, p., 257; See: az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lami an-Nubala*, XV, 89; Ibn Halliqan, *Vafayatu al-A'yan*, III, 285.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Asaqir says the state of Hamrani is unknown. See: Ibn Asaqir, p. 40. However, Hamrani's narratives are used by al-Akhwazi. See: al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p. 155 and the rest. Ibn Asaqir must have received the narrative from him because the narratives in both works are the same. However, by saying unknown, Ibn Asaqir makes Ash'ari-related unpleasant narratives of Hamrani, from whom al-Akhwazi conveyed a narrative, suspicious. In addition, another interesting point is that some of these narratives were used by Ibn Asaqir.

<sup>18</sup> See: Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 40; Ibnu al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, VI, 333. Ibn Asaqir's narrative is as follows: "Witness that I was about to follow a religion other than Islam but now I became a Muslim. I abjure and abandon all my previous ideas. The same narrative with the additions were also reflected by al-Akhwazi. See: al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p. 155. This addition must have been formed to blemish Mu'tazila.

<sup>19</sup> Cf.: Hanna Fakhuri,- Halil Cerr, *Tarihu al-Falsafati al-Arabiyya*, Beirut 1982, I, 176.

<sup>20</sup> See: Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 38 and the rest.; Giridi, Sirii, *Arau al-Milal*, Istanbul, 1303, p. 206.

according to some.<sup>21</sup> People conducting studies on this topic preferred different reasons in this regard. This study approaches to the topic only through the narratives and data provided in relation to Ash'ari's departure from Mu'tazila from the relevant sources and studies. These are the discussions believed to have occurred between Ash'ari and his master Jubbai, and the dreams which are believed to have been seen by Ash'ari.

## 2.1. Discussions

The ideological discussions reported to have occurred between Ash'ari and Jubbai took place in Basra before Ash'ari went to Baghdad. Ash'ari stayed in Basra for some period after abandoning Mu'tazila and went to Baghdad probably after and around the time Jubbai passed away.<sup>22</sup> Although the content of the discussions in the sources indicate that most of the discussions occurred after Ash'ari left Mu'tazila, it is not possible to determine whether all of the discussions occurred when he was a Mu'tazila member or after he declared that he abandoned Mu'tazila.<sup>23</sup> Certain sources reflect that Ash'ari left Mu'tazila as a result of certain ideological discussions with Jubbai. One of the interesting points in these discussions is that Ash'ari used the Mu'tazila dialectic well and hit them with their weapons.<sup>24</sup> This issue generally aims to reflect that Ash'ari's certain ideas including "finding solutions to insoluble issues with different comments"<sup>25</sup> and the issue of Three Brother (Ikhwa al-salasa) and Mu'tazila's certain ideas regarding divine actions actually cause dilemma and uncertainty in this case. Moreover, this discussion includes the issue of Salah-Aslah.

### First Discussion: The Issue of Three Brothers

This discussion has been included with its different variants in many sources. As noted by Rosalind Ward Gwynne,<sup>26</sup> the oldest source in this regard is the following narrative by Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi (429/1037), one of the early-period Ash'ari scholars, under the title "permissibility of killing someone who will not show faith if they are not killed": "We can tell the following to those who claim all

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<sup>21</sup> See: al-Akhwazi, *Masalib*, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup> Abd ar-Rahman, Badawi, *Mazahibu al-Islamiyyin*, Beirut 1983, p. 492.

<sup>23</sup> Cf.: Badawi, *Mazahib*, p. 492.

<sup>24</sup> Cf.: Nicholson, R.A., *A Literary History Of The Arabs*, Cambridge 1979, p. 378.

<sup>25</sup> Nicholson, *A Literary History Of The Arabs*, p. 376.

<sup>26</sup> Gwynne, Rosalind Ward, "al-Jubbai, al-Ash'ari and the Three Brothers: the Uses of Fiction", *The Muslim World*, LXXV/3-4 (1985), p. 132.

best arise from destiny: They say 'Tell us the state of three children siblings, one of whom dies in his/her childhood, while the other two, one of whom is a disbeliever while the other is a believer, reach adolescence in the eternal world.' They are replied as follows: 'The disbeliever will stay in hell eternally. The other two will go to paradise. However, the degree of the believer will be higher than the one who dies in childhood.' 'How will Allah respond when the one that dies as a child demands a position, just like that of his/her believer sibling, in paradise?' And when Allah answers: 'Your sibling achieved this place due to his/her practices. But you have no practices.' The child says: 'Why did not you enable me to live to perform practices just like him/her?', and Allah responds: 'Dying as a child was better/beneficial for you because if I let you live, you would become a disbeliever.' In this case, if this is a correct/senseful excuse, the disbeliever one would say: 'O! Allah! You took the life of my sibling when he/she was a child. Why did not you take mine although you knew that I would become a disbeliever when I reached adolescence?' According to those who defend the aslah principle, Allah becomes unable to answer this question which cannot be the case for Allah.<sup>27</sup> Under the titles of Salah-Aslah and Lutuf, Ibn Furaq says Ash'ari stated the following "Only Allah knows the reasons for letting the one live who will be a disbeliever in his upcoming years or taking the life of one who will show faith if one is permitted to live."<sup>28</sup>

One of the earliest variants of this narrative is reflected by Ghazali (d. 505/1111), and Ash'ari and Shafii scholar. The narrative he conveys under the title "Allah Does Whatever Allah Pleases to the Servants" is as follows: "Say there is a discussion between a child who dies as a Muslim and an adult. Allah increases degree of the believer and makes him/her superior than the child because that adult spent his/her life practicing religiously in adolescence. According to Mu'tazila, doing so is necessary by Allah." If child asks: "O! Allah! Why did you make his/her degree superior than me?" Allah answers: "Because he/she practiced after adolescence." Upon this answer, child says: "You took my life when I was a child. It was necessary for you to let me live so that I could practice and obey you. You blessed him/her enabling to live longer. But it was unfair of you not doing the same for me. Why did you bless him/her?" Allah answers: "I knew that If you had reached adolescence, you would have become a disbeliever or rebel. What was better for you was to die as a child." This was an excuse reflected by Mu'tazila on behalf of Allah. Meanwhile, disbelievers scream from the depths of hell: "O! Allah! Would not you know that we would be disbelievers when we reached adolescence? Why did not you take our lives in childhood? We even accept a place lower than that of this child." How is this answered? In this case, divine actions should be

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<sup>27</sup> al-Baghdadi, Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir ibn Muhammad (429/1038), *Usulu ad-Din*, Beirut 1981, p. 151-152.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Furak, Abu Baqr Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (406/1015), *Mujarradu Maqalati ash-Sheikh Abi al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*, (ed., Daniel Gimaret), Beirut 1987, p. 124, 129.



more exalted than being assessed by Mu'tazila. (Is there any option but to say this?)

<sup>29</sup> Ghazali includes another variant of this narrative in *al-Iktisad fi al-I'tikad*.<sup>30</sup>

Fahruddin ar-Razi (d. 606/1209), a well-known Ash'ari kalam authority, conveyed the narrative variant which is known as "ikhwa al-salasa (three brothers)" and believed to have occurred between Ash'ari and his master Jubbai. It is as follows: "According to statements, an alienation (distance) emerged between Sheikh Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari and Abu Ali al-Jubbai when Ash'ari abandoned Mu'tazila and objected to their ideas more than ever. Certain scholars attended the negotiation meeting of Jubbai one day. Sheikh Abu al-Hasan attended this assembly and sat at a corner hiding from Jubbai. He said to one of the old women there: "I will mention an issue to you. Go ask the master about this issue. Tell him that you had three sons. First of them was religious and devotee, while the second was a disbeliever and sinner, and the third was a child. They all died in these states. O! Sheikh! Please tell me about their states." Jubbai says to her: "The believer has positions in paradise. The disbeliever is in the layers of hell. The child, however, receives no punishment." Ash'ari tells the woman: "Ask him whether it is possible for the child receiving no punishment to achieve the same positions of the believing child in paradise? Jubbai replies: "No, because Allah says: 'Your brother achieved these positions with his practices and religious activities. You did no such things.'" Abu al-Hasan says to woman: "Ask him what if the child says 'O! The Creator of the Universes! I am not responsible because you took my life before I reached adolescence. If you had given me the chance to live longer, maybe I could have done more than what my brother did as a religious person.' Jubbai: "Allah answers: 'I knew that you would reach beyond your limits, become a disbeliever and deserve hell. I observed your state and took your life preventing you from going to hell.'" Abu al-Hasan says to woman: "Ask him what if the disbelievers and sinners in the lower layers of hell raise their heads and say: 'O! Allah! The Ahkam al-Hakimin and Arhamu ar-Rahimin! You knew about our states just like you knew that this little brother would have deserved hell if he had lived longer. Then why did not you observe our states?" The narrator of this story says: "When the dialog reached this point, Jubbai could not say anything and hesitated. He looked around and saw Abu al-Hasan, understanding that these questions came from him instead."<sup>31</sup> Thus, who refuted Jubbai at the end of this discussion was Ash'ari.

Scholars such as Ibn Halliqan (681/1282), Ibn Taymiyyah (728/1328), Zahabi (748/1347), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (751/1350), as-Subki (771/1370), Taftazini

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<sup>29</sup> al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad (505/1111), *Ihyau Ulum ad-Din*, Jeddah, 2011, I, 411-412.

<sup>30</sup> al-Ghazali, *al-Iktisad fi al-I'tikad*, (ed.: İbrahim Agah Çubukçu - Hüseyin Atay), Ankara, 1962, p. 184-185.

<sup>31</sup> ar-Razi, Fahruddin Muhammad ibn Umar (606/1209), *at-Tafsiru al-Qabir*, Beirut, 1420/1999, XIII, 143-144.

(792/1390), Jurjani (816/1413) and Taşköprülüzade (968/1561), all of whom lived after Razi, based their ideas on Razi's narrative with a couple of changes.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, they provided serious contributions to the popularity of this narrative.

Razi notes that Abu al-Husein Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Tayyib al-Basri (436/1044), one of the remarkable students of Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, a well-known Mu'tazila and Shafii scholar, came four generations after Jubbai and found a solution to this issue and that he reflected certain claims. Razi makes an effort to separately refute the arguments mentioned by Abu al-Husein.<sup>33</sup>

Watt directs the following criticisms to this narrative in the sources about Three Brothers. The first is related to "three children" instead of "three brothers". The second indicates that the criticized ideas belong to certain Baghdad Mu'tazila members instead of Jubbai. Jubbai said Allah can act showing the divine superiority and show compassion to people more than they deserve. Jubbai might have selected this study to use it against the Baghdad school. The third indicates that this story is included in the following sources. Ibn Asaqr (572/1176) does not mention about this but Subki (771/1370) reflects it. He conveys this idea from Zahabi (748/1347). Moreover, the same story is used by (505/1111) Ghazali to criticize a Mu'tazila idea without mentioning that it was also used by Ash'ari before.<sup>34</sup> A similar form of this criticism is also directed by Rosalind Ward Gwynne.<sup>35</sup>

Watt's objection that the story takes place between three children instead of three brothers indicates that this story includes three people: a believer, a disbeliever and a child.<sup>36</sup> However, they are brothers in Baghdadi's narrative which

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<sup>32</sup> See: Ibn Halliqan, *Wafayat al-A'yan*, IV, 267-268; Ibn Taymiyya, Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim al-Harrani (728/1328), *Minhaju as-Sunmati an-Nabawiyya*, (ed. Muhammad Rashad Salim), Riyadh 1406/1986, III, 198-199; az-Zahabi, *Siyaru A'lami an-Nubala*, XV, 89; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Abi Baqr (751/1350), *Shifau al-Alil fi Masail al-dai wa al-Qadari wa al-Hiknmati wa at-Ta'llil*, (ed. Muhammad Badruddin), Beirut 1978, p. 216; as-Subki, Tajuddin Abu Nasr Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ali (771/1370), *as-Sayfu al-Mashhur fi Sharhi Akidati Abi Mansur*, (ed. M. Saim Yeprem), Istanbul, 1989, p. 28; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiiyya*, III, 356; at-Taftazani, Sa'duddin (792/1390), *Sharhu al-Akaidi an-Nasafiyya*, Karaçi, 2012, p. 57; al-Jurjani, as-Sayyid ash-Sharif Ali ibn Muhammad (816/1413), *Sarhu al-Mawaqif*, Beirut, 1998, VIII, 218-219; Taşköprüzade, Ahmad ibn Mustafa (968/1561) *Miftahu as-Saada wa Misbahu as-Siyadah fi Mawzuati al-Ulum*, Cairo 1968, II, 165-166; al-Halabi, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, *Nimatu az-Zaria fi Nusarati ash-Sharia*, (ed. Ali Rıza), Riyadh, 1998, p., 109-110.

<sup>33</sup> ar-Razi, *at-Tafsiru al-Qabir*, XIII, 144-145.

<sup>34</sup> Watt, Montgomery, *İslam Düşüncesinin Teşekkül Devri*, (trans. Ethem Ruhi Fıglalı), Istanbul, 1998, p. 376.

<sup>35</sup> See: Gwynne, Id, p. 137 et al.

<sup>36</sup> as-Subki conveys this narrative as follows: Ash'ari asks Jubbai "What is your idea about the state of a believer, a disbeliever and a child before the divine presence?" See: as-Subki, *as-Sayfu al-Mashur fi Sharhi Aqidati Abi Mansur*, p. 28; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiiyya*, III, 356.

seems as the oldest narrative in this regard.<sup>37</sup> Ghazali's narrative, the one following Baghdadi's narrative, contains three children.<sup>38</sup> Regarding his criticism toward Jubbai that he believed Allah can show superiority, the issue here is actually related to the necessity of blessing or aslah in regard to offers and beliefs or the point is related to Allah's power in this regard. The issue is not related to Allah's decision to make the life of an acquiescent believer longer and bless that person so that he/she can practice longer and have higher degrees and more benevolent acts. Jubbai's ideas are related to degrees and good deed rather than the concept of faith and offers.<sup>39</sup> The interesting point is that what is mentioned in discussions is related to the topic of belief. Thus, this study stresses that the objection in this regard does not make sense. It is a fact that this story is included in the following sources and narrated by Zahabi, Subki's master. However, this was narrated by Ibn Halliqan before Zahabi, by Fahrudin ar-Razi before Ibn Halliqan, by Ghazali before Fahrudin ar-Razi, and Abd al-Qahhir al-Baghdadi before Ghazali. The details related to narratives and early-period narratives were provided in the previous pages. Moreover, Baghdadi reflects the issue of three brothers as an argument used against Qadariyya.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the fact that Ibn Asaqir does not convey a narrative justifies approaching to the issue with suspicion. Considering the afore-noted points, it does not seem senseful to think that Jubbai selected this story to use against Baghdad school. Moreover, there is no concrete evidence in this regard.

Ash'ari sources reflecting this discussion indicate that Allah makes the divine blessing and torture specific to any people Allah deems suitable and that divine actions are the evidences reflecting that these actions are not associated to any human purposes.<sup>41</sup> In addition, this discussion is related to the following questions: Is Allah obligated to do something? Are all actions of Allah related to a reason?<sup>42</sup> It is clear that this story is not solely used in regard to the salah-aslah issue. This story has been generally used in relation to the quality of divine actions. This example is used, despite being related to salah-aslah in particular, to indicate that Allah is totally free in the divine actions and cannot be regarded as obligated to associate the divine actions to a reason or wisdom, that Allah can do or prevent whatever Allah deems necessary for the creatures, and that there is no superior authority which can restrict Allah. Moreover, Ash'ari indicates that Allah can act however Allah pleases toward the creatures in the eternal life just like Allah does in this

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<sup>37</sup> See: al-Baghdadi, *Usulu ad-Din*, p. 151-152.

<sup>38</sup> See: al-Ghazali, *Ihyau Ulum ad-Din*, I, 411-412. Cf.: al-Ghazali, *al-Iktisad fi al-I'tikad*, p. 184-185.

<sup>39</sup> For more details about Jubbai's ideas on this issue, see: al-Ash'ari, *Makalat*, p. 575.

<sup>40</sup> al-Baghdadi, *Usulu ad-Din*, p. 151-152.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Halliqan, *Vafayatu al-A'yan*, IV, 267-268; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiyya*, III, 356.

<sup>42</sup> Cf.: as-Subki, Ahmad Mahmood, *fi Ilmi al-Kalam Dirasatun Falsafiyya li Arai al-Firaqi al-Islamiyya fi Usuli ad-Din*, Beirut 1985, II, 45.

mortal world, and that Allah does not have to do anything for any creatures. Objects and subjects all belong to Allah. If Allah has a vow, Allah does not break the divine promise.<sup>43</sup>

### Second Discussion: Issue of Allah's Names

Another topic of discussion that is believed to have occurred between Ash'ari and Jubbai reflects the titles of Allah. One of the early narratives in this regard is conveyed by Baghdadi. Accordingly, Jubbai asks Ash'ari: "What does obeying mean to you?" Ash'ari replies: "Following the instructions." Ash'ari also asks Jubbai about his ideas. Jubbai replies: "To me, the exact meaning of obeying is related to the suitability to will. Anybody fulfilling others' wishes would obey them." Ash'ari says: "Accordingly, it means Allah would obey creatures when Allah fulfills their wishes. By saying so, you opposed to the works of Muslims and denied the Allah of the universes. If the claim that Allah obeys people is appropriate, then it would also be appropriate for Allah to bow down to people, which is not the case for Allah."<sup>44</sup>

According to another discussion about whether Allah's titles are divine, a man asks Jubbai whether it is suitable to give the title "akil" to Allah. Jubbai states that the term "akl" is derived from the term "ikal"<sup>45</sup> meaning prevention or restriction, and that these meanings or such an assertion cannot be the case for Allah. Upon this answer, Ash'ari says to Jubbai: "Accordingly, Allah cannot be named hakim because this name is derived from the phrase 'hikmat al-lijam' meaning the iron bars preventing animals from leaving their places. Considering the fact that this phrase is derived from the concept of 'man' meaning prevention and that Allah cannot be prevented, you should not consider giving the name of hakim to Allah as appropriate." Jubbai cannot give a response to this statement and asks Ash'ari why he deems naming Allah as akil inappropriate though he finds the title hakim suitable for Allah. Ash'ari says the principle he follows in determining Allah's titles is not the action of comparison but the presence of canon permissions, and he states that he finds the title hakim suitable as it was given by the canon principles and that he considers the term akil as inappropriate as it was disaffirmed by the religious works. Ash'ari also notes that if canon principles would deem this title suitable, he would accept it.

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<sup>43</sup> See: al-Baghdadi, *Usulu ad-Din*, p. 151; Ibn Furak, *Mujarrad*, p. 130,335; Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhaju as-Sunna*, III, 14; Cf.: al-Maghribi, *al-Firaqu al-Kalamiyya*, p. 325; Öz, Mustafa, "Principles of Abu al-Hasan Ash'ari and Ash'ari Sect" *Diyanet Dergisi*, 1974. XIII, Issue, III, p. 192.

<sup>44</sup> al-Baghdadi, Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir ibn Muhammad (429/1038), *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, (ed., Muhyuddin Abd al-Hamit) Beirut, 1995, p. 183. Cf.: al-Baghdadi, Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir ibn Muhammad (429/1038), *al-Milal wa an-Nihal*, (ed. Albert Nasri Nader ) Beirut, 1970, p. 129.

<sup>45</sup> The plural of "i'qal" is "U'qul". See: ar-Razi, Zaynuddin Muhammad ibn Abi Baqr ibn Abd al-Qadir (667/1268), *Mukhtar al-Sihah*, Beirut 1988, p. 447.

Another discussion in this regard is related to Jubbai's claims that Allah's titles are based on comparisons and that Allah's all actions can create titles for Allah. According to a narrative, Ash'ari refutes Jubbai stating "You give the title 'muhbil' to Allah as Allah also creates pregnancy."<sup>46</sup>

### **Third Discussion: The Issue that Allah Wishes Whatever Allah Orders**

According to this narrative, Ash'ari says to Jubbai: "You claim that Allah wishes whatever Allah orders. Then what happens when a person who has a debt and receivable fails to pay the debt, says to the creditor "I swear I will pay you tomorrow", and still fails to pay on that day? Jubbai replies: "That person becomes a sinner due to swearing as Allah wishes that the creditor should be paid." Upon this answer, Ash'ari says Jubbai opposes to the works of the ummah because people would agree that one who swears by reflecting Allah's freedom in divine actions would be a sinner if one fails to keep one's promise.<sup>47</sup>

There is another narrative indicating that Ash'ari was defeated by his opponent in a discussion he participated on behalf of Jubbai and he abandoned Mu'tazila ideology upon this defeat.<sup>48</sup> The most interesting point in this narrative is that the discussion arises from a debate Ash'ari participated on behalf of Jubbai although the discussion is reflected to have occurred between Jubbai and Ash'ari.

Some state that Ash'ari left Mu'tazila due to Jubbai and as a result of these discussions.<sup>49</sup> This is partly true but Ash'ari must have undergone an ideological preparation before these discussions according to this belief. The concrete evidence in this regard is the narrative indicating that Ash'ari asks certain questions to his master, gets no satisfactory answers, becomes quite disturbed, and makes an effort to seek answer to the ideological questions.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, Ash'ari asked his questions to his master but got no satisfactory answers, and meanwhile, he was being influenced by Zakariya ibn Yahya as-Saji, an Ahl al-Hadith member and one of his first masters. He conveyed his personally-found answers to the unanswered questions to Jubbai in time. It is possible that this process turned into the discussions reflected in all sources.

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<sup>46</sup> al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, p. 183-184. Cf.: al-Baghdadi, *Kitabu al-Milal wa an-Nihal*, p. 129.

<sup>47</sup> al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, p. 184.

<sup>48</sup> al-Akhwazi, *Masalibu Ibn Abi Bishr*, p. 155; Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 91. It is not known who the opponent of Ash'ari was in this discussion. He might be someone from Ibn Qullab school.

<sup>49</sup> ash-Shahrirani, Abu al-Fath Muhammad ibn Abd al-Qarim (548/1153), *al-Milal wa an-Nihal*, ed. Ahmad Fahmi, Beirut 1992, I, 28; İzmirlı, İsmail Hakkı, *Yeni İlmi Kelam*, Ankara 1981, p. 68; Abu Rayyan, Muhammad Ali, *Tarikh al-Fiqri al-Falsafi fi al-Islam*, Beirut, nd., p. 196; Kemal Yazıcı-Antown Gatas Kerem, *A'lamu al-Falsafati al-Arabiyya*, Beirut 1990, p. 130-131.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 38-39.

There are narratives indicating that Ash'ari continued his ideological discussions with Mu'tazila in Basra after abandoning this sect.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, there is no concrete evidence indicating that these discussions were made up later. Moreover, discussions between them are totally natural and suit the progress of the events. However, narrators might have added or removed things from their narratives, which does not require neglecting the discussions or regarding them as false. Ash'ari wrote separate refutations to Jubbai<sup>52</sup>, he mentioned his name in other works and criticized his ideas. These all support the reality of the discussions in different sources. However, the possibility that some of these discussions were conducted through the works does not terminate the possibility that some were conducted face to face.

## 2.2. Dreams

There are different narratives indicated by Ibn Asaqir as a reason for Ash'ari's departure from Mu'tazila but their content is almost the same because they all relate Ash'ari's departure to the dream he saw.

The first narrative is conveyed by Ahmad ibn Husein, a kalam authority. Accordingly, Ash'ari starts asking questions to his master when he become competent in kalam but gets no satisfactory answers. This disturbs him, causing him to have uncertainty about what to do. Upon this, he prays to Allah for seeking solutions to his ideological problems. He then sees the Prophet who tells him "Follow my Sunnah." Accordingly, Ash'ari relates kalam issues to Quran and Sunnah, and he accepts the suitable ones while rejecting the opposite.

The second narrative conveyed by Ibn Asaqir is related to Abu Abdillah ibn Muhammad. According to this narrative, Ash'ari sees the Prophet who orders him to follow the Sunnah. However, the issue is reflected with more details in this narrative. Accordingly, the dream is seen three times: at the beginning and middle of Ramadan, and on Laylat al-Qadir. Ash'ari is told to follow the Sunnah in this narrative. However, he is also told to use kalam discipline for Islamic works. Moreover, after stating that it is hard for him to abandon a sect he has followed for

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<sup>51</sup> Ibn Asaqir states that Ash'ari himself met with Mu'tazila members to discuss with them and he actually discussed with them. See: *Tabyin*, p. 116-117. See also: *Tabyin*, 94-95; as-Subki, *Tabakatu ash-Shafiiyya*, III, 349.

<sup>52</sup> For example, Ibn Furaq mentions about a work entitled '*an-Nakd ala Usul al-Jubbai*' and reflects certain ideas of Ash'ari from this work. See: Ibn Furaq, *Mujarradu Makalat*, p. 93, 329. Ibn Asaqir says this work is entitled '*Kitab fi Nakdi Kitabi al-Usul*' and states that Ash'ari wrote this book as a criticism to Jubbai's *al-Usul*, that Ash'ari revealed the ideological wrongs of Jubbai in regard to Mu'tazila principles, and that he refuted all evidences of Mu'tazila through divine arguments. See: *Tabyin*, p. 130. Ibn Furaq also mentions about a work named *Kitab Nakdi al-Istitaa ala al-Jubbai* and conveys narratives from it. See: *Tabyin*, p. 110. For more details about the works of Ash'ari against Mu'tazila, see: Mehmet Keskin, *Imam Eṣ'ari ve Eṣ'arilik*, Istanbul, 2013, p. 114-124.

30 years just for a dream, the Prophet says to him that Allah will help and Ash'ari will receive this help.<sup>53</sup>

The third narrative is conveyed by Abu al-Hasan ibn Mahdi. Accordingly, the Prophet tells Ash'ari to abandon Mu'tazila and to start to fight against them. This is actually almost the same with the previous narrative. This narrative indicates that Ash'ari is told by the Prophet to follow the ideas in Sunnah and support these through rational and kalam-based evidences. However, this narrative stresses more clearly that the ideas reflected by Ash'ari are the ones approved by the Prophet himself.<sup>54</sup>

All of the narratives briefly noted above are included in the books of Ash'ari scholars. However, these were not accepted by many scholars, and they were believed that they are mostly false or suspicious considering the goals indicated in narratives.<sup>55</sup> There have been scholars who considered this narrative as the reason of Ash'ari's departure without criticizing it.<sup>56</sup>

These narratives are highly important for enlightening the ideological crisis and psychological issues Ash'ari suffered before leaving Mu'tazila. The interesting points include Ash'ari's failure in receiving satisfactory answers for the questions he asked to his master and his efforts to seek solutions to these questions. This issue might have become a dream for him when he sought solutions. However, it is possible that these narratives were revised to serve for a particular purpose later.<sup>57</sup> These narratives are related to the following three criteria.

**a. Defending the kalam discipline:** The afore-noted narratives indicate that the Prophet himself wants Ash'ari to use the kalam method. Therefore, Ash'ari, who strictly opposed kalam, continued to reflect kalam as non-religious, and got criticized by Ashabu al-Hadis as he used the kalam method which had many points common with this school, is supported by the highest degree and believed that this is Allah's order and assistance.

**b. Defending Ash'ari sect:** Ash'ari is reported to be based on Sunnah and formed upon the Prophet's order, to contain ideas suiting the religious works, and

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<sup>53</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 40-41.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Asaqir, *Tabyin*, p. 42-43.

<sup>55</sup> al-Maghribi, Ali Abd al-Fattah, *al-Firaqu al-Kalamiyyati al-Islamiyya*, Egypt 1986, p. 279; Ahmad Amin, *Zukhru al-Islam*, Beirut 1969, IV/66; Badawi, *Mazahib*, p. 492; as-Subki, Amad Mahmood, "al-Ash'ari al-Mutakallim", p. 380; Subkhani, Jafar, *Bukhusun fi al-Milal wa an-Nikhal*, Qum 1411/1990, II, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Giridi, Sirii, *Arau al-Milal*, Istanbul, 1303, p. 206; Abd al-Hayy, M, "Eş'arilik" (trans. Ahmet Ünal), *İslam Düşüncesi Tarihi*, Istanbul, 1990, I, 257.

<sup>57</sup> Cf.: as-Subki, Ahmad Mahmood, *fi Ilmi al-Qalam*, II, 49-50. Certain researchers regard these dreams as real and relate these to the honesty and faith of Ash'ari. E.g. see: Fayyumi, Muhammad Ibrahim, *al-Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*, Cairo, 2003, p. 170.

to aim supporting Prophet's Sunnah. It is also claimed to be the school of truth. These narratives clearly indicate the efforts to relate Ash'ari school, a sect that emerged later than the era of the Prophet, to the early periods of Islam to justify the sect, which is a common action seen in the history of sects. This is a sort of "rewinding the history"<sup>58</sup>. This also shows how a simple dream that might actually be seen is detailed in accordance with the determined goal.

**c. Blemishing Mu'tazila:** All three narratives examine the issue of seeing Allah in the eternal life while aiming to directly or indirectly reflect that Mu'tazila does not observe the scope of the sunnah, thus being false, which is also noted by other narratives. Therefore, efforts are made to prevent people from abandoning Ash'ari and the new school.

Considering these evidences, it is understood from these dreams that Ash'ari makes an effort to solve the ideological crisis and issues by himself before leaving Mu'tazila, and these dreams reflect how he approaches to the kalam issues of his new sect.

### Conclusion

The issue of why Ash'ari left Mu'tazila is still a controversial issue in classical and modern works although it has been centuries since that incident, and it has been examined since the period of early works in this regard.

The narratives mentioned most in regard to Ash'ari's departure from the ideological system he followed for years are related to the data indicating the discussions between him and Jubbai. Another relatively less important narrative issue in this regard is related to Ash'ari's dreams considered as the reason of Ash'ari's change of ideology.

The most well-known narrative indicated to have occurred between Jubbai and Ash'ari is reported to be The Three Brothers story. The source of this narrative is actually Fahuiddin ar-Razi but it became well-known thanks to the contributions from Ahl al-Sunnah scholar such as Ibn Halliqa, Ibn Taymiyyah, Zahabi, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, as-Subki, Taftazani, Jurjani and Taşköprülüzade. This narrative was criticized by western researchers such as Watt and Gwynne who noted that this narrative is false or causes suspicion at least. It is possible that the narrative might have not occurred like how Razi conveyed. However, it is not possible to holistically disregard it because there is no significant evidence neglecting the narratives in the sources.

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<sup>58</sup> Onat, Hasan, *Türkiye'de Din anlayışında Değişim Süreci*, Ankara 2003, p. 133.



Another topic of discussion is related to the severe criticism by Ash'ari toward Jubbai who caused people to give certain titles such as *akil*, *muhbil* and *muti*, which is believed to have occurred in the discussion regarding Allah's titles. In addition, sources also mention about a discussion based on the concepts of Allah's freedom and will.

In addition to these discussions in different variants, another incident considered as the reason of Ash'ari's departure is the dreams he is believed to have seen. It is narrated that he saw the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in his dreams and was told to follow the Quran and Sunnah, and to support the studies of Ahl al-Sunnah through kalam evidences. The narratives related to dreams indicate that Ash'ari almost set the lines of the kalam school he founded later. Moreover, it is clear that he mentioned three interesting points in these dreams: Defending kalam discipline and Ash'ari school means blemishing Mu'tazila. The narratives-related to dreams are highly important for enlightening the ideological crisis and psychological issues Ash'ari suffered before leaving Mu'tazila.

It is difficult to say that this discussion and relevant dreams solely caused Ash'ari to abandon Mu'tazila ideology, or to accept that these are nothing but some false imaginations or scenarios.

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## Why Did Ash'ari Leave Mu'tazila?

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## A General Outlook on the Ash'arism-Maturidism Relationship in the Ottomans\*

Mehmet KALAYCI\*\*

### Abstract

The first intellectual interactions between Asharites and Maturidites started in the V./XI. century and, in the later period, continued in an undulant manner. While initially it was a struggle of two theological schools intellectually equivalent to each other, the intellectual expansion of Asharism as a result of its contact with philosophy made Maturidite discourse, which insisted on theology, nonfunctional. Therefore, Maturidism failed to sufficiently appear against the philosophical theology that became the rising value in the time of Mehmed II the Conqueror. However, the fact that Asharism cut step by step its relationship with philosophy, pushed it again to the theological field. In this point, Asharism and Maturidism encountered again. In parallel with this, in the Ottomans a stress on Maturidism which started in the X./XVI. Century and reached a peak in the XII/XVIII. century came to the fore. When a great number of works composed on the theological disagreements between the two schools are considered, it is seen that they go beyond the attempts made by the members of two schools to understand each other and that Maturidism was brought to the fore as an Ottoman identity. In this paper, the emphasis of Maturidism, which was initially insignificant, but in later process was brought into the fore, and the political and intellectual factors that supported it will be analyzed.

**Keywords:** Ottoman, Asharism, Maturidism, Ikhtilâf Texts, al-Firqa al-Najiya

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## Osmanlı'da Eşarilik-Maturidilik İlişkisine Genel Bir Bakış

### Özet

Eş'arilerle Maturidiler arasındaki ilk fikri etkileşimler, V./XI. yüzyılda başladı ve sonraki süreçte inişli çıkışlı bir seyir izledi. Başlangıçta fikri açıdan birbirine denk iki kelam ekolünün mücadelesiyken, Eş'ariliğin felsefe ile ilişkisi neticesinde uğradığı entelektüel genişleme Maturidiliğin kelimada ısrar eden söylemini işlevsizleştirdi. Bu yüzden Fatih döneminde yükselen değer haline gelen felsefi kelam karşısında Maturidilik yeterince boy gösteremedi. Ancak ilerleyen süreçte Eşariliğin felsefe ile bağının peyderpey kopmaya başlaması, onu tekrar kelami zemine çekti. Bu noktada Eşarilik ve Maturidilik yeniden birbirinin muhatabı oldu. Buna paralel olarak da Osmanlılarda X./XVI. yüzyıldan itibaren başlayan, ancak en yüksek ifade biçimine belki de XII/XVIII. yüzyılda ulaşan bir Maturidilik vurgusu gündeme gelmeye başladı. İki mezhep arasındaki itikadi görüş ayrılıklarını konu edinen çok sayıdaki metne bakıldığında, bunun, iki mezhebin mensuplarının karşılıklı olarak birbirlerini anlama çabasından daha fazla bir anlam ifade ettiği ve Maturidiliğin bir Osmanlı kimliği olarak ön plana çıkarıldığı görülmektedir. Bu yazıda Osmanlı'da ilk başta felsefi Eşarilik karşısında silik kalan, ancak sonraki süreçte öne çıkarılan Maturidilik vurgusu ve bunu besleyen siyasi ve fikri unsurlar tahlil edilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı, Eşarilik, Maturidilik, İhtilaf Edebiyatı, Fırka-i Naciye

### Introduction

Ottomans' Islamic studies are eclectic in their foundation period. Ibnu al-Arabi's unity of existence doctrine that combines Sufism with philosophy marks this period. A transition from philosophical Sufism to philosophical kalam starts with Molla Fanari. He lived in the middle of this transition period. He followed both Ibnu al Arabi and Saduddin at-Taftazani. Fanari is the most important name in spreading at-Taftazani's works in Anatolia. It is noted that he let his students take a day off for reproducing the copies of these works.<sup>1</sup> In addition to Fanari, works and statements of at-Taftazani and as-Sayyid ash-Sharif al-Jurjani became common through the efforts of certain scholars such as Burhanuddin al-Haydar, 'Ala'uddin ar-Rumi, Fahrudin al-'Ajami. This caused the orientations based on the unity of existence to lose their impacts on madrasa tradition and helped kalam activities based on Fahrudin ar-Razi's activities increase.

Philosophical kalam discipline turned into the dominant ideology in the Ottoman madrasa tradition. The role model of Mehmed the Conqueror is Timur. Therefore, he aimed to transfer the Islamic activity of Transoxiana into the post-conquest Istanbul. He invited certain well-known scholars such as Ali ibn

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Janabi Abu Mohamed Mustafa b. Hussain, *el-Hafilu'l-Vasıt ve'l-Aylamuh az-Zakhiru'l-Muhıt*, Hamidiye, N: 896, v. 445a.

Muhammad (Ali al-Kushchu) and Ali at-Tusi to Istanbul. The new capital turned into a center of attraction for the scholars no matter what their sects were. Mehmed attributed a great importance to teaching all sorts of sciences, particularly the philosophical fields, in Sahn al-Saman madrasas. He himself instructed that the footnote written by al-Jurjani to *Tajridu al-Akaid* by Nasiruddin at-Tusi and the annotation written by him to *al-Mawaqif* by Adududdin al-Iji be included in the madrasa curricula.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the annotation written by at-Taftazani to *Akidah* by Abu Hafs an-Nasafi, the footnote written by Shamsaddin al-Hayali to this annotation, *Tawaliu al-Anwar* by Qadi al-Bayzawi and the contra annotation written by Shamsuddin al-Isfahani are among the works read and taught in Sahn al-Saman madrasas.<sup>3</sup> All of these works, except the footnote of al-Hayali, were written by Ash'ari scholars generating statements suiting ar-Razi's views.

Mehmed is the primary actor of this ideological transformation. However, he did not want this process to be an articulation activity solely. Therefore, he never hid his desire of witnessing the development of well-known scholars, such as at-Taftazani and al-Jurjani, from his public. This desire was fulfilled by Molla Yagan and his students. Hizir Begh, the most remarkable student and son-in-law of Molla Yagan, was one of the figures greatly cared by Mehmet. He is known for *al-Qasida al-Nuniyya* written for Maturidi doctrines. He was the first qadi of Istanbul assigned by Mehmed. Hizir Begh raised many scholars, and almost all of them were Sahn professors. Hayali, Hojazadah, Kastalli, Hatibzadah, Sinan Pasha, Alaaddin al-Arabi, Molla Hayraddin, Molla Ayas and Molla Ayas are among the scholars directly taught by Hizir Begh. Afdaladah, Ibn Kamalpashadah, Taşköprülüzade and Abussuud Efendi follow these students. Considering the fact that the number of these people and their associates is higher than a thousand is interesting as the philosophical approach showed its impact following the era of Mehmed.<sup>4</sup>

Ottomans included the kalam works written by Ash'ari people in their own madrasas despite their Maturidi-Hanafi identities, which directed people to directly relate the Ottoman madrasa tradition to Ash'arism. However, what people tried to teach in Ottoman madrasas was philosophical kalam rather than Ash'arism. These texts cannot be directly and holistically reduced to the level of Ash'arism. On the contrary, they are the frame texts pushing the limits of Ash'arism. The most significant reason why these works were deemed important in the Ottoman Empire is that they are the most authentic examples of philosophical kalam activity despite their Ash'ari quality rather than being written on Ash'ari kalam. It should be noted that Ottoman traditions in Islamic studies were nor shaped through these works

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<sup>2</sup> Katib Chalabi, *Mfzān al-hakk fiihkhtiyar al- ahakk*, Trans. O. Ş. Gökyay, İstanbul 1980, p. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu, "XV. XVI. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlm-i Kalam Öğretimi ve Genel Eğitim İçindeki Yeri", *İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, IV(1980), p. 274.

<sup>4</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye Teşkilatı*, Ankara 1984, p. 76; Fahri Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Fatih Külliyesi*, Ankara 2003, p. 335.

and that people made efforts to emphasize Maturidi's name in certain cases. The example of footnote and annotation tradition offers concrete evidences. This tradition is the ideological (and sometimes too humble) memory of the Ottomans which contains the kalam-related, philosophical and sectarian content. The intellectual reflex shown by the Ottomans to the frame texts is hidden in this footnote and annotation tradition.<sup>5</sup> This tradition indicates that certain points mentioned in favor of Ash'arism are opposed in frame texts.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that the philosophical kalam works written by Ash'ari scholars were taught in Ottoman madrasas should not be regarded as the dominance of Ash'ari ideology over Ottoman Islamic science traditions. The main problem here is that the efforts of Ottoman scholars to face with philosophical kalam scholars were disrupted when they were about to yield results. If certain incidents of the era of Selim the Grim had not occurred and this process had been maintained for another century, we could have been discussing the Ottoman Islamic science activities from the perspective of different dynamics.

*Mukaddima al-Arbaa* discussions<sup>7</sup> are significant for observing the commitment of Ottomans to Maturidism. Four introductions which were conveyed from Fahrudin ar-Razi but formulated by Ubaydullah Sadrushari as a criticism to Ash'ari followers, particularly ar-Razi, are nothing but the discussions of human actions as benevolent and malevolent. Ash'ari's approaches relating benevolence and malevolence to commentators' declarations and indicating that benevolence and malevolence cannot be present as long as such a declaration is absent were among the most important ideological disagreements with Maturidis. However, this issue was formulated more systematically with ar-Razi. Moreover, this issue did not only consist of benevolence-malevolence discussion. It was also associated to the basic kalam problems such as the quality and requirements of offers, marifatallah-related discussions, and divine and human actions. Sadrusharia's discussions with Ash'ari followers through ar-Razi and at-Taftazani's answers to support Ash'arism and to criticize Maturidism made the disagreement points deeper and more extensive. Regarding the era of Mehmed the Conqueror, this discussion was revived upon the order of the sultan. Katib Çelebi says Sultan Mehmed made certain scholars gather before him and discuss these issues based on what Sadrushari and at-Taftazani wrote.<sup>8</sup> Mehmed ordered them to write booklets and then bring these for the discussions before his presence. Scholars invited by the sultan to discuss these issues included Molla Alaaddin al-Arabi, Molla Hatibzadah,

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<sup>5</sup> M. Sait Özervanlı, "Osmanlı Kelam Geleneğinden Nasıl Yararlanabiliriz?", *Dünden Bugüne Osmanlı Araştırmaları: Tespitler- Problemler-Teklifler Sempozyumu*, İstanbul 2007, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> The indications of this example can be seen in the footnotes written to *Sharhu al-Akaid* by at-Taftazani. For a brief assessment on this issue, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, "Bir Hakkın Teslimi: Ebu Azbe'nin *er-Ravzatü'l-Behiyye*'sine Yansıyan İntihal Olgusu, *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 29 (2013), p. 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> For a thorough study on this issue, see: Cüneyd Asım Köksal, "İslam Hukuk Felsefesinde Fiillerin Ahlakiliği Meselesi -Mukaddimat-ı Erbaa'ya Giriş-, *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 28 (2012), p. 1-44.

<sup>8</sup> Katib Çelebi, *Kashfu az-Zunun*, prep. by: Ş. Yaltkaya-K. R. Bilge, İstanbul 1971, I/ 498-99.



Molla Lutfi and Molla Kastalli. The gathering before the sultan would become one of the most important sources feeding the dispute literature that became systematic later, and it is the particular reason for a separate literature based on *irada al-juzziyah*.

Philosophical *kalam* directed the Ottoman madrasa traditions for almost a century. However, two important political incidents disrupted this process since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The first is related to the fight against Safawids. Their dominance over Khorasan region cut Ottomans' connection with the Eastern world. The philosophical *kalam* tradition established in this region was seriously harmed after the region was controlled by Safawids and reshaped through Shiite. Following the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, philosophical *kalam* started to lose its impact over the Sunni geography and be controlled by the Safawid Shiite.

The second is related to the termination of Mamluk's political presence and inclusion of Damascus to Ottoman borders. Mamluks were the first state resisting to Mongols and defeating them. After Mongols invaded Baghdad, many Abbasid people took refuge in Mamluk state. Egypt became the sole Islamic country for Muslims in both east and west. Meanwhile, Mamluks became the protector of Abbasid Caliph and therefore, Sunnism. The Ottomans put an end to the political existence of the Mamlûks and at the same time they become heirs to their political and cultural heritage. The philosophical *kalam* was established in the region in a limited manner and philosophical identities were generally revealed through the doctrine form.

Egypt and Damascus controlled by Mamluks were dominantly controlled by traditional hadith-based approaches. The most important policy of the formations controlling the area in the period following Fatimids was to permanently remove the traces of Shiite and properly establish Sunnism in the area. Therefore, the sectarian commitments in this region were generally promoted through Sunnism. The transformation of the political fight against Safawids into a competition with Shiite caused a shrinkage in the Ottoman ideology. The reflex to define the self through others made the belief-related *kalam* and philosophical discussions meaningless and made Ottoman Sunnism based on doctrines and policies. Ottomans' paradigm to generate ideologies started to lose its functions in such an environment, and Shiite and all Shiite variants were attacked under the upper heading of Rafism based on a refutation-related logic.<sup>9</sup> The reaction towards Shiite through Fatimids became obvious considering the opposition to Safawids just like how the same reaction caused the emergence of a Sunnism emphasis containing doctrine and policy-related content. Sunnism was reshaped in more strict and precise patterns through Shiite.

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<sup>9</sup> For a broader information about the texts and content analyses in this regard, see: Elke Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik Gegen die Safawiden im 16. Jahrhundert nach Arabischen Handschriften*, Freiburg 1970.

Combination with Egypt and Damascus lands caused Sunnism-based political efforts<sup>10</sup>, which became concrete through the opposition to Fatimids, to be transferred to the Ottoman Empire. The traditionalist discourse in the area could penetrate into the ideology of the Ottomans, which yielded certain significant results for both Ash'arism and Maturidism. Abu Abdillah as-Sanusi, Jalaluddin as-Suyuti, and al-Lakani family (the father and son) are the important representatives of Ash'arism. The concept of Ash'arism mentioned in the discourses of these scholars reflects a school with no relation to philosophy but having an association to classical kalam ideology. A similar case is also valid for Maturidism. Hadith-based Hanafism ideology, which was largely based on the doctrine of Abu Jafar at-Tahawi, was established in the Ottoman Empire. Discourses of figures such as Ibrahim al-Halabi, Birgiwi, Chiwizadah, Hasan Kafi Akhisari, Ahmad al-Rumi Akhisari, Hakim Ishaq ar-Rumi and 'Aliyyu al-Kari are like an extension of this ideology. These figures had Maturidi ideas in accepting the doctrines, but their discourses do not include a dept or extensiveness in regard to kalam discipline. Moreover, they strictly opposed to philosophy and philosophical kalam. This approach caused the emergence of Qadizadah movement on the social grounds.

The Qadizadah movement is often regarded as a reflection of ideological shrinkage and discredited even in the early stages. This is partly right but there are certain interesting points in regard to the fight against Halwatis. The discussion regarding the father and mother of the Prophet (abawayn al-Rasul), which is one of the controversial topics between two sides, is important.<sup>11</sup> Qadizadahs state that Prophet's parents died with sacrilege while Halwatis claim that they died with faith. As noted by Katib Çelebi, this issue is the continuation of the ancient discussion between Ash'ari and Maturidis about whether marifatallah is necessary based on rational ideology or transferring activities.<sup>12</sup> Considering the rational necessity, Qadizadahs state that Prophet's parents were responsible for the offers also before the arrival of booklets and that they died with sacrilege as they did not fulfill their responsibility. However, Halwatis consider the necessity in transferring and claim that the parents could not be held responsible for offers before the arrival of booklets. The arguments and sources used by both sides indicate Ash'arism and Maturidism once again.<sup>13</sup> In addition, *al-Fiqhu al-Akbar* by Abu Hanifa is a work that is at the center of the afore-noted discussions and was severely and bilaterally

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<sup>10</sup> The political efforts based on Sunnism are not specific to a single state. On the contrary, they are maintained in the directions changed by Zangis, Ayyubis and Mamluks. For more details about this issue, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, *Tarihsel Süreçte Eşarilik Maturidilik İlişkisi*, Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2013, p. 167-186.

<sup>11</sup> For a broad assessment in this regard, see: Kadir Gömbeyaz, "Vani Mehmed Efendi'nin Hz. İbrahim'in Babası ve Ebeveyn-i Resul Hakkındaki Görüşleri", *Ulusal Vani Mehmed Efendi Sempozyumu, 07-08 Kasım 2009, Kestel-Bursa -Bildiriler-*, ed. M. Yalar-C. Kiraz, 2011, p. 206-210.

<sup>12</sup> Katib Çelebi, *Mizanu al-Hakk fi İhtiyari al-Ahakk* p. 54-55.

<sup>13</sup> For more details about the sources used by both sides, see: Necati Öztürk, *Islamic Orthodoxy Among the Ottomans in the Seventeenth Century with Special Reference to the Qadı-Zade Movement*, Phd. Dissertation, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh 1981, p. 384-388

manipulated or blemished in the copying activities conducted in the relevant period.

Another interesting point in the relationships between both sides is the Shiite aspect. Ottomans' emphasis on an anti-Shiite discourse in the fight against Safawids caused social reactions toward all sorts of connotations regarding Shiite. "The issue of cursing Yazid", one of the controversial points between Halwatis and Qadizadahs, is a reflection in this regard. Even certain leaders of Halwatis had assessments indicating that their addressee blamed them for being a Rafizi follower. For instance, Abd al-Ahad an-Nuri, the leader of Halwatis after Abd al-Majid as-Siwasi indicated that they were directed relevant accusations from their opponents, and he made an effort to answer these criticisms by reflecting the financial support of Abu Hanifa to the protest of Zayd ibn Ali instead of directly opposing to these criticisms.<sup>14</sup>

The sequence of approval for Halwatism ended in Ali (r.a), which is also the case for all Sufism movements generated by Ash'ari's followers, and an impactful stress on "twelve imams" was witnessed in the sect. There is the third and a secret party of the fight between Qadizadahs and Halwatis, which is Naqshibandis. Naqshibandism first affected Ottomans when Timur captured Anatolia but had limited reputation among the people. In addition, it should be noted that the first wave of Naqshibandism has a Akhrariyya-related aspect that was supported by Qubrawi heritage and donated with the unity of existence elements. The political competition Ottomans had with Timurids and their successors before the fights with Safawids restricted the representation of Naqshibandis who had activities within the borders of Timurid state in the Ottoman Empire. However, the highest amount of resistance shown to the efforts to make the area Shiite came from this sect, which changed Ottomans' views toward Naqshibandi people in the political and sectarian fight against Safawid. This new aspect of Naqshibandism is called Mujaddidiyyah and it is the most impactful representative of anti-Shiite discourse.<sup>15</sup> The discourses of Birgiwi, Aliyyu al-Qari and Hasan Kafi Akhisari suited the discourse of Imam ar-Rabbani, the leading figure of Mujaddiyya, which is not a coincidence. Another non-coincident point is that the dispute literature that examined the ideological differences between Ash'arism and Maturidism became well-known in this period. The more interesting point is that some of those who

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<sup>14</sup> Abd al-Ahad an-Nuri (d. 1061/1651), *Ta'dibu al-Mutamarridin*, Fatih, No: 5293, v. 305b-306b.

<sup>15</sup> The foundation was laid by Imam Rabbani himself, the founder of Mujaddidiyyah. His work entitled *Ta'yid al-Ahli as-Sunna* was written as a criticism toward Shiite, and it maintained its importance in the upcoming period. See: Hamid Algar, "Imam al-Rabbani", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXII/198.

emphasized Maturidism were associated to Naqshbandism, and particularly, Qadizadah movement.<sup>16</sup>

The dispute literature examining the ideological differences between Ash'aris and Maturidis<sup>17</sup> was first reflected in a separate text in *Nuniyye Kasidesi* by Tajuddin

<sup>16</sup> For a brief and general assessment on this issue, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, "Şeyhülislam Mehmed Esad Efendi ve Eşarilik-Maturidilik İhtilafına İlişkin Risalesi", *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, XI/21 (2012), p. 111-112.

<sup>17</sup> The following texts were respectively written to classify the disputes between two sects in this regard:

- Najmuddin İbrahim ibn 'Ali at-Tarsusi (d.758/1356): This ode by him entitled *Urjuza fi Ma'rifati ma bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Hanafiyya* was published by İsmail Şık in an article. In this article where Tarsusi's personal information was provided and the content of his text was analyzed, *Urjuza's* Arabic text was presented in depth and translated in Turkish based on the text conveyed in a manuscript in Tokat Provincial Public Library collection and on *Ayanu al-'Asr wa Ayanu an-Nasr* by Safadi. See: "Necmeddin Tarsusi'nin Urcuzesinde Eş'ari-Hanefi Teolojik Farklılaşmaları", *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2017), v. 6: 1, p. 327-342.

- Abu Nasr Tajuddin 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn 'Ali as-Subki (d. 771/1370): Nuniyya is actually reflected in *Tabakat* by Subki and in the section where the life story of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari is provided. See: *at-Tabakatu ash-Shafi'iyyati al-Qubra*, ed. A. M. al-Hulv-M. M. at-Tanahi, Cairo 1964, v. III, p. 383-389; The ode was separately published by Badeen. See: "Nuniyyetu's-Subki," E. Badeen (ed.), in *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit*, Würzburg 2008, p. 5-18; For more details about the scope in which Nuniyya was generated, content analysis and the impact on the following scholars, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, "Eşarilik ve Maturidiliği Uzlaşırma Girişimleri: Tacüddin es-Sübki ve Nuniyye Kasidesi", *Dini Araştırmalar* (2012), volume: XIV, issue: 40, p. 112-131

- Nuru ash-Shirazi Muhammad ibn Abi at-Tayyib (d. probably the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century): The work has two manuscripts. *Sharhu al-Kasidati an-Nuniyya li as-Subki*, Süleymaniye Library-Hamidiye, no. 765, 46 v.; *Sharhu al-Kasida fi al-Hilaf bayna al-Ash'ariyya wa al-Maturidiyya*, Çorum Hasan Paşa Provincial Public Library, no. 1030-2, 56 v.; This work by Nuru ash-Shirazi was used almost in its original form by Abu Azba, a late period scholar, without mentioning names and by removing unnecessary parts. For a comparison and analysis on this issue, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, "Bir Hakkın Teslimi: Ebu Azbe'nin er-Ravzatü'l-Behiyye'sine Yansıyan İntihal Olgusu", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2013), issue: 29, p. 1-34.

- Ahmad Shamsaddin Kamalshazadah (d. 940/1534): The first booklets of Kamalshazadah and the booklet published in 1304/1886 for the first time have different publications in the following periods. For details, see: "Risalatü al-Ihtilaf bayna al-Ash'ari wa al-Maturidi," in *Rasa'il al-Ibn Kamal*, Istanbul 1304 [1886], p. 57-60; "Risaletü al-Ihtilaf bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Maturidiyya," in *Rasa'il al-Ibn Kamal*, Istanbul 1316 [1898], p. 231-233; "Risaletü al-Ihtilaf bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Maturidiyya," ed. Sayyid Bahçivan, in *Hamsu Rasa'il fi al-Firaq wa al-Mazahib*, Cairo 1425/2005, p. 67-78; "Risalatü al-Ihtilaf bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Maturidiyya fi Isnatay 'Ashrati Mas'ala," ed. Edward Badeen, in *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit*, Würzburg 2008, p. 20-23; *Masailu al-Ihtilaf bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Maturidiyya*, ed. Sa'id Abdallatif Fawda, Amman 1430/2009; Most of the small-sized anonymous manuscripts in Turkish libraries belong to Kamalshazadah. A booklet associated to As-Sayyid ash-Sharif al-Jurjani actually belong to Kamalshazadah. See: *Risala fi al-Masa'ili al-Muhakkaka Bayna al-Maturidi wa al-Ash'ari*, Suleimaniyah-Yazma Bağışlar, no. 4164-7, v. 23b-24a; For more details about the possible sources of the booklet and its scope, see: Mehmet Kalaycı, "Kemalshazade'nin Eş'arilik-Maturidilik İhtilafı Konusundaki Risalesi Üzerine, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (2012), c. LIII: 2, p. 211-218.

- Nawi Efendi Yahya ibn Pir al-Malkarawi (d.1007/1598): The booklet has different manuscripts in the Turkish libraries: Suleimaniyah-Partaw Pasha, no. 607, v. 51a-b; Nuruosmaniyyah, no. 4909, v. 24-25; Millat-Ali Amiri Arabi, no. 4313, v. 171a-b; Amasya Provincial Public Library, no: 882, v. 7b-9a; Amasya Provincial Public Library, no. 918, v. 150a-151a; Kastamonu Provincial Public Library, no. 529/3, v. 81a-83a; National Library, no. 4915/5, v. 10a-11a; The booklet was published by Edward Badeen based on the manuscript at number 1882 in Leiden University. See: "Risale fi al-Fark bayna Mazhabi al-Asha'ira wa

al-Maturidiyyah”, *Sunnitische Theologie in Osmanischer Zeit*, ed. E. Badeen, Würzburg 2008, p. 25-29; We wrote an analysis regarding the quality and source of this booklet purpose of this booklet, and it will be published in volume 56: 1 of Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi.

- Bayazizadah Ahmad Efendi (d. 1098/1687): Bayazizadah stated that two sects had disagreements on 50 issues but he reflected 36 in the list he provided in this regard. See: *İsharatu al-Maram min Tbarati al-İman*, ed. Y. Abd ar-Razzak, Cairo 1949, p. 53-56.

- Anonymous Dispute Text (probably the first quarter of the 18th century or earlier): This booklet with no certain authors has two copies: *Risala fi Masa’il al-Hilafiyah Baynal-Maturidiyyah wa al-Ash’ariyyah*, Konya İl Halk, no. 4708-2, v. 18a; *Maturidi ile Eş’ari Arasındaki İhtilaflar*, Konya İl Halk, no. 1076-48, v. 157a-b; Considering the fact that it is one of the sources for 73-item classification of Abu Sa’id al-Hadimi, it is fair to state that the booklet dates back to the 18th century at the earliest. See: Mehmet Kalaycı, “Ebu Sa’id el-Hadimi’nin 73’lü İhtilaf Tasnifi ve Kaynakları”, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (2013), volume: LIV, issue: 2, p. 215-221; We wrote a paper about the text and analysis of the booklet. It will be published later.

- Sheikhzadah ‘Abd ar-Rahim ibn ‘Ali al-Amasi (d. 1133/1721): This work by Sheikhzadah who reflects the issue of 40 disputes is an important example of dispute literature. See: *Nazmu al-Fara’id wa Jam’u al-Fawa’id*, Egypt 1317.

- Mastjizadah, ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Uthman (d. 1150/1737): The work was used as a doctoral thesis by Ülker Öktem but it was not published. See: *Mastjizadah’s “al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Hukama ma’a al-Mutakallimin va al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Mu’tazila ma’a al-Asha’ira wa al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Asha’ira ma’a al-Maturidiyya”*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara 1993; Publication by Seyyid Bahçivan. See: *al-Masalik fi al-Hilafiyat Bayna al-Mutakallimin wa al-Hukamah*, ed. S. Bahçivan, İstanbul 2007; Bahçivan also wrote an article regarding the problems in the analysis by Öktem. See: “Yazma Eserlerin Tahkikinde Metodolojik Problemler (The Case of Mastjizadah’s ‘al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Hukama ma’a al-Mutakallimin va al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Mu’tazila ma’a al-Asha’ira wa al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Asha’ira ma’a al-Maturidiyya)”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (2006), issue: 21, p. 61-90.

- Muhammad ibn Wali al-Kirshahri al-Izmiri (d.1165/1752): This work, the most extensive one among the dispute texts, has three copies: *Sharhu al-Hilafiyat bayna al-Ash’ari wa al-Maturidi*, Suleimaniyah-Shahid Ali Pasha, no. 1650, 146 v.; *Masa’ilu al-Hilafiyat fi ma bayna al-Ash’ariyya wa al-Maturidiyya*, Köprülü Library-Mehmed Asim Bey, no. 254, 190 v.; *Sharhu Masa’il al-Hilafiyat*, Burdur Provincial Public Library, no. 1315.

- Sheikh al-Islam Abu Ishaqzadah Mehmed As’ad Efendi (d.1166/1753): This booklet by Sheikh al-Islam Asad Efendi who reflected 40 problems in total is a summary of Sheikhzadah’s text. See: *Risala fi İhtilafati al-Maturidi wa al-Ash’ari*, İstanbul 1287 (Suleimaniyah-Haji Mahmood Efendi, no. 1686; Tahir Agha Tekke, no. 310, p. 279-287); The dispute text in the catalogues in regard to Sayyidzadah Asad Efendi actually belong to Sheik al-Islam Asad Efendi. See: *Risala fi Bayani al-İhtilaf bayna al-Ash’ari wa al-Maturidi fi al-İtikad*, Kastamonu Provincial Public Library, no. 3906, 6 v.; For a broad assessment regarding Asad Efendi’s text in Ottoman Turkish and its relationship with other texts, see: Kalaycı, “Şeyhülislam Mehmed Esad Efendi ve Eşarilik-Maturidilik İhtilafına İlişkin Risalesi”, p. 99-134; For more details about As’ad Efendi’s paper, see also: Murat Memiş, “Eşari-Maturidi İhtilafına Dair İki Risale”, *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (2012), v. I: 35, p. 75-103.

- Dawud Efendi ibn Muhammad al-Qarsi (d. 1199/1756): The booklet of Dawud al-Qarsi is not a text specifically assigned for this issue; he reflected the disputes between two sects in the work entitled *Malumah*. See: *Ma’lumat*, Suleimaniyah-Denizli, no. 88-1, v. 4b-5b.

- Abu ‘Azba Hasan ibn ‘Abd al-Muhsin (d. 1172/1759): His work entitled *ar-Rawzatu al-Bahiyya* was published for a couple of times. See: *ar-Rawzatu al-Bahiyya fima bayna al-Asha’ira wa al-Maturidiyya*, Haydarabad, 1322/1904; ed. ‘Abd ar-Rahman ‘Umayra, Beirut, 1409/1989; ed. E. Badeen, in *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit*, Würzburg 2008, p. 133-209; This work, one of the literary works which come to mind first when the ideological difference between Ash’arism and Maturidism is mentioned, is not authentic. Instead, it is the brief copy of the annotation written by Nuru ash-Shirazi, student of Tajuddin as-Subki, to the ode entitled *an-Nuniyya*. For a broader assessment in this regard and comparison of the content between two texts, see: Kalaycı, “Bir Hakkın Teslimi: Ebu Azbe’nin er-Ravzatü’l-Behiyye’sine Yansıyan İhtilaf Olgusu”, p. 1-34.

as-Subki, and an extensive annotation was written to this by Nuru ash-Shirazi, his student. This first text reflected thirteen disputes in total: six were related to wording while seven were essential. Parties were determined as Ash'arism and Hanafism in this first dispute text and annotation, and a reconciliatory style was adopted.<sup>18</sup> This attitude was maintained in the Ottoman Empire in the early periods. It is noted in the booklet written by Kamalpashazadah that disputed were experienced on ten issues without making wording or essential differentiation. The issues in this booklet are different than what as-Subki detected, and they are largely compiled from the works of As-Sabuni. The concepts of *al-Maturidi* and *al-Maturidiyya* gained legitimacy with Kamalpashazadah within the scope of relevant literature.<sup>19</sup>

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- Abu Sa'id Muhammad ibn Mustafa al-Hadimi (d.1176/1762): This classification by him is included in the annotation entitled *Barika al Mahmudiyya* written on *Tarikat al-Muhammadiyya*. See: *Barika al-Mahmudiyya fi sharhi Tarikat al-Muhammadiyya*, Istanbul 1317, v. I, p. 314-316; This classification was also copied as a separate booklet. See: *Sharhu Ihtilafi Bayna al-Maturidiyya wa al-Ash'ariyya*, Adana Provincial Public Library, no. 1075, p. 61a-78a; Hadimi's classification was translated into Turkish by Mutarjim Ahmad Asim (d.1235/1819) without making any changes to the annotation written by Sirajuddin al-Ushi's ode entitled *Amali*. See: *Marahu al-Ma'ali fi Sharhi al-Amali*, Darsaadah 1304, p. 15-18; For more details about the texts used as a source to Hadimi's classification, see: Kalaycı, "Ebu Sa'id el-Hadimi'nin 73'lü İhtilaf Tasnifi ve Kaynakları", p. 215-221.
- Sayyid Murtaza Muhammad ibn Muhammad az-Zabidi (d. 1205/1790): Murtaza az-Zabidi analyzes the relationship between Ash'arism and Maturidism and provides the disputes between them under certain titles in the introduction of the section related to the annotation written toward *Ihya* by Ghazali. He refers to certain figures such as Tahawi, Subki family (father and son), Molla Aliyyu al-Qari, Sheikhzadah and Bayazizadah in this regard. According to him, the scholar who thoroughly reviews the dispute between Ash'arism and Maturidism is Sheikhzadah but he kept his statements longer than enough. Zabidi prefers the ideology of Subki and Bayazizadah and conveys the information they in regard to the disputes between both groups as is. See: *Kitabu Ithafi as-Sadati al-Muttaqin bi Sharhi Asrari Ihya al-Ulumi ad-Din*, y.y. t.y, v. II, p. 12-13.
- Kara Halil Pasha of Çorlu (d. probably around the last quarter of the 18th century or later): Halil Pasha cited and analyzed the dispute-related texts of Dawud al-Qarsi and Kamalpashazadah. See: *al-Masa'ilu al-Muhtalifa bayna al-Ash'ariyya wa al-Maturidiyya*, Hafid Efendi, no. 150, 20 v.
- Mehmed Amin 'Izzi (d. Probably the first half of the nineteenth century): This booklet by Izzi is like a translation of the dispute text written by Asad Efendi in Ottoman Turkish into Arabic. The booklet has two manuscripts. *Arba'una Masa'il*, Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Theology Library, no. 3988; *al-Masa'ilu al-Muhtalifa bayna al-Maturidi wa al-Ash'ari*, Manisa Provincial Public Library-Akhisar Zeinelzadah, no. 5765, v. 1a-4b; The booklet has two verified publications: *Eşariye ve Maturidiye Arasındaki Görüş Farklılıkları (Arba'una Masail)*, With the Addition of Research and Notes, Translated by: A. Bülent Baloğlu, y.y. t. y; Memiş, "Eşari-Matüridi İhtilafına Dair İki Risale", v. I: 35, p. 75-103; For more details about the relationship and comparison with the text by Asad Efendi, see: Kalaycı, "Şeyhülislam Mehmed Esad Efendi ve Eşarilik-Maturidilik İhtilafına İlişkin Risalesi", v. XI: 21, p. 99-134.
- İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (d. 1946): İzmirli included the disputes between two sects in *Yeni İlm-i Kelam* and ordered fifteen controversial points. See: *Yeni İlm-i Kelam*, prep. Sabri Hizmetli, Ankara 1981, p. 71-73.

<sup>18</sup> For more details about the background and effects of the ode, see: Kalaycı, "Eşarilik ve Maturidiliği Uzlaştırma Girişimleri: Tacüddin es-Sübki ve Nuniyye Kasidesi", p. 112-131.

<sup>19</sup> For more details about the analysis and sources of the booklet, see: Kalaycı, "Kemalpaşazade'nin Eş'arilik-Maturidilik İhtilafı Konusundaki Risalesi Üzerine", p. 211-218.

The main share in emphasizing Maturidism and reducing the number of disputes belongs to Bayazizadah who indicated that the disputes between both sects could not be disregarded, that they were important, and that they had disputes on 50 topics. However, the main important aspect in this regard is hidden in the emphasis on Maturidism and the efforts to make the position of this school equal to that of Ash'arism. Bayazizadah claims that the sect that reached salvation is not only one and that more than one society can achieve salvation as long as they strictly follow the definite principles of the Quran and Sunnah in the issue of Islamic doctrines. Ahl al-Sunnah is an inclusive term in his approach, and Maturidism is equal to Maturidism under this concept.

Bayazizadah bases Maturidism on the center while presenting the disputes between both societies. He states that certain controversial issues essentially belong to Maturidis and that Ash'aris are the opponent if there is an opposition in this case. The presentation of disputes by him shows that Maturidis' ideas have a consistency. However, this is not the case for Ash'aris. Bayazizadah does not hesitate to hint the ideological differences experienced in this sect while reflecting the ideas of Ash'aris. Moreover, according to him, certain Ash'ari scholars agree with Maturidis in certain points.<sup>20</sup> Another interesting point is that he refers to scholars who lived before al-Ashari, such as Kharis al-Mukhasibi, Ibn Qullab, al-Qrabisi and al-Qalanisi, or Imam Shafii, Imam Maliq and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.<sup>21</sup> These people are the actors of a process where Ash'arism was not present on a conceptual level yet.

This attitude of Bayazizadah can be regarded as an indirect reaction to Ash'ari's desires of initiating Ahl al-Sunnah with Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. He states in the introduction of this work that Abu Mansur al-Maturidi is the person who explained the sect of Abu Hanifa and his acquaintances way before than al-Ash'ari and that Ibn Qullab and al-Qalanisi are the people who lived before al-Ash'ari and who have personal works, opinions and supporters. Accordingly, how is it possible to claim that Ash'ari was the first representative of Ahl al-Sunnah?<sup>22</sup> This period starting with Bayazizadah indicates that people made efforts to reflect Maturidism as a kalam movement that is no lower than Ash'arism in degree.

Three different dispute texts were written by Sheikhzadah, Mastjizadah and Kirshahri in the period after Bayazizadah. Sheikhzadah's work is the most remarkable one among these in regard to reviewing the problems, influencing the sources and possessing systematic integrity. This work which referred to many works of both traditions and cited more than 90 works for approximately 340 times can be regarded as a narrative of the dispute between Ash'arism and Maturidism.

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<sup>20</sup> Bayazizadah, *Isharatu al-Maram*, p. 54.

<sup>21</sup> Bayazizadah, *Isharatu al-Maram*, p. 53-54, 56.

<sup>22</sup> Bayazizadah, *Isharatu al-Maram*, p. 23-24.

Stating that there are disputes on 40 topics between both groups, Sheikhzadah promises to reflect these topics objectively in the introduction of his work.<sup>23</sup>

This "objectivity" emphasis of Sheikhzadah should be stressed. This emphasis is also repeated in other dispute texts by Mastjizadah and Kirshahri. This emphasis can be regarded as an indirect criticism to the incident that kalam works taught in the Ottoman Empire do not include Maturidi approaches. This is also mentioned by Mastjizadah and the fact that Maturidi ideology is rarely mentioned in Ash'ari scholars' works such as *Abkaru al-Afkar*, *al-Arba'un*, *Nihayatu al-Uqul*, *al-Mawaqif* and *al-Makasid* has been made an issue of criticism.<sup>24</sup> Kirshahri states that the contents of many works related to kalam are nothing but the ideas of al-Ash'ari, and that he wrote his work to support the ideas of al-Maturidi.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, objectivity means including Maturidism ideology thoroughly for these figures.

The dispute literary initiated by Bayazizadah and made systemic by Sheikhzadah underwent a new developmental stage with Mastjizadah and Kirshahri. Disputes were then discussed in a broader scope by employing different ideological actors such as huqama, philosophers and Mu'tazilah along with Ash'arism and Maturidism representatives. The developmental direction of this literature where a collective aspect of the disputes is to be reflected aims to indicate that Maturidism does not depend on Ash'arism and that it contains integrity and consistency as much as or maybe more than Ash'arism. It should be noted that Ash'ari people gave no reaction to this attempt, and that no text was written by Ash'ari school to present a total compilation of the disputes.

The stress on Maturidism is not only limited to these works. The texts on "irada al-juzziyyah" , the continuation of *Muqaddima al-Arbaa* discussions and reflection of the latest stage regarding the dispute literature, provide concrete data in this regard. The issue is bilaterally examined and cared in this regard, and it is discussed by both Ash'ari and Maturidi people. A close look over the content of approximately 40 works on this topic indicates that Maturidism is highlighted and that Maturidism is the preferred ideology compared to the Ash'arism's approach called as "jabr al-mutawassit".<sup>26</sup> The booklets written by Ash'ari's indicate the correctness of the classical Ash'ari ideology and reflect that a concern of agreement is the focal point.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Sheikhzadah, *Nazmu al-Fara'id*, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Mastjizadah, *al-Masalik fi al-Hilafiyat*, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Kirshahri, *Sharhu al-Hilafiyah*, v. 2b.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, it is clear that Asirizadah regards the preferable approach of Maturidism followers as a starting point in the introduction of his booklet. See: Asirizadah Abd al-Baqi ibn Mehmed Bursawi, *Risala fi Ihtilaf Bayna al-Ash'ari wa al-Maturidi*, Kastamonu Provincial Public Library, 355-3, v. 37b.

<sup>27</sup> Abd al-Gani ibn Ismail an-Nablusi, "Tahkiku al-Intisar fi Ittifaki al-Ash'ari wa al-Maturidi ala Halki al-Ihtiyar", in *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit*, ed. E. Badeen, Würzburg 2008, p. 81-130 (Arabic Part); Ziya'uddin Khalid al-Baghdadi an-Naqshibandi, *al-'Ikdu al-Jawhari fi al-Farq bayna Quدراتayi al-*



It is possible to see the concrete traces of the attempts to make Maturidism a sect equal to Ash'arism in the discussions of firqa al-najiyah (the sect to reach salvation). These annotations written to *Sharhu al-Jalal* by Jalaluddin ad-Dawwani are interesting in this regard. Al-Iji stated in his doctrine that the sect that achieved salvation is Ash'arism. Ad-Dawani made attempts to reflect why Ash'arism should be the sect which achieved salvation.<sup>28</sup>

The footnotes written by Maturidi scholars such as Siyalquti, Galanbawi and Maghnisawi to ad-Dawwani's annotation indicate that this approach by him was opposed and that people made efforts to reflect Maturidism under the scope of firqa al-najiyah like Ash'arism. However, the harshest reaction comes from Shihabuddin al-Marjani. He objects to the incident that Maturidism was made the follower of Ash'arism. According to Al-Marjani, a general frame and method is indicated in hadiths, and those who follow God's path will achieve salvation. The Prophet did not directly indicate any sects. Instead, he only pointed out the ways for salvation. Therefore, considering the statement of him "those who follow my and my relatives' paths", it is not possible to indicate a single sect or congregation as the one that achieved salvation. Al-Marjani thus cannot tolerate indicating al-Ash'ari as the founder of Ahl al-Sunnah and considering others as his followers. However, al-Ashari and al-Maturidi are two people who lived in the same period at different cities, and there is no record indicating that they meet or one of them followed the other. Accordingly, after kalam activities became common in Khorasan and Transoxiana, al-Ash'ari's sect started to show itself in the region. However, the followers of al-Ash'ari neglected Hanafism followers who had been doing this activity for a long time, and they indicated al-Ash'ari as their leader in methodological and doctrine-based studies.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that this firqa al-najiyah discussion, which was developed on the footnotes written to ad-Dawwani's annotation, affected other works and that separate booklets that were restricted in this regard emerged on this issue.<sup>30</sup>

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*Maturidiyya wa al-Ash'ariyya*, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, No: 1459, 13 v.; 'Abd al-Hamid Hamdi ibn Umar Harputi, *as-Samtu al-'Abqari fi Sharhi al-'Ikdi al-Jawhari*, Darsaadah 1305.

<sup>28</sup> Jalaluddin Muhammad ibn As'ad ad-Dawwani, *Jalal: Sharhu al-'Aka'idi al-'Adudiyya*, Istanbul 1290, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Shihabuddin ibn Baha'uddin al-Marjani, *Hashiya 'ala Sharhi al-Jalal li al-'Aka'idi al-'Adudiyyah*, Matbaai Amirah, y. 1317, I/34-36.

<sup>30</sup> For more information, see: Osman Aydınlu, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Yazıcılığı*, Ankara 2008.

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## Hasan, Hussein and Karbala According to Zaydiyya Sect\*

Mehmet ÜMİT\*\*

### Abstract

In Zaydi sources, Hasan and Hussein are handled in the context of their imamat after their father Ali. On this matter they bring evidences from the Quran and Hadith in a way that they will support their own understanding of imamat. They do not make any special references to Hussein than Hasan as in the Imamiyya Shia. In other words, according to the Zaydites, the imam, after Hussein, was not limited to only nine people, In other words imamat will continue from the progeny of Hasan and Hussein until the day of Judgement.

In addition, the Zaydites' interpretation of Hussein's martyrdom and Karbala event is also different from that of Imamiyya Shi'ah. Among the Imamiyya Shiites, Karbala event, which is a 'selected' and 'transferred trauma', is one of the most painful events that human history has witnessed. The anniversary of this painful event with great ceremonies and demonstrations every year on the occasions where members of the Imamiyya Shiites dominant, especially in Iran, can be regarded as an identity construction of the Imamiyya Shia and an effort to keep this identity constantly alive. However, in the memorial ceremonies of the Zaydites and in the texts of authors belonging to the Zeydiyya denomination, there is no particular emphasis on Hussein's martyrdom for the construction of an identity and keeping of this constructed identity alive. Their narrations of Hussein usually revolve around the support of his imamate.

**Keywords:** Zaydiyya, the Jârûdiyya, Batriyya, Ali, Hasan, Hussein, Karbalâ, Imâma, İmâmiyya, Yemen.

## Zeydiyye Mezhebi'nde Hz. Hasan, Hz. Hüseyin ve Kerbelâ

### Özet

Zeydî kaynaklarda Hz. Hasan ve Hz. Hüseyin, genel olarak, babaları Hz. Ali'den sonra imam oluşları bağlamında ele alınır. Bu hususa ilişkin Kur'an, Hadis, icmardan kendi anlayışlarını destekleyecek şekilde yorumladıkları deliller getirirler. İmamiyye Şiası'nda

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olduğu gibi Hz. Hüseyin'e Hz. Hasan'dan farklı, çok özel bir konum biçilmez. Yani Zeydîlere göre Hz. Hüseyin'den sonra imâmet, sadece onun soyunda, ismi belirli dokuz şahısla sınırlı tutulmamış olup, Hz. Hasan ve Hüseyin'in her ikisinin soylarında kıyamet kopana kadar devam edecektir.

Ayrıca Zeydîlerin Kerbelâ hadisesi ve Hz. Hüseyin'in şehit edilmesini yorumlayışları da İmamiyye Şiası'ndan farklıdır. İmâmiyye Şîleri arasında 'seçilmiş' ve 'transfer edilmiş bir travma' olan Kerbela hadisesi, insanlık tarihinin şahit olduğu en acı olaylardan birisidir. Bu acı hadisenin, her yıl dönümünde, özellikle başta İran olmak üzere İmâmiyye Şiası mensuplarının yoğun olduğu yerlerde büyük tören ve gösterilerle anılması, İmâmiyye Şiası'nın bir kimlik inşası ve inşa edilen bu kimliğin sürekli canlı tutulma çabası olarak değerlendirilebilir. Ancak gerek Zeydîlerin anma törenlerinde gerekse Zeydiyye mezhebine mensup yazarların metinlerinde Kerbelâ'da Hz. Hüseyin'in şehit edilmesine, bir kimlik inşası ve inşa edilen bu kimliğin sürekli canlı tutulması şeklinde özel bir vurgu pek gözükmemektedir. Onların Hz. Hüseyin'e ilişkin anlatımları, genellikle onun imâmeti çerçevesinde ve bunu ispata yöneliktir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Zeydiyye, Cârudiyye, Batriyye, Hz. Ali, Hz. Hasan, Hz. Hüseyin, Kerbelâ, imâmet, İmâmiyye, Yemen

## Introduction

The name of Zaydiyya sect, which politically emerged after the uprising of Zaid ibn Ali in 122/740, is derived from the same person regarded as the founder of the sect. A group from Qufa Shiite asked the opinions of Zaid about Abu Baqr and Umar, the caliphs before Ali, during the preparation of the uprising against Umayyad people. Upon this question, Zaid ibn Ali did not say anything negative about them and remembered them with benevolent words. Thus, this group withdrew their support toward Zaid and supported Jafar Sadik, the nephew of Zaid ibn Ali.<sup>1</sup> Those who stayed with Zaid were called Zaydis.

The first formation of Zaydiyya sect consisted of Jarudiyya and Batriyya, the first steps of Qufa Shiite.<sup>2</sup> Jarudiyyah was named as so following Abu al-Jarud Ziyad ibn Munzir, a supporter of Muhammad Baqir. Abu al Jarud is noted to have supported Zaid ibn Ali, who was mostly abandoned Muhammad Baqir.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir al-Balazuri (279/892), *Kitabu jumalin min Ansabi al-ashraf*, I-XIII, edited and presented by: Suhail Zakkar-Riyad Zirikli, Daru al-Fiqr, Beirut 1417/1997, v. III, p. 436; Abu Said Nashwanu al-Himyari (573/1175), *al-Huru al-in*, ed. Kemal Mustafa, Daru Azal-Maktabatu al-Yamaniyya, Beirut-San'a 1985, p. 238-239.

<sup>2</sup> Wilferd Madelung, "Zaydiyya", *EI(2)*, v. XI, E.J. Brill, Leiden 2002, p. 477-481, p. 477.

<sup>3</sup> Abu al-Abbas Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Shirshir an-Nashi al-Akbar (293/906), *Masailu al-imama wa muktatafat min kitabi al-awsat fi al-makalat*, ed. Josef van Ess, Beirut 1971, p. 42-43; Qummi-Nawbahti, *Şii Fırkalar Kitabu al-maqalat wa al-firaq-Firaqu ash-Shia*, trans.: Hasan Onat-Sabri Hizmetli-Sönmez Kutlu-Ramazan Şimşek, Ankara Okulu Yayınları, Ankara 2004, p. 178-181; İsa Doğan, *Zeydiyye'nin Doğuşu ve Görüşleri*, Samsun 1996, p. 81; Mehmet Ümit, *Zeydiyye-Mu'tezile Etkileşimi Zeyd b. Ali'den Kasım er-Ressi'nin Ölümüne Kadar*, İSAM yayınları, İstanbul 2010, p. 101.

Batriyya was among the Shiite people who accepted certain teachings of Baqir. Qufali Qasir an-Nawa, Salim ibn Abi Hafsa (133/750), Haqam ibn Utaybah (114/732), Salama ibn Kuhail (122/740) and Abu Mikdad Sabit al-Haddad, the Batri leaders during the era of Muhammad Baqir, criticized Baqir due to the uncertainties in his doctrine and they did not accept him as the primary authority.<sup>4</sup>

Batriyya was a part of general Qufa Hadith. Batriyya's ideas were common among the people of Zaydiyya once. However, he made Jarudiyya's conception common in Zaydiyya sent at the end of the 2nd/8th century and beginning of the 3rd/9th century.<sup>5</sup>

Like other sects, Zaydiyya emerged as a process like other sects. The ideological development of Zaydiyya sect started with Zaid ibn Ali and adopted a different and systemic kalam-based structure in Shiite during the era of Qasim Rassi (246/860) and his generation. The sectarian principles of Zaydiyya were determined with Hadi Ilalhaq Yahya ibn Hussein (298/911), the grandson of Qasim Rassi as Tawhid, Adl, al-Vaad wa al-Vaid, al-Amru bi al-Ma'ruf wa an-Nahyu ani al-Munkar wa Imamat.<sup>6</sup> These principles were than conserved despite differences in details.

The basic sectarian principles separating Zaydiyya from other sects and Shiite sects such as Imamiyya and Ismailiyya are based on imamah doctrines. According to Zaydis' beliefs, after Ali, Hasan and Hussein, those who carry the qualities related to Islamic science, bravery, taqwa, justice, independence and manhood of the sons of Hasan and Hussein, who are older than 18 and who declare his imamah and invites people to his path is the imam to be obeyed.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, there were certain people among Zaydis who regarded considering one who was not from the lineage of Hasan and Hussein as imam on the condition that this person acted in line with Quran and Sunnah.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Qummi-Nawbahti, *Şii Fırkalar*, p. 77-78, 183-188.

<sup>5</sup> Wilferd Madelung, "Batriyya or Butriyya", *EI(2) Supplement*, v. XII, Leiden-Brill 2004, p. 129-130.

<sup>6</sup> Hadi Ilalhaq Yahya ibn Hussein (298/910), *Uşulu ad-Din*, (ed. Abdallah ibn Muhammad ash-Shazali, in *Maǵmuu Rasaili al-Hadi ila al-Haq*) Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Saqafiyya, Amman 1421/2001, p. 191-196; Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin Muhammad (663/1265), *Yanabiu an-nasıha fı al-akaidi as-sahiha*, ed. Murtaza ibn Zaid Mahatwari Hasani, Maktabatu Badr, San'a 1420/1999, p. 25 and the rest. See also: İsa Doǵan, "Zeydiyye Mezhebi", *Milletlerarası Tarihte ve Günümüzde Şiilik Sempozyumu*, İSAV yay., İstanbul 1993, p. 557-600, p. 578-587; Yusuf Gökalp, "Zeydiyye mezhebinin görüşleri, kültürel mirası ve İslam düşüncesine katkıları". *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/2 (2007), p. 95-112.

<sup>7</sup> For more details about the conditions indicated by Zaydis in regard to imamah, see: Abu Talib Natiq bi al-Haq (d. 424/1033), *Kitabu as-siyar* (Ayman Fuad Sayyid, *Tarihu al-mazahibi ad-diniyya fı biladi al-Yaman hatta nihayati al-qarni as-sadisi al-hijri*, Daru al-Misriyyati al-Lubnaniyya, Cairo 1408/1988, p. 281-283), p. 281.

<sup>8</sup> See in regard to Zaydi's imamah concept, see Muhammad Yahya Salim Izzan, "Kırae fı nazariyyati al-Imama 'ında az-Zaydiyya", *al-Masar* 3/3 (2002): 5-48; Mehmet Ümit, "Zeydiyye Mezhebi, İmamet Anlayışı ve Sahabe Hakkındaki Görüşleri", *Yakın Doǵu Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1/2 (Fall 2015), p. 93-118, p. 97-112.

Isna Ashariyya Shiite claims that Hussein's sons are certain people, that imam's name were clearly reflected in the works and that the number of imams is 12. However, Zaydis believe that imamah belong to Hasan's and Hussein's sons following Hussein, that there is no order in the number of imams, and that imams' knowledge is not natal but learned, in other words, that they learned what they knew by working and making efforts. Therefore, Zaydi imams developed themselves in terms of Islamic science and reflected their ideas through their works. Most of these works can be found in modern times. In addition, Zaydis do not accept the concepts of gaib, imam, bada, rijat or virtues of imams.

Zaydis first founded a state in Tabaristan<sup>9</sup> in 250/864 and in Yemen in 284/897 later. Zaydis in Tabaristan existed as a society until the era of Safawids (toward the end of 10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century) although they lost their state in approximately 65 years. As a result of Safawids' efforts to make the people they controlled obey the Imamiyyah Shiite, Zaydis in the area were gathered in the pot of Isna Ashariyya Shiite.<sup>10</sup> Zaydis in Yemen<sup>11</sup> area has maintained their presence as a state for a longer period and lived as a society until the present time. Modern Zaydis live in the northern sections of Yaman with their bases in Sa'da and constitute approximately the one-third of Yemen population (8-10 millions).<sup>12</sup>

This study aims to reflect the positions of Hasan and Hussein in Zaydiyya sect and the place of Hussein who undertook a special mission such as identity formation by Imamiyyah Shiite and the incident of Karbala for Zaydiyya sect through its own sources.

## 1. The imamah concept of Hasan and Hussein

Was noted as the primary distinguishing quality of Zaydiyya Sect. According to Zaydi imamah, the most benevolent person who comes after the Prophet and deserves the imamah the most is Ali ibn Abi Talib followed by Hasan and Hussein. After them, imamah comes from the lineage of Ali-Fatimah, is a scholar, benevolent, brave, honest, generous person with taqwa, and who invites people to

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<sup>9</sup> For more details about Tabaristan Zaydis, see: Hasan Yaşaroğlu, *Taberistan Zeydileri*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Marmara Uni. Ins. of Soc. Sci., Istanbul 1998, p. 66 et al.; Yusuf Gökalp, *Zeydilik ve Taberistan'da Yayılması*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, AÜSBE, Ankara 1999, p. 50-113.

<sup>10</sup> Adem Arıkan, "Gilan'da Son Zeydi Yönetim (Al-i Karkiya)", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, issue: 20 (2009) p. 1-26, p. 20-25. Cf. Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, The Persian Heritage Foundation, New York 1988, p. 92; Abdu ar-Rafi', *Junbish al-Zaydiyya dar Iran*, Intisharat al-Azad a-Andishan, Tahran 1359, p. 140-141.

<sup>11</sup> For more details about Yemen Zaydis, see: Yusuf Gökalp, *Zeydilik ve Yemen'deYayılişi*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, AÜSBE, Ankara 2006, p. 91-177.

<sup>12</sup> For more details about the formation, historical development and basic theological approaches of Zaydiyya sect, see: Mehmet Ümit, *Zeydi İmamet Düşüncesinin Teşekkülü*, Ankara 2012, 22-49.



his imamah.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Hussein is regarded as the imam after his older brother Hasan. Zaydis make great efforts to prove the imamah of Ali in the issue of imamah. The Hussein collectively. Therefore, the statements regarding Hasan and Hussein are developed in regard to reflecting their imamah. Zaydis provide evidences from the Quran, Sunnah and religious works to prove their claim that the imamah of Hasan and Hussein belongs to the lineage of Hasan and Hussein.

They first aim to prove that Hasan and Hussein are the Prophet's sons and from his lineage. They reflect Surah al-An'am from Quran as an evidence to their claims.<sup>14</sup> While interpreting these verses, they indicate that Jesus, the son of Mary, is from the lineage of Abraham like Moses and Aaron, that Jesus' association to Abraham's lineage arose from Mary, and that there is no difference between the children of female and male before God in this regard.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, they make efforts to prove that Hasan and Hussein is the children of the Prophet and from his lineage. Moreover, they state that God revealed Surah Ali 'Imran 3/61 (mulaanah)<sup>16</sup> about Hasan, Hussein, their fathers and mothers, that the Prophet took Hasan, Hussein, their fathers Ali and mother Fatima alongside him upon this verse, and that Hasan and Hussein are regarded as the sons of Hasan and Hussein.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad ibn al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn Hasan ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (284/897), *al-Ussulu as-samaniyya*, ed. Abdallah ibn Hammood al-Izzi, Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Sakafiyya-Markazu al-Adl wa at-Tawhid li ad-Dirasat wa al-Buhus wa at-Tahkik, Amman-Sa'da 2001, p. 66-68; al-Hadi ila al-Hak Yahya ibn al-Hussein (298/910), *Kitab fihi Ma'rifatullah min al-adl wa at-tawhid, wa tasdiku al-wa'di wa al-waid wa isbatu an-nubuwwa wa al-imamatu fi an-nabi*, Majmuu rasaili al-Hadi, (Majmuu Rasaili al-Hadi ila al-Haq, ed. Abdallah ibn Muhammad ash-Shazali, Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Sakafiyya, Amman 1421/2001, p. 49-85), p. 53-60; a.mlf, *Kitabu Ussuli ad-Din akidatu ahli al-bayti at-tahirin*, (a.mlf, *Majmuatu rasail al-Hadi ila al-Hakk Yahya ibn al-Hussein*, Manshuratu Ahli al-Bayt li ad-Dirasati al-Islamiyya, Sa'da 2001, p. 191-196), p. 194-6; al-Murtaza li Dinillah Muhammad ibn al-Hadi Yahya ibn al-Hussein ibn al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim ar-Rassi (310/922), *Kitabu al-Ussul*, ed.: Abdallah ibn Hammood al-Izzi, Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Sakafiyya, Sa'da-Amman 1421/2001, p. 37-45; Abdallah ibn Hamza ibn Suleiman (614/1217), *al-Ikdu as-samin fi ahkami al-aimmati al-hadin*, ed.: Abd as-Salam ibn Abbas al-Vajih, Amman: Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Sakafiyya 2001, p. 43-44, 59-60, 65-70; Amr Hussein ibn Badruddin (663/1265), *Yanabihi an-nasiha fi'al-akaidi as-sahiha*, ed.: al-Murtaza ibn Zaid al-Mahatwari al-Hasani, San'a: Maktabatu Badr li at-Tiba'a wa an-Nashr wa at-Tawzi' 1420/1999, p. 323 et al.; Qasim ibn Muhammad az-Zaydi (1029/1620), *al-Asas li akaidi al-akyas fi ma'rifati Rabbi al-alamain*, ed.: Isa Dogan, Samsun 1998, p. 117-131.

<sup>14</sup> The verses have meanings as follows: "And We gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - all [of them] We guided. And Noah, We guided before; and among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good. (An'am 6/84) And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot - and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds.." (An'am 6/85)

<sup>15</sup> Qasim ibn Ibrahim ar-Rassi (246/860), *Majmuu qutub wa rasaili al-imam al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim ar-Rassi*, I-II, ed.: Abd al-Qarim Ahmad Jadhan, San'a: Daru al-Hikmati al-Yamaniyya 1422/2001, II, 220; Hadi Ila al-Haq, *Kitab fihi ma'rifatullah*, p. 54

<sup>16</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you - say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].'" (Ali 'Imran 3/61).

<sup>17</sup> Hadi Ila al-Hak, *Kitab fihi ma'rifatullah*, p. 54; Humaid ibn Ahmad al-Muhalli (652/1254), *min Kitabi al-Hadaiki al-wardiyya fi manakibi aimmati az-Zaydiyya*, comp. and ed.: Wilferd Madelung, (Ahbaru eimmeti'z-

The reflect that the Prophet made the following statement as an evidence to the claim that Hasan and Hussein are Prophet's sons: "Children of every mother have particular fathers except those children of Fatima. I am their father and grandfathers."<sup>18</sup>

They also express that the sahabah regarded Hasan and Hussein as the children of the Prophet and that sahabah's agreement on this regard is a theological evidence regarding the imamah of Hasan and Hussein.<sup>19</sup>

After indicating that Hasan and as an evidence to the claim that Hasan and Hussein are the sons of the Prophet, Zaydis make efforts to prove that imamah belongs to their lineage. Thus, they claim that prophecy, imamah, guardianship and authority belong to Abraham's sons until a Prophet is sent, and that only imamah and leadership have continued as the Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet. Therefore, the statements regarding Zaydiyya claims that imamah was passed to Hussein, Hasan's brother, after Hasan.

They reflect the verses Hud 11/73,<sup>20</sup> Zukhruf 43/28,<sup>21</sup> Nisa 4/54,<sup>22</sup> Ma'idah 5/20,<sup>23</sup> Jathiyah 45/16,<sup>24</sup> and Ali 'Imran 3/33-34<sup>25</sup>, and they state that the Prophecy was passed from Abraham to Ismail, from Ismail to Ishaq, from Ishaq to his son Jacob, from Jacob to his son Joseph, and from Joseph to Israeli people, from them to Jesus, and from Jesus to Mohammad. After mentioning Surah al-Hashr<sup>26</sup> indicating

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*Zeydiyye*, Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandschen Gesellschaft, Beirut 1987, p. 171-349), p. 308-9; Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 407-8.

<sup>18</sup> Hadi Ila al-Hak, *Kitab fihī ma'rifatullah*, p. 54; Murtaza li Dinillah, *Kitabu al-usul*, p. 40; Natic bi al-Hakk Abu Talib Yahya ibn al-Hussein al-Haruni (424/1033), *Sharhu al-Balighi al-mudrik*, ed.: Muhammad Yahya Salim Izzan, San'a: Maktabatu Badr 1417/1997, p. 150; Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 409.

<sup>19</sup> Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 409.

<sup>20</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "They said: 'Are you amazed at the decree of Allah? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house! Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.'" (Hud 11/73)

<sup>21</sup> The meaning of this verse is as follows: "And he made it a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it] (Zukhruf 43/28).

<sup>22</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But we had already given the family of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom and conferred upon them a great kingdom." (An-Nisa 4/54)

<sup>23</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when Moses said to his people "O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you possessors and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds." (al-Ma'idah 5/20).

<sup>24</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds." (al-Jathiyah 45/16)

<sup>25</sup> The verses have meanings as follows: "Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran over the worlds. (Ali 'Imran 3/33) Descendants, some of them from others. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. (Ali 'Imran 3/34).

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: And what Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the

that whatever the Prophet says to do should be done and whatever he reflects as prohibited should be avoided, they say about the *sakalayn* hadith<sup>27</sup> reflecting the obligation to follow Ahl al-Bayt. Zaydiyya sect indicates that Ahl al-Bayt consists of selected people, mentioning about surah al-Ahzab 33/33 (Tathir).<sup>28</sup> According to them, surah an-Nisa 4/165<sup>29</sup> should be an evidence in this regard. The Prophet Muhammad is from the lineage of Abraham, and the lineage of Muhammad is from the lineage of Abraham. Accordingly, they mention surah al-Baqarah 2/124<sup>30</sup> as an evidence to the imamah of Hasan and Hussein because they are the benevolent people from the lineage of Abraham. Reflecting al-Fatir 35/32<sup>31</sup>, they state that God left the Quran as a heritage to selected people, and that these people are Muhammad, Ali, Hasan and Hussein. To them, cruel people are in the lineage of Abraham or Hasan and Hussein, who are the grandsons of Abraham, and these cruel people should not be modeled as also indicated in Hud 11/113<sup>32</sup>. They mention al-Saffat 37/113<sup>33</sup> and indicate that there are benevolent people in the lineage of Abraham and Ishaq, or in the lineage of Hasan and Hussein, and that God's heritage is for the benevolent people in the lineages of Abraham and Hasan and Hussein. Thus, imamah belongs to people from their lineages with their qualities after Hasan and Hussein.<sup>34</sup> They order the qualities to be possessed by

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[stranded] traveler - so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you. And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (al-Hashr 59/7).

<sup>27</sup> For more details about this hadith, see Adem Dölek, "Sekaleyn Hadisi ve Değerlendirilmesi". *Ma'rifa* 4/3 (2004): 149-173.

<sup>28</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification." Al-Ahzab 33/33).

<sup>29</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: [We sent] messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise. (an-Nisa 4/165)

<sup>30</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them. [Allah ] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [ Allah ] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers." (al-Baqarah 2/124).

<sup>31</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah. That [inheritance] is what is the great bounty. (al-Fatir 35/32).

<sup>32</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors; then you would not be helped." (Hud 11/113).

<sup>33</sup> The meaning of the verse is as follows: "And We blessed him and Isaac. But among their descendants is the doer of good and the clearly unjust to himself." (al-Saffat 37/113).

<sup>34</sup> Hadi Ila al-Haq, *Kitab fih ma'rifatullah*, p. 54-56; Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 405-6. See also Humaid al-Muhalli, *min Kitabi al-Hadaiki al-wardiyya*, 308-9. Jafar Sadik was asked about the phrase "those in authority among you" in the order in an-Nisa 4/59 "obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." And he mentioned Ali, Hasan, Hussein, and their lineage as the authority. See: Majduddin ibn Muhammad ibn Mansoor al-Hasani al-Muayyadi, *Lawamiu*

people from their lineages as follows: Wara and taqwa, a totally healthy body, zealous in fulfilling God's orders, indifferent to the mortal actions or facts, an ideology and understanding expected from imams, ability to solve problems, qualities of being brave, valiant and generous, being gentle, honest and compassionate toward people, considering the personality equal to that of others, negotiating with the people, solely giving orders of God, sending assistants to different towns, trusting believers instead of disbelievers, and acting on behalf of himself.

The Hasan and the imamah of Hasan and Hussein. Some of these narratives include the following: "Hasan and Hussein are the masters of the people in paradise and their fathers are superior", "Hasan and Hussein are the imams even if they protest (*kama*) or do not protest (*qaada*)", "I leave you *sakalayni* (two important heritages). You will not diverge from the true path as long as you embrace these; Quran and my Ahl al-Bayt (lineage). Allah, the pleasant and wise, told me that these two will never leave one another until they reach me alongside the Kawsar river."<sup>35</sup>

Zaydis claim that *sabaha*, *tabiin* and *tabiin* followers do agree upon the imamah of Hasan and Hussein, and that only the Hashwiyyah<sup>36</sup> group opposes to them. They also state that Ahl al-Bayt agrees upon their imamah and their agreement is an evidence in this regard. Moreover, according to Zaydis, Hasan and Hussein, carrying the necessary qualities for imamah, invited people to their imamah and Ahl al-Hal and Ahl al-Akd followed their imamah. In this case, any such people are imams. There was agreement among the people that Hasan and Hussein were the superior people to the rest of the ummah when they declared their imamah. The people with the greatest degree deserve imamah and hold rights upon the agreement of the *sahabah*. In this case, their imamah becomes certain.<sup>37</sup>

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*al-anwar fi jawami al-ulum wa al-asar wa tarajimu uli al-ilmi wa al-anzar*, I-III, Sa'da: Maktabatu at-Turasi al-Islami 1414/1993, v. II, p. 522-3.

<sup>35</sup> Qasim Rasi, *Majmuu kutub wa rasail*, p. 186, 192; Muhammad ibn al-Qasim, *al-Ussulu as-samaniyya*, p. 67; Hadi Ila al-Haq, *Kitabu Ussuliddin*, p. 195-6; Murtaza li Dinillah, *Kitabu al-usul*, p. 41; Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 406.

<sup>36</sup> The concept of Hashwiyyah which was first used in the early 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century was defined differently based on the period and environment, the group in which it is managed and the opposing group to be criticized. Some of these narratives include the following: 1. It reflects those who reject reasoning in religious topics and adopt the concepts including *tashbih* and *tajsim* by following the messages of religious works. 2. It indicates those who accept divine titles and claim that the Quran is eternal, who believe that human actions are predetermined, and who give a verdict based on the *ahad* hadiths. 3. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, this is used to mean "common and ignorant people" and to blemish certain people instead of reflecting certain theological ideas or people. 4. Those who accept the idea that the Prophet did not select a caliph as a successor gather within the ideology of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and confirm his management. This definition is generally made by Shiite scholars. For more details about Hashwiyyah, see: Metin Yurdagür, "Haşviyye", *DİA*, v. XVI (Istanbul 1997), p. 426-27.

<sup>37</sup> Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 407. See also Muayyadi, *Lawamiu al-anwar*, v. II, p. 525.

Zaydis provide evidences to the imamah of Hasan and Hussein by comparing their benevolence to the qualities and actions of Muawiyah and Yazid. Accordingly, the ummah agrees that it is not possible to compare Yazid, someone who killed or captured many people from the lineage of the Prophet, showed no respect to their funerals, named the harem (Madinah) of the Prophet as allowable in Harra incident, and killed approximately 6000 people among the muhajirs and Ansar, to Hussein. They reflect narratives that The Prophet cursed Yazid.<sup>38</sup> According to them, Muawiyah did not obey the agreement he made with Hasan in regard to accepting Hasan as the imam and Hussein as the following imam, and he declared his son Yazid as the successor.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Hussein and Hasan to Zaydiyya Sect

The statements in Zaydi sources reflecting Hussein's arrival at Karbala and martyrdom there generally accord to the Islamic history sources. Thus, we will mention certain points where Zaydis associate him with imamah.

This mythological narrative is used to explain how the names of Hussein, born on 5 Sha'ban 4/10 January 626, Hasan were given to them: The told Ali to give a name to Hasan when she gave birth. Ali said: "I am somebody who loves harp (battling). I would like to call him Harb. But I cannot be before the Prophet in naming." The Prophet came later. He was requested to give a name to the baby. He said: "I cannot be before God in naming." Then God made a revelation through Jibril: "That baby is the son of Muhammad. Descend, congratulate and say: "Ali's position to you is like the position of Aaron to Moses." Then Jibril descended and congratulated him on behalf of God. The he said: "God orders you to give the name of Aaron's son." The Prophet asked: "What is his name?" "Jibril Shabbar" answered Jibril. The Prophet said his mother tongue was Arabic, and upon that, Jibril told him to name the baby Hasan. The gave the name Hasan to the baby. When Hussein was born, God revealed: "Muhammad had another son. Descend, congratulate him and say: "Ali's position to you is like the position of Aaron to Moses. God orders you to give the name of Aaron's son." After descending and reporting God's message, the Prophet asked about the name of Aaron's son. Jibril said: "Shubair." The said his mother tongue was Arabic, and upon that, Jibril told him to name the baby Hussein. The Prophet named him Hussein then.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Amir Hussein ibn Badruddin, *Yanabiu an-nasiha*, p. 412-426; Abu al-Abbas al-Hasani, *al-Masabih*, p. 354.

<sup>39</sup> Abu al-Abbas al-Hasani, *al-Masabih*, p. 355-7.

<sup>40</sup> Abu al-Hasan Husamuddin Hamid ibn Ahmad al-Muhalli (652/1254), *Kitabu Hadaiki al-wardiyya fi manakibi aimmati az-Zaydiyya*, I-II, ed.: Murtaza ibn Wazir al-Mahatwari al-Hasani, San'a: Matbuatu Maktabati Center Badr, 1423/2002, v. I, p. 189. For a closer interpretation, see: Yahya ibn al-Hussein ibn Aaron ibn al-Hussein ibn Muhammad ibn Harun ibn Muhammad ibn Qasim ibn al-Hasan ibn Zaid ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (Natiq Bilhak) (d. 424/1033), *Taysiru al-matalib fi amali Abi Talib*, divided by: Qadi Jafar ibn Ahmad ibn Abd as-salam, ed.: Abdallah ibn Hammud al-Izzi, San'a-Jordan:

This narrative connotes the statement made by the Prophet to Ali when he was about to fight in the Battle of Tabuk (9/631) five years after the birth of Hussein. The left Ali to look after the Ahl al-Bayt when he set off for the battle. Upon this, Ali complained, saying Ali, "Are you just leaving me to look after the women and children?" The Prophet said to Ali: "You are at a position before me like that of Aaron before Moses. Is not this enough?"<sup>41</sup> These narratives are used by Shiite as an evidence to Ali's imamah. The names of Hasan and Hussein are the names of Aaron's sons, Ali's imamah is consolidated and the imamah of Hasan and Hussein is hinted. This point is separately confirmed saying that the names were directly given by God. However, the aspect to be observed here is the passing of Aaron before Moses. Therefore, it is not possible for Aaron to be the guardian of Moses.

The much information about the childhood of Hussein except the statements of the Prophet regarding two brothers.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, there is not much known about their youth. However, it is noted that Hasan and Hussein were assigned by their fathers to protect Uthman when he was surrounded, and that they participated in the Battles of Camel and Siffin alongside their fathers in the era of Ali.<sup>43</sup> The when people obeyed Hasan, they also obeyed Hussein, and that Hussein respected and stayed alongside Hasan despite his disturbance when Hasan left caliphate to Muawiya. The highest amount of information regarding Hussein's life reflects the last five-six months before his martyrdom in Karbala incident. The information regarding this period parallels the data provided in the general Islamic History sources. Therefore, this study solely indicates the martyrdom of Hussein<sup>44</sup> and its reflections over Zaydis, and Zaydis' attitudes in the ceremonies to remember Hussein.

The martyrdom of Hussein in Karbala deeply affected Zaydis like all Muslims. However, there is another issue upsetting them more. They criticize Ahl al-Sunnah hadith authorities who convey narratives from the people regarded as the opponents of Ahl al-Bayt and who trust these people. To them, preferring others over Ahl al-Bayt members such as Jafar Sadiq is a contradiction. Accordingly, they reflect their concerns to people who were involved in the

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Maktabatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali-Muassasatu al-Imam Zaid ibn Ali as-Sakafiyya 1422/2002, p. 149. Cf. Muhammad ibn Sa'd (230/845), *Tabakatu al-kubra*, I-XI, ed.: Ali Muhammad Umar, Cairo-Madinah: Maktabatu al-Hanji-ash-Sharikatu ad-Duwaliyya li at-Tiba'a, 1421/2001, v. VI, p. 356-57. This story does not mean a process of naming God through Jibril.

<sup>41</sup> See: Ibn Sad, *Tabakatu al-kubra*, v. III, p. 22-23.

<sup>42</sup> When the Prophet passed, Hasan was seven and Hussein was six years old.

<sup>43</sup> al-Muayyadi, *Lawamiu al-anwar*, v. III, p. 45.

<sup>44</sup> When the Prophet passed, Hussein, see: Fudail ibn Zubair ibn Umar ibn Dirham al-Qufi al-Asadi, *asmiyatun man kutilah ma'a'l-Husein min waladihi wa ikhwatihi wa ahli baytihi wa shiatihi*, ed. Sayyid Muhammad Riza al-Huseini al-Jalali, Kum 1405, 23-31. The researcher of the work states that Fudail ibn Zubair is a relative of Muhammad Baqir and Jafar Sadik and reflects the information regarding him and his family in the sources.

martyrdom of Hussein in Karbala were accepted fair and that scholars convey narratives from these people. They even state that Sunni hadith authorities regard Umar ibn Saad ibn Abi Wakkas, the commander of Umayyad army, in the incident of Karbala where Hussein was killed as fair and reliable in terms of refuting and amending works or ideas.<sup>45</sup> Zaydi scholar Sarimuddin Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Wazir states the following in this regard: "Hadith authorities blemished their works by mentioning about the Ahl al-Bait opponents... Even some of them crossed their lines considering Umar ibn Saad as fair and reliable. Abi Wakkas, the killer of Hussein, as fair. Ijli stated that Umar ibn Saad is a native and reliable person who can be narrated."<sup>46</sup>

There is not much known about the memorials of Hussein by Zaydis<sup>47</sup>. However, this study makes an evaluation after reflecting these historical events.

The of Hussein's grave (making it a ruin) happened in the era of Umayyad's sons. Afterwards, Mutawaqqil, an Abbasid caliph, did a similar thing. Moreover, armed guardians were left here to prevent people from visiting.<sup>48</sup>

Hasan ibn Zaid (270/883), Muhammad ibn Zaid (reign: 270-287/883-900), the second imam of Tabaristan Zaydi State, rebuilt the graves of Ali and Hussein, Ali's son. Accordingly, it is noted that he spent 20,000 dinars to rebuild the graves.<sup>49</sup> In addition, he is believed to have sent a million dirhams to the children of Hasan and Hussein in Mecca, Madinah, and Iraq, to the children of Ali's other children, to the children of Jafar, Aqil and Abbas, and poor people of Shiite.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> al-Muayyadi, *Lawamiu al-anwar*, v. I, p. 173-175.

<sup>46</sup> Sarimuddin Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Wazir, *al-Falaku ad-dawwar fi ulumi al-hadis wa al-fiqh wa al-asar*, ed.: Muhammed Yahya Salim İzzan, Sa'da-San'a: Maktabatu at-Turasi al-Islami-Daru at-Turasi al-Yamani, 1415/1994, p. 173. See also Majduddin al-Muayyadi, *Lawamiu al-anwar*, v. I, p. 173-175.

<sup>47</sup> When the Prophet passed, the history of Hussein's memorial ceremonies, see: Rebecca Ansary Pettys, "The Ta'zieh: Ritual Enactment of Persian Renewal", *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (October 1981), p. 341-354; Yitzhak Nakash, "An Attempt to Trace the Origin of the Rituals of 'Ashura'", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, v. 33, Issue: 2 (November 1993), p. 161-181; Eyüp Baş, "Aşure Günü, Tarihsel Boyutu ve Osmanlı Dini Hayatındaki Yeri üzerine Düşünceler", *AÜİFD*, XLV (2004), issue: 1, p. 167-190; Muhammad Salih al-Juwayni, "Tarihu al-ma'tamu al-Husayni mina ash-shahadah wa hatta al-asr al-Kajari", Arabic trans.: Farkad al-Jazairi, *Majallatu Nususi al-Muasira*, Issue: 9 (Date: 31.03.2010, Web Address: <http://www.nosos.net/main/pages/news.php?nid=132'den> nakille); Jamshid Malekpour, *The Islamic drama Ta'ziye*, London: Frank Cass Publishers 2004, p. 18 et al., 121 et al.

<sup>48</sup> Abu al-Hasan Husamuddin Humaid ibn Ahmad al-Muhalli (652/1254), *Kitabu Hadaiki al-wardiyya fi manakibi aimmati az-Zaydiyya*, I-II, ed.: Murtaza ibn Zaid al-Mahatwari al-Hasani, San'a: Matbuatu Maktabati Center Badr, 1423/2002, v. I, p. 225-226.

<sup>49</sup> Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Hilal al-Katib as-Sabi, *Kitabu al-Muntaza' mina al-juz'i al-awwal mina al-kitab al-ma'ruf bi at-Taji fi ahbari ad-Dawlati ad-Daylamiyya*, comp. and ed.: Wilferd Madelung, (*Ahbaru eimmeti'z-Zeydiyye*, Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandschen Gesellschaft, Beirut 1987, p. 7-51), p. 22; al-Muhalli (652/1254), *Kitabu Hadaiki al-wardiyya*, v. I, p. 226.

<sup>50</sup> al-Hakim Abu Saad al-Muhassin ibn Muhammad al-Jushami, *Nuhab min kitabi Jalai al-absar* (Ahmad ibn from *Tuhfatu al-abrar Sa'du ad-Din al-Miswari*), compiler and ed.: Wilferd Madelung, (*Ahbaru eimmeti'z-Zeydiyye*, Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandschen Gesellschaft, Beirut 1987, p. 119-133),

Adudu ad-Dawla, a Shiite Buwayhi leader, reached the furthest point in regard to repairing and revising the graves of Ali and Hussein, and assigning associations to them. He visited their graves every passing year. The sons of Abbas for destroying Hussein's grave and revealed all the malevolent acts they did.<sup>51</sup>

Ashura ceremonies were held by the government in Baghdad in 352/963 by Shiite Buwayhis under the influence of Abbasid caliphate. Accordingly, Muizzudawla, a Buwayhi leader, ordered people not to buy or sell anything and not to sacrifice any animals, and he ordered them to close their shops and join the mourning ceremonies on Muharram 10 (The Ashura day). Women were ordered to wear black clothes for the ceremonies and mourn by hitting their faces.<sup>52</sup>

Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Kawkabi, a Buwayhi vizier, prohibited this memorial ceremony lasting approximately 30 years as a result of the fights between Shiite Qarh and Babu at-Taqa people and Sunnis, causing death.<sup>53</sup> The ceremonies in question were permitted in 402/1011<sup>54</sup> but prohibited once again in 406/1015.<sup>55</sup>

These evidences indicate that Ashura ceremonies were conducted with the governmental support in the period when Buwayhis were being influenced by Abbasid caliph. Considering that Buwayhis had good relationships with the Zaydi imams of Tabaristan, approval or promotion of these ceremonies by them is a possibility. Moreover, another evidence in this regard is that Muhammad ibn Zaid rebuilt the graves of Ali and Hussein, that Zaydis disapproved the demolition of Hussein's grave by Mutawaqqil and people were prevented from visiting the grave by this person. However, no data indicating that Zaydis themselves held or participated in Karbala memorial ceremonies were found. Moreover, no historical evidences regarding Karbala memories ceremonies among Zaydis were found. Yemen Zaydis fought with groups such as Qarmatis and local tribes in their regions far away from Baghdad, the center of Authority and they did not have a need of remembering them for building their own identities, which might be among the relevant factors in this regard.

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p. 122. See also Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Hussein ibn Ali Mas'udi (346/957), *Muru az-zahab wa maadinu al-jawhar*, I-VII, ed.: Charles Pellat, Beirut: Publications de L'Université Libanaise 1974, v. V, p. 172.

<sup>51</sup> Al Humeid al-Muhkalli, *Hadaiqu'l-vardiyyah fi menakibi eimmah az-Zaydiyya*, v.1, p.225-226.

<sup>52</sup> Abu al-Husein Ali ibn Abi al-Karam Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim ash-Shaybani al-Ma'ruf bi Ibnu al-Asir (630/1233), *al-Kamil fi at-tarih*, I-XI, rev. Muhammad Yusuf ad-Dokak, Beirut: Daru al-Qutubi al-Ilmiyya 1407/1987, v. VII, p. 279; Abu al-Faraj Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jawzi (597/1201)-*al-Muntazam fi tarihi al-muluq wa al-umam*, I-IXX, ed.: Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Ata-Mustafa Abd al-Qadir Ata, Beirut: Daru al-Qutubi al-Ilmiyya 1412/1992, v. XIV, p. 150.

<sup>53</sup> Ibnu al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, v. XIV, p. 361; Jamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin Yusuf ibn Taghribardi al-Atabaqi (874/1469), *an-Nujumu az-zahira fi muluqi Misr wa al-Cairo*, I-XVI, ta'lik: Muhammad Hussein Shamsuddin, Beirut: Daru al-Qutubi al-Ilmiyye 1413/1992, v. IV, p. 165; Baş, "Aşure Günü, Tarihsel Boyutu ve Osmanlı Dini Hayatındaki Yeri üzerine Düşünceler", p. 177.

<sup>54</sup> Ibnu al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, v. XV, p. 82; Baş, Id, p. 177.

<sup>55</sup> Ibnu al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, v. XV, p. 111; Ibn Taghribardi, *an-Nujumu az-zahira*, v. IV, p. 239; Baş, Id, p. 177.



### 3. Modern Karbala Memorial Ceremonies

The modern Karbala Memories Ceremonies are held in Yemen as well. However, unlike the people in Iraq or Iran, nobody harms their own body in these ceremonies. For instance, records indicate that Karbala memorial ceremonies were conducted in different towns of Karbala in 2010, and no arrests or actions were performed by the law enforcement. Some of the activities performed in these ceremonies include the following:

A special conference was held in the Nahrain Mosque. Yahya ibn Hussein ad-Daylami mentioned the state of Islam ummah in regard to Hussein's tragedy so that they would not deviate from the right path. He stated that value-related concepts changed, and that maroof became munkar and vice versa.

A conference on Karbala Memorial ceremonies and Hussein's martyrdom was held in Badr Islamic Science and Culture Center. In this conference, Muhammad Ahmad Miftah mentioned about the reasons of Hussein's arrival to Iraq, his martyrdom along with his family, and Prophet's daughters being captured.

Miftah talked about the mentality of various Umayyads while performing the most malevolent actions in Karbala tragedy. He said Umayyads decapitated certain people and dragged their heads along with the women and children of Prophet's family from Iraq to Damascus, and he added that they conveyed the message of Hussein to the furthest points through their malevolent acts.

Accordingly, Dr. Murtaza Mahatwari gave a conference on the relationship between Hussein and the Prophet (his grandfather) saying "Hussein and I are closely related to one another. God likes those who like Hussein" in Badr Islamic Science and Culture Center. Mahatwari stated that Hussein represented the Prophet against the Umayyads who deviated from Islam in Karbala.<sup>56</sup>

The general attitudes of modern Zaydis toward Hussein and Karbala in the last five and six years are as follows: The environment of conflicts between Zaydis and Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia's allies, which started with Husis (the activists wing of Zaydis), brings Zaydis closer to Iran politically. Accordingly, the number of recent memorials regarding Hussein, Zaid ibn Ali and their associates might have increased.

### Conclusion

Zaydi sources review Hasan and Hussein in the context stating that they became imams after Ali in the topic of imamah. On this matter they bring the evidences from the Quran and Hadith in a way that they will support their own

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<sup>56</sup> *Sakafatuna*, Issue 3 (Safar 1431/February 2010) p. 45.

understanding of imamah. Hussein was not regarded from a particular different aspect compared to Hussein for Imamiyya Shiite. In other words, Imamah was not limited to nine certain people after Hussein, and a strange imamah concept such as the twelfth imam of Imamiyya Shiite was not adopted. According to Zaydis, imamah will continue in the lineage of Hasan and Hussein until the end of time.

Moreover, they interpret Karbala incident and martyrdom of Hussein differently than Imamiyya Shiite. Karbala incident, a “selected” and “transferred” trauma<sup>57</sup> among Imamiyya Shiite,<sup>58</sup> is one of the most tragic incidents suffered by humanity. All Islamic sections perform memorials in the Muharram month to remember this incident. Major ceremonies and programs are held in the places where Imamiyya Shiite is active such as Iran. Shiite and Sunnism cannot be mentioned in the period when this tragic incident occurred, but Shiite (particularly, Imamiyya Shiite) hold major ceremonies at every anniversary of this incident, which can be regarded as an effort to build an identity and keep it alive continuously. However, in the memorial ceremonies of the Zaydis, who are regarded as the closest group to Ahl al-Sunnah, and in the texts of authors belonging to the Zaydiyya denomination, there is no particular emphasis on Hussein's martyrdom for the construction of an identity and keeping of this constructed identity alive. Their statements regarding Hussein are generally related to his imamah and with the purpose of proving this imamah. In doing so, they mention verses from the Quran and present evidences from Sunnah and religious works. However, the Yemeni environment of conflicts between Zaydis and Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia's allies, which started with Husis (the activists wing of Zaydis), causes Husi ideology to be spread among the Zaydis and paves the way for Zaydiyya followers to get closer to Iran politically. Accordingly, the recent ceremonies performed Zaydis in Yemen and the increase in the number of memorials for Hussein, Zaid ibn Ali, transformation of these into massive reactions, and partial similarity to the programs in Iran are the reflections in this regard. If this continues for a longer period, Zaydis can get closer to Imamiyya Shiite ideologically. However, the historical sources and interviews made with contemporary Zaydis six or seven years ago stressed the differences compared to Imamiyya Shiite.

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<sup>57</sup> Vamık D. Volkan, *Kan bağı: Etnik Gururdan Etnik Teröre*, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul 1999; p. 63; Id, *Körü Körüne İnanç, Kriz ve Terör Dönemlerinde Geniş Gruplar ve Liderleri*, Okuyan Us yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 66-69.

<sup>58</sup> Hasan Onat, “Kerbela’yı Doğru Okumak”, *Akademik ORTA DOĞU*, v. 2, Issue: 1 (2007), p. 1-9, p. 4-6; Hanifi Şahin, *Şiilerin Gözüyle Sünniler*, Mana Yayınları, İstanbul 2017, p. 41-50.

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## Abbasid Caliph Nasir Lidinillah's Shiite Policy\*

Adem ARIKAN\*\*

### Abstract:

The Shiite-influenced Buwayhid Dynasty captured Baghdad (334/945), and the Abbasid caliphs remained under their domination for a long time. This administration came to an end, when the Great Seljuk Dynasty took over Baghdad (447/1055). Following the death of the last Sultan Tughrul of the Iraqi Seljuks (590/1194), who ruled the region after the Great Seljuks, Seljuk rule collapsed. Abbasid caliph Nasir Lidinillah, who was influential in these developments, had been in the caliphate for a long time (575-622 / 1180-1225). The period of this caliph was also a time of major developments in terms of sectarian history. During the time of Caliph Nasir, who was reported to be Shi'i by some sources, Shi'a members, in particular, were patronized and appointed to various posts including the position of vizier. This study will focus on aspects of development that are relevant to the history of these sects.

**Keywords:** Nâsir Lidinillah, Seljuk Dynasty, Tughrul, Ithna-Ashariyyah, Ismailis

## Abbasî Halifesi Nasır Lidinillah'ın Şîi Siyaseti

### Özet

Şîi eğilimli Büveyhiler Devleti, Bağdat'ı ele geçirmiş (334/945), Abbasî halifeleri de uzun süre onların tahakkümü altında kalmıştır. Büyük Selçuklu Devleti Bağdat'ı ele geçirdiğinde (447/1055) bu yönetim sona ermiştir. Büyük Selçuklulardan sonra bölgede hüküm süren Irak Selçuklularının son sultanı Tuğrul'un öldürülmesiyle (590/1194) bölgede Selçuklu yönetimi sona ermişti. Bu gelişmelerde etkili olan Abbasî halifesi Nâsir Lidinillah uzun süre (575-622/1180-1225) hilâfet makamında bulunmuştu. Bu halifenin dönemi, mezhepler tarihi açısından da önemli gelişmelere sahne olmuştur. Bazı kaynaklarda Şîi olduğu bildirilen Halife Nâsir'ın döneminde özellikle Şîa mensupları himaye görmüşler ve vezaret dâhil çeşitli görevlere getirilmişlerdir. Bu çalışmada söz konusu gelişmeler mezhepler tarihini ilgilendiren yönleri bakımından ele alınacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Nâsir Lidinillah, Selçuklular, Tuğrul, İsnâaşeriyye, İsmâiliyye

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### Introduction: The End of the Shiite Century

Prior to the era of the Seljuks, Shiite-oriented administrations, including the center of the Caliphate, held power. The Abbasid caliphate was also influenced by the Shiite-oriented Buwayhis in the period known as the Shiite century. The Caliphs of the Abbasids, who were controlled by the Seljuks, took action to establish their own authority. Nasir Lidinillah played an active role in the events that brought an end to the Seljuk Empire. He allied himself with different Shiite groups during this period. These historical events which are important in the history of the sects should be examined having regard to various aspects concerning different sects.

Seljuks were Muslims. When they made contact with Islamic society, there were two administrations of the caliphate, namely the Abbasids (750-1258) and the Fatimids (909-1171), and two caliphs. The Umayyad amir in Andalusia gained the title Nasir Lidinillah in 929 and the Andalusia Umayyad Caliphate (929-1031) was established.<sup>1</sup>

When the Seljuks came to the region, the Ismaili-Qarmatian state continued to exist in Bahrain despite the end of their previous aggressive attitudes.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of Sultan Melikşah, the local authorities in the region were supported and the Karmatî administration came to an end.<sup>3</sup> The local Zaydi administrations continued to exist in the area known as Daylam in the southwest of the Caspian State.<sup>4</sup> The rulers of Mecca's Zaydi, who were descended from Hasan, taught sermons in the name of the Fatimids for approximately a century (368-462 / 978-1070).<sup>5</sup> The Zaydi administration in Yemen was replaced by the Suleyhids from the Fatimids from 439/1047.<sup>6</sup>

As accepted by the followers of the Shiite Ithna-Ashariyyah, the period known as the "minor gaybat (al-gaybatu as-sughra, al-gaybatu al-kusra, al-gaybatu al-kasira)" on 8 Rabialawwal 260 (1 January 874), the date on which Hasan al-Askari, the eleventh imam, passed away. Communication with Muhammad ibn Hasan, the twelfth imam, was established through four intermediaries appointed by deputies, religious bodies and ambassadors. Communication with the imam ended after the death of the fourth ambassador on 15 Shaban 329 (15 May 941), which is known as the "major gaybat" (al-gaybatu al-kubra, al-gaybatu as-saniya,

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<sup>1</sup> Mehmet Özdemir, "Endülüs", *DİA*, XI, 213.

<sup>2</sup> Nasir al-Husraw, *Safarnama*, trans. Abdülvehap Tarzi, Ankara, Ministry of National Education, 1994, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Sevim, "Sultan Melikşah Devrinde Ahsa ve Bahreyn Karmatileri'ne Karşı Selçuklu Seferi", *Bellekten*, Ankara, 1960, V. XXIV, issue 94, p. 209-232.

<sup>4</sup> Hasan Yaşaroğlu, *Taberistan Zeydileri*, Gümüşhane University, 2012, p. 68 et al.

<sup>5</sup> Nebi Bozkurt, Mustafa Sabri Küçükbaşçı, "Mekke", *DİA*, XXVIII, 560.

<sup>6</sup> Yusuf Gökalp, "Zeydilik ve Yemen'de Yayılışı", (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis), Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Basic Islamic Sciences and History of Islamic Sciences, Ankara, 2006, p. 166.



al-gaybatu at-tula, al-gaybatu at-tamma).<sup>7</sup>

The Shiite-oriented Buwayhis influenced the Sunni Abbasid caliph after capturing Baghdad in 334/945 shortly after the major gaybat. The most respected hadith, doctrine and fiqh works of Ithna-Ashariyyah were written during this period.<sup>8</sup> The period lasting until the fall of Baghdad to the Seljuks (447/1055) is known as the "Shiite Century".<sup>9</sup> Qadi Abd al-Jabbar (d. 415/1025) who lived during this period indicated that the Abbasids existed only in name for almost a century and that many centers were administered by Shiites.<sup>10</sup> According to Biruni (d. 453/1061), the authority vested in the Buwayhis in Baghdad. Management (ad-dawla wa al-mulk) was passed to the Buwahis. Furthermore, Abbasid caliph retained only religious powers and were not authorized to act in worldly affairs.<sup>11</sup>

According to Fuat Köprülü, if the Seljuk authorities had not preserved the Abbasid caliphate and Sunnism, it would have been certain that Shiite would have become the dominant sect in Islam.<sup>12</sup> According to Spuler, who has made a similar assessment and states that the Fatimids in Egypt were conducting effective invitational activities in Syria, Iraq and Iran, if the Seljuks had not adopted and defended Ahl al-Sunnah, the Ismailis would have taken control.<sup>13</sup>

Garsunnima Abu al-Hasan Muhammad (d. 480/1088) observed and recorded the events when the Great Seljuks entered Baghdad and ended the governance of Buwayhi. According to the narrative of Garsunnima, Sibt Ibnu al-Jawzi (d. 654/1256)<sup>14</sup> states that Tughrul Begh entered Baghdad in Ramadan in 447/1055. At this time after the name, Tughrul Begh, al-Maliqu ar-Rahim, a Buwayhi amir, was mentioned in the sermon. At the end of Ramadan (December 1055), the name of

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<sup>7</sup> Avni İlhan, "Gaybet", *DİA*, XIII, p. 410-412; Cemil Hakyemez, *Şia'da Gaybet İnanıcı ve Gaib On İkinci İmam*, İstanbul, İSAM yay., 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmet Güner, *Büveyhiler'in Şii-Sünni Siyaseti*, İzmir, 1999, p. 95 et al.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmet Güner, "Şii Yüzyılında Yahut Büveyhiler Devrinde Bağdat'tan Bazı Yansımalar", *İslam Medeniyetinde Bağdat (Medinetü's-Selam) Uluslararası Sempozyum*, 2011, I, p. 151-170; Güner, *Büveyhiler'in Şii-Sünni Siyaseti*, p. 184; Metin Bozkuş, *Büveyhiler ve Şiilik*, Sivas, 2003, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, *Tasbitu Dalaili an-Nubuwwa*, trans. Ömer Aydın, M. Şerif Eroğlu, İstanbul, Manuscript Institution of Turkey, 2017, p. 814.

<sup>11</sup> Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, *al-Asaru al-Bakiya ani al-Kuruni al-Haliya*, published by: Eduard Sachau, Leipzig, 1923, p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> M. Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Tarih-i Dinisi*, Prepared by. Metin Ergun, Ankara, Akçağ yay., 2005, p. 135, Footnote no. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Bertold Spuler, "The Disintegration of the Caliphate in the East", *Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. P.M. Holt et al, Vol. IA, Cambridge, 1970, p. 150; "Doğuda Hilafetin Çöküşü", trans. Hamdi Aktaş, *İslam Tarihi Kültür ve Medeniyeti*, İstanbul, 1997, I, p. 157; Seyfullah Kara, *Büyük Selçuklular ve Mezhep Kavgaları*, İstanbul, 2007, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup>The *Uyunu at-tawarih* by Garsunnima has not been published up to the present time. This was used as a reference in the *al-Muntazam* by Abu al-Faraj Ibnu al-Jawzi and the *Miratu az-zaman* by Sibt Ibnu al-Jawzi (XVIII, 496). The evidence indicates that a major part of the *Uyunu at-tawarih* by Sibt was used in the work of Al-Jawzi. It contains detailed information relating to Turkish history within the Seljuk State (Tughrul Begh, Alparslan and Malik Shah) which has not been included in many other works (see: Ali Sevim, "Garsunnima", *DİA*, XIII, 386-387.

Buwayhi amir was excluded from the sermons, the amir was arrested and the Buwayhi State (Dawlatu ad-Daylam) fell.<sup>15</sup> The Sultan of the Seljuks changed his direction towards the west when he heard that Basasiri, the commander of the Buwayhis who had fled to the west, had then gone to Mosul and given sermons in the name of Fatimid (6 Zilkadah 448 / January 1057).<sup>16</sup>

After the Seljuks settled in Baghdad, the muezzins were ordered to recite the adhan in the Sunni way within the Shiite regions. Abu al-Faraj Ibnu al-Jawzi<sup>17</sup> (d. 597/1201) and Sibt Ibnu al-Jawzi considered the changes in reciting the adhan as among the major events of 448. Ibnu al-Asir (d. 630/1233) stated that Tughrul Begh ordered the people of Karh to recite the Quran in the Sunni manner in 447.<sup>18</sup> The same order was also given by the caliph in 448.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, the adhan was recited in the Sunni tradition in the Musa Kazim Mashad and Karh neighborhoods where Shiite people resided, and all Shiite expressions were banned. Those coming from the Sunni neighborhoods read poems praising the members of the sahabah. Abu Abdallah Ibnu al-Jallab, who clearly insulted the sahabah members, was hanged in front of his shop upon the order of the vizier of caliph. The Shiite canonist, Abu Jafar at-Tusi, fled and his home was looted.<sup>20</sup>

Ibn Kasir (d. 774/1373), describing the removal of the Shiite adhan after Ibn Tugrul Bey's capture of Baghdad, uses expressions that show what these developments meant both before and after: "Buwayhis assisted the Shiite followers. Then the Seljuk Turks who liked Ahl al-Sunnah came. They acted in a friendly way toward the followers of Ahl al-Sunnah, accepted their high honors, and exalted their positions."<sup>21</sup>

The sensitivity shown toward Hanafism during the era of Tughrul Begh, the first Seljuk Sultan, caused the Shiites and other sects, and even the Ash'aris, to be cursed from the shrines. Alparslan, a Seljuk Sultan, was a Hanafi himself. However, Shafi/Ash'ari ideology was taught in the madrasas established on the instructions of Nizam al-Mulk, Alparslan's vizier.<sup>22</sup> Nizam al-Mulk was cautious and prudent

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<sup>15</sup> Sibt Ibnu al-Jawzi, *Mir'atu az-zaman*, ed.: Muhammad Barakat et al., Damascus, Daru ar-Risalat al-alamiyye, 1434/2013, XIX, 492.

<sup>16</sup> Sibt, *Miratu az-zaman*, XIX, 508-509.

<sup>17</sup> Ibnu al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam fi Tarihi al-Muluq wa al-Umam*, ed.: Muhammad Abd al-Kadir Ata and Mustafa Abd al-Kadir Ata, Beirut, 1412/1992, XVI, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Qamil fi at-Tarih*, (edit. C.J. Tornberg, Leiden E. J. based on Brill 1867 edition), Beirut, Daru Beirut (Daru Sadir), 1992, IX, p. 614.

<sup>19</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil fi at-Tarih*, IX, 632.

<sup>20</sup> Sibt, *Miratu az-zaman*, XIX, 510.

<sup>21</sup> Abu al-Fida Ibn Kasir, *al-Bidaya wa an-nihaya*, published: Abdallah ibn Abd al-Muhsin at-Turki, Jiza, Daru al-Hijr, 1418/1998, XV, 736.

<sup>22</sup> Adem Arıkan, "Nizamülmülk'ün Eş'arilere Destekleri ve Diğer Sünnülerle İlişkileri", *İslami İlimler*

toward the Shiites. Later he was assassinated by a Shiite-Ismaili Batini killer. The Great Seljuks were cautious towards the continuing influence of the Shiite Buwayhis who had dominated before them. Tughrul Begh and Alparslan kept Shiite followers out of government positions. Alparslan did not approve the assignment of a Shiite clerk under the command of a commander. He asked "Is the Rafizi sect so good that you use it as a shield against the Batini?" When the clerk Hurdaba was questioned in his presence, he replied "I am a Shiite, not a Batinid".<sup>23</sup> However, the situation changed over time. People came to accept that the government had become more powerful, and the members of the Shiite Ithna-Ashariyyah branch were, in fact, employed in government after the era of Malik Shah. After the passing of Malik Shah, the fight for the throne between his young children weakened government authority, and each group wanted to use this as an opportunity. Later, Shiite followers were promoted to the position of vizier.

The Seljuk administration adopted different practices toward Hasan Sabah (d. 518/1124) and his successors, managing followers of the Shiite, Ismaili Batini Nizariyyah, and the other Shiite groups, the Ithna-Ashariyyah and Zaydiyyah. Military action was taken against the Nizaris but the Ithna-Ashariyyah amirs continued to govern their own regions. Mosul-based Uqaylis, Hillah-based Maziadis, Aleppo-based Mirdasis, Tripoli-based Ammaris, and Tabaristan-based Bawandis remained committed to the government and managed their own regions.<sup>24</sup> The Zaydis are noted to have experienced no issues. Abu al-Baraqaat Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Husseini (d. 539/11459), a leading Zaydiyya scholar in Qufa, briefly summarized the issues. According to the narrative of as-Samani (d. 562/1167) who listened to hadiths by him, Abu al-Barakat said "I have a Zaydi lineage and my sect is Zaydiyya, but I give sermons to the Hanafi sect, the Sultan's sect."<sup>25</sup>

A military battle began during the rule of Sultan Malik Shah and the fight for the throne which occurred after his death provided new opportunities for the Batini Nizaris. Thousands of Nizaris infiltrated the army of Barkyaruk, the eldest son of Malik Shah. Many Batinis were killed or arrested on the order of Barkyaruk who managed to escape assassination attempts with only minor injuries. Through the efforts of Sultan Muhammet Tapar, they were completely eliminated in some regions and although their expansion has been stopped in general, this did not bring about their end. Long periods free of conflict were experienced with the Nizaris in the era of Sultan Sanjar, and they were granted the status of Emania on the condition that they did not build castles, buy weapons or proselytize their ideologies.<sup>26</sup>

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*Dergisi*, 6-2, 2011, p. 39-64.

<sup>23</sup> Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasat-nama*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, Ankara, Turkish Historical Society, 1999, p. 115 et al.

<sup>24</sup> For more details, see: Adem Arıkan, *Büyük Selçuklular Döneminde Şia* (Doctoral thesis), Istanbul University, Department Basic Islamic Sciences, 2010, p. 105.

<sup>25</sup> Abd al-Qarim as-Sam'ani, *al-Ansab*, ed. al-Baruni, Beirut, Daru al-Jinan, 1988, III, 188.

<sup>26</sup> Arıkan, *Büyük Selçuklular Döneminde Şia*, p. 259.

After the passing of Sanjar in Rabiulawwal 552/May 1157, the Great Seljuks retreated from history. Köyemen states the following in this regard: "The empire was founded and then organized the Islamic world. When it ended, all areas in the middle and near east suffered from chaos."<sup>27</sup> After the fall of the Great Seljuks, the Iraqi Seljuks, one of Great Seljuk divisions, continued to exist.

### 1. Caliph Nasir and the Seljuks

In the period when Sanjar was alive, two caliphs who fought with Masud, the sultan of the Iraq Seljuks, were killed. The Nizari Batinis also killed two caliphs. The army of the caliph was defeated in the battle (529/June 1135) fought between Sultan Masud and Caliph al-Mustarshid, and the caliph was captured. The caliph was then assassinated in his tent by the Nizari Batinis. Certain sources point to Sultan Sanjar as being the one responsible for the killing of Caliph al-Musrashid.<sup>28</sup> Like al-Mustarshid, ar-Rashid had issues with Masud and had to leave Baghdad. Ar-Rashid was dethroned from the caliphate and replaced by his uncle al-Muktafi (d. 555/1160). Ar-Rashid cooperated with the opponents of Sultan Masud but achieved little. Ar-Rashid was killed by Nizari Batinis when he was in Esfahan (532/June 1138).<sup>29</sup>

Abbasid caliph Nasir Lidinillah (575-622/1180-1225) witnessed the end of the Seljuks and made efforts in this regard.

When Tughrul ibn Arslanshah became sultan, power still rested with Eldiguz (1175-1186). Tughrul was just seven years old when he became sultan in 571/1176. Accordingly, ar-Rawandi (d. after 603/1207) says "Tughrul became the sultan as soon as he got out of his cradle".<sup>30</sup> Pahliwan<sup>31</sup> Muhammad ibn Eldiguz (d. 581/1186) managed the government during the early period of Tughrul's reign. Pahliwan said "Caliphs should deal with sermons and imamah and leave the political stuff or global governance to the sultans".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Mehmet Altay Köyemen, *Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu Tarihi: İkinci İmparatorluk Devri*, Ankara, Turkish Historical Society, 1991, p. 465.

<sup>28</sup> For more details about the killing of Caliph al-Musrashid, accusations concerning Sultan Sanjar, and relevant sources and assessments, see: Osman Özgüdenli, "Selçuklu Hilafet Münasebetlerinde Bir Dönüm noktası: Halife el-Müsterşid'in Katli Meselesi", *Ortaçağ Türk-İran Tarihi Araştırmaları*, İstanbul, 2006, p. 111-146 (The place where the article was published: *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, Issue 39, İstanbul 2004, p. 1-35).

<sup>29</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 42, 62. Ibn al-Jawzi states that ar-Rashid was killed by Batinis (*al-Muntazam*, XVII, 328) but he also reported that there were three rumors that he was poisoned and killed by his servants (*al-Muntazam*, XVII, 332).

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Suleiman ar-Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur wa Ayatu as-Surur*, trans. Ahmet Ateş, Edition 2, Ankara, Turkish Historical Society, 1999, p. 306.

<sup>31</sup> Faruk Sümer, "Pahliwan", *DİA*, XXXIV, 221-222.

<sup>32</sup> Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur*, p. 309.

Upon the death of Pahlivan, his brother Muzaffaruddin Kizilarслан Uthman replaced him and had bloody battles with Sultan Tughrul. Caliph Nasir supported Kizilarслан and sent military aid. According to sources, unbeknownst to the allied administrators Caliph Nasir created hostility between them.<sup>33</sup>

According to information provided by Ibnu al-Asir, the messenger sent by Kizilarслан to Baghdad in 583 received promises of aid. When the messenger sent by Tughrul demanded the reconstruction of Dar as-Saltana, the Caliph had it destroyed.<sup>34</sup> However, other sources do not confirm this.<sup>35</sup> As-Suyuti states that after the Seljuk State fell, Dar as-Saltana was destroyed in 592 after Khwarezm Shah demanded power from the Caliph during the Seljuk Era.<sup>36</sup>

The caliph sent the caliphate army commanded by Jalaluddin ibn Yunus to help Kizilarслан in 584/1188. This army was defeated by Tughrul Begh before the meeting with Kizilarслан could take place.<sup>37</sup>

Capturing Tughrul in a castle in Azerbaijan in 586/1190, Kizilarслан succeeded to the throne with the help of the Caliph. His amirs had Kizilarслан killed while he was sleeping during the night (587/1191).<sup>38</sup> Tughrul managed to escape from the castle with the help of Turkmen, and he subsequently defeated Abu Baqr and Kutlugh Inanch, the sons of Pahlivan (588/1192). Kutlugh Inanch called Khwarezm Shah Alaaddin Takish for help. Caliph Nasir Lidinillah sent a special messenger stating that Tughrul had given his lands to the Khwarezm Dynasty. Commanding the primary forces of Khwarezm Takish, Kutlugh Inanch defeated Tughrul and ended the dynasty of the Iraq Seljuks (Jamaziyalahir 590 / June 1194). Tughrul's head was sent to the caliph and displayed in Baghdad.<sup>39</sup> After the Khwarezm Dynasty had captured many cities, the armies of Kutlugh Inanch and Muayyiduddin Ibnu al-Kassab, and the Shiite vizier<sup>40</sup> of Caliph Nasir Lidinillah, combined and began to fight against the dynasty. However, these two allied armies had problems after a short period of time and began fighting one another instead.<sup>41</sup> Kutlugh Inanch was killed in a plot in 591/1195.<sup>42</sup>

The Seljuks were "fair people" in Husseini's words. Upon the passing of San-

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<sup>33</sup> Salahaddin Halil as-Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, inv: Ahmad al-Arnaud, Turki Mustafa, Beirut, Daru Ihyai at-Turas, 1420/2000, VI, 193; Shamsuddin Muhammad az-Zahabi, *Tarihu al-Islam*, ed. Umar Abd as-Salam Tadmuri, Beirut: Daru al-Kitabi al-Arabi, 1407/1987, XLV, p. 86; Jalaluddin Abd ar-Rahman as-Suyuti, *Tarihu al-Hulafa*, Beirut, Daru Ibn Hazm, 1424/2003, p. 352.

<sup>34</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 560.

<sup>35</sup> Faruk Sümer, "Tuğrul II", *DİA*, XLI, 342-344.

<sup>36</sup> As-Suyuti, *Tarihu al-Hulafa*, p. 357.

<sup>37</sup> Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur*, p. 319; Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 75.

<sup>39</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 94, 106-108.

<sup>40</sup> az-Zahabi, *Tarihu al-Islam*, XLII, 295.

<sup>41</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 111.

<sup>42</sup> For more details, see: Gülay Ögün Bezer, "İldenizliler", *DİA*, XXII, 82-84.

jar, the last sultan of the Great Seljuks, Khorasan was destroyed, and when Tughrul was killed, Iraq was destroyed.<sup>43</sup>

The Khwarezm Dynasty brought the rule of the Iraq Seljuks to an end and began cooperating with the Caliph. However, the issue of who would replace the Seljuks resulted in a struggle among them. Khwarezm Shah Muhammad ibn Tekish (1200-1220) received a fatwa from the ulama in his country and declared that he had assigned Alaulmulk al-Tirmidhi, a scholar from the lineage of Ali, as the caliph. Sources support claims that Caliph Nasir Lidinillah feared that the Khwarezm army may march towards Baghdad, and so sent a mission to Genghis Khan and invited the Mongols into Muslim territory. However, to date this claim has been generally rejected. Nasir-Lidinillah sought support from different sectors. He organized and controlled the futuwwaat organization.<sup>44</sup>

## 2. Nasir Lidinillah and Ismailis

Seljuks had taken military action against the followers of the Shiite Ismaili Batini Nizariyya more than other Shiite groups. "Sultan Tughrul invaded the lands of the nonbelievers around Damgan and Gerdkuh (Batinis/Nizaris), looted and destroyed their properties and killed whoever he found."<sup>45</sup>

The Shiite Ismaili Fatimi administration was weak in Cairo during this period. The viziers were managing the country on a de facto basis at this time. Al-Adid Lidinillah was declared caliph when he was just nine years old (1160). After the Crusader King of Jerusalem decided to invade Egypt in 1168, Vizier Shawar and Caliph Adid requested help from Nuraddin Zangi. Shirkuh was sent by Zangi and his nephew, Salahaddin Ayyubi, was able to control the situation. Shirkuh was assigned as the vizier but he died two months later. Upon the recommendation of Nuraddin's commanders, Adid assigned Salahaddin as vizier on 26 March 1169. Protests emerged over time but were suppressed. Sermons were given on Friday 7 Muharram 567 (10 September 1171) in the name of the Abbasids in Egypt. Adid died on Monday 10 Muharram 567 (13 September 1171) and the Fatimid caliphate and state officially ended upon his death.<sup>46</sup> Salahaddin Ayyubi (1171-1193), the founder and first leader of the Ayyubi dynasty, conquered Jerusalem in 583/1187. After the fall of Jerusalem and many castles in the region, a new Crusade took place with the participation of many western European countries. They surrounded Acre in 1189. Fierce battles took place between Salahaddin and the Crusaders over a

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<sup>43</sup> Sadruddin Abu al-Hasan al-Husseini, *Ahbaru ad-Dawlati as-Salchukiyya*, trans. Necati Lugal, Ankara, Turkish Historical Society, 1999, p. 137.

<sup>44</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "Nasir-Lidinillah", *DIA*, XXXII, 399-402.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Husseini, *Ahbaru ad-Dawlati as-Salchukiyya*, p. 123.

<sup>46</sup> Ramazan Şeşen, "Adid-Lidinillah", *DIA*, I, 374-375.

period of approximately two years in Acre.

Instead of assisting Salahaddin Ayyubi who was defending the city under siege by the Crusaders, Caliph Nasir expanded the borders to the north and took control of the residential areas on the shores of the Euphrates. The negative approach by the Caliph toward Salahaddin may have arisen from concerns that Salahaddin would attack the lands of the Caliph after saving Jerusalem from the Crusaders. When the Crusaders attacked Damietta in 615 (1218), the Ayyubis demanded help from the Caliph. Nasir refused this demand.<sup>47</sup>

Although the Shiite Ismaili Fatimid administration ended, the Shiite Ismaili Batini Nizari administration in Alamut continued to exist. Hasan, the administrator of Alamut, initiated a period called "doom" during Ramadan in 559/1164, two and half years after succeeding to the throne, and he declared that he had terminated the obligations of shariah. Jalaluddin, taking over the administration of Alamut in 607/1210, and ended the doom.<sup>48</sup>

Information regarding the relationships between Caliph Nasir and the Batinis differs significantly in the sources. A messenger from Jalaluddin Hasan, the leader of Alamut, came to Baghdad in 608 and stated that they had abandoned Batiniyya, built mosques and masjids, organized Friday prayers and introduced segregation, and fasted during Ramadan. Caliph Nasir was delighted to hear this. When Hatun, the mother of Jalaluddin, came to Baghdad on a pilgrimage, the Caliph organized a ceremony for her. The Nizârîs in Damascus were also informed of this in a letter from Alamut. Shafii ideology was then adopted.<sup>49</sup>

Jalaluddin also conducted joint military operations with the Caliph. When Uzbek ibn Pahliwan, one of Ildaniz Atabegs, succeeded to the throne of Arran-Azerbaijan, Mangli, one of his amirs, rebelled. Uzbek triumphed with the army sent by Caliph Nasir Lidinillah and with the aid of Jalaluddin who came to help following the Caliph's request, and Mangli's lands were shared between these three (612/1215).<sup>50</sup> Amir Aghlamish, who was assigned the lands of Uzbek, after a time gave sermons in the name of Khwarezm Shah Alaaddin Muhammad. He was later assassinated by the Batinis in 614/1217.<sup>51</sup> The claim was that Aghlamish's death was a demand of the Caliph.<sup>52</sup> After dominating Alamut for eleven years, Jalaluddin died in 618/1221 and the Sunni-related decisions of Batini Ismaili Nizaris did not

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<sup>47</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "Nasir-Lidinillah", *DIA*, XXXII, 399-402.

<sup>48</sup> Farhad Daftary, *İsmaililer: Tarih ve Öğretiler*, trans. Erdal Toprak, Istanbul, Doruk, 2005, p. 540, 565.

<sup>49</sup> Jamaluddin Muhammad Ibn Wasil, Mufarriju al-Kurub fi Ahbari Bani Ayyub, ed.: Hasanayn Muhammad Rabi, Cairo, Amiriyya, 1957, III, 211; Sibti Ibnu al-Jawzi, *Miratu az-zaman*, XXII, 185; Daftary, *İsmaililer*, p. 565.

<sup>50</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 111; Daftary, *İsmaililer*, p. 568.

<sup>51</sup> Ibnu al-Asir, *al-Kamil*, XII, 316.

<sup>52</sup> Gülay Öğün Bezer, "İldenizliler", *DIA*, XXII, 82-84; Daftary, *İsmaililer*, p. 569.

change. However, they gradually abandoned Sunni practices.<sup>53</sup>

### 3. Nasir Lidinillah and Ithna-Ashariyyah

Information provided by Rawandi<sup>54</sup>, who wrote a separate book on the Rafizis, may be considered as the indicator of Sultan Tughrul's attitude towards the Ithna-Ashariyyah followers. Tughrul was in the Mazandaran region in 583/1187.<sup>55</sup> "The basics of his doctrine... the hypocritical, malevolent and Rafizi king of Mazandaran" (Ispahpad Ardashir Husamuddawla, 568-602/1173-1206)<sup>56</sup> fought against Sultan Tughrul. "When the Sultan recognized the malevolence of his doctrines, he began to distrust him."<sup>57</sup>

The attitude of Ibnu as-Sahibi al-Adil Shiabuddin, Tughrul's vizier, when he was the tughra officer of Tughrul indicates important details in this regard. Accordingly, the Shiites (Rafizis) made efforts to ensure that the Ash'aris held various offices. The vizier is introduced as "the one strengthening the family of Abu Hanifa". Rafizis, such as Haja Aziz, wanted an Ash'ari as the qadi of Isfahan. An order that sermons and qadi services be given by Hojandis was enacted. The vizier tore apart the order document as he was about to put a tughra on it. The words he uttered while doing so are notable: "Losing Isfahan is preferable to seeing the Sultan become a nonbeliever. Islam has no such thing as losing commitment to home country. I cannot allow the sultans who are their ancestors and their predecessors to deliver free of charge to the Ash'ari people what they have taken with the sword from the Ash'aris." Having met the vizier and reflecting upon these words, Ar-Rwandi notes that nobody could object to this, and he says "The honor of the Ash'aris and Rafizis was hurt."<sup>58</sup>

Sources suggest a positive relationship between the Abbasid Caliph Nasir and Ithna-Ashariyyah. Some even provide evidence indicating that the Caliph was a Shiite or had orientations toward the Shiite.<sup>59</sup>

According to the tablet in the Gaybat al-Mahdi Shrine which he had repaired in Samarra, Nasir-Lidinillah defined himself as the protector of holy relics from the Shiite.<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that the imams' graves were also respected, visited and

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<sup>53</sup> Daftary, *Īsmāīlīer*, p. 569.

<sup>54</sup> Ar-Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur*, p. 364.

<sup>55</sup> Erdoğan Merçil, "Bavendiler", *DĪA*, V, 214-216.

<sup>56</sup> See: Yusuf Ismaili, *Sayri dar Tarih al-Tashayyu al-Mazandaran*, Kum, Pazuhaskah al-ulum wa farhang a-Islami, 1387, p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur*, p. 315.

<sup>58</sup> ar-Rawandi, *Rahatu as-Sudur*, p. 388-389.

<sup>59</sup> Muhammad Tahir Yaqubi, "Tashayyu al-halifa an-Nasir Lidinillah", *Tarih al-Islam dar ayina al-Pazuhash*, issue: 9, 1385, p. 184.

<sup>60</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "Nasir-Lidinillah", *DĪA*, XXXII, 399-402.



improved by Seljuk sultans, which does not reflect Shiism in the caliphate.<sup>61</sup>

Nasir-Lidinillah assigned people from the Imamiyya Shiites to different government positions.<sup>62</sup> Governmental work was left to Ustaduddar Ibnu as-Sahib.<sup>63</sup> Ibnu as-Sahib was an extreme Shiite.<sup>64</sup> There were Shiite people among the viziers and other officers of the caliph.<sup>65</sup>

According to what was stated by al-Maliku al-Mansur<sup>66</sup> (d. 617/1221), the guardianship of Baghdad was declared to Shiites and Ahl a-Bayt. Ustaduddar Ibnu as-Sahib was well-known for this action. He and his family inherited it from their ancestors. He publicly declared a curse on Muawiya and Yazid. Radiyuddin al-Kazwani (d. 590/1194), a professor in the Nizamiyya Madrasa, was told to curse Yazid when he was preaching in the madrasa, and when he did not people tried to kill him. Through the efforts of the authorities, unrest was prevented, and Qazwini was taken to another place and protected, although later he was taken to his home at night. The Caliph was also among the people involved in this incident. A group wanted him to curse Yazid and Muawiya. Following these incidents, Qazwini demanded permission to return to his country and see his family. Ustaduddar Ibnu as-Sahib demanded and was granted permission due to the hatred directed at him. They wrote a letter to Kizil Arslan when he was on his way. The caliph had regrets when he was told that as-Sahib had left due to sectarian issues. They feared that the situation might spread to other towns to their detriment. Delivering the letter of the council to Kizil Arslan, Qazwini said he would not return to Baghdad and instead returned to Qazwin. The people and administrators in this region valued Qazwini. Nizamiyya was left without teachers. Those in the madrasas believed that Qazwini would return one day.<sup>67</sup>

According to what Zahabi conveyed, Abu al-Hayr Radiyuddin al-Qazwini began to lecture in Nizamiyya after 569. People wanted the authorities to curse Yazid on the minbar when Shiism was dominant during the era of Ibnu as-Sahib, but Qazwini avoided doing so. Therefore, several attempts were made to kill him. Qazwini managed to save himself from these threats and returned to Qazwin in 580. A group of Hanbalis had Shiite orientations during the time of Ibnu as-Sahib, and it is noted that Ibnu al-Jawzi made unclear statements that were open to differ-

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<sup>61</sup> Yaqubi, "Tashayyu al-halifa an-Nasir Lidinillah", p. 189.

<sup>62</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "Nasir-Lidinillah", *DĪA*, XXXII, 399-402.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Maliku al-Mansur Muhammad ibn Taqi ad-Din, *Mizmaru al-hakaik wa sirru al-halaik*, ed. Hasan Habashi, Cairo, Alamu al-Kutub, 1968, p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> For more sources and details in this regard, see: Fatih Güzel, *Nasir li-Dinillah'ın Halifeligi Ve Şahsiyeti*, (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis), Necmettin Erbakan University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Islamic History and Arts, Konya, 2014, p. 28. Fatih Güzel reflects the same details in his article written later.

<sup>65</sup> Yaqubi, "Tashayyu al-halifa an-Nasir Lidinillah", p. 192.

<sup>66</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "al-Maliku al-Mansur", *DĪA*, XXIX, 70-71.

<sup>67</sup> al-Maliku al-Mansur, *Mizmaru al-hakaik*, p. 120.

ent interpretations.<sup>68</sup>

Zakariyya al-Qazwini (d. 682/1283) states that Radiyuddin Qazwini wanted to go to Qazwin, and upon realizing that this was not possible, he received permission for a pilgrimage and came to Qazwin via Damascus. Radiyuddin's preaching was appreciated in Qazwin as he was attacking the Shiites. However, his home was in a residential area of Shiite people. He saw a man in the tree in front of his door. He believed that the man had come to attack him. Upon seeing this, Radiyuddin left the city, saying "I will no longer live in Qazwin." The people of Qazwin also left the city. They placed a condition on their return. The names Abu Baqr and Umar would be stamped on the foreheads of the Shiites. He agreed to return after this was done. These people covered the stamps using an imamah so that people would not be able to see them.<sup>69</sup>

Shihabuddin at-Tusi (d. 596/1200) received permission for a pilgrimage, and left for Egypt. After that they did not permit anybody, who might not return to Iraq, to go on a pilgrimage. Ustaduddar Ibnu as-Sahib hated Shihabuddin at-Tusi. If at-Tusi stayed in Iraq he would kill him because in a meeting in Ustaduddar's home, Ali was said to have had nothing in this world, that he was poor, and that he ate barley bread. Tusi stated that Ali's initial state had changed, that he acquired many assets, and that he had donated large amounts of alms.<sup>70</sup> When Tusi came to Egypt, he was assigned as a professor. He taught people about the Ash'ariyya sect. He had discussions with Hanbalis, such as Zaynuddin ibn Nujayya.<sup>71</sup>

Ibn Wasil<sup>72</sup> (d. 697/1298) stated that Caliph Nasir had Shiite orientations, and that he had inclinations toward Imamiyyah. The Caliph contradicted his ancestors in this regard because they had adopted the sect of Salafism. Halifa al-Qadir (d. 422/1031) had adopted a well-known doctrine (declared in 409/1018) in this regard.<sup>73</sup> The Caliph Nasir, on the other hand, had prioritized a Shiite group and had tried to punish anyone who wanted to defend the health of Muawiya's caliphate. The man defended himself saying "I say that an imam cannot be dismissed for committing a sin." In a sermon heard by the Caliph, Jamaluddin Ibnu al-Jawzi (d. 597/1201) referred to "the one married to the Prophet's daughter" when he was asked "Who is the most virtuous person after the Prophet before God?". This

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<sup>68</sup> az-Zahabi, *Tarihu al-Islam*, XLI, 368.

<sup>69</sup> Abu Yahya Zakariyya ibn Muhammad Qazwini, *Asaru al-Bilad wa Ahbaru al-Ibad*, Beirut, Daru Sadir, [t.y.], p. 402.

<sup>70</sup> al-Maliku al-Mansur, *Mizmaru al-hakaik*, p. 121.

<sup>71</sup> az-Zahabi, *Tarihu al-Islam*, XLII, 267.

<sup>72</sup> Cengiz Tomar, "Ibn Wasil", *DIA*, XX, 438-440.

<sup>73</sup> For more details regarding this text, see: Süleyman Genç, "Halife el-Kadir Döneminde Bağdat'da Yaşanan Dini-Siyasi Hadiseler ve onun Sünni Siyaseti", *Marife*, year: 4, issue: 2 (Fall 2004), Konya, 2004, p. 235.

statement probably has two<sup>74</sup> meanings.<sup>75</sup> During the era of Nasir, they exiled Ibnu al-Jawzi to Wasit upon the order of the Caliph, the efforts of the Shiite vizier and a group helping the vizier, and they assigned a Shiite patrol to follow him.<sup>76</sup>

Abu Nasr Muhammad (d. 623/1226), the oldest son of Caliph Nasir, replaced him with the title Zahir Biamrillah.<sup>77</sup> Az-Zahir was opposed to the sect of his father and adopted Hanbalism. He hated the Shiites (Rafawiz).<sup>78</sup>

Abu Nasr Muhammad was a brave person. His father was afraid of him. Abu Nasr opposed his Shiite-inclined father. He was a Sunni who hated the Rafizis. He had Hanbalism orientations. His father disapproved of him due to these orientations. Caliph Nasir's youngest son, Abu al-Hasan Ali, had Shiite orientations like his father. Thus, Caliph Nasir was influenced by Abu al-Hasan Ali. He then discharged Abu Nasr as heir to the throne, removed his name from sermons and coins, and had him arrested. However, Abu al-Hasan Ali passed away, so Abu Nasr was obligatorily made heir once again (618). Nasir did not approve of him. Abu Nasir was imprisoned until Nasir's father died. Abu Nasr remained as caliph in this office until his death.<sup>79</sup> Nasir had a grave constructed next to that of Musa ibn Jafar. However, az-Zahir gave an order to have his father buried in the family graveyard in Rusafah.<sup>80</sup>

Caliph Nasir liked and praised Ali and his sons. His poems were narrated referring to these events. In one of his poems reflecting his inclination to Shiism, he says "They violated Ali's right after the Prophet because he had no Nasir (assistant) in Yasrib."<sup>81</sup> The As Ali was also liked by the followers of Ahl al-Sunnah, it is noted that this cannot be seen as evidence of the Caliph's Shiite tendencies.<sup>82</sup>

Certain Shiite scholars support the sectarian commitment associated with Nasir. Ibnu-at Tiktaka<sup>83</sup> (ö. 709/1309), a Shiite historian known for *al-Fahri*, stated that Caliph an-Nasir followed Imamiyyah ideology.<sup>84</sup> Aga Buzurg at-Tahrani (1875-1970) included Caliph Nasir as one of the well-known Shiites of the hijri seventh century in his biographical work and conveys some of his statements about his inclination to Shiism.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Abu Baqr, Ali or Uthman as they were married to the Prophet's daughters.

<sup>75</sup> Ibn Wasil, *Mufarriju al-Kurub*, IV, 166; as-Suyuti, *Tarihu al-Hulafa*, p. 354.

<sup>76</sup> Compare: az-Zahabi, *Tarihu al-Islam*, XLII, 293, 295.

<sup>77</sup> Murat Öztürk, "Zahir-Biamrillah", *DÍA*, XLIV, 92-93.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Wasil, *Mufarriju al-Kurub*, IV, 166.

<sup>79</sup> Ibn Wasil, *Mufarriju al-Kurub*, II, 281.

<sup>80</sup> Sibt, *Miratu az-zaman*, XXII, 274.

<sup>81</sup> Ibn Wasil, *Mufarriju al-Kurub*, IV, 168, 169, 191.

<sup>82</sup> Yaqubi, "Tashayyu al-halifa an-Nasir Lidinillah", p. 189.

<sup>83</sup> Sabri Hizmetli, "Ibnu at-Tiktaka", *DÍA*, XXI, 232-233.

<sup>84</sup> Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Tabataba Ibnu at-Tiktaka, *al-Fahri fi al-Adabi as-Sultaniyya wa ad-Duwali al-Islamiyya*, Beirut, Daru Sadir, p. 322.

<sup>85</sup> Aga Buzurg al-Tahrani, *al-Anwaru as-Satia fi al-miati as-sabia*, Beirut, Daru Ihyai at-turasi al-Arabi,

Moreover, there is further evidence that related to Caliph Nasir, that does not match with the claim of Shiite orientation but that can actually be regarded as evidence of this having regard to the details. The Caliph ordered that Ahmad ibn Hanbal's *Musnad* be read at the grave of Musa Kazim. The prophet permitted the Shiite scholar, Shafiyuddin Muhammad ibn Maadd al-Musawi (d. 620/1223), who was assigned to this order. He came from Hilla to Baghdad. The first issue reviewed here related to the relevant aspects of the Fadak incident.<sup>86</sup>

Al-Musawi was from the lineage of Musa Kazim.<sup>87</sup> He was a scholar of the Shiite and the Islamic and Imamiyya words. He had read Ruhu al-arifin from the Caliph an-Nasir and had received permissions from him. He was buried in the Musa Kazim cemetery.<sup>88</sup>

"The interest shown by Nasir in the Shiites was assessed as a political necessity rather than his personal inclination."<sup>89</sup> However, the claim that the conditions of the era made Nasir adopt this approach is not accepted because Nasir's authority was powerful.<sup>90</sup>

Abu Hafs Shihabuddin Umar as-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234) led the work of organizing the futuwat association during the era of Caliph Nasir al-Lidinillah.<sup>91</sup> The negative attitudes towards the philosophical works of the era is interesting. Suhrawardi included works in this context. The books of Ibn Sina and Ikhwau as-Safa, which were found in the house of Abd al-Wahhab (d. 611), were burned despite his explanation that he wrote the works to provide an answer regarding these matters. Moreover, qadi Abd as-Salam was also declared a nonbeliever. While the books were being burned, a man named Ibnu al-Marastaniyya (d. 599/1203) was reading the books and said, "Curse whoever wrote and read this." People were cursing loudly. They even cursed Sheikh Abd al-Kadir and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.<sup>92</sup>

The interesting point in Suhrwardi's anti-philosophical, *Rashfu an-nasaihi al-imaniyya*,<sup>93</sup> is that people avoided problems with the Ismaili-Batinis. Jalaladdin Hasan, a Batini leader, adopted Sunnism in 608 (1211-12), which was an effective change in this regard.<sup>94</sup> In his doctrine-related work entitled *Alamu al-Huda wa aki-*

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1430/2009, IV, 4-6.

<sup>86</sup> Sibt, *Miratu az-zaman*, XXII, p. 186. See also: Ibnu at-Tiktaka, *al-Asili fi Ansabi at-Talibiyin*, ed. S. Mahdi ar-Rajai, Kum, al-Marashi, 1418, p. 166.

<sup>87</sup> Tahrani, *al-Anwaru as-Satia*, IV, 175.

<sup>88</sup> as-Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, V, 29.

<sup>89</sup> Güzel, Nasir li-Dinillah'in Halifeliği ve Şahsiyeti, p. 37.

<sup>90</sup> Yaqubi, "Tashayyu al-halifa an-Nasir Lidinillah", p. 191.

<sup>91</sup> Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, "Sühreverdi, Şehabeddin", *DİA*, XXXVIII, 40-42

<sup>92</sup> Sibt, *Mir'atu az-zaman*, XXII, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Abu Hafs Shihabuddin Umar as-Suhrawardi, *Kashfu al-Fazaihi al-Yunaniyya wa Rashfu an-nasaihi al-imaniyya*, ed.: as-Sayyid Ali Ashur, Beirut, Daru al-Kutubi al-Ilmiyya, 1418/1998, p. 68.

<sup>94</sup> Angelika Hartmann, "Nasir-Lidinillah", *DİA*, XXXII, 399-402.

*datu arbabi at-tuka*, Suhrawardi stresses that sahabah and Ahl al-Bayt should be loved. He mentions loving Fatima while indicating the names of four caliphs. He recommends that one should hide one's feelings if one deems some sahabah followers to be more benevolent than others.<sup>95</sup>

### Conclusion

Administrators who were the followers of different Shiite branches gained significant power before the Seljuks. Sources from the era suggest that the Abbasid caliphate no longer held political power. Many scholars refer to the period when the Fatimids and Buwayhis were dominant as the Shiite century. It is noted that this century was ended by the Seljuks. A new era began for the Abbasids when the Abbasid caliphate was saved from the Shiite authorities by Tughrul Begh. During the fights for the throne during the Seljuk dynasty, some of the Abbasid caliphs attempted to assert their independent authority and brought about an end to the Mustarshid and Rashid Batini assassinations. The Abbasid Caliph, an-Nasir Lidinillah, supported the other side during the battle in which Tughrul Begh, the last sultan of Iraqi Seljuks, was killed. When the Seljuks, the nation which ended the Shiite century, were defeated, the Abbasid Caliph an-Nasir established positive relationships with the Shiites. The Shiite Ismaili Batini Nizariyya followers in Alamut had no problem with this caliph, which is evidence of the adoption of Sunnism by him, according to many researchers. Shiite people were protected during the era of Caliph Nasir, who was reported to be a Shiite, and they were even assigned as viziers during this time. There are theses explaining this situation based on the conditions of the era. After the Seljuk power, which ended the Shiite century, was defeated, unexpected alliances emerged when considered through sectarian identities. It is noted that the ideology of keeping Shiites out of government office ended following the Malik Shah era, as it was considered at this time that the state was sufficiently strong, and Ithna-Ashariyya followers were even able to rise to the position of vizier. However, the assertions of certain Sunni scholars are notable as they describe the situation during the period of an-Nasir. As a result of the oppression arising from the support of the Shiite viziers using their powers during the era of Caliph an-Nasir, Nizamiyya teachers fled from Baghdad to save their own lives. Consequently, certain important incidents occurred during this period; the madrasa was left without teachers, Hanbali scholars, such as Ibnu al-Jawzi, were exiled, the grandson of Abd al-Kadir Gaylani was declared a nonbeliever and cursed as philosophical works had been found in his home, and this curse was even directed to Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Shiite people partially gained power through Shiite officers assigned by Caliph an-Nasir to various government offices.

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<sup>95</sup> Abu Haf's Shihabuddin Umar as-Suhrawardi, *'Alamu al-Huda wa akidatu arbabi at-tuka*, ed. Abd al-Latif Umar al-Muhaimid, Beirut, Nashirun, 1437/2016, p. 92, 98.

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## Sacred Days and Nights in Contemporary Iranian Shiism\*

Habip DEMİR\*\*

### Abstract

Sects emerge in a certain geographical region within a certain time period. However, when they encounter different cultures and regions, they develop and differentiate by taking on characteristics of their location. There are important time periods for each religion and religious movement, which are symbolic. The more persistent the sectarian societal life, the more persistent and persuasive it will be. As in other religions and religious movements, there are also time periods in Islam that place special importance on maintaining social consensus among the members of the people and on keeping the holy up to date. Among the Islamic sects, the emphasis on holy days and periods seems to be seen mostly in Shiism. The importance of sacredness to holy days and nights has been renewed and renewed during the historical development of the sect, and has continued to be active in society for much of the time. This work aims to explain the importance of the days and nights, which are considered holy annually in Iran, and therefore the Shia of Imamiya. However, the lines between them have remained and not only the days and nights shown on the calendar have stayed, but also there has seen to be a preference for those with visible effects on Iran's religious life.

**Keywords:** Iran, Shiism, Imamiyya, Sacred Time, Day and Nights

## Günümüz İran Şiîliğinde Kutsal Gün ve Geceler

### Özet

Mezhepler, belli bir coğrafyada ve zaman diliminde ortaya çıksa da farklı kültür ve havzalarla karşılaştıkça bulunduğu yerin kalıbını alarak gelişip farklılaşmaktadır. Her din/mezhep için sembol ifade eden önemli zaman dilimleri mevcuttur. Zira bir mezhep toplumsal hayata ne kadar nüfuz ederse kalıcılığı ve inandırıcılığı da o ölçüde artacaktır. Diğer bütün dinlerde/dini hareketlerde olduğu gibi İslam mezheplerinde de sosyal birlikteliği sağlamak, kutsalı güncel tutmak amacıyla özel önem verilen zaman dilimleri bulunmaktadır. Söz konusu kutsal zamanlara yapılan vurgunun en çok Şiîlik'te olduğu

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görülmektedir. Şiîliğin kutsal gün ve gecelere verdiği önem mezhebin tarihsel süreçte yenilenerek güncellenmesini ve günümüze kadar toplum üzerinde etkinliğinin sürmesini sağlamıştır. Çalışmamız günümüz İran'ı ve dolayısıyla İmâmiyye Şîa'sı özelinde bir yıl boyunca kutsal kabul edilen gün ve geceler ile bunların önemini açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ancak burada satır aralarında kalmış ve sadece takvim yapraklarında gösterilen gün ve geceler değil, İran'ın dini hayatında gözle görülür etkisi olanları tercih edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İran, Şiîlik, İmâmiyye, Kutsal Zaman, Gün ve Geceler

### **Introduction**

All religions and religious movements in history bear the traces of the era in which they emerged. However, they have had to renew and improve subject to the influence or pressure of various social and political motives or figures. It is a known fact that religious movements, which cannot keep up with new phenomena and social change, become unable to respond to the needs of their followers and in time enter into a process of extinction. The situation is not different for different sects which are assessed as the means of understanding the religion. Sects emerge in a certain geography and certain period of time. However, as they reach various cultures and social environments, they take shape and become different over time. Accordingly, acceptance of a sect by the masses depends on its ability to articulate in different cultures.

There are certain important periods of time which are regarded as symbolic for certain religions or sects. Religions and sects make efforts to continue existing by gathering their followers around certain symbols throughout these periods of time and by preserving their dynamism through the sharing of common love and sadness among their followers. Although information is an important factor for the transference of beliefs and religions, which are simply the institutionalized manifestations of beliefs, to future generations, it is certain that emotions and visuality are more important for making these beliefs permanent. For this reason, the concept of "sacred" which forms the most important basis of religions, needs to be concretized and the masses should gather around certain rituals and these concepts should be included in the minds of the people.

### **Importance of Sacred Days and Nights for Updating Sects**

Inter-generational sectarian transference can occur only by updating social events in people's minds. The more a sect influences social life, the more it will become permanent and credible. Although literature and information is important for the permanence of a sect, it is not possible for a sect that has not penetrated the smallest building blocks of society to survive. In addition, considering sectarian movements over time, there are certain sects which still exist today due to the ability to form unifying relationships among their followers even when their

numbers are limited. However, the evidence indicates that sects which have only dealt with informational activities and which have failed to spread through the social base will become extinct in time. Accordingly, the fact that Shiite is a “living sect” arises from its quality of having been integrated into society over centuries.

Sacred times are some of the most important means of keeping religions or sects alive in a society. The concept of “sacred time” have parallels with one another in all religions. The emphasis on holy times in religions can be traced throughout the long history of Egypt, Iran and Indian civilizations. These civilizations have influenced all religious movements in terms of the concept of sacred time. Sources indicate that there are various days considered sacred through the relationship with God in Ancient Egypt,<sup>1</sup> and that the special interest shown in the birthdays of the Hindu powers, such as Rama, Krishna or the avatars, continues in different dimensions and qualities in various religions.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that religions tend to sanctify certain times is related to how the concept of time is perceived. According to ancient philosophers who believed that the world would exist forever, time reaches eternity in a linear way, and it creates constant change and development. However, time is not homogeneous for religious people.<sup>3</sup> To them, the world has cyclical characteristics that are renewed annually. In other words, each year the world achieves the original “sacredness” it had when it was created by God.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is possible to experience the passion of “that first moment” every year. The purpose here is to return to early times and ensure the eternity of the sacredness.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the celebration of new year, which is important for many religions, is based on the belief that the universe is recreated and purified every year. The creation of the universe is imitated every new year. Moreover, the world and time are simultaneously recreated and revived all over again.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the celebration of new year, sacred days which are religiously referred to as holidays and which are repeated annually are also important in this regard. Eliade indicates that the celebration of religious holidays is for the purpose of updating religions over and over again every year instead of being a simple mythical event experienced in the past.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, those celebrating the holidays become the witnesses to a mythical event from a certain period in past. In other words, these are excluded from the historical times which are holistically formed by

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<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Ünal, *Dinlerde Kutsal Zamanlar*, İstanbul, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2008, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ünal, *Dinlerde Kutsal Zamanlar*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Kutsal ve Dindışı*, trans. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Ankara, Gece Yayınları, 1991, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Eliade, *Kutsal ve Dindışı*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Ünal, *Dinlerde Kutsal Zamanlar*, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Eliade, *Kutsal ve Dindışı*, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Eliade, *Kutsal ve Dindışı*, p. 61.

the combination of non-religious, personal and interpersonal events, and they meet with the primary times that are eternal and thus always the same.<sup>8</sup>

For this reason, the concept of time which is filled by various actions in the modern period and which is in a continuous flow stops for a while on the sacred days and nights and thus the interest is drawn to religion or sect. This focus enables people and society to escape from the chaos of life for a certain period and helps religions and sects update themselves.

As seen in all other religions and religious movements, Islam has certain valued periods of time such as Ramadan, religious holidays and the Night of the Decree, all of which are celebrated to ensure social integrity among the believers and keep the concept of sacredness alive. The basis for these celebrations in time can often be found in the Quran and the hadiths. For instance, it is noted that the Night of the Decree is believed to be more benevolent than a thousand nights and that angels descend on that night. In addition, the birthday of the Prophet has been celebrated in the Islamic world under the name "Mawlit" for a long time.

### **The concept of Sacred Times in Shiite Tradition**

Regarding the Islamic sects, the concept of sacredness that is related to time and place can be clearly seen in Imamiyya/Ithna-Ashariyyah Shiite.<sup>9</sup> Followers of Imamiyya who claim through clear works or who believe that Ali and his eleven sons were appointed as caliphs to manage Muslims' religious and worldly affairs after the passing of the Prophet constitute approximately 12% of the global Muslim population. The Imamis, who were more secluded when they had no political support, managed to build a sectarian identity that could influence all of society once they received the support of the government. One of the most common methods used by the sect in doing this is to refer to historical events more emotionally and to maintain a history and ideology building activity through these events.

It is possible to follow the importance of the Shiite tradition to the sacred days through the prayer literature, where there is a great accumulation of knowledge on this subject. Shiite traditions paid great importance to prayer-related works and have produced many works including special prayers for years, months, weeks, days and even for particular hours of days.<sup>10</sup> In addition, calendars reflecting the important days of a year were also created. Through these works, it is possible to trace the sacred Shiite days and nights, and the changes to these that

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<sup>8</sup> Eliade, *Kutsal ve Dindışı*, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> Shiite is both an inclusive concept in general and a term used to refer to the Imamiyya Shiite in particular. Throughout this study, the term Shia/Shii refers to the Imamiyya Shia.

<sup>10</sup> For a study of the prayer literature of the Shiite, see Rasul Ja'fariyan, "Şia'da Dua Edebiyatı", trans. Habip Demir, *Iğdır Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2015, 209-237.

have occurred over time. There are studies that have determined the days and nights to which the Imamiyya have attached special importance over time. Calendars of Sheikh Mufid (d. 413/1032) and Sheikh Bahai (d. 1030/1621) were published by Mehmet Ali Büyükkara and filled a significant gap in this regard.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, special days and nights have been mentioned in the prayer works which are highly important in Shiite tradition. Accordingly, this study focuses on this period based on Sheikh Tusi's (d. 460/1067) *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*,<sup>12</sup> Ibn Tawus' (d. 664/1266) *al-Ikbalu al-a'mal*,<sup>13</sup> Allama Majlisi's (d. 1110/1698) *Zadu al-maad*<sup>14</sup> and Sheikh Abbas Kummi's *Mafatihü al-jinan*<sup>15</sup>.

The Shiites, who were segregated due to political pressures until the era of the Buwayhis (932-1062) and who could not display the signs of the social dimension of the sect, increased their social influence through rituals and various other activities during this period. As has been known for a long time, the Gadir al-Khumm and Ashura ceremonies were initiated in Baghdad with the support of the Buwayhis and spread over other regions in a very short period of time, and consequently, the practical dimension of the sect was demonstrated for the first time. These periods, which began with two observances in the form of Ashura mourning and the Feast of Gadir and served to differentiate them from Sunni groups, and also represented a demonstration of the power of the Shiites.<sup>16</sup> Many holidays and ceremonies celebrated socially by the Shiites brought about a Sunni majority to response in their various forms, and different ideologies became dominant in countries with the support of the Buwayhis during this period.<sup>17</sup>

The first Shiite works of prayer emphasize the special periods which have been commonly adopted by all Muslims.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, with the emphasis on the Ashura, Gadir and Mubahala days which were important for the Shiites, it is clear that Shiite society began to be differentiated. However, Shiites adopted new cultures as they spread across different geographical regions, particularly in the Indian sub-continent. Indian religions, in which Batini ideology is dominant, value the sacred times more than other religions, which must have changed the Shiite perception of the sacred days and nights. For instance, sources indicate that

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<sup>11</sup> Two other important works that have been published are: (see: Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, *Imamiyye Şiası'na Göre Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler (Şeyh Müfid ve Şeyh Bahai'nin Takvimleri)*, Çanakkale, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan Sheikh Tusi (d. 460/1067), *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, Beirut, Muassasa al-Fiqh al-Shia, 1411/1990.

<sup>13</sup> Ali ibn Musa Ibn Tawus (d. 664/1266), *al-Ikbalu bi al-a'mali al-hasana fima ya'malu marratan fi as-sana*, ed. Jawad Kayyumi Isfahani, Kum, Maktabu al-A'lami al-Islami, 1414.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi al-Majlisi (d. 1110/1698), *Zadu al-maad*, ed. Alauddin A'lami, Beirut, Muassasatu al-A'lami li al-Matbuat, 1423.

<sup>15</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, Kum, Ayin al-Danish, 1386/2007.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmet Güner, "Büveyhiler Dönemi ve Çok Seslilik", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, XII, 1999, p. 56-57.

<sup>17</sup> Güner, "Büveyhiler Dönemi ve Çok Seslilik", p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> These periods included important months, such as Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan and Zulhijja and religious practices such as prayers, pilgrimages, fasting, and the giving of alms.

activities known as “Urs” were conducted to commemorate the death of a saint and there were other ceremonies to recognize various religious authorities.<sup>19</sup> After the Safawids took power in Iran, the Shiites established closer contacts in this region, and the days and nights which were celebrated on limited occasions were expanded to include the death anniversaries and the birthdays of all twelve imams.<sup>20</sup> Asserting that the number of sacred days and nights increased during the era of the Safawids as a result of official governmental policy, Ali Shariati associated this increase to the influence of Christianity.<sup>21</sup> Although Shariati attributes this phenomenon to the influence of Christianity, it is believed that such influences were transferred from Indian culture, where the Batini ideology was dominant. It is fair to state that the increasing Shiite influence on society occurred through the sacred days and nights during the era of the Safawids, regardless of the reason.

### Important Days and Nights in Modern Iran

The number of activities that were initiated during the Safawid era and that spread through the social milieu with government support have increased in Iran over time. Accordingly, birthdays or death anniversaries of imams or important figures in the sect were recorded as more than one date, which caused these activities to continue throughout the year. Therefore, through the sectarian practices, people’s imaginations can be kept alive throughout the year.

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<sup>19</sup> Annemarie, Schimmel, *Tanrı'nın Yeryüzündeki İşaretleri*, Istanbul, Kılbalcı Yay., 2004, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup> Schimmel, *Tanrı'nın Yeryüzündeki İşaretleri*, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Shariati states as follows: “As Shiites never lived independently, except for the short period of Ali Buwa’s administration and periods controlled by other temporary powers, such as the Sarbadaris, and as Shiite followers did not gain social status, Shiites cannot know how and what sorts of social forms and collective appearances they would adopt. There are no social symbols, indicators or ceremonies. Something should have been done when the Safawid regime needed them. However, the circumstances evolved very simply. An official vizier’s office was established. A person with the title “Vizier of Rawza Reading Affairs” was appointed to organize this work. The Vizier of Rawza Reading and Condolence Affairs travelled to Western Europe (when the Safawids had a close and secret relationship with him) and performed studies of the religious ceremonies and celebrations there. Most of the statements and facts regarding Christian traditions, holistic religious ceremonies, shows and programs, experiences of the Messiah, the history of Christian apostles and martyrs, adornments of these religious secrets and churches, and the instruments and symbols of the church were noted and brought back to Iran by him. With the assistance of spiritual people from the Safawid regime, these forms and traditions were adapted by the Shiites, in Shiite history and for the benefit of the religious and national interests of Iran. These European Christian patterns were adapted by the Iranian Shiites to such an extent that new symbols, ceremonies and manifestations, which had never previously been present in Iran, or in Islam or the Shiite sect, suddenly emerged in Iran. All special and new elements and ceremonies such as condolences, the animation of religious heroes, flags, domes, palanquins, the opening and closing of curtains, the locking of certain elements, chaining, hitting with swords, playing music or ringing bells, reflecting on condolences, and “cases of calamity” and “collective crying” were adapted from Christianity. Anybody familiar with these can easily say that this is nothing but imitation.” (Ali Shariati, *Ali Şiası Safevi Şiası*, trans. Hicabi Kırılancı, Ankara, Fecr Yay., 2011, p. 161-162).

It is noted that almost every day in a year reflects an important event for Shiites and these days are indicated in various calendars prepared for this purpose. However, this study reviews the days and nights, rather than the neglected days or times shown on calendars, that have social meaning under current conditions in Iran, that are celebrated and observed in some way, and that were observed by the authors in accordance with the order in the Hijri calendar. Accordingly, the purpose here is to determine the days which have practical value in Iran and which are celebrated in some way or through special memorial programs and to then reflect on how a sect is kept alive.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has accepted Imamiyya/Ithna-Ashariyya as the official sect, valued the religious days and nights following the “Islamic Revolution” in 1979, and the programs and ceremonies for commemorating these days and nights came to be controlled by the government. A special office was founded for this purpose and these activities were coordinated domestically. In this context, it is possible to say that the current day and night programs in today's Iran are shaped by the state itself and special efforts are made to keep them alive.

### **MUHARRAM**

Muharram, the first month of the Hijri calendar, is important not only for Shiites, but also for the whole Islamic world. Regarding Iran, Muharram is the most spectacular and influential month in regard to religious days when written literature and visuality reach their peak points. This month witnesses significant events for the development and visibility of Shiism. The most important one in this regard is the Karbala incident when Hussein and approximately 70 people from his family were martyred following an assault by the Umayyad army. However, according to Shiite tradition, a 50-day period beginning on 1 Muharram and lasting until 20 Safar, became an interval in which other condolence days relating to the Karbala incident were included, and which was expanded for this purpose. Although activities to commemorate Hussein and the Karbala incident, which were referred to as Ashura, date back to earlier periods, sources indicate that it was a government initiative by the Buwayhis introduced during the first half of the tenth century (352/963) after they had captured Baghdad.<sup>22</sup> The Karbala incident is not solely regarded as an historical event for Shiites. It was enriched with different narratives by the Shiites and positioned at the center of the history of the universe in a way which included the entire historical experiences of humanity. The narratives regarding the pain of Hussein and his martyrdom have been presented along with religious stories relating to many important or sacred people since the time of Adam.<sup>23</sup> Karbala has been accepted as “a selected trauma” in Shiite tradition

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<sup>22</sup> Ahmet Güner, “Büveyhiler Döneminde Bağdat'ta Kerbela/Aşure, Gadir Hum ve Benzeri Şii Uygulamaları”, *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Kerbela (Tarih Bilimleri I)*, Sivas, 2010, p. 325.

<sup>23</sup> Schimmel, *Tanrı'nın Yeryüzündeki İşaretleri*, p. 106.

and has been kept alive throughout history, which has made the incident take on a mythological quality rather than having become a historical fact.<sup>24</sup> It is possible to see and feel the traces of this in Iran today.<sup>25</sup>

**Muharram 1**<sup>26</sup> This is the first day of the mourning month (Mah al-Matamm) or “Ayyam al-Husseini”<sup>27</sup> in all mosques, masjids, Husseniyya<sup>28</sup> and lodges of Iran. Black flags, streamers, brochures etc. are hung at important locations and at the entrances of houses in Iran before the beginning of the month. From the first day on, elegies are read on the streets and in the places where people are gathered together, and efforts are made to remember and revive the memories regarding the importance of the day.

**9 Muharram** – This is the day known as “Tasua al-Husseini”.<sup>29</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the battle fought by Hussein and his companions in Karbala.<sup>30</sup> Mourning ceremonies reach their most intense levels on this day. Encomiasts<sup>31</sup> read elegies about Abu al-Fazl Abbas, son of Ali, who was martyred in the Karbala incident<sup>32</sup> and remind people of his heroism and bravery. Certain

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<sup>24</sup> Hasan Onat, “Kerbelayı Doğru Okumak”, *Akademik Orta Doğu*, 2/1, 2007, p. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> For current comments on the Karbala incident see: Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, “Çağdaş Şia Düşüncesinde Kerbela'nın Problemleri Mirası: İmam Hüseyin Kazanmak İçin mi Yoksa Canını Feda İçin mi Ayaklandı?”, *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Kerbela (Tarih Bilimleri I)*, Sivas, 2010, p. 383-408; Metin Bozan, “Şii-İmami Kaynaklarda Kerbela'nın Menkabevi Anlatımı, *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Kerbela (Tarih Bilimleri I)*, Sivas 2010, p. 477-492.

<sup>26</sup> In the work prepared by Sheikh Tusi compiling particular prayers relating to particular months or days, no prayers regarding the first nine days of Muharram were included. According to belief, God accepted the prayers of Zakariyya (a.s) on the first day, saved Joseph (a.s) from the well on the third day, helped Moses (a.s) parted the sea on the fifth day, spoke with Moses (a.s) on Mount Sinai, and took Jonah (a.s) out of the stomach of the whale on the ninth day of Muharram. If all this is taken into account, it is clear that the perception of mourning in Shiism was different to what it is today (see: Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 771). The same approach can be seen in the work of Ibn Tawus (see: Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, III, 20-63).

<sup>27</sup> Important venues known as the dervish lodges were constructed by the public in almost every neighborhood and were founded to commemorate Hussein, and these lodges were used as places of mourning during the month of Muharram, and were common in Iran during the Safavid period. It was here that all religious rituals were hosted. While masjids were only considered as places for prayer, the Husseniyyas were seen and supported as a social and spiritual tool where the sect was directly reflected in the social life.(see: Masud Nari Kummi, “Olguha-yi Kalbadi-yi Husseniyya: Rishaha wa Tahawwulat”, *Hüner ve Mimari*, IX, 1395/2016, p. 26-28.

<sup>28</sup> Abd al-Hussein Nishaburi, *Takvim al-Shia*, Kum, Intisharat al-Dalil al-Ma, 1391/2012, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 500.

<sup>30</sup> Shiite hadith literature has the following narrative from Ja'far as-Sadiq: “Hussein and his companions were fighting on Tasua day.” (see: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulaini (d. 328/939), *Usulu al-kafi*, ed. Ali Akbar al-Gaffari, Tahrän, Daru al-Kutubi al-Islamiyya, 1407/1986, IV, 147).

<sup>31</sup> Encomiasts are the people who read elegies on the religious days and nights in Iran and who cause people to cry. The fulfillment of this duty by encomiasts made them quite popular across Iran and turned them into people with authority in religious, social and even political lives.

<sup>32</sup> He is one of Ali's four sons from Ummu al-Banin. He carried the flag of Hussein during the Karbala incident, became popular for his bravery, and was known as “Moon of Bani Hashim”. He was also known as “as-Saka” for his responsibility for providing water to Hussein and his companions in Karbala. (see: Ali ibn al-Hussein Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 356/966), *Makatilü at-talibiyyin*, Beirut, Daru al-Murtaza, 1430/2009, p. 60-61; Abu Nasr Sahl ibn Abdallah al-Bukhari (d. 4./10th century), *Sirru as-*



encomiasts and preachers regard 9 Muharram as the day of the martyrdom of Abu al-Fazl to increase people's enthusiasm and to make this day more meaningful. However, official Iranian sources indicate that he was actually martyred on 10 Muharram.<sup>33</sup>

**10 Muharram 61-** "Ashura" day. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to when Hussein and his family were captured and 72 people around him were martyred following the Umayyad assaults. Mourning ceremonies reach their peak on this day. Shiites make an effort not to eat or drink anything other than water until mid-afternoon to commemorate this day. Delicious food is not preferred even if it is to be eaten. Sheikh Bahai states that fasting on this day is preferable but it would not be genuine fasting but rather fasting which consists of abandoning eating and drinking due to the business of mourning. It is noted that this practice is performed in order to become closer to God and iftar is eaten after the middle of the afternoon.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, a type of dessert is served in the homes in the late afternoon in Iran.<sup>35</sup>

**12 Muharram 94 -** "Shahadat al-Imam Sajjad (p.b.u.h)". This is the day Ali ibn Hussein Zaina al-Abidin, regarded as the fourth Shiite imam, passed away.<sup>36</sup> According to another narrative, that day is actually 24-25 Muharram.<sup>37</sup> Both dates

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*silsilati al-alawiyya fi ansabi as-sadati al-alawiyya*, ed. Sayyid Mahdi Rajai, Kum, 1389/2011, p. 131; Najmaddin Abi al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Alawi al-Umari (d. 466/1073), *al-Majdi fi ansabi at-talibiyyin*, ed. Ahmad al-Mahdawi ad-Damaghani, Kum, Maktabatu Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi, 1380/2001, p. 193-196; Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Abi al-Qasim ibn Zaid Ibn Funduk (d. 565/1169), *Lubabu al-ansab wa al-alkab wa al-a'kab*, ed. Sayyid Mahdi ar-Rajai, Kum, Maktabatu Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi, 1385/2007, p. 337; Abu Talib Ismail ibn Hussein Husseini al-Marwazi (d. after 614/1217), *al-Fahri fi ansabi at-talibiyyin*, ed. Sayyid Mahdi ar-Rajai, Kum, Maktabatu Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi, 1385/2007, p. 169.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.hawzah.net/fa/occation/view/48956/شهادت-ابوالفضل-حضرت-عليه-السلام](http://www.hawzah.net/fa/occation/view/48956/شهادت-ابوالعباس-عليه-السلام) (Date Accessed: 21 October 2017)

<sup>34</sup> Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 49-50; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 233-234. Ibn Tawus, an author from earlier periods, mentions a different fasting practice performed on 10 Muharram and gives information about nafila fasting which is recommended by the Prophet to be undertaken on the ninth and tenth day (see: Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, III, 50-55). The 12-day fasting undertaken by the Alawis-Baktashis in Turkey has no equivalence in Iran.

<sup>35</sup> Although the tradition of eating the dessert known as Ashura is criticized by Shiites stating that it is a disgrace to the pains suffered by Hussein, it was interesting to see such an offering in Iran.

<sup>36</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 508; Ali ibn Hussein was 57 years old when he passed away in Madinah in Hijri 94. Ali ibn Hussein is thought to have died naturally but it has also been recorded that he was killed. All imams are accepted as martyrs in Shiite literature. Some early period sources heavily stress that certain imams are not martyrs and that they died naturally, but the emphasis on martyrdom continues in Iran. For a detailed study in this regard, see: Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, "Kerbeladan İnkılabı: İmami-Şii Şehadet Düşüncesi ve Problemleri", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* XLIII/II, 2002, p. 211-247.

<sup>37</sup> Along with the dates noted above, 18-19 Muharram and 1 Safar are also mentioned (see: Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 42). Sheikh Mufid's calendar notes the death of Ali ibn Hussein as 25 Muharram 94 (see: Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 30). however, Sheikh Bahai accepts 12 Muharram as the date (see: Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 50).

are accepted although the number of people accepting 12 Muharram is higher.<sup>38</sup> Except for one or two reminders from the minbar, this day is not that influential perhaps due to the continued influence of the Karbala commemoration.

### SAFAR<sup>39</sup>

**5 Safar 61-** "Shahadat al-Hazrat al-Rukayya (p.b.u.h)". The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the day that Ruqayyah, a daughter of Hussein, passed away.<sup>40</sup> According to narratives, she was with her father in Karbala and was later captured. She was then brought to Damascus and died there.

**7 Safar 127/128 (?)-** "Waladat al-Imam Musa Kazim (p.b.u.h)". This day is celebrated as the birthday of Musa ibn Ja'far el-Kazim who is the seventh imam of the Shiites.<sup>41</sup>

**Safar 20 -** "Arbain al-Husseini"<sup>42</sup>. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the 40<sup>th</sup> day after Hussein was martyred. Mourning ceremonies end on this day. After about ten days, many people from Iran are sent off with great ceremony in order to spend Arbain in Karbala. Special farewell ceremonies are held on this day where there is extensive participation similar to the organization of a pilgrimage. Posters indicating the visit to Karbala are hung in front of the houses of those people who have visited Karbala. The houses of these people are visited extensively just like the houses of those who returned from a pilgrimage. Failure to visit the houses of these people who have returned from Arbain and the rejection of their offerings are regarded as disgraceful acts. This day is also a public holiday in Iran.

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<sup>38</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Muntaha al-am'al*, ed. Musawi Damagani, Tahrān, Intisharat al-Payam al-Azadi, 1390/2011, II, 69.

<sup>39</sup> Sheikh Tusi conveys a special prayer known as "Arbain" in the month, Safar. He does not mention the names of the other days which are valued today (see: Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 787-790).

<sup>40</sup> Early Shiite sources are doubtful about the existence of a daughter named Ruqayyah. Ali ibn Isa ibn Abi al-Fath al-Irbili (d. 693/1293), *Kashfu al-gumma fi ma'rifati al-aimma*, Beirut Daru al-Adwa, 1405/1985, II, 216; Ibn Funduk does not mention a girl with this name (*Lubabu al-Ansab*, I, 350).

<sup>41</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, 509; also states that Imam Kazim's birthday is the last day of Zilhijja (Naburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 60).

<sup>42</sup> As far as is understood, the first reference to Arbain in Shiite literature began with Sheikh Tusi and continued with Ibn Tawus. No particular meaning was attributed to Arbain until this period. Ibn Tawus' emphasis on this aspect influenced the followers and the merits of the commemoration of this day have been included in the literature (see: Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, III, 98-104; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 248; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 509). Hasan al-Askari is believed to have stated the following: "There are five signs of a believer: 51-rakat prayers a day, a visit to Arbain, wearing ring on the right hand, putting the forehead to the ground and saying Bismillahirrahmanirrahim aloud." (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 788; Muhammad ibn Hasan Sheikh Hurr Amuli (d. 1104/1692), *Wasailu ash-Shia*, ed. Muassasatu Ali al-Bayt Alayhissalam, Kum, 1409/1988, XIV, 478).

This day is commemorated as the visit to Hussein's grave by Jabir ibn Abdallah al-Ansari<sup>43</sup>, a sahabah follower, and also as the day when Hussein's family reached Karbala while travelling from Damascus to Madinah.<sup>44</sup> These two visits are often mentioned in the elegies.

**28 Safar 11-** "Rihlat al-Paygambar (p.b.u.h)"<sup>45</sup> and "Shahadat al-Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (p.b.u.h) (h. 50)"<sup>46</sup>. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the date that the Prophet passed away. It is a public holiday. It is also the day when, according to what various beliefs, Hasan, the twelfth imam of the Shiites, passed away after being poisoned by his wife, Ja'da, upon the promotion of Muawiya. Muawiya has his own place in the history of Shiism, which has facilitated the process of blemishing his name. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the passing of Hasan due to poisoning which is described and listened to with special interest. Encomiasts tell about the various tricks and the poisoning of the imam across many sections of the city with a particular language. Today, in many parts of the city, the encomiasts effectively explain the tricks of the Muawiya and the poisoning of the imam. In fact, some theater plays depict Muawiya as an ugly creature and a devil being the source of malevolence. When these plays were performed, people booed the actor playing Muawiya every time he began to say something, which offers an interesting viewpoint reflecting how Shiites remember and live with their history.<sup>47</sup>

**30 Safar 203** - "Shahadat al-Imam Rīza (p.b.u.h)".<sup>48</sup> This is the day when Ali ibn Musa ar-Riza, the eighth imam of Shiism, was poisoned and killed by

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<sup>43</sup> He is one of Ali's four sons sahabah followers who narrated the most hadiths of the Prophet. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the power over the believers being "sirat al-mustaqim". He is also regarded as valued in Shiite ideology similar to the twelve imams and is regarded as an important authority reflecting many narratives (M. Yaşar Kandemir, "Jabir ibn Abdallah", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul, TDV Yayınları, 1992, VI, 531).

<sup>44</sup> Sheikh Mufid indicates this day as being 20 Safar while Sheikh Bahai says it is 19 Safar (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 54). Sheikh Tusi accepts the date as being 20 Safar (see: Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 787).

<sup>45</sup> Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 279; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 509. Certain Shiite sources have narratives indicating that the Prophet was martyred by being poisoned (see: Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 76).

<sup>46</sup> He is one of Ali's four sons. Another narrative on the date of Hasan's passing suggests that it was 7 Safar. However, the claim that it was 28 Safar is more widely accepted. This date is mentioned as 27-28 Safar in the calendar of Sheikh Mufid (see: Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 32). Nishaburi gives his passing date as 7 Safar but most of the ulamah accept the date as being 27 Safar (see: Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 60).

<sup>47</sup> According to relevant observations, people still experience the living effects of the incident and caused emotional reactions in a play performed in Kum in 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Sheikh Mufid in his calendar gives the date as 23 Zulqida but he also noted in his work, *al-Irshad*, that the imam died in Safar. According to the records from reliable sources, the imam passed away in Safar (see: Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, 20). Majlisi accepts this date as 17 Safar (Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taki al-Majlisi (d. 1110/1698), *Bihar al-anwar*, ed. Hayat, Beirut, Daru Ihya at-Turasi al-Arabi, 1403/1982, XLIX, 223). Nishaburi accepts this date as 17 Safar (Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 67).

Ma'mun.<sup>49</sup> Ali ar-Riza is the only Shiite imam who lived in Iran even for a short period and passed away there. His presence is extremely important for Iran, both in the period in which he lived and after his death, due to the extensive literature developed around his tomb. His grave in Mashhad is the second place (after Karbala) visited the most by Shiites. Imam Razi and his grave have been both theologically and strategically important for Iran. This day is also a public holiday in Iran as it has special importance.

### **RABIULAWWAL**

**8 Rabiulawwal 260-** "Shahadat al-Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h)".<sup>50</sup> This is the day Hasan ibn Ali al-Askari, the eleventh imam of Shiism, died.

**9 Rabiulawwal 260-** "Ruz al-Nasb al-Imam Mahdi ba Imamah (The Day of the Imamah for Imam Mahdi)".<sup>51</sup> According to Shiite doctrine, the day the eleventh imam passed away should be accepted as the day the eleventh imam was appointed, but the imamah of the new imam is celebrated on the day after the passing of the eleventh imam so that a celebration is not performed on the day of mourning. No special interest is shown in the days of imamah for other imams but this day is particularly valued due to the importance of the twelfth imam in Shiite doctrine. People are encouraged to wear sweet perfumes, to give alms, to dress beautifully and to wash their body on this day. The posters hung in many sections of Kum include phrases such as "Joy, Happiness and Great Holiday of Amiru al-Muminin Ali Alayhissalam's Shiite and His Followers". Shiite literature gives various names to this day including Iydu'llahi al-Akbar, Gadir al-Sani, Iydu'l-Fitr al-Dowwom, Ruz al-Farh al-Shia, Iydu'l-Ahl al-Bayt a.s, Ruz al-Kabuli-yi A'mal, Ruz al-Piruzi-yi Mazlum, Ruz al-Dusti-yi Muminin, Ruz al-Parhiz az Kabair, Ruz al-Nabudi-yi Dalalat and Gomrahi, and Ruz al-Shukrgozari.<sup>52</sup>

**12 Rabiulawwal** - "Waladat al-Paygambar (p.b.u.h)". The followers of Imamiyya relate this day as being accepted as the birthday of the Prophet. The Prophet's birthday is celebrated over two days in Iran. One of them is 12 Rabiulawwal, in accordance with the narrative of Ahl al-Sunnah, while the other is 17 Rabiulawwal, the date accepted by most Shiites. However, birthday celebrations

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<sup>49</sup> For more details about the poisoning of Ali ar-Riza, see: Metin Bozan, "Ali er-Rıza'nın Velihtlığı Meselesi (İmamiyye'nin İmamet Nazariyesine Teori-Pratik Açısından Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım)", *Dini Araştırmalar* 2004, VII, 159-171.

<sup>50</sup> Sheikh Mufid gives this day as 4 Rabiulawwal in his calendar. However, in his book, *al-Irshad*, he also records this date as 8 Rabiulawwal, which is also supported by Qulaini (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 33). Sheikh Bahai accepts this day as being 1 Rabiulawwal (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 54). According to Sheikh Tusi, it is Rabiulawwal 1 (Sheik Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, 2: 791; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 511).

<sup>51</sup> It is observed that the earliest information about this day's reparation, albeit briefly, is given in Ibn Tâvûs. Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, 3: 114; Sheikh Abbas Kummi stresses that this day is a great holiday for Shiites (Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 511).

<sup>52</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 101.

begin on 12 Rabiulawwal and last for a week as Qulaini, an important Shiite scholar, accepts this date. The period between 12 and 17 Rabiulawwal is known especially as “Unity Week” stressing the concepts of brotherhood and solidarity around the brotherhood of Shiism and Sunnism. Cities are beautifully decorated and this week is celebrated like a festival. Although conferences with participating Sunni scholars are conducted in every city, in recent years there have been important protests regarding the fact that these conferences have become a showpiece.

**17 Rabiulawwal** - “Waladat al-Paygambar (p.b.u.h.)”. According to the ideology of Shiite people, this is accepted as the birthday of the Prophet.<sup>53</sup> This is also the birthday of Fa’far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, the sixth imam of Shiism, which is Hijri 83.<sup>54</sup> It is a public holiday.

### **RABIASSANI**

**8 Rabiassani 232-** “Waladat al-Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.)”.<sup>55</sup> This is the birthday of Hasan ibn Ali al-Askari, the eleventh imam of Imamiyya.

**10 Rabiassani 201-** “Shahadat al-Hazrat al-Fatima al-Ma’suma (p.b.u.h.)”. This is the name given to the memorials conducted to remember the day Fatima, the daughter of Musa al-Kazim and the sister of Ali ar-Riza, passed away near Kum during her journey to Khorasan. The entire city of Kum turns black on this day. Various ceremonies are conducted around the grave of Fatima as this day has particular importance in Iran and Kum.

### **JAMAZIALAWWAL**

**5 Jamazialawwal 5-** “Waladat al Zaynap (p.b.u.h.)”. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to Zaynap.<sup>56</sup> Zaynap is an important female figure in Shiite mourning literature and among present day Shiite people. She is among the people mentioned after the imams. She is accepted as having an esteemed profile with stories that her name was directly given by God through a revelation, and that her name was written on lawh al-mahfooz, and that she bore traces of characteristics of Hatijah and Fatimah.<sup>57</sup> The words she said in the palace of Yazid

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<sup>53</sup> Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 34, 56; Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 791; Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-an’al*, III, 119; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 260; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 511.

<sup>54</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Muntaha al-am’al*, 2: 191.

<sup>55</sup> It is on 10 Rabiulahir according to Sheikh Mufid. (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 35; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 131. Also according to Sheikh Tusi, it is on 10 Rabiulahir. Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 792; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 512.

<sup>56</sup> He is one of Ali’s four sons being the daughter of Ali from Fatimah. She is also known as Ummu al-Masaib and Ummu an-Nawaib. al-Umari, *al-Majdi*, p. 199; Ibn Funduk, *Lubabu al-ansab*, I, 337.

<sup>57</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 148.

in Damascus following the Karbala incident are considered examples of courage. Moreover, it has been emphasized that women should follow her as an example.

**13 Jamazialawwal 11-** “Shahadat al-Fatima Zahra (p.b.u.h.)”.<sup>58</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to Fatima who was believed to have died as a martyr. There are two narratives, one indicating that this incident took place 75 days after the passing of the Prophet while the other suggesting that the date was 95 days after his passing. Both days are accepted.<sup>59</sup> However, Iranian people accept the date as 3 Jamaziassani.

### JAMAZIASSANI

**3 Jamaziassani 11-** “Shahadat al-Fatima Zahra (p.b.u.h.)”. This is the day Fatima, remembered as “Sayyidatu an-Nisa” by Shiites, passed away.<sup>60</sup> It is a public holiday. The passing of Fatima, an important figure for Shiites, is among the most spectacular of the ceremonies following Ashura in Iran. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day and the manner in which Fatima passed away has been a controversial issue between Shiite and Sunni groups for centuries. For the purpose of keeping people in a state of continual mourning the period of 20 days after 13 Jamaziulawwa is known as “Ayyam al-Fatimiyyah”. Memorial programs led by the religious leaders of Iran are performed for 20 days. Normally, the term “Daha” is used to refer to a 10-day period, a special “Daha” is accepted for this event and a total of 20 days of mourning ceremony is held. One of these periods between 10 and 20 Jamaziulawwal is known as “Daha al-Fatimiyya-yi Awwal” while the other between 1 and 10 Jamaziassani is known as “Daha al-Fatimiyya-yi Dowwom”.<sup>61</sup> In each of these periods, different memorials where the mourning reaches intense levels are conducted over three days.

**13 Jamaziassani** - “Ruz al-Tarim al-Madaran wa Hamsaran al-Shuhada (Day for Exalting Mothers and the Spouses of Martyrs)”. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day the mother of Abu al-Fazl died which has been turned into a special day in Iran. As noted above, the importance of Abu al-Fazl for Shiites played a role in the commemoration of such a day. However, such a day is not mentioned in sources from early periods.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The date is 11 Jamazialahir in Sheikh Mufid’s calendar. In Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, 36; Majlisi mentions the concept of the mourning ceremony held on this day and advises people to curse Fatima and her enemies, particularly Abu Baqr and Umar. Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, 281; For different narratives on the passing of Fatima, see: Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 164-165.

<sup>59</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 135.

<sup>60</sup> Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 793.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.beytoote.com/art/decorum/start3-decade2-fatemiyyeh.html> (Date accessed: 28 September 2017)

<sup>62</sup> Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 793-795.

**Jamaziassani** - “Waladat al-Hazrat al-Zahra (p.b.u.h.)”,<sup>63</sup> “Ruz al-Zan (Female’s Day)”. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the birthday of Fatima and it is celebrated as “Women’s Day” in Iran.<sup>64</sup> It is a public holiday. As a reflection of Women’s Day celebrated in western countries, Women’s Day in Iran was celebrated on 25 Azar (December 16), the birthday of Faridah Kutbi from the dynasty of the Shah, in Iran, but later Women’s Day was celebrated on Fatima’s birthday.<sup>65</sup> Her birthday has been recognized by influential preachers who refer to hundreds of miracles performed on that night. People are encouraged to buy gifts for their spouses, children and their mothers. The celebration of such a modern day in relation to Fatima can be regarded as evidence of attempts by Shiism to update itself.

**Jamaziussani 1320/1941-** This is the birthday of Ayatallah Humaini, the leader of the Iranian revolution. This day is normally celebrated in accordance with the Hijri-Shamsi calendar but it has also been included in the Hijri-Qamari calendar as the leader of revolution had religious characteristics.

## **RAJAB**

**1 Rajab 57-** “Waladat al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.)”<sup>66</sup> This is the birthday of Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth imam of Shiism.

**3 Rajab 254-** “Shahadat al-Ali al-Hadi (p.b.u.h.)”<sup>67</sup> This is the day Ali al-Hadi, the tenth Shiite imam, passed away.

**10 Rajab 195-** “Waladat al-Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (p.b.u.h.)”. This is the birthday of Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad, the ninth Shiite imam.<sup>68</sup>

**13 Rajab-** “Waladat al-Amiru al-Muminin (p.b.u.h.)”. Ali ibn Abi Talib was born on this day.<sup>69</sup> It is a public holiday in Iran. As a result of efforts to give a particular name to this day, this day has become known as “Ruz al-Mard (Men’s/Father’s Day)” and children and women are encouraged to buy gifts for their fathers and husbands. In addition, it is clear that such a day is mirrored in sectarian practices, and is accepted in many modern countries.

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<sup>63</sup> Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 793; Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, III, 162; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 281.

<sup>64</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Muntaha al-a’mal*, I, 213.

<sup>65</sup> <https://mamasite.ir/fa/news/304374/1395-بوزن-روز-تاریخچه-مادر>، روزمادر، مادر، (Date accessed: 9 September 2017).

<sup>66</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same day in his calendar (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 37; Nishaburi, *Takvim al-Shia*, p. 185).

<sup>67</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same day in his calendar (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 37; Nishaburi, *Takvim al-Shia*, p. 186-187).

<sup>68</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same date as the birthday of Muhammad ibn Ali as 15 Ramadan in the same year (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 18; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 260; Nishaburi, *Takvim-i Şia*, p. 189).

<sup>69</sup> Sheikh Bahai accepts this date but it is 23 Rajab for Sheikh Mufid (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 64; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 24; Nishaburi, *Takvim al-Shia*, p. 195-206).

**13-14-15 Rajab** <sup>70</sup>- “Ayyam al-Itikaf” (Days of Itikaf). These are among the important days for Iranian society. Religious people go to the mosques for fasting and prayer and they even sleep there. Special efforts are made by government and non-government organizations and mosques receive donations for the appropriate equipment. Many people go to mosques during these days in the city of Kum, which is known for its religious identity.

**15 Rajab** <sup>62</sup> - “Wafat al-Hazrat al-Zaynab (p.b.u.h.)”.<sup>71</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day that Zaynab passed away. Her outstanding character is remembered on the day she died, as on her birthday, and her exemplary character in this regard is emphasized for women.

**25 Rajab** <sup>183</sup>- “Shahadat al-Imam Musa Kazim (p.b.u.h.)”.<sup>72</sup> This day is celebrated as the birthday of Musa ibn Ja’far el-Kazim who died in the prison of Abbasid caliph Harun Rashid. As a result of the importance that Shiism gives to historical events, people are reminded of the torments of Ahl al-Bayt, and people’s minds are kept alive by remembering these historical events. Personified by Harun Rashid, all the historical characters who have harmed Shiites are identified with the people who are living today and who are the enemies of Iran..<sup>73</sup>

**27 Rajab** - “Iyd al-Mab’as” (Prophecy Day).<sup>74</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day the Prophet began to serve as the Prophet. It is a public holiday in Iran. Despite being a public holiday, not many activities are performed and it is celebrated less spectacularly than other holidays. It is clear that the Shiite traditions of the present time have been employed over a long period of time. Accordingly, Sheikh Tusi accepts 27 Rajab as “Laylatu al-Mab’as” and states that performing a 12-rakat prayer, performing ablutions and fasting are encouraged on this day.<sup>75</sup> According to the narrative of Ibn Battuta, on the night of the 27th in the month of Rajab which is called “Mahya Night”, approximately 30 or 40 disabled people from Iraq, Khorasan, Faris and Anatolia are brought to the Shiites in Najaf where Ali’s grave is located and are laid on the grave of Ali, and people then wait for them to be healed. Those who bring these disabled people watch Rawda (Ali’s

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<sup>70</sup> Sheikh Tusi states that performing a 12-rakat prayer on 15 Rajab is preferred (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 806). The emphasis on the importance of these days was first put forward by Majlisi (Majlisi, *Zadu’l-mead*, p. 24-25; Sheikh Abbas Kumm, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 260-261).

<sup>71</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 207.

<sup>72</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same day in his calendar (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 38; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 34; Sheikh Abbas Kumm, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 270; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 216).

<sup>73</sup> For example, in a radio program broadcast in 2013, Harun Reşid’s atrocities were compared with US President Obama’s actions.

<sup>74</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same day in his calendar (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 39). Ibn Tawus reflects it as Rajab 25 (Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, III, 262; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 35; Sheikh Abbas Kumm, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 270-275; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 221-223).

<sup>75</sup> Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 813-817. Similarly, Ibn Tawus mentions many special nafila prayers (Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, III, 264-276).



grave), perform prayers, and speak of God.<sup>76</sup> The same day is also celebrated as Miraj night.

### **SHABAN**

**3 Shaban 4-** “Waladat al-Imam Hussein (p.b.u.h)”.<sup>77</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day that Hussein was born. This day is also known as “Ruz al-Pasdar” (Guardian’s Day).<sup>78</sup> His birth and life are mentioned with miracles.

**4 Shaban 26-** “Waladat al-Abbas”. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day that Abu al-Fazl Abbas, Ali’s son, was born, according to their beliefs. This day is celebrated as “Ruh al-Janbaz” meaning “Veteran’s Day” in Iran in memory of Abu al-Fazl. Abu al-Fazl has a particular place in Shiism. His titles include “Kamaer al-Munir al-Bani Hashim” (Shining moon of Hashimis) or “Babu al-Hawajj”<sup>79</sup>. He is a person who is upheld as an example of bravery and strength in all areas along with hundreds of mythical events and myths with which he is associated. His actual and legendary personality are often confused. He has influenced the daily lives of Iranian people to such a degree that they say “Ya Abu al-Fazl” when they are about to do something requiring strength. He is regarded as some sort of extraordinary hero. The fact that he was the person carrying the flag of Hussein in the Karbala incident makes him one of the most important figures on the days of mourning. The fight he put up in Karbala Square is narrated with emotion and enthusiasm and makes listeners imagine that day more profoundly. He lost both his hands but God gave him wings to fly with the angels in paradise. His place among the martyrs is momentous in Shiism.<sup>80</sup>

**5 Shaban 38-** “Waladat al-Imam Zaynalabidin (p.b.u.h)”.<sup>81</sup> The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day celebrated as the birthday of Ali ibn Hussein Zaina al-Abidin, son of Hussein and accepted as the fourth imam of Shiism.

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<sup>76</sup> Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Battuta Tanji, *İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi I*, trans. A.Sait Aykut, Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yay., 2004, p. 252.

<sup>77</sup> Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 39; Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 826; Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, III, 303; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 51; Sheikh Abbas Kumm, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 292; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 233.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.hawzah.net/fa/Magazine/View/3872/6270/68414/> -روز پاسدار (Date Accessed: 17 November 2017)

<sup>79</sup> Use of this title, meaning the door where needs are met, for an innocent person indicates how important Abu al-Fazl is for Iranian culture. Remembering Abu al-Fazl by this name is more common among Azerbaijani Turks.

<sup>80</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 238.

<sup>81</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts 15 Jamaziulawwal as the date Sheikh Bahai also accepts this date (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 66). Sheikh Tusi and Ibn Tawus accept this date as 15 Jamaziulawwal and state that fasting on this day is encouraged. (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 792; Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, III, 156).

**11 Shaban 33** - "Waladat al-Hazrat al-Ali Akbar (p.b.u.h.)". The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day celebrated as the birthday of Ali, son of Hussein. It is told that he is the person who most resembles the Prophet.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, in recent years, a special designation as "Ruz al-Jawan" (Youth Day) has been encountered.<sup>83</sup>

**15 Shaban 255**- "Nim al-Shaban (Middle of Shaban)". This is the birthday of Muhammad al-Mahdi, accepted as the twelfth Shiite imam, who is believed to be in another dimension. This is the day in Iran with the most spectacular celebrations after Gadir al-Khumm. Moreover, spectacular events are performed in Jamqaran Masjid in Kum which is believed to have been constructed upon the order of Mahdi. This day is also a public holiday. Various stories are told, stating that his birthday is a blessing for people. The volume of zamzam water increased and became visible when he was born, according to belief.<sup>84</sup> Thanks to his birth, many people are destined to be saved from the fires of hell, and therefore, this night is known as "Laylat al-Bara'at".<sup>85</sup> This night is celebrated on the same date in Sunni traditions and has now gained a Shiite form and been celebrated in this way.

### RAMADAN<sup>86</sup>

**Ramadan 10, 3 years before Hijra** - "Wafat al-Hazrat al-Hatijah (p.b.u.h.)". The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day Hatijah passed away. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to Fatima, although Hatijah has a more important position for Imamiyya Shiites compared to the other wives of the Prophet.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 240-241.

<sup>83</sup> <http://setare.com/fa/news/11090/روز-ی-چهارم-ان-روز> (Date accessed: 17 November 2017)

<sup>84</sup> For more details about the miracles which occurred during his birth, see: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan Sheikh Tusi (d. 460/1067), *al-Gayba li al-hujja*, Kum, Daru al-Maarifi al-Islami, 1411/1990, p. 229-252.

<sup>85</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 241; Sheikh Tusi orders practice, prayers and fasting to commemorate this day, which also matches the views propounded in Sunni ideology, and he briefly mentions the birthday of Mahdi. This is also accepted by Shiite people as the means of salvation from all sins, which is also accepted by all Muslims. They also briefly remember Imam Mahdi. They have neglected the other meanings of this day highlighting Mahdi and have interpreted the other narratives in parallel with perceptions regarding Mahdi (see: Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 829-844). The same approach was taken by Ibn Tawus (Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, III, 312-355). The first strong emphasis relating 15 Shaban to Mahdi was put forward by Majlisi and continued with *Mafatih al-jinan*, which is one of the most widely read books today (Meclisi, *Zadu'l-mead*, p. 55-56; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 295).

<sup>86</sup> Sheikh Tusi spares a particular place for prayer, fasting, performance of nafila prayers, Itikaf activities and prayers to be made on this day but he does not mention any other day as having particular importance (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 539-648).

<sup>87</sup> This date is mentioned in the calendar of Sheikh Mufid. Ibn Saad also accepts this date (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, 17, footnote no. 7).

**15 Ramadan 3-** “Waladat al-Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (p.b.u.h)”. This day is celebrated as the birthday of Hasan, the second imam of the Shiites.<sup>88</sup> It is known as “Ruz al-Ikram” (Offering/Respect Day).<sup>89</sup>

**Ramadan 17** - “Mi’raj al-Peygambar”. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the time when the Prophet is believed to have ascended to the sky. According to Shiite ideology, the Prophet ascended while he was physically awake. Meetings mentioned by the Sunnis and performed by various Prophets during the Miraj night were originally referred to in Shiite traditions.<sup>90</sup>

**19 Ramadan 40-** “Ruz al-Zarbat (Day of Strike)” This is the day when Ali was believed to have received the fatal blow of the sword.<sup>91</sup>

**Ramadan 18-20-22** – The nights of these days are accepted as the Nights of the Decree. They are also known as “Shab al-Ihya” (Nights of Recovery).<sup>92</sup>

**21 Ramadan 40-** “Shahadat al-Imam Ali (p.b.u.h)”. The followers of Imamiyya relate this day to the day that Ali died as a martyr. It is a public holiday.<sup>93</sup>

**Last Friday of Ramadan** - “Ruz al-Jihani-yi Quds” (World Jerusalem Day). The Palestinian problem, which is considered a religious cause by all Muslims, is accepted with the same enthusiasm by the Iranian people.. The political tension between Israel and Iran is kept alive to this day. Collective demonstrations are being conducted to support Palestine and to curse Israel. The center of these demonstrations is Tehran. A long march is undertaken with the participation of the Friday imams and government authorities, enabling people to participate, too.

## SHAWWAL

**1 Shawwal** - “Iyd al-Said al-Fitr”. Eid ul-Fitr. In contrast to Turkey, Eid ul-Fitr is accepted as lasting two days. It is a public holiday.<sup>94</sup> Eating a small portion of soil of Hussein’s grave before the Eid prayer is accepted and encouraged.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 276.

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.ettelaat.com/etiran/?p=131258> (Date Accessed: 17 November 2017)

<sup>90</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 278-79.

<sup>91</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same date. Ibn Saad and Tabari also accept this date (see: Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 18; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 286).

<sup>92</sup> Sheikh Mufid states that 23 Ramadan is believed to be the Night of the Decree (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 19; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 122-128; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatihü al-jinan*, p. 398).

<sup>93</sup> The same date is accepted in the calendars of Sheikh Mufid and Sheik Bahai. Qulaini mentions it as 9 Ramadan. Tabari mentions Rabiulahir along with 17 and 19 Ramadan (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 19, 69).

<sup>94</sup> Sheikh Mufid states that this day is important also because Amr ibn As perished on this day (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 19).

<sup>95</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 301.



## ZULHIJJA

**1 Zulhijja 2** - This is the date accepted as the wedding anniversary of Ali and Fatima.<sup>100</sup> A series of events under the title of “Family and Marriage Week” have been undertaken since 2013. Divorce records are not recorded in registers as an expression of respect. Transactions for those whose divorces have become final are completed the next day.<sup>101</sup> This is a notable practice indicating how integrated Shiism is with the daily life.

**6 Zulhijja 1407**- “Ruz al-Hunin al-Hajj”. This is the day when pilgrims were killed by the Suud family. The strange aspect in this regard is that Iranians, who refer to the recent events based on Shamsi’s calendar, have considered the Hijri calendar to reflect the religious aspect of the case and so ensure a closer relationship to the Pilgrimage event. This is a day in which all propaganda tools are used in criticism of Saudi Arabia, which is one of the countries with which Iran has problems.

**7 Zulhijja 114**- “Shahadat al-Imam Muhammad Baqir (p.b.u.h)”.<sup>102</sup> This is the birthday of Muhammad al-Bawir, the fifth imam of Shiite.

**9 Zulhijja 61**- “Ruz al-Niyayish”.<sup>103</sup> This is the Iranian name for the eve of Eid al-Adha. People conduct evening prayer activities on this day. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day on which the prayers that Hussein recited on the day of Arefe during the Hajj are read throughout Iran. Along with the Shiite narratives indicating that visiting Hussein’s grave on the eve is equal to the pilgrimage and umrah performed 1000 times and 1000 battles fought alongside the Prophet,<sup>104</sup> there are certain narratives stating that one can be forgiven, if not yet already forgiven in Ramadan, on the condition that one prays under the sun on the eve of Eild al-Adha.<sup>105</sup> However, this narrative is not believed by many people although it is frequently mentioned. As a matter of fact, it was observed that the people often prayed in shady places.

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<sup>100</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same date (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 21). Sheikh Tusi accepts the same date but according to certain narratives, he also accepts 6 Zulhijja. Moreover, he states that a four-rakat prayer entitled the “Fatima Prayer” with various verses is recommended on this day (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 671; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 162) Nishaburi mentions it as 6 Zulhijja. However, 1 Zulhijja is accepted as the date in Iran (Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 346-356).

<sup>101</sup><http://markazi.msy.gov.ir/news/1120672-عناوين-هفته-های-برنامه-شد-اعلام-خانواده-تعالی-از-دواج-هفته-های-برنامه-اخبار>?t= (Date accessed: 17 November 2017)

<sup>102</sup> Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 442; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 357.

<sup>103</sup> Neither Sheikh Mufid nor Sheikh Bafai mention the relationship of this day to Hussein. The events regarding this date and mentioned by Sheikh Mufid included God’s forgiveness toward Adam, Abraham’s birthday, acceptance of Dawud’s repentance, Isa ibn Mariam’s birthday, and the martyrdom of the Muslim ibn Akil. (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 22).

<sup>104</sup> Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Kummi Ibn Kulawaih (d. 368/978), *Kamilu az-ziyarat*, ed. Jawda al-Kayyumi Kum, Nashru al-Fukaha, 1429/2009, p. 169-173.

<sup>105</sup> Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 714-717; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 170-172.

The same day is also referred to as “Shadah al-Muslim ibn Akil” The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day when Muslim ibn Akil, the ambassador and cousin of Hussein, was killed in Kufa by Umayyad soldiers.<sup>106</sup>

**Zulhijja 10** - “Iyd a-Said al-Qurban” Eid al-Adha. Two days are spent as holidays. Eid al-Adha is less spectacular than other holidays in Iran. The celebrations seen in Turkey are not the case in Iran, and the number of people sacrificing animals is lower. However, in the last couple of years, the number has increased.

The period between 10 and 18 Zilhijja is known as “Daha al-Imamat wa Walayat.” Preaching and messages regarding the concept of imamat, walayat, Night of the Decree and walayat al-Faqih are delivered upon the order and under the surveillance of religious authorities, and people prepare themselves for the Gadir al-Khumm holiday, keeping the memories alive in their minds.<sup>107</sup>

**15 Zulhijja 212-** “Waladat al-Imam Hadi (p.b.u.h)”. This is the birthday of Ali an-Hadi, the tenth imam of the Shiites.<sup>108</sup>

**18 Zulhijja 10-** “Iyd al-Said al-Gadir al-Khumm” (Gadir al-Khumm holiday).<sup>109</sup> This is one of the most spectacular holidays in Iran. It is celebrated as the greatest holiday of Ali al-Muhammad. It is a public holiday. This is one of the rare days when the Iranian people, who mourn throughout the year, smile and laugh. The news that criminals will be forgiven by Ayatullah Ali Hamanai, the religious leader of Iran, is spread before the holiday, which has become a tradition over time. Penalties for those who have committed crimes against the government and who have committed minor crimes are forgiven. For instance, in 2013, 1241 prisoners were pardoned in Iran.

**24 Zulhijja 9-** “Ruz al-Mubahala” (Mubahala Days).<sup>110</sup> This is the anniversary of the incident where the Prophet and a delegation representing the

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<sup>106</sup> Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 361.

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.598.ir/fa/news/173632/شد-مشخص-ولایت-و-امامت-دهه-شعار> (Date accessed: 28 September 2017)

<sup>108</sup> Sheikh Mufid mentions this day as being 27 Zulhijja. However, in Sheikh Mufid’s *al-Irshad* and in the calendars of Qulaini and Sheikh Bahai, it is stated to be 15 Zulhijja (Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 28, 76).

<sup>109</sup> This is one of the dates is agreed between the sources. Furthermore, Sheikh Mufid accepts this day as the day Uthman was killed and Ali was obeyed. Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, 25; Ibn Tawus recommends the performance of a 12-rakat prayer on this day (Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, II, 237; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 482).

<sup>110</sup> Sheikh Mufid accepts the same date. Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, 27; Sheikh Tusi accepts both 24 and 25 Zulhijja. Shaykh Tûsî’s mention of such an event and the special prayer text that has developed around many political events are important examples indicating how intertwined religion and politics are in Shiite tradition. The tradition that he initiated continued after him (Sheikh Tusi, *Misbahu al-mutahajjid*, II, 759-760; Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am’al*, II, 354-368; Majlisi, *Zadu al-maad*, p. 218-227; Sheikh Abbas Kummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, p. 496; Nishaburi, *Takwim al-Shia*, p. 388).

Najran Christians cursed each other in Madinah.<sup>111</sup> This incident is regarded as evidence of the Imamah of the sequence of the Prophet's practices and benevolent acts in the discussions as to who constituted the Ahl al-Bayt. Therefore, Iranian people pay particular importance to this day,<sup>112</sup> and it has been emphasized that this incident is particularly important in regard to the belief that Shiite ideology is approved by the Quran and has consequently become dominant. Shiite preachers say sardonically that Sunnis have nothing to say against this and that this verse should be stressed in any mutual discussions.

### Conclusion

All religions and religious movements throughout history have had rituals to strengthen the unity and solidarity of their followers and to bring them together around common feelings and thoughts. Commitment to the religions or sects are consolidated through these rituals and in this way the purpose of transferring the relevant experiences to the next generations is pursued through the progress of history. The more a religion or religious system influences a person or society, the more it becomes possible for this religion or system to be adopted and maintained by the following generations. It is a fact that religions or religious systems rely on an emphasis on the "sacred times" in this regard. Certain days or nights have been regarded as sacred by certain religions, and followers of these have aimed to consolidate their commitment by placing more value on their religious rituals. Both the Quran and the Prophet continuously stressed the importance of sacred times, such as, Ramadan, Eid al-Adha and Night of the Decree.

The emphasis on sacred times is observed the most in the Imamiyya branch of the Shiites. Shiites separate many periods from other days in a year and have managed to maintain sectarian practices for centuries. Sects and rituals are constantly updated during these historical periods through certain practices and have survived until the present time. Accordingly, the existence of Shiism today

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<sup>111</sup> When the Prophet invited a delegation of Najran Christians to Islam, they claimed they had been Muslim long ago, and that Jesus must have been God as it was indicated in the Quran that he was also born without a father. Accordingly, the Prophet called them to come together to pray to God asking that He curse whoever was the liar and slanderer. The followers of Imamiyya relate to this day as the day that they went to the place of the Najran Christians with Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hasan, Hussein and Fatima to curse one another. However, they refused to accept the payment of jizya (capitation). Verse 61 of Surah Ali 'Imran, also known as the Mubahala verse, was revealed upon this incident. Shiite sources attributed different importance to this incident due to the importance of the people the Prophet took with him. According to this, it would seem that the Prophet took Hasan and Hussein having regard to the use of the divine phrase "abnaana (our children)", Fatima having regard to the phrase "nisaana (our women)" and Ali having regard to the phrase "anasana (ourselves)". For more details, see: Mustafa Fayda, "Mübahele", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, TDV Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006, XXXI, 425; Büyükkara, *Önemli Tarih, Gün ve Geceler*, p. 27, footnote no. 50).

<sup>112</sup> Ibn Tawus recommends that one should begin this day with ablutions and fasting, wear pleasant clothes during this day, and visit the grave of a Saint, if possible (Ibn Tawus, *al-Ikbalu al-am'al*, II, 354).

arises from its history of its effective use of channels of penetration into society. This study indicates the most important aspect of Shiism that distinguishes it from other sects is its efforts to maintain its vitality by emphasizing the imagination of the individual and society.

It is possible to observe the importance given to the holy days and nights by the Shiite tradition in the intense prayer literature created since the first centuries. Certain works in this literature indicate that the early-period writers were more concordant with Muslims in regard to the sacred days and nights, and these works emphasize the prayer-related aspects of the sacred months, such as, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan and Muharram. These early-period authors mention many days and nights and point out the importance of *nafila* practices at these sacred times, such as, the performance of prayers, fasting and the giving alms. The works of authors, such as, Sheikh Tusi and Ibn Tawus, who created works on the sacred days and nights, and the religious practices performed at these times, indicate that these authors have emphasized the alliances that the majority have agreed upon.

It is clear that the perception of the sacred times for Shiites have changed during the course of history. Shiites have differed from other sects only in regard to the emphasis placed on the days of Gadir al-Khumm, Ashura and Mubahala in earlier times but the number of sacred days and nights increased for Shiites due to control by the government. For instance, there are many differences between the calendar of Sheikh Mufis and Sheikh Bahai, an important Safawid Figure, who lived in the period of formation for Shiite. Moreover, as the celebration of sectarian ancestors, such as Ali and Fatima, adapted to modern times with names such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Respect Day etc., Shiism began to renew itself and adopt new forms. In addition, efforts have been made to venerate the anniversary of Humeini's death more by adopting titles for the day, such as Ruz al-Hunin al-Hajj, Daha al-Imamat and Walayat. Accordingly, there are virtually no days which are valued in Iran other than religious or national ones. Each day has been denominated with a different name and efforts have been made to increase their influence. This evidence is notable as it demonstrates how the sects have managed to renew themselves and how they have influenced society through that renewal.

One of the important issues in the commemoration of Shiite days and nights is the special emphasis on female figures. The followers of Imamiyya relate Fatima, Fatima Ma'suma, Zaynab bint Ali, Ruqayya bint Hussein, and Ummu al-Banin to this day, and the importance of women in terms of sectarian values are emphasized and they honor them as the emotional messengers of the sect. It is understood that the desired purpose has been achieved as women are now undertaking special tasks and active participation.

The particular importance on the birth and death anniversaries of Ali ar-Riza and her sister Fatima, who are important in Iran, is believed to have arisen from the efforts to elevate the status of Shiites to other central positions in other countries



and to strengthen the consciousness in Iran. In addition, new days such as Ruz al-Hunin al-Hajj have been created and there have been attempts to divert Iran's disputes with other countries that are problematic for Iran in the field of religion. Thus, it is easier to understand how religion and politics are intertwined in Iranian society.

Another interesting point here is the greater importance attributed to the death anniversaries of imams and sectarian ancestors compared to their birthdays, which has been related to efforts to consolidate the mourning-related aspects of the sect, which was notably also the case with the Safawids. After receiving government support of the Safawids, sacred days and nights have increased in Shiism, and ceremonial activities which have increased social integrity have been highlighted more. This tradition, initiated by the Safawids, has been maintained, and the ceremonial and emotional aspects of these days and nights have been highlighted more. Moreover, the duration of certain commemorations have been increased to one or two weeks. Contrary to the importance, attributed in Sunni tradition, to birthdays, such as Mawlid day, Shiism values death anniversaries more and aims to ensure that the atmosphere of mourning continues throughout the year, which justifies the practice of perceiving Shiism as a mourning sect by its followers and by other sects.

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## Sacred Days and Nights in Contemporary Iranian Shiism

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## Political Consequences of Sectarian Separation: Politicization of the Safavids Order\*

Ömer Faruk Teber\*\*

### Abstract

In this study the political and religio-cultural differences between the Ottomans and Safavids is presented. Accordingly, the battle of Çaldıran, while determining the eastern boundary of the Ottoman Empire, placed them outside of the process of Shiatization, breaking down the actual relationships in Anatolia between the Turcomans and Safavids. The political suppression of the Ottomans against the Qizilbash also created an obstacle for them in making contact with Sunnite Islam.

**Keywords:** Sectarian Separation, Safavids Order, Qizilbash

## Mezhebî Ayrışmanın Politik Sonuçları: Safevî Tarikatının Siyasallaşması

### Özet

Anadolu coğrafyasında yaşayan Türkmen topluluklar için kullanılan kızılbaşlık Osmanlılar ile Safevîler arasında yaşanan siyasal ve dinî-kültürel bir farklılaşmanın sonunda ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre, Çaldıran savaşı Osmanlıların doğu sınırını belirlerken, Anadolu'daki Türkmenlerin Safevi Devletiyle olan fiilî bağlarını kopararak onları Şiîleşme sürecinin dışında bırakmıştır. Osmanlıların Kızılbaş Türkmen nüfusa karşı siyasi tutumları onların Sünnîlik ile irtibat kurmalarını zorlaştırmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mezhebî Ayrışma, Safevî Tarikati, Kızılbaş

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This paper is the English translation of the study titled "Mezhebî Ayrışmanın Politik Sonuçları: Safevî Tarikatının Siyasallaşması" published in the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of *İlahiyat Akademi*. (Ömer Faruk Teber, "Mezhebî Ayrışmanın Politik Sonuçları: Safevî Tarikatının Siyasallaşması", *İlahiyat Akademi*, sayı: 5, 2017, s. 193-200.) The paper in Turkish should be referred to for citations.

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## Introduction

Mazhab (sect) is a word derived from the Arabic z-h-b term as the name of time and place. It literally means the path or place and to go.<sup>1</sup> It is also used to mean an adopted ideology, differing attitudes and behaviors, and paths followed.

The doctrine and practice of Islam is the ideological and religious reflection of the political, theological and financial influences of the sects, also known in the field as the ideological schools, on the founders of the sects and their followers<sup>2</sup>. In other words, they are the manifestations relating to religious concepts and perceptions which arose from the institutionalization of differences in theological perceptions due to social, political and financial reasons in Islamic history<sup>3</sup>. The common emphasis of the definitions made by the experts in regard to the discipline, the History of Islamic Sects, which examines the sectarian formations that have emerged over time, is as follows: "It is a discipline that reviews the human and social formations which can be regarded as the schools of Islamic ideology and which have been created for political and theological purposes throughout history, the environments where these formations emerged, the reasons why they were created, the process of creation, the ideologies, followers, literature, the places to where these formations spread, and their contributions to Islamic ideology based on the main sources, within the scope of time and place, and within the relationship between ideas and events using descriptive methods objectively."<sup>4</sup>

Another type of activity reviewed and performed within the History of Islamic Sects is the classification and sociological determination of movements which have emerged firstly in the form of the political, ideological and religious groups and which subsequently became sects during the early periods of Islam. Accordingly, according to Ottoman sources, Safawid works, which were written by the Safawid people or their supporters in Anatolia, regarding the Kizilbash-Rafizi groups, accepted as the Turkmen people living in Anatolia, are also considered in the field of the study of the sects in terms of methodology. This study reviews, in the light of historical data, the politicization of the Safawid movement, which emerged during the history of cults, the influence of which increased over time, accepting Shiite theology as the basis of its religious legitimacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Beirut 1410/1990, I, 394.

<sup>2</sup> Ethem Ruhi Fığlalı, "Önsöz", ABD al-Kahir ibn Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi, *Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar*, trans. E. Ruhi Fığlalı, TDV Yay., Istanbul 1979, p. XVIII.

<sup>3</sup> Hasan Onat, "Türkiye'de İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi'nin Gelişim Sürecinde Prof. D. Ethem Ruhi Fığlalı'nın Yeri", *Ethem Ruhi Fığlalı'ya Armağan*, Vadi Yay., Ankara 2002, p. 236; a.g.mlf., *Türkiye'de Din Anayışında Değişim Süreci*, Ankara Okulu Yay., Ankara 2003, p. 127-130; Mehmet Saffet Sarıkaya, *İslam Düşünce Tarihinde Mezhepler*, Isparta 2001, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Sönmez Kutlu, *Mezhepler Tarihine Giriş*, Dem Yay. Istanbul 2008, p. 10.

## 1-The Safawid School in the Historical Context

Sheikh Safiyyuddin, the first Sheikh of the Safawid School, was assigned as the Sheikh of the Zahidiyya Movement on the wishes of Sheikh Zahid who was 85 when<sup>5</sup> he passed away in 700/1301.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, it is recognized that the Safawiyya sect is the continuation of the Zahidiyya. Sheikh Safiyyuddin was a Sunni Sufi as was his master who raised him and as in the Halwatiyya School<sup>7</sup> which he followed<sup>8</sup>. Upon the death of his master, Safiyyuddin came to Ardabil, his hometown which was then highly cosmopolitan, religious and cultural, and here he began to teach his followers about Sunni Sufism principles,<sup>9</sup> and people coming from Iran, Syria and Anatolia led to the intensification of religious-Sufi movements in the region.<sup>10</sup> Being competent in various Sufism-philosophical teachings, Safiyyuddin managed to grab the attention of the masses by benefiting from various theological and ideological trends, such as the Ahi Community, Mawlawiyya and Kubrawiyya.<sup>11</sup>

The esteemed fathers of Shah Ismail (1486/1487-1524), the first sultan of the Safawid dynasty, were Sultan Haydar (1460-1488) ibn Sheikh Junaid (d.1460) ibn Sheikh Ibrahim (d. 1447) ibn Sheikh Ali (1371-1429) ibn Sheikh Sadraddin Musa (1305-1392) ibn Sheikh Safiyyuddin Ishaq (1252-1334)<sup>12</sup> has a lineage of 25 generations related to Imam Musa Kazim (d. 790), the seventh imam, and Imam Ali

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<sup>5</sup>Ahmed Kasrawi, *Sheikh Safiyy wa Tabarash*, Tahran 1379, p.56; R. M. Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, Cambridge 1980, p. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> Iskandar Begh Munshi, *Tarih al-Alam al-Ara-yi Abbasi*, ed. Muhammad Ismail Ridwani, Tehran 1377, I/ 24.

<sup>7</sup> For more details about Halwatiyya, see: Sadik Vijdani, *Tomar al-Turuk al-Aliyyadan Halwatiyya Silsilanama*, Istanbul 1338-1341. Halwatiyya was developed by Sheikh Sirajuddin Umar Lahiji, who died in Harat in 1398, after Ibrahim Zahid Gilani, the actual founder of the sect. It later spread to Khwarezm and Khorasan. Shirwan (Iran) became the center of the school and hosted significant events during the era of Sayyid Yahya Shirwani (d. 1464). The first introduction of Halwatiyya in Anatolia was realized through Youssef Halwati (d.1408), an Ahi leader. Süleyman Uludağ, "Halvetiyye", *DİA*, C. 15, Istanbul 1997, p. 393-395.

<sup>8</sup> Iskandar Begh Munshi states that Sheikh Safiyyuddin said "O! Jawan al-Turk" (Turkish youth) on the way to Shiraz. See: *Tarih al-Alam Ara-yi Abbasi*, Tercümeler, C. I, v. 18; Also cf.: H. R. Roemer, "The Safavids Period", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Ed. Peter Jackson, Lourence Lackhart, Cambridge 1986, VI/194; Ahmad Kasrawi, *Sheikh Safiyy wa Tabarash*, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Iskandar Begh Munshi, *Tarih al-Alam al-Ara-yi Abbasi*, I/ 24; cf.: Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Cambridge 1953, IV/43.

<sup>10</sup> Munajjimbashi, *Sahayifu al-Ahbar*, III/80; Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 11; Reşat Öngören, "Sünni Bir Tarikattan Şii Bir Devlete: Safeviyye Tarikatı ve İnan Safevi Devleti", *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, (1999), p. 11. 82.

<sup>11</sup> Mirza Abbaslı, "Safevilerin Kökenine Dair", *Belleten*, C. XL, No:158, Ankara 1976, p. 296.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad ibn Ali ash-Shawkani, *al-Badru at-Tali'*, Beirut ed., I/270-71; Şeref Han, *Şerefname, Osmanlı-İran Tarihi*, trans. Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, Istanbul 1971, p.134; Kawsari, *Sheikh Safiy wa Tabarish*, p. 37 and the remaining.

ibn Abi Talip (598-661) and the Prophet.<sup>13</sup> Certain sources from 16th century date the history of the Safawids back to Noah.<sup>14</sup>

The Safawids deliberately tolerated the political and socio-political reasons for relating their lineage to awlad ar-Rasul and made efforts to prove this claim and to make the people around them believe this claim. This effort was not the first to be encountered in that period and it is not something that would be neglected by society. Members of many sects and cults regarded the relating of their imams or sheikhs to the Prophet, caliphs and imams as a way of achieving sovereignty. Shah Ismail was considered not only a charismatic leader with authority but also as a master or sheikh. He was like the master of a cult gathering anti-Ottoman Turkish tribes together.<sup>15</sup>

After the Ardabil Lodge, the formation of which laid the foundations for the Safawid State, became popular as a result of political statements made after Hodja Ali and Sheikh Junaid, the issue was assessed by the Ottoman government authorities having regard to the financial and political aspects,<sup>16</sup> and the protests of the Safawid supporters within the borders of the Ottoman Empire taking into account the economic and political aspects.<sup>17</sup>

## 2-Politicization of the Safavids Order

It is known that the religious origins of the descriptive classifications of the Safawid propaganda, such as Kızılbaş, Rafızî, Light and Calendar and Safawî, which are classified sociologically, are based on the Ardabil Lodge, which had a Sunni orientation first and later gained Shiite-Batini elements.<sup>18</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>13</sup> Iskandar Begh Munshi, *Tarih al-Alam Ara-ya Abbasi*, Tercümelere, C.I, p.10; cf. Savory, "Safavid Persia", I/394.

<sup>14</sup> Handmir, Habibi as-Siyar Fi Ahbari Afrad al-Bashar, IV/442 and the remaining; Iskandar Begh Munshi *Tarih al-Alam Aray al-Abbasi*, p. 5;

<sup>15</sup> Rumlu Hasan, (*Ahsanu at-Tawarih*) *Şah İsmail Tarihi*, p. 71; Köprülü, "Azeri", İA, II/133. Selim the Grim rejected Shah Ismail's efforts to relate his lineage to the Prophet by insulting Shah Ismail in a letter to him and stating that he should give up his desire to be a commander and that he could only be a "loner in a lodge". Feridun Begh, *Munshatu as-Salatin*, Istanbul 1275, I/385-389.

<sup>16</sup> II. This issue is mentioned in the communications between Bayazid and Shah Ismail. Shah Ismail did not want his followers in the Ottoman Empire to be prevented from visiting him but Bayazid II asserted that these people would be considered deserters. See: Ekler, Hodja Saadaddin, *Munshaat al-Hodja Sadadin Efendi Rahimahullahu Alayh*, Reis al-kuttap Nr. 921, ed. 193a-193b-194a

<sup>17</sup> See: Şehabeddin Tekindağ, Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların Işığında Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi", p. 52-56; Ahmet Taşgın, "Hatai'den Günümüze Anadolu Alevilerinde Farklılaşma "Birinci Uluslararası Şah İsmail Hatai Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 9-11 October 2003, prep. Gülağ Öz, Ankara 2004, p. 298.

<sup>18</sup> Ömer Faruk Teber, "Osmanlı Belgelerinde Alevilik İçin Kullanılan Dinî-Siyasî Tanımlamalar", *Anadolu'da Aleviliğin Dünü ve Bugünü*, Ed. H. İbrahim Bulut, Sakarya 2009, p. 70-80.



academics indicate that the Ardabil Lodge, which has its historical and ideological roots in the concept of Kizilbash, represents a policy-based cultural differentiation<sup>19</sup> as a religious phenomenon through its theological aspects considering that the Safawid cult was once a movement and clearly changed form during the period of the authoritarian disputes between Selim the Grim and Shah Ismail.<sup>20</sup>

Another point that can be regarded as the reason and result of all political transformations is the changes that took place in the motives of the religion. An example in this regard is that the Safawid Ardabil Lodge once had Sunni orientations but it underwent theological and fiqh-based changes over time and later took on certain Shiite characteristics. The regions within the independent borders of the Safawid State became Shiite, and the Safawid followers in Anatolia underwent a unique process of change in the form of a cult. Turkmen groups, who had been mostly maintaining the lifestyles of traditional religions from Middle Asia in Anatolia, found that the beliefs sanctifying Ahl al-Bayt were in line with the behavioral beliefs in the embodied forms of divine power. The Ardabil sheikhs were firstly transformed into divine personalities and later into particular people with divine powers as they related themselves to this lineage.<sup>21</sup>

The Battle of Chaldiran consolidated the political division between the Safawids and the Ottomans and reinforced the cultural differentiation between the Kizilbash and Sunni people. While some of the interlocutors of the concepts, such as Kizilbash, Shii or Rafizi, were unclear before the battle of Chaldiran, they became prominent following the battle. Sunnism, adopted by the Ottoman Empire had established a certain dominance, while, on the other hand, the Kizilbash movement in Safawid Iran leant towards Shiism, an institutional and madrasa-based teaching.<sup>22</sup>

The increase in the value of the role that religions played in the formal ideology of governments arose from certain financial and political concerns. During periods of intense Ottoman-Safavid conflict, Shiism created legitimacy for the establishment and contributed to the maintenance of the economic and political system. All these mutual measures were the result of the desire of the Safawid State to benefit from the traditional ties between the Ardabil lodge and the social base of the Ottoman Empire, which consisted of nomadic communities living on the Ottoman periphery. The interesting point here is that the classes, which were

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<sup>19</sup> Hasan Onat, "Alevilik-Bektaşılık, Din Kültürü Ahlak Bilgisi Dersleri ve Diyanet", *Türk Yurdu*, C. 5, I.210, Ankara 2005, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Sönmez Kutlu, Alevilik-Bektaşılık Yazıları Aleviliğin Yazılı Kaynakları Buyruk, Tazkira al-Sheik Safi, Ankara Okulu Yay., Ankara 2006, p. 152, 154.

<sup>21</sup> See: Kamal Pasha-Zada, Fatawa Kamal Pasha-Zada Dar Hakk al-Kizilbash", Majmua, Suleimaniyya Library As'ad Efendi Nr. 3548, ed. 45a.: Ömer Faruk Teber, *XVI Yüzyılda Kızılbaşlık Farklılaşması*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara 2005, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ömer Faruk Teber, *XVI. Yüzyılda Kızılbaşlık Farklılaşması*, p. 133.

Safawid followers within the Ottoman borders, differed in the system and were known by titles, such as Kizilbash or Rafizi. Moreover, the groups within the border of the Safawid State, which had become central while they were conserving their social structures that had emerged prior to the foundation of Safawid state, formed the central authority and became Shiites. Therefore, they were differentiated from the social groups who lived outside the settled area that surrounded them.<sup>23</sup> In other words, as the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire were determined following the Battle of Chaldiran (1514), the Turks living near the Ottoman borders remained as Kizilbash while the Kizilbash classes in the Safawid borders became Shiites through government authority and were later suspended from the government positions.<sup>24</sup>

The Ardabil Lodge entered a period of conversion to Shiism which began with Hodja Ali in 1391 and later found expression with Sheikh Junaid who was an influential person in the politicization of the Safawid movement and came to the forefront during this period. Through propagandist missionaries referred to as caliphs, he was effective among the Turkmen communities living in Anatolia who were leading a semi-nomadic life. Although the central Ottoman authority took decisive action to prevent extensive migration from Anatolia to Iran and the Ardabil lodge, the dynasties of Ustajalu, Shamlu, Rumlu, Takalu, Dulqadir, Awshar, Kachar and the Warsak Turkmens living in South and Central Anatolia did migrate to Iran after the time of Sheikh Junaid. After Sheikh Haidar, the son of Junaid, made these Turkmens wear a red crown with twelve lines, the differentiation began to be clear, and Turkmens in Anatolia began to be interested in the new beliefs and structures under the name of the Kizilbash in Iran. All caliphs of the Ardabil lodge were first raised in a cultist ideology and acted as guides among the people, but they also pursued a political approach after the era of Sheik Junaid following the ideological transformation of the Ardabil school.<sup>25</sup> The names of the twelve imams were read in sermons after Imamiyya Shiism was

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<sup>23</sup> Ahmet Taşğın, "Hatai'den Günümüze Anadolu Alevilerinde Farklaşma "Birinci Uluslararası Şah İsmail Hatai Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 9-11 October 2003, prep. Gülağ Öz, Ankara 2004, p. 298.

<sup>24</sup> Hasan Onat, "Alevilik-Bektaşılık, Din Kültürü Ahlak Bilgisi Dersleri ve Diyanet", *Türk Yurdu*, C. 5, I. 210, Ankara 2005, p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Abu Hamiduddin Aksarayi (d. 1412), who had once followed the Ahl al-Sunnah doctrine of the lodge and was also known as Somunju Baba, and Haji Bairam Wali, who was the founder of the Bayramiyya cult and raised by Aksarayi, only dealt with religious issues and took no part in political activities. They wore the red crown with the twelve lines formed by Sheikh Haidar, the father of Shah Ismail. This crown was turned into a white baize with six lines due to the distaste for the Ardabil Sufis, which may have resulted from the political differences between the Safawiyya and the Bayramiyya despite the lineage having continued as such after the era of Sheikh Zahid al-Gilani. See: Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Hacı Bayram Veli*, p. 124;

accepted as the official sect of Shah Ismail's Safawid Empire. Consequently, Iran and Azerbaijan were made Shiite forcibly.<sup>26</sup>

### Conclusion

The followers of Sheikh Junaid and Sheikh Haidar, who were Safawids sheikhs, regarded their masters as the representatives of God in this world. During the process of politicization of the Ardabil Lodge, the era of Sheikh Junaid (d. 864/1460) when certain political demands came to the fore, can be regarded as a breaking point. The large number of people who lived in the regions from Ardabil to Anatolia came under the spiritual influence of the Safawiyya which paved the way for the Safawid Sheikhs to shift from only religious leadership to the political field following the era of Hodja Ali. From the time of Sheikh Junaid, the sheikhs of the Safawiyya Sect guided their followers as religious people with political identities, not just as religious leaders. Shah Ismail had to unite Iran and Azerbaijan around the principles of Shiism to achieve his political goals and transform his status from sheikh to shah of the state. Shiism was the most important factor for him in being able to ensure political unity. Safavidism, which emerged as a Sunni sect, was nationalized under Shah Ismail and subsequently became a Shi'ite sect.

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<sup>26</sup> Hasan Onat, "Kızılbaşlık Farklılaşması Üzerine", *İslamiyat*, I. 3, 2003, p. 121.

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## Dialectic of Transition from Religion to Sect and its' Consequences\*

Samir Omer SEYYİD\*\*

### Abstract

These papers will monitor the movement of the transition from religion to doctrine in its historical, social, and political moment within Islam. Through this monitoring, the nature of the transition will be seen in terms of historical necessity and inevitability, not only in the history of Islam but also in the history of other religions (Judaism and Christianity.)

I mean the doctrine here, the comprehensive doctrinal and doctrinal meaning; to wear each other in the application on the one hand, and the difficulty of separating them to the intensity of overlap in the minds and perceptions on the other hand. If you have tried to differentiate between them in the search, but this differentiation is a formal separation and does not affect the content very much.

This paper then followed the transition from sectarianism to doctrine, which may mean, in the form of intolerance and hypocrisy around the one thought as the true religion and the other is falsehood, or in other words the return of the doctrine to religion because of the intensity of the association of each other within the perceptions followers.

Just as this paper moves from religion to doctrine, it is also looking at the opposite direction and its implications. It is looking at moving in its dialectical movement in both directions, to monitor its nature, manifestations and consequences.

**Keywords:** Religion, Sect, Doctrine, Intolerance, Conflict, Penanc

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## Dinden Mezhebe Dönüşümün Diyalektiği ve Sonuçları

### Özet

Bu çalışma, İslam'daki din anlayışından mezhep anlayışına dönüşümün sosyal, siyasal ve tarihi serüvenini ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Söz konusu dönüşümün tabiatı ve gerekliliğinden de anlaşılacağı üzere bu değişim, sadece İslam dini için değil bilakis Hıristiyanlık ve Yahudilik gibi diğer semavi dinler için de söz konusudur.

Araştırmamızda mezhep kavramını, hem fıkhi hem de itikadi mezhepleri içine alacak şekilde kullandık. Bunun sebebi, pratikte bu iki kavramın aralarındaki sıkı ilişkiden dolayı birbirinin içine geçmiş olmaları, teoride ise zihinlerde fıkhi ve itikadi mezhepleri birbirinden ayırmanın zorluğunu göz önüne almamızdır. İlk başta fıkhi mezhepler ile itikadi mezhepler arasında bir ayırım yapmayı düşündüsek de bu ayırımın içeriğe tesir etmeyen şekli bir ayırım olacağını düşünerek vazgeçtik. Bu sebeplerden dolayı hem fıkhi hem de itikadi mezhepler için mezhep kavramı kullandık.

Araştırmamızda daha sonra müntesiplerin, bir mezhebe tabi olduktan sonra ortak bir fikir etrafında birleşmek sureti ile bağlı oldukları mezhebin hak din, onun dışında kalan diğer bütün grupların ise batıl üzere olduğuna inanan mutaassıp bir mezhepçiliğe geçişi ele aldık. Buna başka bir ifade ile müntesiplerin tasavvurunda din ile mezhep arasındaki güçlü ilişkiden dolayı mezhepten dine doğru dönüşüm de diyebiliriz.

Yine bu araştırmamızda dinden mezhebe doğru bir hareketliliği ele aldığımız gibi, mezhepten dine doğru tam tersi bir hareketliliği ve bu hareketlilikten doğan neticeleri de ele aldık.

Bu araştırma çift yönlü diyalektik bir hareketliliğin tabiatını, tezahürlerini ve neticelerini ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din, Fırka, Mezhep, Taassup, Mücadele, Tekfir

### Introduction

Does a religion that emerges through revelation turn into a sect within its own system? Does this sect turn into the religion by changing roles? In other words, does a transformation from a broader to narrower field happen or does a transformation from the divine field to human field occur? Can this transformation be seen in all religions as a natural result of people's communication with the religions? If this is natural, what are the limits, dimensions and results of religious people's perceptions toward their sects and religions? This study will answer these questions.



Before doing so, the epistemological aspects of the terms to be used in this study will be provided because explaining the concepts (religion, party and sect) on which this study is based is critical for achieving a proper result.

## 1. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

### 1.1. Religion:

d-y-n bases in *Lisanu al-Arab* mean obeying or commitment to an authority or habits.<sup>1</sup> Jastrof defines religion as follows: "Religion is people's belief in an authority that is greater than them, that controls them, and that is not affected by them. This authority is invisible, outside the abilities of senses. It has a great influence on human life, and orders and prohibitions are included in the belief people form"<sup>2</sup>. According to Varnest Gilner, religion is 'the total of doctrines or practical principles of any ummah.'<sup>3</sup> This invisible authority also means settlement as its includes enacting rules, rewarding or punishing.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the day of religion means the day of punishment of settlement.<sup>5</sup> According to Firuzabadi, religion means anything in which God is believed and obeyed.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the concept of religion means the *accountant* which makes decisions among people on the day of judgment. *British Encyclopedia* defines the concept of religions as follows: *Religion is the power in which people believe. This power transform their lives and deaths.'*<sup>7</sup>

Base of d-y-n means "those making decisions" in the dictionary of the sacred book entitled *al-Mu'jamu al-Mufahras li Alfazi al-Kitabi al-Mukaddas*. Dan is the name of Jacob's fifth son, and Jacob stated the following about him: 'Dan will govern his own public as a grandson of Israeli.' (Tekvin, 49:16)

Therefore, it is fair to state that religion is obeying and bowing down to the authority of the one who manages the day of judgment, rewards the servants and makes decisions. Considering this and other explanations above, three points regarding the definition of religion emerges:

- Invisible authority: It is the authority that rules all creatures, including humans, in the issues ranging from creation to death and life after death.

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1 Jamaladdin ibn Manzur al-Ansari, *Lisanu al-Arab*, (Third Edition) Daru as-Sadr, Beirut 2004, V, article d-y-n.

2 Jawat Ali, *al-Mufasssal fi Tarihi al-Arap Kabla al-Islam*, (Second Edition), Jamiatu a'l-Baghdad, 1993. VI, 28-29.

3 al-Mujtamau al-Muslim, Sixth Article, [www.aranthropos.com](http://www.aranthropos.com): <http://cutt.us/Ot4wk>

4 <http://alkalema.net/3arab/deen.htm>

5 Ibn Manzur, *Lisanu al-Arab*, a.y.

6 Abu Tahir Muhammad ibn Yaqub Firuzabadi, *al-Kamusu al-Muhit*, (Eighth Edition) ed.: Muhammad Irkisasi, Muassatu ar-Risala, Beirut 2005, article d-y-n.

7 <https://global.britannica.com/topic/sacred>

- Human: The people being affected by this authority.
- It is the efforts religious people make to reach the invisible authority, achieve happiness and avoid gloom by performing the practices and religious rituals obligated by the authority they believe in.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2. Firqa:

The concept of firqa from the f-r-k base means the opposite of c-m-a. The concept of tafrik means differentiation as also reflected in al-Isra 106 in the Quran (وَفُرْنَا فَرْقًا). *Firq* means *party* and *firqa* is a party constituting people. The technical meaning of firqa is as follows: A group of people that has theological elements, that is known through these elements, that separates itself from other groups, and that invites people from any sections.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of party that is associated and integrated with those who present opposing ideas to the theological points, rather than the practical issues, agreed by the religious people. Therefore, the phrase "Mu'tazila school in method" is correct but "Shafii school" is wrong.<sup>10</sup> However, such a differentiation is not exact in all areas. People from any parties adopt certain ways through which they can isolate themselves from society, and they consolidate such isolation theologically and practically.

Another point to be mentioned here is that Muslims do not like the concept of party when they hear it. Moreover, party members sometimes blame one another for certain acts as innovation, sinning or sacrilege. "Anybody who reaches beyond the general approaches of Muslims, contradicts with their methods, resist their imams, consider shedding their bloods permissible and makes efforts in this regard is an enemy."<sup>11</sup>

Considering the points above, the concept of party is briefly the different ideas of a group in religious issues which are agreed by other people. In the upcoming phases, this separation becomes wider and includes religious slogans and rituals. In simple words, the formation of a party reflects the stage before the time-wise formation of a sect and covers the concept of sect.

### 1.3. Sect:

According to linguists, the concept of mazhab (sect) is derived from z-h-b base and is a marked infinitive, and a namely time and place concept. Accordingly,

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<sup>8</sup> Sa'dun as-Samuk Mahmut, *Mawsuatu al-Adyan wa al-Mu'takadatu al-Kadima*, (First Edition), Daru al-Manahij, Jordan 2002, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> Majid al-Halifa, *Mafhumu al-Firqati Inda Ulama al-Muslimin*, <http://islampost.com/w/aqd/Web/5312/1.htm>

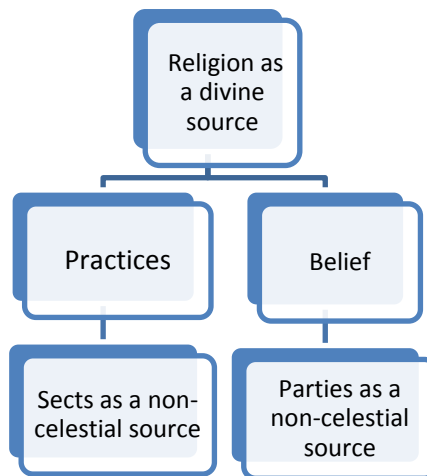
<sup>10</sup> Id

<sup>11</sup> Id Also see: ibn Jawzi (d. h. 597), *Talbisu Iblis*, Daru al-Kalam, Beirut, I, 19-21.

it means watching and continuing or the time and place to go. It also means the path followed and the essence possessed by showing belief.<sup>12</sup> The concept of sect was once used for the poems of provisions regarding the religious practices. Sect is used to mean “the total of certain ideas and beliefs adopted and believed by people” in “*al-Mawsu’atu al-Muassara*”.<sup>13</sup> The concept of sect in the dictionary called *Mu’jamu al-Mustalahatu ad-Diniyyati bi al-Lugati al-Ingiliziyya* means a religious school of thought.<sup>14</sup>

The concept of sect can be summarized including the above-made definitions as follows: Sect is the formation of people with any sort of theological practices as long as they stay within the borders of religion.

Considering this definition and other definition on party, it is not possible to fully differentiate shariah and doctrine. Both definitions include the points made separately. However, the fact that doctrine rather covers the party is not denied. Shariah mostly means sect considering the method of usage. Religion, as understood from the definition above, covers both. Abrahamic religions consisting of divine holiness lost their sacred aspects along with the sects and parties because these formations which emerged in the period after the end of revelations is are the products of human activities. See the figure below: (1.1)



**Figure (1-1)**

12 Mahmut Abd al-Munim, *Mu’jamu al-Mustalahat wa al-Alfazi al-Fikhiyye*, Daru al-Fazila, Cairo nd., III, 41.

13 Mani’ ibn Hammad, *al-Mawsuatu al-Muyassaratu fi al-Adyani wa al-Mazahib*, (Fourth Edition), Daru an-Nadwati al-Arabiyya, Riyadh h. 1420, II, 1142; Nasir al-Kifari-Nasir al-Akl, *al-Mujaz fi al-Adyani wa al-Mazahibi al-Muasira*, (First Edition), Daru as-Sumayi, Riyadh h. 1413, p. 10.

14 Abdallah Abu Ashi-Abd al-Latif Sheikh Ibrahim, *Mu’jamu al-Mustalahatu ad-Diniyyati bi al-Lugati al-Ingiliziyya*, (Second Edition), Maktabatu al-Ubaykan, Saudi Arabia, 1997, p. 52.

## 2. HISTORICAL PROGRESS REGARDING THE RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION OF PRE-ISLAMIC RELIGIONS TO SECTS AND PARTIES

### 2.1. Judaism:

Anybody examining the religious history of Judaism would notice the following important points:

- As noted in the works of religious history, the development and changes regarding the methods and practices of Judaism throughout history reached a point different than what Moses achieved and ended with the formation of certain parties and sects approving or disapproving people in time. As Muhammad Halifa Hasan indicates, the reason for such changes is that Jews had lived under the rule of nations with no tawhid belief such as Iranians, Assyrians and Ancient Egyptians. In addition, another reason might be that Jewish people lived in different regions for a long time.<sup>15</sup> Their lives at different regions in social life created the difference in canon and theological approaches. Moreover, one of the factors influencing Jews' change and transformation is the severe criticisms directed by Islam toward them. Failure of recording the Old Testament for a period as long as a thousand years enabled people to interpret it as much as possible, which confirms the above-noted thesis regarding Judaism. Jewish scholars do not deny the fact that human intervention has been made to the text of Old Testament, meaning additions or omissions were made.<sup>16</sup> The reason is that the transition of Jewish people who do not live as a society from rural life to urbanization continued for three centuries. They lived as different societies in the period until God gave a promise to David on Mount Zion in Palestine lands and Jerusalem was founded.<sup>17</sup> All of these happened a long time after the passing of Moses and Aaron.

- It is a historical fact that the Torah was revealed to Moses and that Jewish people have certain various parties. However, as also noted by Richard Fridman, those who wrote the Torah under torments, fears and risks of being exiled were nothing but the rabbis themselves. The section of the Torah, other than "ten commandments", is related to the history of Israelis. It reflects the historical events such as God's mercy, assistance, help escape from the enemies and positioning them on the promised lands. However, it is clear that these were not adequate in forming a religion. Jewish people had to consider what Moses did and experienced in his life

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<sup>15</sup> Halifa Muhammad Hasan, *Tarihu al-Adyan Dirasa Wasfiyya Mukarana*, Daru as-Sakafati al-Arabiyya, Cairo 2002, p. 180.

<sup>16</sup> For the criticisms of Julius Welhausen and Karl Graf toward the text of Old Testament, see: Irfan Abd al-Hamit Fattah, *al-Yahudiyyatu Ardun Tarihi*, (First Edition), Daru Akar, Jordan 1997, p. 79-80.

<sup>17</sup> Hasan, Id, 181.

and to form a new shariah to exist along with Islam and Christianity in an environment where fights were intense, and they did so. Moreover, after the country of Jewish Ha Nasi was ended, Jews were divided into several groups and have lived, until now, stateless without a common language. Talmud was codified as Jewish people needed a law text that will rule them and be followed by them. Talmud is the second book of Judaism after Torah and consists of two sections as Mishna and Gamara. Mishna was made a text by Yehuda Ha Nahi between 190 and 200. Gamara, reflecting the canon meaning of the text, was written by two people, Gamara Jerusalem in 400 and Gamara Babil in 500.<sup>18</sup> As also noted by Musa ibn Maimun, the interesting point here is that no Jewish scholar, including the master Moses and rabbi Saint Yehuda Ha Nasi, agreed on a doctrine clearly taught under the verbal laws. On the contrary, the leader or prophet of every nation verbally reflected what they heard from their masters or ancestors to their followers."<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, the religion formed by Moses in Judaism was inevitably turned into certain theological and canon sects and parties, which might be a tip explaining the severe disputes that have been occurring between Jewish parties for centuries. The issues discussed by these parties are more than what they agreed. For instance, according to what Shahrستاني who passed away in 548 stated, all Jewish parties agreed that a person called Messiah would come after the Prophecy and passing of Moses. However, they had discussions about who this person was and whether they could be more than one. Similarly, they had clear disagreements regarding whether Talmud can be a canon source, prophecy of Aaron and Yusha ibn Nun, titles and appearance of Messiah (the savior of Jewish people), sacrifices, holidays and prayers. Approaches of Jewish schools and parties such as Farisis, Sadukis, Hasidis, Karaims, Samiris, Isawis and others clearly indicate that the disputes between these parties made people forget about the divine essence introduced by Moses and transformed their religions into the formations of sects parties determined and developed by rabbis.<sup>20</sup>

This extensive change experienced in the religious ideology of Judaism covers their prayers and doctrines. A scholar with Islamic perceptions can easily find many acts or facts in the Old Testament which can be regarded as polytheism. Islamic perception indicates that the change in Judaism ideology covers the principle of Tawhid. A similar issue can be seen in the efforts Christians make to prove their trinity beliefs. They claimed that the Holy Trinity tradition was a belief included in the Old Testament, instead of an innovation in the New Testament.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Fattah, Id, 84-85.

<sup>19</sup> Fattah, Id, 90.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim ash-Shahrستاني, (d. h. 548), *al-Milal wa an-Nihal*, (First Edition), ed.: Badran Muhammad Fathullah, *al-Hay'atu al-Amma li Kusuri as-Sakafa*, Cairo 2014. II, 519.

<sup>21</sup> Takla Himanut, *at-Taslis Akidatu al-Ahdi al-Kadim*, <https://st-takla.org>

## 2.2. Christianity (Nasraniyya)

The concept of Nasara used to refer Nasira, the city where Jesus was born, is directly mentioned in the Quran.<sup>22</sup> Nasara means those who follow Jesus. Below are certain theological ideas of Christianity.

- Three points known or reflected as Father, Son and Holy Spirit or Creation, Sacrifice and Blessing (akanim al-salasa): Sacrifice occurred through Jesus while Holy Spirit emerged via Mary, who was heralded with Jesus, while she was being hung. Moreover, Holy Spirit can always appear in fathers and clergies.

- The belief of Jesus' crucifixion and sacrifice: Due to God's love and justice on people, Jesus sacrificed himself to save humanity. According to Christians, Jesus is the only son of God and was sent by God to forgive humanity due to the sins committed by people and Adam, their father. Jesus was buried after he was hung, and he ascended to the sky after staying under ground for three days.

- Sacraments: Baptism, Marriage, Eucharist, Confession of Sin, Blessing of Father etc.<sup>23</sup>

Historical sources indicate that the trinity belief was not present when Jesus and his apostles lived. Jesus' close friends who knew his personality and heard what he said did not believe that Jesus was among the trinity. Peter, one of his apostles, believed that he was only a Prophet who received messages from God. According to what Marster reflected, there were believers who went to the church during his time, and they believed that he was just a human although he had superior characteristics to an ordinary person. After the passing of Jesus, idolatry worshippers who were also Christians emerged and new beliefs emerged later.<sup>24</sup>

Paul is accepted as the real founder of Christianity doctrine. According to Diploride, he is the second founder of the Christianity church following the fourth century after the period of Arius and Muwahhid followers ended in the third century. A new era for Christianity started with Paul, Constantin and Councils in 325 and has continued until now.

Upon this basic transformation, a new element was added to the religious ideology of Christianity, which is Neo-Platonism. In other words, Christianity, which was under pressure from idolatry during the eras of Origenes (d. 274) and Diocletianus (d. 286), was later combined with idolatry under the influence of neo-Platonism with a basis in Iskandariyya through the efforts of Constantin and Paul. This Christianity that was combined with neo-Platonism reached a status where oppression was applied against the early period Christianity. In other words, it can

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<sup>22</sup> See: at-Tawbah 9/30.

<sup>23</sup> as-Samuk, *Mawsuatu al-Adyan*, 289-290.

<sup>24</sup> For the article about on doctrine of Christianity, see: <http://dorar.net/adyan/608>

be stated that the religious pressure was transformed into sectarian pressure. Historical works reflect the pressures of Romans on Christians in the period from the first to the seventh century. These pressures and actions appear in a religious form in the early periods of Romans but they turned into an anti-sectarian opposition after Romans adopted Christianity. This can be clearly seen in the period called the era of martyrs and in the upcoming incidents.<sup>25</sup>

During the era of Egyptians, Romans adopted the Osiris belief, and therefore, a mutual interaction emerged between Christianity and Osiris ideology. Moreover, Messiah, the son of God, reflected Horus<sup>26</sup>, the son of the sun goddess, and Paul the Apostle was the Father in this Doctrine. Constantin, on the other hand, was not reflected among them but considered as an Apostle.

Accordingly, Barnaba and Mary Magdalene were removed from the Christianity doctrine. Yehova committed suicide due to remorse on the day Jesus was crucified. Historian Paul Johnson asks: Did the Roman Empire accept Christianity or did it combine with the Roman Empire illegally?

After all religious incidents changing the form and content of Christian doctrine were experienced, certain parties which did not match the general doctrine and structure of Christianity inevitably emerged. As a result of these historical processes, many parties which have been present until today and supported trinity emerged then. Historical works indicate that there are three different parties which agree on the trinity. There are Malkits, Nasturis and Yaqubis. However, in theological issues, these parties had disputes whether Jesus had one of two different personalities, whether he had one or more than one will, whether his human or divine side died, about the characteristics of the one who died, and whether reincarnation is correct. Moreover, these parties had disputes in certain particular issues such as the rules and practice of prayers and for how long fasting is performed.<sup>27</sup>

Christian parties of the present time indicate that the Pope, accepted the representative of Jesus on this world, lead the parties and sects, which was first done in the fourth century, and Catholics from the western church or patriarchate are at the forefront. Catholics believe that Jesus had two personalities and wills. In addition to the Catholics from the western church, there are eastern Catholics who believe in a single personality and will and who abandoned the Roman church in the eleventh century. Upon the efforts of Martin Luther, a great change occurred in Christianity in the sixteenth century. He performed a religious reform by stating new ideas to the methodology of Catholic Church. He rejected the forgiveness

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<sup>25</sup> Id

<sup>26</sup> Jaroslav Cerny, *Diyanatu al-Misriyyati al-kadima*, (First Edition), trans. Ahmed Kadri, Daru ash-Shuruk, Cairo 1996/1416, p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Hazm (d. 465), *al-Fasl fi al-Milali wa al-Ahwai wa an-Nihal*, (First Edition) ed.: Ahmad as-Sayyid Ali, Daru at-Tawfikiyya, Cairo 2013, 250-358.

authority of the church and priesthood which first emerged in the early centuries. He said it is not necessary to bow down to the statues of priests in churches. After these reform movements conducted by Luther, a new sect named Protestantism or Church by Bible emerged in Germany.

The sectarian and theological disputes between the Catholics and Protestants of the medieval times directed countries such as France, England, Spain and Germany to have inter-sectarian fights where many innocent people were killed or shed blood. Europe could not escape from these conflicts between the sects easily and swiftly.<sup>28</sup>

As understood from what was mentioned above, the transformation from religions to sectarianism is a historical reality, which is also the case for Judaism and Christianity. This transformation arises from the originality of historical conditions and experiences of party members in this regard. However, this transformation was not often calm as seen in Christianity. The absence of armed conflicts between the Jews, which was the case for Christianity, does not mean that they did not have disputes. On the contrary, the reason is that their numbers were limited, that they lived as different societies, and that they did not have a political authority defending one sect against the other in the period from 721 BC to 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup>

The reason for the ideological disputes and severe conflicts experienced in the history of Judaism and Christianity arises from the fact that the Torah and Bible were recorded at a later period. As the recording process was postponed, human interpretations expanded as much as possible. Moreover, many different ideas emerged and these turned into a tradition in time. Absence of a divine work made it inevitable to include human ideas and approaches into the religion. Looking for the divine expressions in the Torah and Bible is as hard as looking for a needle beneath the sea.

Moreover, although the sectarian conflicts in Europe are related to political reasons and interpreted as the efforts of each nation to expand their borders,<sup>30</sup> such an explanation would not be sufficient to explain the relevant reasons although this is partially correct. From a rather objective point of view, it is clear that these incidents are rather based on religious reasons.

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<sup>28</sup> Said Abd al-Fattah Ashur, *Tarihu Avrupa fi al-Uhuri al-Wusta*, Daru an-Nahdati al-Arabiyya, Beirut 1976, 309.

<sup>29</sup> Israel was officially proclaimed in Tel Aviv on 14.05.1948. See: Tarik, as-Suwaydan, *Filistin at-Tarih al-Musawwar*, Daru al-Ibdai al-Fiqri, Kuwait 2004, 272.

<sup>30</sup> Ashur, *Tarihu Avrupa*, 278.



### 3. HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION FROM RELIGION TO SECTARIANISM IN ISLAM

#### 3.1. Reflections of Transformation:

Has there been a transition from Islam to sectarianism as seen in Judaism and Christianity? If this question is positively answered, this question should be asked: What are the doctrine-wise and sectarian disputes between the Islamic parties? Emergence of Islamic sects such as Harijiyya (which appeared as a result of arbitration issue), Shiite, Kadariyya, Mu'tazilah, Ahl al-Hadith, Ash'ariyya, Maturidiyya, Bab movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and Bahaiyya clearly indicates that people's commitment to a single holy source during the movement of revelation turned into the sectarian obligations which emerged as a result of human activities.

This hypothesis is not specific to Islam. On the contrary, it is also valid for the pre-Islamic periods. In addition, does this similarity between Islam and other religions mean that the result is also the same? In other words, did the emergence of these parties cause fights and massacres between Islamic sects? This was the case in Europe. Or did people just declare themselves innovators, sinners or disbelievers and did their conflict stay at this level? This question should be answered by reflecting the quality of doctrine-related issues among the Islamic sects. Accordingly, disputes between the Islamic sects and parties did not harm the doctrine of Tawhid, the essence of Islam. All of these sects and parties agreed on certain issues such as God's presence and unity, demonstration of Prophecy, and the Quran's divine message. However, sects and parties had disagreements regarding God's names and titles and presented different ideas whether these titles are related or unrelated to God. However, the status of people who committed major sins and whether God forgave sins were brought to attention, and ideological differences regarding the divine justice occurred. This and similar topics are included in the subjects of kalam discipline. Similarly, disputes regarding the discipline of "rijal" which means criticizing the hadith narrators, narration conditions and correctness qualities occurred among the followers of Ahl al-Hadith. After recording the hadiths, these disagreements significantly decreased despite still being present. As understood from the evidence, the disputes between the parties did not affect the essential Islamic topics such as Tawhid and Nubuwwat, and they were limited to certain particular issues. Accordingly, these disputes between the Islamic sects are quite different to those experienced in other religions.

#### 3.1.1. Imamah:

It is better to examine the issue of imamah within the field of sectarian fiqh and under the title of Siyasatu ash-Shariyya. However, sectarian historians such as Baghdadi, Shahristani and Ibn Hazm reviewed the issue of imamah within the doctrine disputes as faith and sacrilege-related topics were needed.

According to Ahl al-Sunnah, (on the contrary to what Shiite claimed)<sup>31</sup>, the Prophet passed without leaving a caliph to conduct the religious and mortal policy to the Muslims. Sahabas agreed upon the caliphate of Abu Baqr as a result of the negotiations. Afterwards, Umar and Uthman became the caliphs. There was no objection among Ali's supporters regarding the imamah until that period. However, after Uthman was killed, disputes regarding the stories of Uthman's killers and imamah emerged. Ali's supporters claimed that Ali and his children deserved caliphate but Bani Umayya forcibly captured caliphate. Meanwhile, Harijis denied everybody, stating that anybody can be caliph.

As noted above, it can be said that the issue of imamah is based on an ideological ground. Imamah Shiite focused on the imamah ideology in the center of doctrines and approached to this issue from a doctrine-related perspective.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the issue of imamah was discussed more than other controversial issues.

As the imamah ideology was reviewed in the field of doctrine, political parties performed certain extreme actions such as refuting one another. The office of caliphate, which aimed to gather Muslims under a single flag but did not succeed all the time, is in the basis of the imamah topic. Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman caliphate from different periods could not manage to end these disputes. Certain separatist movements such as Fatimis and Harijis in Egypt and Northern Africa kept their presences.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.1.2. Major Sin:

The issue regarding the status of those committing great sins turned into armed conflicts between Harijis and other Islamic parties. Harijis stated that Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs became disbelievers as they committed major sins and lost their caliphate-related characteristics, and that their blood and goods are legal. Thus, the issue of imamah caused conflicts and protests from the Azarika branch of Harijis.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the issue of imamah was transformed from a dispute to the reason of punishment to be applied to those who were accepted to have abandoned Islam.

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<sup>31</sup> See: *Ahkamu Al-Wasiyati Mutabikatun li Fatawa Maraji'i ash-Shiati al-Imamiyyati al-Muasirin*, <http://www.aqaedalshia.com/ahkam/waseya/index.htm>

<sup>32</sup> See: *Usulu Akaidi ash-Shiati al-Mu'tamada*, <http://www.aqaedalshia.com/MATHHAB/aqaed/index.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Fathi Zaghrut, *an-Nawazilu al-Kubra fi at-Tarihi al-Islami*, (First Edition), Daru al-Andalus al-Jadida, Cairo 2009, p. 67-93.

<sup>34</sup> Abu Faraj Abd al-Rahman ibn Al- Jawzi (d. h. 597), *Al-Muntazam fi'Tarih*, ed. Muhammed Abdulkadir Ata-Mustafa Ata, Daru'l-Kutubi'l-Ilmiyye, Beirut, VI, 69; Muhammed Suheyle Takkush, *Tarihu'dDevleti'l-Emevviye* (Seventh Edition), Daru'n-Nefâis, Beirut 2010. p. 83.

### 3.1.3. Names and Titles:

One of the doctrine-wise controversial issues between the Islamic parties is related to God's names and titles. There are three basic opinions in this regard; Ah al- Hadith/Ahl al-Asar led by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Mu'tazilah school called Ahl al-Nazar, and neutral Ash'ariyyah and Maturidi schools.

This study indicates the social reflection of ideological conflicts and grouping activities instead of different sectarian ideas. The effects of these ideological disputes which occurred after work-related trends emerged will be mentioned. Accordingly, this study reflects that Salafi trends were effective in certain regions and that certain anti-ideological trends emerged against these trends. Moreover, God's names and titles, which is critical in the differentiation between one sect and the other, will be reviewed.

Mu'tazilah agreed that there is an ancient and powerful creator of the universe, and that God's presence is ancient but titles and names are eternal. Ahl al-Hadith stated that all titles in the Quran and sunnah are ancient and that these titles should be considered without causing abeyance and assigning a physical presence with God as noted in the Quran and sunnah. Moreover, God's characteristics and titles are ancient, and no comparison is made between these names and titles, according to them. Ash'ariyya, on the other hand, found a middle point between two schools and reflected seven titles in this regard. They added the other titles to these seven titles. The idea preferred by Ash'ariyya followers is related to the apprehension of titles. Nasafi, a Maturidiyya scholar who wrote *at-Tabsira*, reflected the same idea. However, he also said that the titles had a meaning different than the particular scope, and they are neither relevant nor irrelevant to the people possessing the titles.<sup>35</sup>

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's sufferings in regard to the Quran public (creation) and incidents known as "mihna" clearly reflect the problems experienced in regard to the names and titles of God. Evidence indicates that caliph Mamun forced people to follow Mu'tazilah ideology and oppressed the protesters, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal was sentenced to prison and tormented due to rejecting this approach. After these incidents, Mu'tasim achieved the office of caliphate, oppressed Mu'tazilah, and made the case to the detriment of Mu'tazilah.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See: <http://www.alukah.net/library/0/5282>

<sup>36</sup> Taqi ad-Din Abu Muhammad Maqdisi, *Mihnah Al- Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal*, Ed. Abdullah Turki, p. 38-73.

## 3.2. The Reasons for the Conflicts Between the Sects

### 3.2.1. A One Sided Perception

Musfir Kahtani states that the fiqh-related discussions that started between Hanbalis, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyya in the hijri fourth century and continued in the fifth century were transformed into the basic theological discussions, and this was among the factors causing sectarian disputes. Naturally, this makes the people with the knowledge of ruling case to make decisions who make a mistake as somebody who is an innovator on the wrong path. Accordingly, the reason for this is that kalam is regarded superior to other disciplines and made a sacred element.<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Taymiyya confirms this idea in *Majmu'u al-Fatawa* and states the following: Methodological (doctrine) and particular separation of religion was not done by the salaf. Accordingly, people with ruling case become those who make mistakes or good actions (in their doctrines) as long as they make the best efforts in methodological and particular aspects and follow the principles regarded reliable.<sup>38</sup> This approach of Ibn Taymiyya arises from the danger formed by the separation of different groups in the ummah and related to the particular bigotry of these groups. He made efforts to minimize the level of the conflicts in the ummah. While doing so, he rejected the differentiation between methodological and particular approaches. There were no disputes arising from methodological and particular aspects between the first generations. According to Kahtani, the reason for the methodological conflicts in this period was that kalam was supported more by other disciplines. Making the discipline of kalam taboo and following it as so caused the emergence of tawhid-related fatwas and doctrine-wise fiqh. In addition to these details mentioned as the reasons for sectarian disputes with doctrine-related aspects, the one-sided perception and belief that the truth only belongs to a section can be added too. Historical works are full of the examples arising from the ideological differences related to one-sided perception. The examples may include prevention of anybody walking on a road, attacking houses, breaking musical instruments or encouraging a blind person to say words to the detriment of Shafii or another sect.<sup>39</sup> In addition, briefly checking the works of Kalam and Sectarian History will support this idea.

On the other hand, along with the sacred parties such as Harijis, Kadariyya, Mu'tazilah and Rafiziyya, which are called (*Firkay al-dalla*), the issues regarding which sect was accepted to have achieved salvation (*Firkay al-najiyah*) and called

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<sup>37</sup> Misfir ibn Ali al-Kahtani, *Kiraatun fi Fikhi al-Ayshi Maa'l-Ahari fi al-Mazhabi al-Hanbali*, <http://saaaid.net/Doat/msfer/index.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Harbi, *Ibn Taymiyya wa Mawkiyuhu min Ahammi al-Firaq wa ad-Diyanat fi Asrihi*, (First Edition) Daru Alami al-Kutub, Beirut 1987, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> Abu Baqr Ahmad ibn Ali al-Baghdadi, (d. h. 463), *Tarihu Madinati as-Salam*, (First Edition), ed.: Bashhar Awwad Ma'ruf, Daru al-Gharbi al-Islami, Cairo 2001, V, 121; Ibn Asir, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad (d. h. 630), *al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh*, ed.: Abu Suhaymin al-Karmi, Baytu al-Afkari ad-Dawliyya as-Suudiyya wa al-Urdun, nd., VI, 308.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaat was are still unsolved. In addition, although both are from Firkay a-najiyah (in Baghdadi's words, from Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaat), Ahl al-Hadith had certain accusations toward Ahl ar-Ray.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, many theological issues regarding names, titles and ruyatullah are discussed between Hanafis, Shafiis, Asharis, Maturidis and Hanbalis, and these groups sometimes directed one another to Kadariyya and Mujassima. For instance, Ash'ariyyah called its opponets, Mujassima and Mushabbiyya, which was also the case for the malevolent Ibn Kushayri.<sup>41</sup> According to Shatibi, sects become a party if they oppose one another in general issues rather than the particular ones. He reflects his approach in this regard as follows: *"These sects become a party if one of them opposes Firkay al-Najiyah in canon issues concerning one of the religious principles. There is no such reason to become a party in ancestry topics appearing insignificant and exceptional. Having disputes in general issues causes sects to become party..."*<sup>42</sup>

The decision made by the fatwa council in Saudi Arabia is as follows:

*"Whoever is a subject to the Quran, methodological and actual Sunnah and ummah practices is regarded as a part of firka al-najiyah and ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaat. However, whoever considers their idols as God and opposes the Quran and true Sunnah due to their ideas and approaches or interprets the Quran and Sunnah works in a way rejected in Arabic and disapproved by Islamic Legal Authorities, they are no longer regarded as Ahl al-sunnah and become one of the seventy two sects all of which will go to hell as noted by the Prophet. The most obvious indicators of these parties are that there is no possibility for an interpretation in the Quran and Islamic Legal Works and Methods which will justify their acts because they deviated from the Quran, Sunnah and religious practices."*<sup>43</sup>

Despite this fatwa with a clear message, Salafi philosophers of the present time accuse Ash'ariyyah of innovation in regard to names and titles. However, Ash'ari people interpret these issues as much as how their languages permit. Ibn Usaimin agrees Ibn Taymiyya's ideas and makes the following statement in regard to the concept of Ahl al-Sunnah: *"If we accept Ahl al-sunnah as a group opposing Rafizis, all parties including Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah and believers are included to the scope. However, the exact definition of Ahl al-Sunnah indicates that it is Salaf al-Salihin who agrees and embodies Sunnah. In this case, Ash'ariyyah, Mu'tazilah and Jahmis are excluded from Ahl al-Sunnah."*<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Abu al-Mansur Abd al-Kadir Baghdadi, (d. h.429), *al-Farku Beyne al-Firak*, (First Edition) ed.: Muhammad Muhyiddin Abd al-Hamit, Daru at-Talal', Cairo 2009, p. 27.

<sup>41</sup> Abu al-Faraj Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Jawzi, *al-Muntazam fi'Tarih*, ed.: Muhammad Abd al-Kadir Ata-Mustafa Abd al-Kadir Ata, Daru al-Kutubi al-Ilmiyya, Beirut nd., XVI, 181.

<sup>42</sup> Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Musa ash-Shatibi, (d. h. 790), *al-I'tisam*, ed.: Hasan Ali Salman, Maktabatu at-Tawhid, Cairo nd., p. 712.

<sup>43</sup> <https://islamqa.info/ar>

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Usaymin, *ash-Sharhu al-Mumtli'*, XI, 30; Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned about this in *Minhaju as-Sunna* before Ibn Usaymin. See: II, 221. However, Ibn Usaimin obviously excluded interpreters from the scope of Ahl al-Sunnah in regard to God's titles although Ibn Taymiyyah did not do so.

Expressions of primary Salafi figures such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Usaimin reflect a cautious approach. The reason for this is that the knowledge levels of the people of this age are not high enough to objectively grasp the doctrine-wise issues. Therefore, such a separation with the statement that this is or is not from Firka al- Najiyah is not correct in such an environment.

### 3.2.2. Participation of Administrators to Sectarian Discussions

One of the clearest indicators of sectarian disputes is the participation of administrators to the discussions between methodology and fiqh authorities and their support to a sect against another, which weakens the ummah and causes divisions. As seen in all physical rules, every action *has* a reverse and equal *reaction*. In this case, what did caliph Mamun do in the issue of Halk al-Quran? He issued a letter and sent it to his certain officers. He told them to test those from Ahl al-Sunnah in this regard, to release those who say the Quran is created, and to imprison and torment those who say the Quran is not created. Historical books have lots of information except this example regarding those who lived in that era. This period, which was called the mihna process, continued in the periods of Mutasim and Wasik-Billah and was terminated during the era of caliph Mutawaqqil.<sup>45</sup> Imam Malik was tormented, his arm was dislocated, his beard was cut, and he was carried on a camel as so.<sup>46</sup>

If caliphs had not supported an idea and forced those who rejected this idea, these would not have occurred. Caliphs considered their ideas as indisputable truth while the opposing ideas were myths. As a result, there were extensive disagreements between those who defended or rejected the kalam ideas reflected by the caliph. The authority of caliphate did not end these disagreements although the contrary was expected by them.

### 3.2.3. Time-wise Alienation

Sects were deviated from their main principles through the efforts of new generations in the period since their establishment. The indicators of these deviations should be examined separately. This examination should be made in regard to methods and particular aspects. The reason for the ideological disagreements between the founders of sects and their followers in fiqh-related topics is related to the changes which occurred in time. Moreover, the

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<sup>45</sup> Harbi, *Mihna*, 38-71.

<sup>46</sup> For the Mihna of Abbasid caliphs and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, see: Shahabuddin ibn Imad al-Hanbali, (d. h. 1089), *Shazaratu az-Zahab fi Ahbari man Zahab*, (First Edition) ed.: Abd al-Qadi Arnawut-Mahmut Arnawut, Daru ibn Qasir, Beirut 1988, II, 351.

disagreements between the methodological people despite being in the same school arise from the rational and ideological differences of every period. Similarly, the external ideological trends influenced the approaches of kalam authorities. In addition, political and social factors shaping the environment were also influential.

Mu'tazilah can be reflected as the most popular kalam party in the history of Islam. Mu'tazilah was divided into Baghdad and Basra schools following its establishment. It was later divided into more than 20 parties according to what Baghdad reflects. It is a fact that divisions in a group are natural. These divisions are experienced among party members, too, and this is also natural for them.

Vassili Podossetnik says the following: "Life is integrative and contradictory. This contradiction is the source of development and movement."<sup>47</sup> The Marxist principles do not change this fact whether we accept them or not. This is valid for the history or sects at least. These internal divisions happened all sects including Mu'tazilah. This is a historical reality reflected by scientific studies.

### **3.3. Results of Transformation**

#### **3.3.1. Change of Roles between Religion and Sects**

Certain followers of certain sects display excessive attitudes, considering their sects as a religion. This change of role between religions and sects for people covers the period between when religions were reflected through revelations and when religious people experience them. Therefore, certain old and new sects needed to directly consult the essential sources of religion. Muslims received all of their knowledge regarding their religions, theological systems, practices and actions from their grandfathers or masters. Such actions of Muslims actually reflect the adoption of a sect or idea instead of a religion. As noted before, certain changes occurred in the periods when ideological isolation occurred and theological inactivity emerged in Islamic society. A religious Muslim who is committed to his/her sect considers anything opposing the followed sect as non-religious. Such a consideration is far from what should happen. As defined in this study, religion consists of the divine orders and prohibitions targeting one's happiness. Sect, on the other hand, is people's efforts to perceive these orders in line with God's will.

Even certain contemporary sects which opposed imitating the sects and approved doing so in the public although they did not prefer it, faced the same problems. However, contemporary Salafi sects could not save themselves from the issue of changing roles between the religion and sects through their approaches. Ibn Baz, a contemporary Salafi imam, is asked the following: Is it necessary to imitate

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<sup>47</sup> Wassili Podossetnik-Ovehy Yakhot, *Elif Ba al-Maddiyya al-Jadaliyya*, (First Edition) trans.: Ghorg Tarabishi, Daru at-Tali'a, Beirut 1979, 57-60.

four sects or should one act religiously by reviewing the issue without considering the ideas of imams as they did so in the past? He replies as follows: *"This might not suit certain people. However, this is correct for qualified people. Moreover, one does not need to imitate another. Saying that it is necessary to imitate the imams of four sects is wrong."*<sup>48</sup>

Ibn Baz rejects the question "is it necessary to adopt a sect?" saying this would cause bigotry or a blind imitation. However, he said it would be accepted without bigotry. He also stated the following for Salafiyya: *"Salafiyya is not a sect but the true path. Salafiyya means following the path of the ancestors in regard to showing faith in God's names and titles and accepting them without making amendments, making them invalid or doing anything personal or preferential. Evidence is used in this regard. A blind imitation or bigotry is not accepted. This is the wish of Salafiyya. Salafiyya is the path of the Prophet. It is the path of the sahabah. This is tarikat al-Muhammadiyah."*<sup>49</sup>

What is true is that Salafiyya is the total of what was conveyed from the statements, actions and practices of the Prophet and sahabah and practices of the best followers with a human perception depending on time and place. This is not the exact religion. On the contrary, it is the final point achieved through the correct reflection of the exact religion and ideas of most scholars. The difference between these two is critical.

Claims of sects' followers that their sects are correct while the others are wrong are understandable despite being wrong. However, they state that they have the divine truth and this truth is specific to certain people, which cannot be accepted. If they do so, they would bless the non-sacred objects or subjects and assign divine qualities to people. In this case, they regard others in a perversion causing them to commit sacrilege. This is an important point in regard to the change of roles between religion and sects.

The concept of Nasara used to refer Nasira, the city where concepts of faith and characteristics which people did not discuss during the era of the Prophet and sahabah, three parties emerged among the following generations. These are Harijis, Murjiah and Ahlu al-Hadith. The first two claimed that faith has a single element and it is spiritually confirmed, but Ahl al-Hadith claimed that it had more than one element. Ibn Taymiyya and other people indicated that Salafiyya agreed on this issue.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to these discussions, a significant point should not be ignored in the concept of takfir. This point is among the important and continuing issues of the present. It is closely related to the period we have been living for some time. In other words, single dimension and violence following the Soviet Union which ended in the previous century. The only dominant pole still exists ideologically and

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.binbaz.org.sa/fatawa/189>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.binbaz.org.sa/fatawa/189>

<sup>50</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu'ul Fatawa*, Prep.: Muassasatu al-Malik Faht, Wazaratu al-Awkaf, Saudi Arabia 2004, VII, 14.



theologically despite losing its political and financial activity. This paves the way for the emergence of modern Hariji parties and publication of their ideas. The single-type religious perception of Harijis reflects an agreement over the new world order.

The idea of achieving the exact truth creates opposition at different levels and with different dimensions. It should be noted that the real truth for the believers is the divine revelation. The conceptions, understandings, recognitions, practices and exercises other than that are just relative concepts.

The problem of modern Salafis is that they make efforts to match their lives with the lives of people during the first three centuries, and they sanctify these eras. The difference between two different approaches should be reflected here. The first is as follows: *"This is the most accurate, concrete and credible idea we have seen."* The second is as follows: *"The most accurate idea belongs to Ahl al-Sunnah and congregation. This is the confirmed party that achieved salvation."* There is a great difference between these two approaches, but there are some disputes regarding the definition and content of Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jamaat. The following question can be asked: What or who is Ahl al-Sunnah? Are Mu'tazilah, Harijis, Ash'aris, Maturidis, and Zaydiyya, a branch of Ahl Sufism and Shiite, regarded to be from Ahl al-Sunnah? Ibn Taymiyyah defines these two concepts from two points. He considers all groups except Shiite to be from Ahl al-Sunnah when he approaches to the issue as an anti Rafiza-Shiite figure. However, when he considers the issue from perceptions different than noted above, he regards Ahl al-Sunnah as Ahl al-Hadith and does not add other parties to this group. In this case, it is clear that Ibn Taymiyya's definition is not complete. The second is not a complete definition as it is made based on the issue of names and titles.

Determination of the absolute truth and making it specific to a certain party or sect created certain problematic results. This just fed certain emotions such as chauvinism and superiority, insulting the other side, and attempted to persuade the other side by using violence. Such an approach caused an ideology that those with guns are right and their opponents have to obey them, which is the most dangerous aspect of the issue.

### **Conclusion**

Transformation of religion into a sect turned the absolute divine truth into human facts. This transformation is not strange. Religion consists of divine texts and teachings. Sect, on the other hand, is the effort to understand and apply these teachings to others. There is no wonder that this kind of effort took place by Jews, Christians and Muslims. However, the dangerous point here is making sectarian or group ideologies a religion. Bigotry and inter-sectarian violence arise from this transformation. Violent acts between the sects, which occasionally causes death or

wards, were not experienced in Judaism and Islam as severely as Christianity. The reason for this is that the texts forming the basis of Islam were determined earlier and more credibly. This probably prevented the severe and extensive disputes experienced in other religions although it did not fully end the fight between the sects.

Absence of violent acts in Judaism parties does not mean that these conflicts were not experienced by them. There are many theological and sectarian differences between these parties. The reason for the absence of these violent acts for Jewish parties is that they represent the minority and lived under the authority of other states following the end of Palestine (Jerusalem) Kingdom. This continued until the establishment of Israel in the previous century. There were many Christian states when sectarian fights occurred between many sects.

This study reflected that certain issues occur between all religious people. Some of these disputes are related to theological issues while some are related to conceptions and practices. Parties and sects emerged as a result of these disputes. The borders of these disputes occurring between these parties and sects changed based on the conditions of the state. For instance, recording the religious texts earlier and more concretely minimized the number of possible ideological disagreements. However, not all disputes were totally solved. Although religious texts were recorded, how these texts were understood and practiced caused certain disputes.

The most important result of this study is that armed power was used to defend a sect or party in the past. This caused the dominance of single-sided perspective, emergence of ideological isolation, and occurrence of sectarian bigotry. Efforts of any parties or sects to be dominant over the other by using political power transformed the quality of disputes from ideological to conflicts and wars.

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## The Proliferation of Non-Mainstream Islam on the Web: The Case of Turkish Preaching Videos on YouTube with Reference to the Videos of Ebu Hanzala \*

Mehmet AKSÜRMEĒİ\*\*

### Abstract

The Internet has transformed many areas of social life including religion. Especially, in the sense of fast access to information and global communication, it has been a new media through which to preach Islam and is considered a valuable source of Islamic knowledge by believers. It facilitated different channels to preach religion such as personal web sites, blogs, and personal pages on various social media platforms. Recently, thanks to faster internet facilities, video sharing sites have become popular and visual materials have become the prevalent method of preaching in the virtual space. The internet, due to its decentralised structure, is a fertile place for non-mainstream Islam. Although traditional media networks may have no place for preachers of non-mainstream Islam, the internet provides a seat for all kinds of *imam*. This article, in that context, will focus on videos of *Ebu Hanzala*, a famous young Islamic *imam* whose real name is Halis Bayancuk, on YouTube, the most prevalent video-sharing and hosting site. He is an Islamic preacher whose his videos have been watched approximately 7,000,000 times. In this article, I will argue the proliferation of the non-mainstream Islamic preaching on the internet through the videos of *Ebu Hanzala*. I will claim that internet preaching will challenge the power relations between mainstream and non-mainstream Islamic authorities. Analysis of this paper reveals how non-mainstream Islamic interpretations find a place and target audience on the internet, how they present themselves, how they preach Islam, and their future potential. In that sense, this article aims to widen debate of Islamic sects into a different area and draws attention to non-mainstream Islam grown on the internet.

**Keywords:** YouTube, non-mainstream Islam, Salafism, internet, Ebu Hanzala

## Ana Akım Olmayan İslam'ın İnternette Yayılması: Ebu Hanzala'nın Videoları Özelinde YouTube'da Türkçe Tebliğ

### Özet

İnternet din de dahil olmak üzere toplumsal hayatın birçok alanını dönüştürmektedir. Özellikle, bilgiye hızlı ulaşılmaya ve küresel iletişime imkân sağladığından dolayı, İslam'ı

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tebliğ etmek ve öğrenmek isteyenler için de kıymetli bir medya olarak talep görmektedir. İnternette kişisel siteler, bloklar ve sosyal medya platformları gibi çeşitli kanallar bu amaçla kullanılmaktadır. Yakın zamanda internetin hızlanmasıyla beraber, video paylaşım siteleri ortaya çıkmıştır ve dini görüş ve yaklaşımlarını yaymak isteyenlerin popüler tercihlerinden birisi olduğunu görmekteyiz. İnternet merkezi olmayan yapısından dolayı, ana akım olmayan İslami yorumların özellikle tercih ettiği bir alandır. Her ne kadar geleneksel medya araçlarında bu tür İslam yorumları kendilerine alan bulamasa da internet bu açıdan her tür İslami yorumu yapmak ve yaymak için bir alan sağlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, makalede Ebu Hanzala lakabını kullanan genç imam Halis Bayancuk'un, YouTube adlı popüler video paylaşım sitesi üzerindeki videolarına odaklanılmaktadır. Ebu Hanzala, YouTube üzerindeki videoları toplamda 7.0000.000 civarında izlenmiş bir vaizdir. Bu makalede, ana akım olmayan İslam'ın, internet üzerinde tebliğinin nasıl yaygınlaştığı, Ebu Hanzala'nın videoları üzerinden tartışılmaktadır. Makalede internet vaizliğinin mevcut dini iktidar ilişkilerinin dönüşümüne yol açabileceği iddia edilmektedir. Bu makalenin analizi, ana akım olmayan İslam yorumlarının internette hedef kitesini nasıl belirlediği, kendilerini nasıl sunduklarını, İslam'ı nasıl tebliğ ettiklerini ve gelecek potansiyellerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu anlamda, internetteki ana akım olmayan İslam yorumlarının yaygınlaşmasına dikkat çekerek, makale mezhep tartışmalarını zenginleştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** YouTube, ana akım olmayan İslam, Selefilik, internet, Ebu Hanzala

### Introduction

The internet is a relatively new phenomenon in our life; It has existed in our world for only 25 years. Its usage has dramatically increased in the world and Turkey over the last ten years. Statistically, almost four billion people use internet, almost three billion people are active social media users, and two and a half billion people use the internet through mobile devices today (Hootsuite, 2017). In Turkey, 66.8% of the population used the internet in 2017 (TUİK, 2017). Mobile devices in particular have dramatically increased in their total usage of the internet. Mobile internet's share of total web traffic is 61 % in Turkey and Turkey is placed 6<sup>th</sup> among other countries of the world for mobile internet usage (Hootsuite, 2017, p. 34). Mobile internet usage is important because it made it possible for the vast majority of people to be users of the internet. People of Turkey, on average, spend almost three hours per day using mobile internet (Hootsuite, 2017, p. 88). Turkey is among the top ten countries in the world in terms of time spent on social media (Hootsuite, 2017, p. 45). These statistics show that the internet has an important place today and its importance will increase in the world and Turkey in the future.

This study is about the relationship between the internet and religion. The purpose of this case study is to understand and describe the proliferation of non-mainstream<sup>1</sup> Islamic preaching on YouTube. It is important to note that "YouTube is not merely an archive of moving images",

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<sup>1</sup> The case of this article can be named as Salafi or Wahhabi Islam. Instead of these terms, I preferred to use the concept of non-mainstream for two reasons. First, this article argues its case to understand the change of mainstream

It is much more than a fast-growing collection of millions of home-made videos. It is an intense emotional experience. YouTube is a social space. This virtual community reflects the cultural politics of the present times and thus is rife with both cooperation *and* conflict (Strangelove, 2010, p. 4).

The subject of my study is famous imam Halis Bayancuk, known as *Ebu Hanzala*. He is a young religious figure who mainly preaches to his followers via YouTube videos. Actually, he can be classified as an internet celebrity in his field with over 7,000,000 viewings on YouTube. At this stage in the research, I consider the internet as a break in “the methods of learning and of transmitting the Quran” (Robinson, 1993, p. 235). It brings incomparable speed in teaching Islam.

Take, for instance, the publication of a book in the early Islamic centuries. Its writing down like that of the Quran was merely an aid to oral publication. The author would dictate his first draft, either from memory or from his own writing; the copyist would then read it back to him. Publication would take place through the copyist reading the text to the author in public, usually in a mosque. During this process the author might make additions and emendations and several readings might be required before it was given his authorization. This was known as his *ijaza*, which means 'to make lawful'. Thus the author gave permission for the work 'to be transmitted from him'. Further copies had real authority only when they had been read back to the author and approved (Robinson, 1993, pp. 235–236).

My research question in this study is: How does Ebu Hanzala, the young non-mainstream Islamic *imam*, preach Islam on YouTube? Sub-questions of this research question are: How do non-mainstream Islamic interpretations find a place and target audience on the internet? How do they present themselves? How do they preach Islam? What is their future potential among the other Islamic authorities? In that sense, this article aims to widen the debate about Islamic sects into a different area and draw attention to non-mainstream Islam grown on the internet.

In this article, first the significance of the case will be debated and the methodology of the paper will be presented. Then the related literature will be

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Islam, represented by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey. Secondly, I consider that conceptualization of Salafi or Wahhabi terms to be problematic. “The socio-cultural and the security-political” perspectives describe Salafi or Wahhabi terms differently (Sedgwick, 2010, p. 76). Besides that difference, there is a theological debate about the definition of that sect (Sedgwick, 2010, p. 77). Another recently published article can be suggested, “What Do We Mean by Salafi” by Frank Griffler.

reviewed in two successive headings. Lastly, three important themes on the videos of Ebu Hanzala will be analysed.

### **The Significance of The Case and The Arguments**

Although there are several studies that focus on the relationship between religion and the internet in the context of non-mainstream Islam (Drevon, 2016; Iqbal, 2008; Just, 2015; Malik, 2017), there is not a study that specifically focuses on the Turkish case. In that sense, this study is important. Moreover, video preaching on YouTube is a new phenomenon which has not yet drawn much attention (Mosemghvdlshvili & Jansz, 2012; Strangelove, 2010; Warner, 2013).

Video preaching on the internet is significant to understanding current debates of Islamic sects because it has the facility to reach countless people who have no chance to be represented in the mainstream media. In that sense, this article analyses the YouTube channel which broadcasts non-mainstream Islamic preaching in Turkish within the context of the relationship between religion and the internet.

In this article, by focusing on the relationship between non-mainstream Islamic preaching and the internet through the videos of *Ebu Hanzala*, I argue that this new medium, the internet, will challenge the power relations between the mainstream and non-mainstream Islamic authorities.

### **Methodology**

My conceptualization of video preaching on the internet is important for this article. "For the purposes of any ethnographic study, technology always becomes material culture"; in other words, "it has been about an integral aspect of people's daily lives: their relationship to their friends and family, part of their identity, their work and in this chapter their religion — not about a virtual world that stands against and defines or supersedes something else called the real" (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 193).

Furthermore, in the case of the Internet we have encountered an extraordinarily dynamic form of material culture. Indeed, the speed of its emergence may leave us breathless; but by appreciating and rendering explicit the nuances of the social practices that account for its manifestation as material culture it may be possible for academics to remain in step. (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 193)

In that sense, I consider videos on YouTube as part of material culture which corresponds with daily life rather than signifiers of a virtual life.



Determining the videos of Ebu Hanzala on YouTube was a challenging process while writing this article. Although “videos on YouTube seem to produce easy data”, they are in “constant flux” (Vis, Van Zoonen, & Mihelj, 2011, p. 114). Creators of the video content or YouTube have the authority to change the content of the site in real time. Moreover, YouTube administration has authority to change the content of the channel completely or partly when it desires. For these reasons, it is impossible to exactly determine the number of videos on a specific topic over a long period of time.

I selected Ebu Hanzala as the subject of this article because he is the most famous YouTube celebrity among other non-mainstream Islamic figures<sup>2</sup>. I reached videos of Ebu Hanzala in two ways. Firstly, I considered videos on the YouTube channel called as “Ebu Hanzala Hoca”. Secondly, I searched “Ebu Hanzala” as a keyword on YouTube and considered videos which are not included in the aforementioned YouTube channel. I purposefully sampled these videos “to illustrate characteristics of particular subgroups” (Bricki & Green, 2007, p. 10), then categorised them and created themes according to their labels.

### **Non-mainstream Religion on the Web: A New and Contentious Area**

In this part, I will review the literature on the relationship between the internet and religion. The internet is a new medium characterized often with fast access to information and global communication. In that sense, similar to other media, the emergence of the internet, first of all, created a debate on that area. Modern states in our age are considered “to control the broadcast and printed word to foster common, shared, and modern identities at least as much as to deny these means to potential opponents” (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003, p. 3). In that sense, they paid more and more attention to centralize the media and to surveil the information transmitted through it. However, the advancement of technology has made this control and surveillance mechanism ineffective, if not impossible, and has resulted in the fragmentation of the authority who had the power to control the media in a society. Controlling the advancements of technology is unsuccessful for modern states for several reasons. For that reason, even “some new media seen as innovative [even] in the 1980s are now almost taken for granted” (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003, p. 3). These new technologies, even though they created unrest, are unstoppable, for instance,

In countries such as Saudi Arabia, the same fax machines that disseminate rapid criticisms of the regime are also essential to the conduct of business. The state is powerless to limit their use without disrupting the

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<sup>2</sup> There are Turkish Islamic preaching YouTube channels owned by religious figures who are also able to show up in the mainstream media. Most of them are more popular than Ebu Hanzala. In my article, I consider Ebu Hanzala as the most popular among other figures similar to him, who has no chance to appear in the mainstream media. Moreover, because he has no chance to be seen in other media, I consider that “being online in the name of Allah represents an obligation” for himself (Bunt, 2009, p. 11).

economy. Audiocassette tapes spread the sermons of Ayatollah Khomeini and others in the pre-revolutionary Iran of the 1970s, just as videotapes of anti-regime preachers and demonstrations today circulate in some countries of the Arabian peninsula (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003, p. 3).

Advancements in technology, as exemplified in the quotation, may have an irresistible transformative effect in the culture of everyday life. Religion is no exception in being affected by it. For example, “the founding figures of Islamic reform in this century such as Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905) and Mowlana Mawdudi (1903- 1979) benefited wisely from their occupation as journalists to enable “the arrival of printing and of print news with new audiences for the written word” (Anderson, 2003, p. 47). In that sense, “they filled and expanded the space between previously restricted circulations of text and talk” (Anderson, 2003, p. 47).

The internet, similarly, came into our lives abruptly and transformed them. Castells (2005) considers the internet to be a tool that is not only shaped by its owners but also mainly by its users. The internet, as summarized by Castells (2005), has now opened very different spaces for people, and when we think about how it is invented, this last situation is really amazing. Now users have power. Now it is a medium that is mainly reproduced by its users. The internet, as a new medium, enabled “a new class of interpreters, who are facilitated by this medium to address and thereby to reframe Islam's authority and expression for those like themselves and others who come there” (Anderson, 2003, p. 45). Especially individuals or religious groups, who have various difficulties to express themselves publicly or “if their activities in public spaces and private locations are monitored in various ways”, consider the internet to be a functional way to preach (Bunt, 2009, p. 178), because restricting transmission of knowledge on the web is almost impossible. When a religious message comes online,

A single message in a chat room can multiply exponentially through e-mail contact, Web links, discussion in chat rooms, references in Net broadcasts, publication in magazines, and other media online and offline, as well as by word of mouth (Bunt, 2009, p. 182).

This style of transmission of knowledge and its spread among people is considered similar to a marketing strategy by Bunt (2009). He states:

This bears some resemblance to the paradigm of a viral marketing strategy, which can be defined as one that (1) gives away products or services; (2) provides for effortless transfer to others; (3) scales easily from small to very large; (4) exploits common motivations and behaviors; (5)

utilizes existing communication networks; and (6) takes advantage of others' resources. (Bunt, 2009, p. 182).

### **YouTube and Religion**

In our age, seeing and learning visually is dominating our cultural world. Actually, in a broader perspective, "the modern world is very much a 'seen' phenomenon" (Jenks, 1995, p. 2). By the invention of optical technologies at the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the microscope telescope and photography, the cultural world was transformed severely by the domination of sight. YouTube, first of all, as a video hosting site, can be considered from that perspective. It supplies countless visuals to its users.

"Since its establishment in early 2005, YouTube has become one of the fastest-growing websites, and ranks second in traffic among all the websites in the Internet by the survey of Alexa" (Cheng, Dale, & Liu, 2008, p. 229). Similarly, "The amount of content uploaded to YouTube in 60 days is equivalent to the content that would have been broadcasted for 60 years, without interruption, by NBC, CBS and ABC altogether" (Figueiredo, Benevenuto, & Almeida, 2011, p. 745). This statistic is clear evidence how YouTube is transforming human kind's visual memory. "Online videos existed long before YouTube entered the scene"; however:

Uploading, managing, sharing and watching videos were cumbersome due to the lack of an easy-to-use integrated platform. More importantly, the videos distributed by traditional media servers and peer-to-peer file downloads like Bit Torrent were standalone units of content. The video was not connected to other related videos, for example other episodes of a show that the user had just watched. Also, there was very little in the way of content reviews or ratings. The new generation of video sharing sites, YouTube and its competitors, have overcome these problems. These new generation sites are also known as user generated content (UGC) sites, in which the users are participatory and creative. The systems allow content suppliers to upload video effortlessly, and to tag uploaded videos with keywords. Users can easily share videos by mailing links to them, or embedding them in blogs. Users can also rate and comment on videos, bringing new social aspects to the viewing of videos. Consequently, popular videos can rise to the top in a very organic fashion. The social network existing in YouTube further enables communities and groups, as videos are no longer independent from each other, and neither are users. This has substantially contributed to the success of YouTube and similar sites. (Cheng et al., 2008, pp. 229–230)

YouTube requires no subscription to watch videos. Additionally, in order to publish a video on that site, a simple subscription and e-mail address are adequate. Today, accessing video capturing devices are rather easier than ten years ago. Even an ordinary mobile phone can capture high-quality videos and the user can upload it to YouTube with his or her mobile phone. YouTube draw attention to video producers on religion:

A considerable number of video bloggers on YouTube engage in debates over religion. Some of the larger areas of debate are focused on evolution, abortion, atheism, Scientology, Mormonism, Christianity, and Islam. The subject matter of these religious debates also appears to be significantly shaped by American cultural concerns (Strangelove, 2010, p. 148).

Strangelove considers that YouTube provides a space for the people wrangling over “my God can beat up your God” (2010, p.148). On the other hand, visual and religion relationship is criticised that visual medium has a transformative effect on religion:

And today, television makes stars of conservative vernacular preachers. In their time, all new media have a certain "down-market" quality from high-textualist perspectives. They employ vernaculars and are often cheaply produced and ephemeral; but they expand the domain of Muslim discourse by engaging a wider public than previously had access to elite-controlled discourse and a more problematic public than other non-elite, "folk" forms reach. (Anderson, 2003, p. 47)

This criticism, similar to early “medium is the message” debate of media studies (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7), places emphasis on how visual preaching transforms religion into a lower quality discourse while expanding its territory.

### **Islamic Preaching on Turkish YouTube Channels**

The number of Turkish broadcasting YouTube channels which focus on Islamic preaching are increasing recently<sup>3</sup>. Turkish non-mainstream Islamic preaching, parallel to the former situation, are increasing also. When the subject of this article, YouTube videos of Ebu Hanzala, are considered, it can be seen that this figure is the most viewed among other non-mainstream Islamic preachers.

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<sup>3</sup> See YouTube channels of *DiyanetTV*, *Sözler Köşkü*, *Hayalhanem* as examples.

Ebu Hanzala, according to a video of him published on YouTube (Ebu Hanzala, 2017c), was born in 1984 in Diyarbakır, Turkey. He is a graduate of Diyarbakır *İmam Hatip Lisesi* (Religious Vocational High School). While he was in high school, he also went to a classical madrasa in Diyarbakır. After graduation, he was accepted to Al-Azhar University in Egypt. However, he did not attend university, rather he followed informal religious education in Egypt for four years.

Videos of Ebu Hanzala are broadcasting to YouTube mainly by three channels. These are Ebu Hanzala Hoca, Tevhid Dersleri, and İslam'ı Anlamak. These channels started publishing videos in 2016, 2014 and 2013 respectively. There is no clear evidence that these channels are related; however, their videos are similar in their shooting technique. When the three channels are summed up, there are almost 3,000 videos, 60,000 subscribers. These videos have been viewed around 7,000,000 times and the daily view count is around 20,000 at the time of writing (Socialblade, 2017).

In the 'about' section of the YouTube channel, they describe themselves as follows:

We are preaching to our society, to those who do not know what they mean while repeating "la ilahe illallah", in the light of Quran and Sunnah. We invite people to rescue themselves from their slavery to other people, and to worship only *Allah*. If the creator is *Allah*, we believe in that, we invite people to give the all authority to him to regulate social life. If prayer is a religious practice, we believe in that, we invite people to pray only to *Allah* and to believe that the only authority to pray to is Allah. As mentioned in Surah Az-Zumer 36, "Is not Allah sufficient for his servant"? (Ebu Hanzala, 2017a)

In the recommended section of the YouTube channel, they suggest English, French, or Arabic channels which publish translated or subbed Ebu Hanzala videos. Compared to the Turkish content, other language contents are weak in number. Although YouTube does not provide any data on which country these videos are viewed in, it can be concluded, from the comments on videos, that basically they are viewed by Turkish speaking people.

There are two types of Ebu Hanzala videos: first, the long preaching videos, and second, short (less than twenty minutes) videos. The short videos are actually trimmed versions of the first long preaching videos. While the first type of videos contains many topics, the second type of videos have a single message. The first group of videos is similar to typical Islamic preaching videos. I consider the second type of videos to be a new version of preaching videos, created to be popular on YouTube. They are short, attractive visual objects, like the trending videos on YouTube.

The Ebu Hanzala videos seem to be produced by professional editors, camera operators and recording people. The videos do not contain any information about the production team. Although it is not common, some videos are translated or dubbed in German, French and Arabic. Additionally, recently the second type of short videos have started to be identified as clickbait. Clickbait is a new term which refers to “something (such as a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest” (“Clickbait,” 2017). Thus, clickbait videos can get more clicks. Examples of this type are the Ebu Hanzala videos (2017d, 2017e).

Furthermore, in the uploading process of videos they have a strategy to overcome possible problems. In a case where a YouTube channel or a video is reported by viewers, YouTube may close the channel or delete the reported video. In such a situation, the subscribers of the channel also are deleted. In order to overcome this possible problem, they have an alternative channel and they require their viewers to subscribe to both of their channels.

When the videos are analysed, it can be seen that there are three themes in Ebu Hanzal’s videos. These are: the rejection of parliamentary democracy, pointing at the social dimensions of life over various topics, and direct criticism of other people. In the following paragraphs, I will examine each of these themes.

One of the most distinctive themes of Ebu Hanzala videos is the rejection of modern parliamentary democracy. There are more than twenty videos on that topic. He criticizes democracy from several points. First of all, he considers parliamentary democracy to be a religion like Christianity, Judaism etc. He states:

Democracy is exact same as what Christianity or Judaism is for Islam. Democracy is a religion and its followers, similar to followers of religions other than Islam, are non-Muslims. No matter how ignorant, uneducated or indifferent they are about that topic, they are the non-Muslims as Christians in Europe (Ebu Hanzala, 2016a).

Besides that, he especially draws attention to voting (Ebu Hanzala, 2015). He considers Muslim people voting, although they want an Islamic regime. He opposes this behaviour and refuses to participate in any step in the democratic system. His attitude is more like an anarchic essence.

Another prevalent theme in the Ebu Hanzala videos is the topics that point to various dimensions of social life. These videos are different from videos that debate theological topics directly. In these videos, topics like the minimum wage, vaccination, compulsory military service, compulsory primary and secondary education are debated with a theological perspective. For instance:

Nowadays, the system that we live in provokes you for your need for a house and a wife. They seduce people with advertisements in movies on television. But this system does not give your needs. Furthermore, it does not give you a job. Let's say you got a job, if you do not have qualification, the system pays you the minimum wage. The system forces you to send your child to school. But you have to pay for it. You will pay for all your needs like natural gas, electricity, water, accommodation, food. How does a human get by with a minimum wage? (Ebu Hanzala, 2016b)

This quotation is an example of how Ebu Hanzala debates everyday social life events as a matter of Islam. In the following sentences of this quotation, he details how people will live in a prosperous life, if the Islamic state emerges. I consider that by using everyday social life events, he strengthens his speech. Another important point, in this quotation, is his case is on the calculation of the minimum wage. This indicates that the majority of his followers are minimum wage earners.

The third important point in the videos is their direct criticism of real people. In such videos, religious, public or political figures are directly criticised on certain topics by name. These videos are commonly being shot on the contemporary events in Turkey and the world. For instance, he criticises Cübbeli Ahmet and his followers, in a video entitled "Harsh Words to Cübbeli Ahmet and his followers":

This Jemaah is making their followers stupid. They despise and insult their followers. They are saying that we are dogs on the door of our sheikh. Why are you the dog at the door of your sheikh? ... This is not a behaviour compatible with Islam. This is against human dignity (Ebu Hanzala, 2017b).

There are more than twenty Ebu Hanzala videos that directly criticise people by name. This kind of video shows that Ebu Hanzala does not hesitate to conflict with other religious and political figures.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, in this article, I argued the relationship between the internet and religion in the context of the proliferation of non-mainstream Islam in Turkey. The subject of the article was videos of Ebu Hanzala on YouTube. I presented three distinctive themes in his Islamic preaching videos.

YouTube as a medium to preach Islam was at the focus of this article. It is important to see how YouTube provides a place for any kind of preaching at a very

low cost. For that reason, the number of non-mainstream preachers are increasing. Besides that, as in the case of Ebu Hanzala, the for these videos is also increasing. There are 7,000,000 viewers of Ebu Hanzala on YouTube today. While internet facilities are expanding globally, it is reasonable to expect that the number of non-mainstream Islamic preachers will increase.

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