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***Aims and Scope**: Ilahiyat Studies* is an international, open access, peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal dedicated to publishing scholarly articles on all aspects of Islam and the Muslim peoples and on religious studies. Available in print and online, and published twice a year, the journal aims to become one of the leading platforms in the world for new findings and discussions of all fields of Islamic and religious studies.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome back to the new issue of *Ilahiyat Studies*. First and foremost, we would like to express our deep sorrow at the martyrdom of people in Palestine. Regardless of our ethnic and religious backgrounds, it has been challenging for all of us to witness an unprecedented genocide, with special targeting of children. We sincerely hope that a lasting solution and peace will prevail soon.

This issue of *IS* features eight research articles. In the first article, "Parabolic Resonances in the Gospels and the Qurʾān", Seyfeddin Kara aims to explore the similarities and differences between parables in the Gospels and the Qurʾān, focusing on the form-critical analysis of the Gospel Parable of the Sower and certain Qurʾānic parables. Conceptual similarities between the parables in both texts are highlighted, particularly regarding faith in an unseen God and the metaphor of soil representing the human heart's receptivity to the divine message. The article concludes by asserting that the Qurʾānic text is a genuine continuation of the biblical text and calls for further comparative studies.

In the second article, "Experiencing al-Ḥusayn's Suffering: *Qamahzanī* in the Shīʿī Mourning Tradition", Zeynep Sena Kaynamazoğlu provides an analysis of the most prominent example of self-mutilation rituals in contemporary Islamic societies. The purpose of this analysis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical course of *qamahzanī*, as well as its connection to religion and politics. According to Kaynamazoğlu, the people saw criticism of the *qamahzanī* as an attempt to prevent them from mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. Despite the prohibitions, this conviction constituted a primary catalyst for the spread of this ceremony. In line with this argument, the article concludes that *qamahzanī* effectively demonstrates the political context that underlies a ceremony primarily focused on individual religiosity.

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Ahmet Türkan's article, "Multidimensional Relations Between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII and the Reflections of These Relations in the Ottoman Empire and Rome", attempts to demonstrate the multidimensional relationship between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII. To prove his case, the author focuses on the Ottoman Archive Documents and news from Istanbul and the European press at that time, in addition to primary sources.

In his article, "Law and Change: A Study of the Cultivation of Wasteland in the 16th-17th Century Ottoman Empire", Bayram Pehlivan evaluates the nature of legal change in Islamic law through the case of the cultivation of wasteland (*iḥyāʾ al-mawāt*). The main thesis of the article is that the Ottoman cultivation of wasteland is compatible with the Ḥanafī interpretation of Islamic law. To that end, the article examines the classical Ḥanafī doctrine and al-Samarqandī's interpretation of the practice. By examining this particular instance, the author also asserts that the jurists and their legal opinions, as documented in the *fatāwā* and *nawāzil* literature, had a significant impact on the doctrinal development and progression of Islamic law.

"Religiosity, Economic Status, Environmental Concern, and Perceived Behavioral Effectiveness as Predictors of Buying Environmentally Friendly Products: A Quantitative Study of Turkish Muslims", by Ali Ayten and Şule Çiçek, presents a study on the effect of different variables on the purchase of environmentally friendly products among Muslims in Turkey. The results show that regarding religiosity, environmental consciousness, attitudes toward nature, and accountability, gender is a significant variable. Religiosity, economic status, perceived behavioral effectiveness, and environmental concern positively affect eco-friendly product purchases.

The article, entitled "A Reply to Morriston's Objection to Plantinga's Free Will Defense", by Ferhat Taşkın, argues that Morriston's objection, which claims the presence of a divine moral perfection problem in Plantinga's ontological argument and defense of free will, is invalid. The central argument revolves around the differentiation between the freedom of God and the freedom of creatures.

Saim Gündoğan's article, "Objections to Sam Harris' Critique of Religion", critically analyzes Sam Harris' defense of the new atheism, focusing specifically on his books, *The End of Faith* and *The Harms of Religion*. Gündoğan aims to prove that Harris' perspective, which lacks

philosophical underpinnings, empirical insights from sociological studies, and scientific data, is superficial and unconvincing due to its reliance on limited assessments.

In the last article of this issue, "Faith and Reason: A Comparative Analysis of Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī and Thomas Aquinas on Intellect, Assent, and Free Will", Muhammet Saygı compares the ideas of two theologians on the nature of religious faith. The author concludes that al-Nasafī considers knowledge sufficient for an individual to accept a religious faith, and similarly, Aquinas utilizes rational explanations to support his theory of faith.

We, the editorial team, are grateful to our authors, referees, and readers for their continued support and look forward to being with you in the next issues of *Ilahiyat Studies*.

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ARTICLES

PARABOLIC RESONANCES IN THE GOSPELS AND THE QUR'ĀN

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Abstract

There are apparent similarities between the parables contained in the Gospels and those found in the Qur'ān, which provide their audiences with illustrations of complex religious concepts and moral teachings through the imagery of everyday life. Based on the form-critical analysis of the Gospel Parable of the Sower and some Qur'ānic parables, this article aims to detect defining similarities and differences between the Gospels and Sūrat al-Baqarah and illuminate details about the historical and geographic context in which the two texts originated. Based on the findings of the comparison, this article will argue that the Qur'ānic text represents a genuine continuation of the biblical text.

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Key Words: Qurʾān, faith, form criticism, parable, the parable of the sower, soil, Muslim-Christian relations

Introduction[1]

In the teachings of the monotheistic religions –Judaism, Christianity, and Islam– parables are used to make abstract religious ideas and concepts tangible for a lay audience[2] through the mediums of sensible phenomena. Major monotheistic religious texts such as the Gospels and the Qurʾān deploy parables as a means of communicating their divine messages to their respective audiences. Jesus Christ and Prophet Muḥammad conveyed theological teachings and moral judgements to their audiences through the medium of these symbolic utterances. There are around fifty parables in the Gospels,[3] and these constitute one-third of all the recorded sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.[4] Therefore, parables have a particular significance in the teachings of Jesus; they provide the audience with an understanding of sophisticated moral and theological teachings through the familiar imagery of first-century Palestine's everyday life.

The parables are also a preferred illustrative device of the Qurʾān; there are around thirty-nine parables mentioned in the Qurʾān that are scattered throughout its various chapters. According to Muslim accounts, most of these parables were revealed in Mecca and some in

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1 The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Mohammed Rustom and Emmi Kara for their invaluable editing assistance. The critical comments and feedback provided by John Kloppenborg, Axel Marc Oaks Takács, Mohammad Saeed Bahmanpour and anonymous reviewers have been instrumental in refining and improving the content of this article. Additionally, the author acknowledges the support of the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Global Fellowship (Funding No: 101022180 — TIQ) for enabling the research and writing of this article.

2 The audience does not always have to be common people; they may also be the audience of the rhetorical performance. This is what Aristotle called paradeigmata, which are normal rhetorical means to illustrate a point – not just for the simple or layperson. Paradeigmata are typically either an opening story used as an induction of a more abstract point or as a concluding visualization of a more abstract speech. (I express my gratitude to Professor John Kloppenborg for this elaboration.)

3 Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1981), 26.

4 Brad H. Young, *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 7.

Medina. Like the Gospel parables, Qurʾānic parables provide the audience with an illustration of complex religious concepts and moral teachings in the imagery of everyday life in seventh-century Arabia.[5] Despite the apparent similarities between the parables of the Bible and the Qurʾān,[6] relatively little attention has been paid to the comparative study of the parables of these two texts[7] as comparative studies to date have focused largely on their prophetic narratives.[8]

As Angelika Neuwirth astutely observes, there have been two main trends with regard to how scholars understand the Qurʾān's status in relation to the biblical text, namely that the Qurʾān is "either as a religiously genuine attestation of biblical faith" or "a mere imitation" of the Bible:

> The Qurʾān until now has not been acknowledged as part of the Western canon of theologically relevant knowledge – although it is obviously a text that, no less than the Jewish and Christian founding documents, firmly stands in the biblical tradition. Indeed, it seems to be the very fact of this close relationship that has kindled the present controversy over the status of the Qurʾān: either as a religiously genuine attestation of biblical faith, a *Fortschreibung* or "continuation" of the Bible, adding to it new dimensions of meaning, or as a mere imitation, a theologically diffuse recycling of biblical tradition. Although new readings advocating a genuine relationship between the Bible and the Qurʾān have lately been

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5 Wadad Kadi (al-Qāḍī) - Mustansir Mir, "Literature and the Qurʾān", *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden - Boston - Köln: Brill, 2001), 1/209.

6 Christopher Buck, "Discovering", *The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 32.

7 Notable yet limited exceptions on Qurʾānic parables. Mustansir Mir, "Language", *The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 104-105; Abdullah Saeed, *The Qurʾan: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 77-78; Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qurʾān: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 97-100; A. H. Mathias Zahniser, "Parable", *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2004); Karim Samji, *The Qurʾān: A Form-Critical History* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2018).

8 In this vein, Angelika Neuwirth rightly pointed out that the Qurʾānic parable narrative remains unresearched. See Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qurʾan and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*, trans. Samuel Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 305.

proposed, scholars are still far from recognizing the status of the Qurʾān as a new manifestation of biblical scripture.[9]

Through a form-critical study of the parables found in both scriptures, this article will argue in line with Neuwirth's thesis that "the status of the Qurʾān as a new manifestation of biblical scripture." In other words, it will argue that the Qurʾānic text is a genuine "continuity" of the biblical one. In addition to providing further supporting evidence, Walid Saleh made a significant contribution to Neuwirth's thesis.[10] Neuwirth has already demonstrated the feasibility of her thesis through an analysis and comparison of the various stylistic features of the Qurʾān and the Bible. However, an examination of the parables found in these two texts will shed further light on this subject. More importantly, this article will scrutinise the "continuity thesis" from the perspective of the metaphor of the soil used to illustrate the varying degrees of the receptivity of the human heart to the Word of God. In this sense, it will compare the parables of the Gospels and Qurʾān for the first time to make a connection between the Gospels and the Qurʾān regarding the grading of their audiences' response to the divine message.

A comparative study of the parables may detect delineating similarities and differences between the biblical and Qurʾānic texts and illuminate details about the historical and geographic surroundings where the two texts originated from. Suppose Neuwirth's argument about the relationship between the two sacred texts is taken at face value. In that case, it seems reasonable to expect that there should be conceptual similarities between the parables of the two texts. Especially those that pertain to faith in an unseen and mighty God. Furthermore, given that an essential characteristic of parables as a genre is that they draw on the familiar and the local in order to maximise the impact they have on their audience, it should be possible to identify the demarcating local ingredients, such as the agricultural, commercial,[11] and geographical elements of seventh-century Arabia. Furthermore, specifically as regards the study of the Qurʾān, these

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9 Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity*, 178.

10 Walid A. Saleh, "The Psalms in the Qur'an and in the Islamic Religious Imagination", *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 286-287.

11 Zahniser, "Parable", 11.

findings would potentially contribute to dispelling the pejorative thesis that it is merely a poor imitation of the "original" Judeo-Christian sources.[12]

An additional benefit of studying the parables of the Qurʾān in this way also pertains to its relationship with the New Testament. As will be shown below, there seems to be a consensus among biblical scholars that parables are the most authentic units of the New Testament that contain the actual teachings of Jesus. Given that the textual originality of the Qurʾān has also been established,[13] investigating the similarities that exist between the parables of the New Testament and those of the Qurʾān becomes more significant for establishing the nature of the connection between these texts.

1. Parables of the Gospels

Given that there is abundant literature discussing the parables of the Gospels, it may be better to understand the meaning of parables within a religious context by looking at parable's meaning in biblical studies. According to a simple biblical studies definition, "parables are earthly stories that illustrate heavenly truths."[14] Jesus used parables to teach his message about God and God's relationship to humanity.[15] C. H. Dodd offers what is perhaps the most comprehensive definition of parables: "At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought."[16]

According to Joachim Jeremias, who was one of the most significant historical critics of the Bible in the modern period,

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[12] For a study of the relevant literature see John Wansbrough, *Qurʾānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977); John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006); Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity*, 33-57; Harald Motzki, "Alternative Accounts of the Qurʾān's Formation", *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 59-75; Fred M. Donner, "The Historical Context", *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (New York: Cambridge University Press 2006), 23-39.

[13] See fn. 30.

[14] Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*, 27.

[15] Young, *The Parables*, 5.

[16] C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Glasgow: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1988), 16.

> Not only do the parables of Jesus regarded as a whole represent a specially reliable tradition, but they also present the appearance of being entirely free from problematic elements. The hearers find themselves in a familiar scene where everything is so simple and clear that a child can understand, so plain that those who hear can say, 'Yes, that's how it is.' Nevertheless, the parables confront us with a difficult problem, namely, the recovery of their original meaning.[17]

Based on the above definitions, I may identify two main characteristics of the parables. First, they take place in an environment that is familiar to their audience and invoke ordinary objects from everyday life. Therefore, people understand them effortlessly. As Donahue notes: "The parables manifest such a range of images that the everyday world of rural, first-century Palestine comes alive in a way true of ancient cultures."[18]

The second salient characteristic of the parables is that they aim to simplify complex and abstract divine teachings. Thus, parables serve as a didactic tool for actively teaching religious and moral values and convincing the audience to adopt them. The parable's style and message are intended to capture the listener's attention unexpectedly; it often comes in the form of a challenge to religious conviction and the corresponding action of the audience. It provides the listener with a glimpse of the divine character and the spiritual realities of human life. The main stylistic feature of the parable is arguably the element of surprise; it sets out to be familiar, but then there is a sudden shift that develops in the plot of its story, "A consciousness of God and his way of viewing the world enters the commonplace scene to communicate the divine message. The familiar setting of the parable allows each person to understand God's will. The local colour of the story is changed for a special purpose."[19]

In other words, parables are the literary devices used to connect the spiritual realm with the physical one by way of making it understandable to ordinary people. In the context of biblical studies,

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[17] Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 12.

[18] John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 2.

[19] Young, *The Parables*, 5.

traditional interpretations of parables up to the end of the 19th century focused on deciphering their allegorical meanings. According to these interpretations, every word and expression had an independent meaning that could be interpreted according to the church's teachings. This approach to the interpretation placed a strong emphasis on the particular details of the parables instead of focusing on their overall messages.

The modern period in parable scholarship in biblical studies began in 1888 with the publication of Adolf Jülicher's *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*. In this two-volume work, Jülicher argued against the allegorical interpretation of the parables and made a strong case for a distinction between parable and allegory. He argued that a parable was a single simile or metaphor and that it aimed to focus on a single reality, not a chain of metaphors. In short, Jülicher's contribution to the field freed the biblical exegesis from the esoteric understanding of the parables that emphasised the details of the story, rather than extracting the main ethical and theological message of the parable.[20] C. H. Dodd's *The Parables of the Kingdom*[21] was the next significant contribution to the field. Dodd concurred with Jülicher's thesis but further asserted that the parables could be best interpreted in the context of the core teaching of Jesus, the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. In his ground-breaking research, Jeremias agreed with Dodd's thesis in general but disputed Dodd's definition of eschatology.[22]

Jeremias argued for the direct relevance of the parables to the life of Jesus. That is to say, he asserted that parables were not merely a literary production but were, in fact, uttered in response to the actual situation of the life of Jesus. Therefore, through a careful study of the parable, Jeremias made a case that parables refer to actual events of history. Thus, they represent the history and not only a literary culture of the early Christians: "What we have to deal with is a conception which is essentially simple but involves far-reaching consequences. It is that the parables of Jesus are not –at any rate primary– literary productions, nor is it their object to lay down general maxims (no one

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[20] Madeleine Boucher, *The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1977), 5-8.

[21] Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*.

[22] Mary Ann Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 24-25.

would crucify a teacher who told pleasant stories to enforce prudential morality)."[23] Instead, each of the parables was expressed in a tangible situation of the life of Jesus, at a particular and often unforeseen point. Moreover, they were concerned with a situation of conflict. They correct, criticise, and attack.[24] Jeremias further states that C. H. Dodd's *Parables of the Kingdom* makes the first successful effort "to place the parables in the setting of the life Jesus, thereby introducing a new era in the interpretation of the parables."[25]

However, over time Jeremias's approach, which was to "attempt to reach back the most primitive text possible for each parable"[26] or "Ur-parables," was criticised on the grounds that it would be impossible to extract historical information from the parables because "the parables he constructs simply do not exist. Jeremias's Ur-parables are hypothetical formulations; therefore, the parable interpreter relying upon them is not only faced with interpreting ancient and culturally alien texts but with interpreting hypothetical texts as well."[27] This view has found widespread acceptance, and modern research on the parables of Jesus has largely shifted from historical research to literary analysis as they now appear in the gospels.

Therefore, the modern studies in parables have mostly fallen into one of two categories: either parables of Jesus or parables of the Gospels, that is to say, scholars have studied the parables either as a conduit for seeking reliable historical information about Jesus or looking at "the theological and polemical interests and intents of the redactors of Gospels."[28] Biblical scholars have used form and redaction criticism methodologies believing that the parables might include valuable information about the teachings of Jesus or about the theological concerns of the early Christian community.[29]

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[23] Charles W. F. Smith, *The Jesus of the Parables* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), 17.
[24] Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 21.
[25] Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 21.
[26] Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables*, 19.
[27] Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables*, 22.
[28] Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables*, 21.
[29] Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables*, 18.

2. The Parables of the Qurʾān

It seems that trends in the biblical studies regarding the study of the parables do not differ significantly from the contemporary study of the Qurʾān in the West. The members of the "revisionist school" were influenced by the dominant views in the field of biblical studies and, consequently, adopted and implemented the same ideas in the field of Qurʾānic studies. These ideas have been outlined by Andrew Rippin in his accessible introduction to the methodological approaches adopted by John Wansbrough in his studies of the Qurʾān.[30]

There have been a number of critiques of the views of the revisionists that have largely succeeded in dispelling their hypotheses about the textual history of the Qurʾān.[31] What is more relevant to the scope of this article, however, is that there is a strong view amongst scholars of biblical studies that parables are probably among the more authentic parts of the Gospels and that it may be possible to reconstruct some aspects of the history of Jesus based on their contents. Furthermore, it has been established by recent scholarship that the Qurʾānic text most probably is the work of the Prophet Muḥammad and that its historical origins lie in seventh-century Arabia.[32]

As I have noted above, the Qurʾān also utilises parables to convey complex religious concepts to its audience in the form of simple narrations. As both Islam and Christianity are Abrahamic religions, it may be possible to locate similarities[33] between the parables contained in their respective sacred texts, especially regarding the faith in an omnipotent God. The following Qurʾānic verse may be taken as a confirmation of this fact: "*We have certainly diversified (ṣarrafnā) this Qurʾān for the people with every [kind of] parable, but most people are*

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30 Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough", *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, ed. Ibn Warraq (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), 355-361.

31 See fn. 11 and 32.

32 Behnam Sadeghi - Mohsen Goudarzi, "Ṣanʿā' 1 and the Origins of the Qur'ān", *Der Islam* 87/1-2 (March 2012): 1-129; Walid A. Saleh, "The Preacher of the Meccan Qur'an: Deuteronomistic History and Confessionalism in Muḥammad's Early Preaching", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 20/2 (June 2018), 74-111; Marijn van Putten, "'The Grace of God' as Evidence for a Written Uthmanic Archetype: The Importance of Shared Orthographic Idiosyncrasies", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 82/2 (June 2019), 271-288.

33 Angelika Neuwirth provides an excellent analysis of the comparison of the Bible and the Qurʾān, see Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity*, 347-378.

only intent on ingratitude." (Q 17:89).[34] It seems reasonable to hypothesise that while the details of the Qurʾānic and Gospel parables might differ because of differences in the localities of their respective audiences, they contain the same message. There are approximately thirty-nine parables contained within the Qurʾān, and these are found in 55 verses spread between the following chapters:

al-Baqarah: 17, 19-20, 26, 171, 261, 264, 265.
Āl ʿImrān: 117.
al-Aʿrāf: 176, 177.
al-Tawbah: 109-110.
Yūnus: 24.
Hūd: 24.
Ibrāhīm: 18, 24, 25, 26.
al-Naḥl: 75, 76, 112.
al-Isrāʾ: 89.
al-Kahf: 32-44, 45, 54.
al-Ḥajj: 31, 73.
al-Nūr: 35-36, 39, 40.
al-ʿAnkabūt: 41, 43.
al-Rūm: 28, 58.
al-Zumar: 27-28, 29.
al-Fatḥ: 29.
al-Ḥadīd: 20.
al-Ḥashr: 21.
al-Jumʿah: 5.

For the most part, these verses use the Arabic word *mathal*[35] to denote a parable (Hebrew is *mašal*, comparison). However, sometimes there is no explicit mention of the word *mathal* but a reference to the previous mention of the word *mathal*, as can be seen in Q 2:19-20. In Arabic, by and large, *mathal* can be translated as simile, similitude, or parable.[36] These two verses do not contain the word *mathal* but instead refer to the previous use of the word in Q 2:17. In some other instances, there is neither explicit use of the word *mathal* nor there is a reference to the previous use of it, and instead

[34] In the translation of the Qurʾānic verses, I mostly rely on ʿAlī Qulī Qarāʾī's translation of the Qurʾān with minor alterations.
[35] On *mathal* see Samji, *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History*, 179-182.
[36] Zahniser, "Parable", 9.

the parable is introduced by the phrase *ka* ("like"), such as in the verses of Q 24:39 and 40. In some verses, such as Q 2:26 and Q 7:176, the word *mathal* was used twice.

The word *mathal* is sometimes used in the sense of "an example." For instance, in verse Q 13:35, the word *mathal* is used to describe the rewards of Paradise. To some extent, however, even this use of the word *mathal* could be counted as a parable, as it tries to explain the abstract concept of Paradise using examples drawn from the objects of everyday life. However, there is no attempt to provide moral and ethical teachings in these types of examples. Also, there are elaborate theological debates among Muslim scholars concerning the nature of Paradise and Hell. Therefore, there is no need to stray into such a problematic area by including them in the category of parables. Most of the parables are included in the chapter *al-Baqarah* (The Cow) –the Qur'ān's longest chapter, revealed in the city of Medina– which contains seven independent parables. In this next section, I will study some of the parables mentioned in the Qur'ān and compare them with the parable of the sower in the Bible.

3. The Parable of the Sower and the Use of "Soil" in the Qur'ān

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his disciples: "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"[37] In this way, Jesus points to the significance of the parable as a means of understanding his innermost teachings.[38] The parable of the sower is included in all synoptic Gospels (as well as the Gospel of Thomas) and is widely believed to be something that Jesus authentically taught. However, it is also believed that the interpretation of the parable (found in Mark 4:14-20, Matthew 13:18-23, and Luke 18:11-15) was added to the original story at a later stage.[39] The original parable is 3-9, the rest is Markan redactional framing:

> (Mark 4) [1]Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in

[37] New International Version.

[38] Birger Gerhardsson, "The Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation", *New Testament Studies* 14/2 (January 1968), 165.

[39] Anna Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?: Explaining the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables in Simple and Universal Human Concepts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257.

it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. [2]He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: [3]"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. [4]As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5]Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. [6]But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.[7] Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. [8]Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." [9]Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." [10]When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. [11]He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables [12]so that,

"'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"

[13]Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? [14]The farmer sows the word. [15]Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. [16]Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. [17]But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. [18]Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; [19]but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. [20]Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

In his interpretation of the parable, Jeremias notes that the parable of the sower fits in the traditional sowing methods used in Palestine. Therefore, it is relevant to the conditions of Palestine where the parable was told. Unlike the generally implemented method, in

Palestine, sowing took place before ploughing.[40] Hence, he concludes that the parable is historically accurate.

Wierzbicka notes the various views regarding the significance of the parable of the sower and mentions the comments of scholars such as Madeleine Boucher, Herbert Lockyer, and Robert Farrar Capon, whom all agree that it is one of the essential parables of the Gospels.[41] Despite the concurrence of the scholars regarding the significance of the parable, however, there is a difference of opinion about its proper interpretation.

Despite the diversity of the opinions, as it was stated by Wierzbicka, the interpretation of the parable may be divided into two main categories: first, Mark's original interpretation included in the Gospel of Mark, which frames the story as a warning against the dangers of worldliness and tribulation.[42] Second, the eschatological interpretation mostly championed by Joachim Jeremias: "In essence, Jeremias (1972) argued that the harvest in verse 8 symbolises an impending world crisis—the coming of the kingdom of God—and that the parable promises the final victory of this kingdom.[43] Mark, on the other hand, saw the parable as speaking about hearing, understanding, and responding to the Word of God."[44]

Many biblical commentators consider Mark's interpretation of the parable of the sower most appropriate interpretation of the parable:

> The view of the present study is that the Markan interpretation gives a very natural rendering of the parable, one which fits it perfectly. The hearer would have to be told that the parable as a whole has to do with hearing the word; but once so informed, he would have little difficulty in apprehending many of its constituent meanings. That the scattering of seed stands for the dissemination of the word;

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[40] Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 11-12.

[41] Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?*, 257-258.

[42] M. F. Wiles, "Early Exegesis of the Parables", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 11/3 (September 1958), 293.

[43] Jeremias insists that the parable refers not only to "doing the word" but also to the kingdom of God. Jeremias calls this the eschatological point of the parable, which he interprets in terms of an impending crisis: "God's hour is coming ... in spite of every failure and opposition, God brings from hopeless beginnings the glorious end that he has promised." Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 119-120. See the criticism of this interpretation in Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?*, 261.

[44] Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?*, 259.

> the ground for those among whom the word is broadcast; the poor and rich soil for those respectively who fail and who succeed in receiving and keeping the word; and the final yield of grain for righteousness—these are meanings that are derived quite naturally from the story. There is nothing in the broad lines of the interpretation that strains the sense of the reference in the parable itself. Even a simple, uneducated hearer of the kind that must have largely made up the audiences of Jesus would have been able to supply these constituent meanings, once he had perceived the whole meaning to be about the word... What the author of the interpretation (whoever he may have been) has done with the parable... is by no means a falsification of its meaning.[45]

There is a universal relevance to the parable in Mark's original interpretation; it is a meaning that can be understood effortlessly by common people, which renders such an interpretation more plausible. The main idea that Mark focuses on is that the sower sows God's Word and that people respond to it differently. Wierzbicka contends that Mark's interpretation has not been superseded by later interpretations, including the latest scholarly hermeneutics.[46]

According to Mark's interpretation, the parable focuses on the soil and its three kinds.[47] In the parable of the sower, the soil signifies the human heart and its receptiveness and reaction to the Word of God. In other words, the parable categorises the different levels of faith or lack of faith in God and His prophet. The aim is to understand what kind of faith these three types of soil represent.

> The interpretation says that the parable is about the duty of the people of God to (effectively) listen to the Word of God, and this takes us to the centre of the covenant ideology. The obligations of the covenant, which in themselves could be summarized in many different ways, could be condensed into the duty to hear—in its most profound sense of hearing and doing—the Word of God. Every pious Jew reminded himself of this obligation daily as he read the Shema'—the covenant text par excellence.[48]

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45 Boucher, *The Mysterious Parable*, 49-50.
46 Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?*, 260.
47 Donald H. Juel, "Encountering the Sower Mark 4:1–20", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 56/3 (July 2002), 274.
48 Gerhardsson, "The Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation", 166.

Gerhardsson refers to the Shema' as the oldest fixed daily prayer in Judaism, which has been recited morning and night since ancient times. This prayer contains the covenant between God and His people and is mentioned in various parts of the Bible: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41. In short, it calls the human being to total submission to God's will, in heart and in deed. In other words, it calls him to have full faith in the words of the Creator.

One of the occurrences of the parable of the soil in the Qur'ān's chapter *al-Baqarah* includes the explicit reference to the parable of the "rocky soil" as it was used in the parable of the sower to describe the faith.

> O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and have no faith in God and the Last Day. Their parable is that of a rock covered with soil: a downpour strikes it, leaving it bare. They have no power over anything of what they have earned, and Allah does not guide the faithless lot. (Q 2:264)

A number of basic similarities between Qur'ānic parables and Gospel ones are apparent: They are presented in clear and simple language, and they are related to objects found in the everyday life of seventh-century Arabia, such that even the most uneducated people could grasp their basic meaning with minimal effort. This gives an important clue about the audiences of Jesus and Muḥammad; their audiences were the same; the common people. Early Christianity and Islam address mainly the lowest levels of their societies, who often have less influence in the society but higher in numbers. So, both Jesus and Muḥammad wanted to reach out to as many people as possible to preach their teachings.

There is something of a consensus among Muslim exegetes that the aforementioned verse addresses the hypocrites[49] who did not believe in the message of the Prophet but pretended to be Muslims because of the prevailing authority of the Prophet in Medina. To delve further into the significance of this parable, I have selected Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) influential[50] *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* as a representative exegesis. In his discussion of the verse, al-Rāzī notes that two images

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[49] Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 98.

[50] See Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'ānic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

are used in this verse; one is that of the disbelievers and the other is that of "a rock covered with soil". The inclusion of the example of disbelievers and the element of pompousness illustrated by the phrase "to be seen by people" in the verse makes it clear that the parable of soil is used to refer to hypocrites who are disbelievers in their hearts but pretend to be believers outwardly. The example gave rise to the idea that good deeds could be rendered void by one of two ways: disbelief in God and committing the misdeed of "reproaches (*al-manni*) and affronts (*al-adhā*)." According to al-Rāzī, committing such a flagrant misdeed is a clear sign of hypocrisy and the parable of a rock covered with soil is given to explain it.

In the verse, the word "rock" (*ṣafwān)* denotes faithless human hearts that do not believe in God but, due to the pressure of the society, perform good deeds such as giving charity but then invalidate these by engaging in "reproaches and affronts." This term for rock refers not to small pieces of stone but to sizeable solid blocks that stand on desert or bare land. It often happens that such a rock might be covered with a layer of soil or dust, such as would allow small plants to take root and grow if they receive light rain. By contrast, a heavy downpour might instead wash away the thin layer of soil and these small plants from the face of the rock because the soil is not deep enough for them to take root.

Thus, the word "soil" (*turāb*) refers to the thin layer of soil that built up on the rock by chance over time, such as by the wind depositing it there. In the parable, this soil represents the good deed of giving charity, but which lacks a firm base and occurred by chance rather than out of a conscious belief in God and a desire to spend one's wealth in the way of God. The "downpour" (*wābil*) of heavy rain represents "reproaches and affronts," that the giver of charity committed after his good deed. Like the thin layer of soil that covered the rock, charity not given for the sake of God is washed away by "reproaches and affronts," leaving the heart barren. Hence, the soil in this parable represents fertility, receptiveness, and the potential to bear the fruit of faith on the Day of Judgement. Good deeds may only be cultivated in fertile soil or in a heart which would convey the good deeds to the Day of Judgement in the forms of the rewards that inhabitants of Paradise would recognise:

> And give good news to those who have faith and do righteous deeds, that for them shall be gardens with streams running in them: whenever they are provided (*ruziqū*) with their fruit for nourishment, they will say, "This is what we were provided before," and they were given something resembling it. In it there will be chaste mates for them, and they will remain in it [forever]. (Q 2:25)

In general, Qurʾānic commentators have understood the word *ruziqū* as food, and thus interpreted the verse in the literal sense, namely that the fruits that people eat in this world will also be available in Heaven. However, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981), one of the most important commentators of the Qurʾān in the 20th century, disagrees with the standard interpretation of the verse. Instead, he reads the verse figuratively and contends that the word "fruit" refers to the fruit of those deeds that people of Heaven performed while they were alive in the previous world. In this vein, the word *ruziqū* does not only mean food, but rather every kind of blessing bestowed upon people, such as knowledge, good character, happiness etc. In the Hereafter, these blessings are obtained through the deeds of the believers in this world: deeds such as prayer, fasting, and giving charity will be returned to them in the Hereafter in the form of spiritual provisions.[51]

Because there is no faith at the foundation of the good deeds performed by hypocrites, this leads them to commit "reproaches and affronts" when the deed is done and thereby turn the soil into dust (*ghubār*).[52] The hearts of disbelievers are like rocks, which do not provide the soil with a natural foundation. Hence, their good deeds inevitably turn to dust and are carried away.[53] Al-Rāzī seems to refer to the idea that charity giving is a good deed for the society and the needy. Similarly, the rain in itself is good for the environment and crops; if the conditions are right, it gives life to everything in the world

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[51] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Qom: Ismāʿīlīyān, 1985), 1/89-90.

[52] In addition to the point made by al-Rāzī in the explanation of the parable, another verse of the Qurʾān may further support the connection between the state of lack of faith and invalidation of the good deeds: "*And [at the point of death] we will turn to the deeds that they [disbelievers] have done and disperse them like dust*." (Q 25:23)

[53] Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-musammá al-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 2/43-47.

and makes living things flourish. But, if the conditions are not right, it may cause havoc. If the hearts of the people who give charity are not faithful, then their giving of charity is associated with reproaches and affronts, which invalidate the good deed on the Day of Judgement by way of increasing the hypocrisy and arrogance of the heart.

However, Ṭabāṭabāʾī again puts forward a slightly different reading of this verse. For him, the addressees of the verse are not the hypocrites but believers whose hearts are afflicted by spiritual illnesses. According to this understanding, because the verse opens with "O you who have faith!" he argues that it indicates those of weak faith who commit reproaches and affronts towards the people to whom they give charity would be disbelievers or hypocrites in this particular instance, as the existence of duplicity is a major sign of disbelief. In other words, any good deed that is *ultimately* committed for the sake of people's approval rather than for the sake of God may take people outside the bounds of faith on the performance of this particular act and render such a person a hypocrite. This means that while the person may be faithful overall, a particular action of ill intent removes the faith from his heart, putting the person into a state of hypocrisy as a result. As for the remainder of the verse, he broadly concurs with al-Rāzī's interpretation.[54]

In addition to this mention in the Chapter of *al-Baqarah*, there is an explicit acknowledgement of the parable of the sower in the Qurʾān, in which soil is referred in relation to the various ways in which human beings receive and respond to the divine message:

> Muḥammad is the messenger of God; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, [but] compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves [in prayer], seeking grace from God and [His] good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, [being] the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Torah; and their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. God has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great reward. (Q 48:29)

[54] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān*, 2/393-395.

The theme of representing the heart with soil is the common feature of both the New Testament and Qurʾān, which reaffirms the fact that both Palestinian Jews to whom Jesus preached and Muslims of Medina to whom Prophet Muḥammad preached were mainly farmers.[55] Therefore, the parable of soil was chosen to describe a receptive and unreceptive soul, as this image of sowing was relevant to the daily lives of the inhabitants of Palestine and Medina in their respective times. One might argue that parables and farming are fairly generic features of both the New Testament and Qurʾān context, but this was not always the case. Because a significant portion of the Qurʾān was revealed in Mecca, which was basically a desert environment, hence no farming could have occurred. In Mecca, the main occupation was trade (of commodity and slave) and religious service in Kaʿbah. Hence, it was not a suitable context for farming; consequently, there was no reference to farming in Meccan verses.

Furthermore, the first twenty verses of the chapter *al-Baqarah*, similar to the parable of the sower, categorise people into distinct groups based on their reaction to the divine revelation. The first group is the believers, who are mentioned in verses 3, 4, and 5. The second group is the disbelievers, who are mentioned in verses 6 and 7. Verses 8 and 20 describe two different types of hypocrites:

First, hypocrites who momentarily believed in the revelation, but then their hearts returned once again to disbelief while they pretended outwardly to be Muslims. This group of hypocrites are mentioned in the Chapter of al-Munāfiqūn (the Hypocrites): "Because, they believed first and then disbelieved..." (Q 63:4). Second, hypocrites who never accepted the revelation but still pretended to be Muslims. It appears the reason more verses are allocated to the discussion of the hypocrites is that the beginning section of the chapter *al-Baqarah* was revealed when the Prophet entered Medina, which is where he first had to deal with the problem of the hypocrites.

3.1. The First Category: Disbelievers

The parable of the sower describes the first category of receptivity of the human heart to the Word of God with the following image: "Some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up." As the New

[55] Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 35.

Testament scholars noted above, the parable's focus is the soil rather than the seed; in the first category, the seeds fall on the ground but are eaten by the birds, meaning that the Word of God is heard but does not penetrate the heart of the listener. Because it was not a fertile ground but hardened soil or path which lost its fertility due to people constantly walking on it. Therefore, it is probable that this group are the disbelievers upon whom the Word of God had no influence.

Looking at the Qurʾānic equivalent of the first group mentioned in the parable of the sower, it can be found in the beginning verses of *al-Baqarah*, immediately before the parables that describe the hypocrites:

> Indeed, those who disbelieve - it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe. God has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment. (Q 2:6-7)

The style of the verse is certainly different from the parable of the sower, but it uses words that indicate a similar reaction to God's Word – namely, that it has no influence on the heart of these listeners. Whether or not God's Messenger tries to sow the seeds of faith in the hearts of these disbelievers, the disbelievers will not be affected by hearing God's Word. This is because "God has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil" or "the birds came and ate it up." Interestingly, in the Qurʾān, a sealed heart – one which is utterly turned against the message of God– is also associated with the image of being eaten by birds:

> ... as persons having pure faith in God, not ascribing partners to Him. Whoever ascribes partners to God is as though he had fallen from a height to be devoured by birds, or to be blown away by the wind far and wide. (Q 22:31)

The similarity between the Gospel and Qurʾānic parables in their description of disbelievers is striking. Those people whose hearts refuse the divine message are considered like seeds fallen into barren soil, and birds –used here to symbolise Satan– come and take away such hearts:

> [14]The farmer sows the word. [15]Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

The use of birds to symbolise Satan is salient in both examples. In the example of the Qur'ān, the individual choice of disbelief is equated with the self-destructive behaviour of throwing oneself from a height only to be devoured by birds. Birds in this context implicitly refer[56] to Satan, whose influence would push disbelievers further away from God and intensify the process of their self-destruction in the Hereafter. In both examples, however, the source of disbelief is not Satan. Rather, the disbelief is the result of an internal process or a lack of receptiveness of a person's heart (or fertile soil) to the divine message.

Elsewhere, the Qur'ān makes it clear that it is individuals who initiate their state of disbelief by the choices and actions they take, and Satan intensifies this process: "*Because* of their disbelief, God set a seal [on their hearts]" (Q 4:155). In another example: "*Have you seen someone who has taken his own desire as god. God misguided him despite the knowledge he had and sealed his ears and his heart and veiled his vision...*" (Q 45:23). Once the heart and mind are set on disbelief, the consequences of the individuals' choice amplify their experience of disbelief, which is then depicted as giving Satan dominion over them – as illustrated by the phrase "God set a seal [on their hearts]."[57] The natural consequence of God setting a seal on disbelievers' hearts is to place them under the guidance of Satan: "*... And those who disbelieve, their guardians are the evil ones/Satan will take them from light to darkness...*" (Q 2:257).

In both parables, the external role of the birds or Satan is clear. They are there to devour what has been consciously left unprotected. However, despite the thematic and symbolic similarity of the two parables, one cannot ignore the differences in the use of metaphors. The biblical parable is used in the context of the sowing practice of Palestinians, while the Qur'ānic parable, in the general terms of falling from a height and being devoured by scavenger birds, is more relevant to geographical features of the city of Medina, which is surrounded by

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[56] Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī,* 2/222-223.

[57] Some verses of the Qur'ān may offer a more comprehensive perspective on this issue. In this case, for example, the verse 4:155 provides an explanation for why God set a seal on the hearts of disbelievers: "*Because of their disbelief,* God set a seal [on their hearts]." According to the Qur'an, the cause of their hearts being sealed is their individual choice to disbelieve, rather than the cause of their disbelief being that God sealed their hearts and that, therefore, they are doomed to be disbelievers.

mountainous terrain.[58] This perfectly fits into the demarcating differences that give parables their key ingredients of locality and familiarity. Of course, farming was also practised in Medina,[59] thus "birds", the common enemy of the farmers in agricultural societies, that devour what is left in the open and unprotected, could have eaten those seeds that fell on infertile soil, but perhaps heights or the mountains surrounding the city of Medina were more salient images for the audience, especially for those who came to Medina as visitors from the other parts of Arabia.

3.2. The Second Category: Hypocrites Who Briefly Had Faith

> [5]Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.[6]But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. [7]Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

This section of the parable refers to people who hear God's Word and instinctively accept it in their hearts, which momentarily fills them with joy and happiness. Unlike the previous category, whose hearts were utterly unreceptive, the seed or the Word penetrates into the heart of listeners of the second category. However, it does not take root in the individual's heart because the spiritual depth of their heart is shallow. Thus, such an individual's commitment to the Word of God is superficial. As soon as an external difficulty emerges (when the sun comes up or thorns grow), the superficial faith is scorched, withered, or choked as it did not have strong roots in the soil (in the heart).

The same concept is invoked in the parables of the torch and the rainstorms in the chapter *al-Baqarah* of the Qurʾān, which concerns the hypocrites. Some of these hypocrites briefly believed in the message of the Prophet Muḥammad but then turned away from the message, while others never believed the message in the first place but made an outward show of faith. The section of verses discussing the hypocrites begins with Q 2:8. However, it is in Q 2:16 that the parable of the torch is introduced, and so it is from here that we will begin our

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[58] The city of Medina is naturally surrounded by two hills. See, Harry Munt, *The Holy City of Medina: Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 68-71.

discussion: "*They are the ones who bought error for guidance, so their trade did not profit them, nor were they guided*."

This verse says that this group of people figuratively "bought error (*al-ḍalālah*) for guidance." It indicates that this group of hypocrites first received guidance from the Prophet but then exchanged this guidance for misguidance in return for personal gain when they received an offer from the other disbelievers in exchange for giving up their belief in the Prophet's message. This offer may not necessarily have been one of the material rewards; it may also be the offer of an improved social position or of prestige. Verse 17 further elaborates on the process by which these hypocrites lost their faith: "*Their parable is that of one who lighted a torch, and when it had lit up all around him, God took away their light and left them sightless in a manifold darkness*." (Q 2:16-17)

The parable likens this group's initial belief in the Prophet and his revelations to their lighting up a torch that illuminated their surroundings. In the parable of the sower, this same phenomenon is expressed by the phrase "*Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow*." Because the light of the torch was not perpetual –as compared to natural sources of light, such as the sun or stars– it was vulnerable to being extinguished by the wind and rain or running out of fuel. And as soon as God caused these external elements to act –in a manner similar to the Sun coming up and scorching the plant that sprang from the seed or the thorns choking it in the Parable of the Sower– the light vanished and the people were left lost in darkness.

The darkness referenced in this verse symbolises the fact that when an individual believes, they do not only perceive the physical realm but something beyond as well –the spiritual realm– by broadening their vision. As soon as the hypocrites believed in the Prophet, the torch was lit. Then, when they disbelieved, the torch was extinguished, and they were plunged into darkness and could no longer perceive the realities of the spiritual realm. In the example of the seed, the seed is God's Word, and in the case of successful sowing, it grows into a plant –symbolising faith– and flourishes towards the spiritual realm, connecting the individual to the spiritual realm.

The parable of the rainstorm mentioned in Q 2:19–20 further elaborates on the hypocrites:

> Or that of a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, thunder, and lightning: they put their fingers in their ears due to the thunderclaps, apprehensive of death; and God besieges the faithless.
>
> The lightning almost snatches away their sight: whenever it shines for them, they walk in it, and when the darkness falls upon them, they stand. Had God willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, God has power over all things.

The "rainstorm" (*ṣayyib*) here represents the perception of the revelation by the hypocrites who never believed in the Prophet. The revelation would come frequently at the time and such was its abundance that these hypocrites felt like it was like a "rainstorm". As a matter of fact, rain is essential for human existence; it brings benefits to the land and all that lives on it. However, due to their blindness to the truth, the hypocrites only saw the negative and frightening features of a rainstorm, such as darkness, rather than its beneficial side.

Verse 20 illustrates another trait of those hypocrites who never believed in the Prophet. As Muslims' accounts of early Islam claim, there were occasions during the Prophet's mission in which the hypocrites received guidance momentarily. For example, when the time came to share war booty between the Muslims, the hypocrites would receive their share as established in the Qurʾān and it would make them pleased with the Prophet. However, if there were a difficult situation, they would quickly become discontented; consequently, they would lose the guidance again. In this vein, the expression "rocky soil" mentioned in Q 2:264, studied above, may also refer to hypocrites who momentarily accepted the faith. But because their faith was shallow; because the base of their heart was a rock which was covered with a thin layer of soil, in the face of some external difficulties, they lost their faith.

It needs to be kept in mind that, unlike Muḥammad, Jesus did not establish any political entity or wield any political authority. Hence, there was no need for people to pretend they were the followers of Jesus. He neither held power nor was able to offer incentives to his people, thus those who refused his message never felt the need to hide their disbelief in the same manner as the hypocrites of Medina.

However, according to Muslim sources, Muḥammad did wield political power, and this meant that some people deliberately hid their disbelief, either out of fear or to obtain some benefit for themselves. Therefore, correspondence between the message of the Qurʾān's parables and the historical context of Muḥammad's life is remarkable.

The existence of the political power is the key difference between Muḥammad and Jesus, which left its mark in their teachings. Although Jesus was seen as a political threat to the local Rome appointed leader of Galilee and this perception played an important role in his perceived punishment of crucifixion. It was a punishment only implemented on slaves and enemies of the state. Jesus was certainly not a slave; thus, he must have been considered an enemy of the state.[60] Although Jesus might have had a political agenda on the side of his religious teachings, it is almost certain that he never wielded political power. Nevertheless, post 325 CE-Christians obtained political power and transformed how they understood the Gospel message in accordance with their changing circumstances.[61]

On the other hand, Muḥammad, after the first ten years of his stay in Mecca, migrated to Medina, where he gained the unwavering support of two powerful tribes of the city. With the existing support of his followers, who migrated with him from Mecca, Muslims became the most organised and powerful religio-political force in the city of Medina. The Charter of Medina[62] (or the Constitution of Medina) became an important tool for Muḥammad's projection of political power over the Medinan society, where the above-mentioned verses were believed to be revealed. The Charter granted Muḥammad the role of the final arbitrator of the disputed matters, thus paving the way for his political power in the society. The later expeditions of Muḥammad, especially with the Meccan polytheists, strengthened the political claim of Muḥammad and his followers. In the presence of such

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60 I express my gratitude to John S. Kloppenborg for teaching this and many important information about the study of the life of Jesus and the Gospels in his course on Early Gospels.

61 I thank Axel Marc Oaks Takács for proving this insight.

62 See Muhammad Nazeer Kaka Khel, "Foundation of the Islamic State at Medina and Its Constitution", *Islamic Studies* 21/3 (Autumn 1982), 61-88; Uri Rubin, "The 'Constitution of Medina' Some Notes", *Studia Islamica* 62 (1985), 5-23.

overwhelming political and military force,[63] it was only normal for those who did not accept the religious teachings of Muḥammad to fake their faith to either avoid repercussions or take full benefit of the newly emerging socio-political situation in the city. It was inevitable that the verses of the Qurʾān would have to take a stock of the new situation in Medina and address such a pretence response to the Prophet's preaching.

3.3. The Third Category: Believers

Verse 8 of the parable of the sower mentions the believers, the third category:

> [8]Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew, and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.

Here, God's Word meets the fertile soil, and faith flourishes in the form of an abundance of crops. New Testament scholars emphasise that this parable refers to deeds rather than mere belief, as faith is not merely a spiritual commitment but also needs to be supported with active loyalty: "To bear fruit' was a traditional image for an active loyalty to the covenant, a righteousness that was shown in the life and in deed."[64]

The description of the faithful at the beginning of the chapter *al-Baqarah* places the same emphasis on the deeds:

> Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter, they are certain [in faith]. (Q 2:3-4)

This verse draws an explicit connection between believing in God's Word and demonstrating an active loyalty to the commands of God, which is the description of faith. Because, according to Qurʾān, God is beyond human comprehension and people have physical existence and limitations, the connection between God and humankind can only be achieved through faith. However, faith can only be attained and preserved through worship or active loyalty. In other words, faith is an action of the heart[65] and needs to be set into motion through outward deeds. According to the Qurʾān, the same applies to angels as well;

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[63] Saleh, "The Psalms in the Qurʾan and in the Islamic Religious Imagination", 282-283.

[64] Gerhardsson, "The Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation", 177-178.

[65] Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī,* 2/269-270.

even though they are unseen (by people), like God, they also need to connect to God through faith and worship: "*Those [angels], at the closest point to God and those around it, exalt their Lord with praise and they have faith in Him...*" (Q 40:7). This is because God is also beyond the comprehension of angels, who live in the unseen world but are on a different level.

Further, *al-Baqarah* uses the parable of the crop to illustrate the benefits of deeds which are done as a result of intense devotion to God:

> The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is that of a grain which grows seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. God enhances severalfold whomever He wishes, and God is all-bounteous, all-knowing. (Q 2:261)

This verse ostensibly describes the reward of spending on the way of God, but, ultimately, given the close connection between faith and worship, charity giving is presented as an act of faith or as evidence of the presence of faith in the heart.[66] According to this parable, the combination of a receptive heart (or fertile soil) and the performance of good deeds results in an exponential reward. It is also striking that the highest number in a multitude of crop and grains was given in both the parables of sower and 2:261 is a hundred. Most likely, the numbers are used figuratively[67] to represent the exponentiality of good deeds that are rooted in faith.

Conclusion

This article is built upon Neuwirth's thesis wherein she views "the status of the Qur'ān as a new manifestation of biblical scripture." It set out to further explore this thesis by examining parables in the Gospel and the Qur'ān. I set two main parameters for a successful assessment of such a thesis through studying the parables: I expected to see conceptual similarities between the Gospel and Qur'ān parables, particularly those that pertain to faith in an unseen God. Also, in accordance with the essential characteristics of parables as a form of

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[66] David Waines considers the verse an example of demonstration of the all-powerful nature of God. David Waines, "Agriculture and Vegetation", *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden - Boston - Köln: Brill, 2001), 1/42.

[67] For an example of the figurative use of the numbers see Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 70.

genre, it was reasonable to expect to also find region and religion-specific elements that set these parables apart from one another.

The study discovered profound conceptual similarities between the parables found in the two monotheistic texts of the New Testament and the Qurʾān, as well as clear signs of local differences. The similarity in the metaphor of the soil used to illustrate the varying degrees of the receptivity of the human heart to the Word of God is indeed an important element that connects the Bible to the Qurʾān.

The most important connection was the use of soil as a metaphor to refer to the heart both in the Gospels and the Qurʾān. In accordance with the use of soil, the reception to the Word of God was graded by the level of the hardness of the soil. In both texts, a receptive or faithful heart was described as fertile soil that embraces the word of God, or a seed that connects the spiritual realm to the physical realm through the manifestation of faith, or the sprouting of the crop. In contrast, the state of disbelief or an unreceptive heart was likened to a rock that lacks the necessary foundation and thus is not open to embrace the Word of God.

Moreover, between the two spectrums, there were the hypocrites whose faith was built upon "rocky soil" or "rocky places, where it did not have much "soil". In other words, they did not build their faith on fertile ground. Consequently, their faith was shallow and in the face of some external difficulties such as the sun, thorns or downpour of rain, their faith was lost. I noted that the theme of representing the heart as soil is a common feature of both religious texts, which reaffirms the fact that both the Palestinian Jews to whom Jesus preached and Muslims of Medina to whom Muḥammad preached were mainly farmers. The use of the metaphor of soil, therefore, made great sense to the people of Nazareth and Medina.

However, there was an important distinction between Jesus and Muḥammad; while the former did not wield political power, the latter did. The use of the parables appears to fit well with the scarce information preserved about the life and preaching of Jesus in first-century Palestine, particularly about his lack of political power. This is why the parable of the sower contains no reference to hypocrites who make an outward show of belief due to a combination of fear and the desire to win favour. However, the Prophet Muḥammad did obtain political power and the Qurʾānic parables reflect the available

historical information about the early history of Islam. In this sense, the study has shown that a close comparison of the Gospels and the Qurʾān may yield positive results in establishing a connection between the two monotheistic texts and help locate their historical relevance to their original audiences.

Aside from the soil, the use of birds in the parables of the Gospels and Qurʾān was also significant. The birds were used in both texts to refer to Satan, whose job was to eat or further mislead people who chose to disbelieve in the Word of God. In the Qurʾān, the individual choice of disbelief is equated with the self-destructive behaviour of throwing oneself from a height only to be devoured by birds. In the Gospels, it was again the individual choice of disbelieving; people heard the message, but they decided to disbelieve because their heart was hardened and turned into a path. In such a case, it becomes possible for Satan to further carry away from the message. In both parables, the source of disbelief is not Satan. Rather, the disbelief results from an internal process of an unreceptive heart. Birds are there to devour what has been consciously left unprotected.

However, despite the thematic and symbolic similarity of the two parables, I also noted differences in the use of metaphors. While the Gospel parable is used in the context of the sowing practice of Palestinians, the Qurʾānic parable in the general terms of falling from a height and being devoured by scavenger birds is more relevant to the geographical features of the city of Medina, which is surrounded by mountainous terrain. Such style fits well into the demarcating differences that give parables their key ingredients of locality and familiarity. Farming was also practised in Medina, thus "birds", the common enemy of the farmers in agricultural societies, that devour what is left in the open and unprotected, could have eaten those seeds that fell on infertile soil, but heights surrounding the city of Medina were more salient images for the audience.

Because of the unique importance of the parable of the Gospels that they are the more authentic parts of the Gospels, the form-critical comparison carried out in this article is more significant. This is much different from comparing the prophetic stories of the Bible and Qurʾān. It may be possible to argue for the influence of prophetic stories mentioned in the Bible on the Qurʾān. Because these stories exist in the Bible and the Qurʾān; one only needs to copy and edit them before

reinserting them into the Qurʾān. Of course, the existence of additional detail and different focus in the prophetic stories of the Qurʾān hinders such argument, but still, it remains a possibility. However, parables are used to make abstract religious ideas and concepts tangible for the audience through the mediums of sensible phenomena. Therefore, they are indirect linguistic tools, and it is almost impossible to copy metaphors of the Gospels to the Qurʾān while ignoring the demarcating local ingredients.[68] With the comparison of the parables, this article, together with Walid Saleh's work, makes a stronger case for the continuity thesis; it aspires to pave the way for further comparative and more detailed studies of the parables of the Gospels and Qurʾān.

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[68] It must be noted that the argument for the continuity thesis does not necessarily negate the inimitability thesis. Rather, it suggests that the Qurʾān can be seen as a continuation of previous monotheistic scriptures while also maintaining its unique qualities. Moreover, the Qurʾān has its own literary style, structure, and language that distinguish it from previous scriptures. In this vein, I agree with the justifications for the continuity thesis that Neuwirth and Saleh have expressed in Neuwirth, "Qurʾānic Studies and Philology"; Saleh, "The Psalms in the Qurʾan and in the Islamic Religious Imagination".

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EXPERIENCING AL-ḤUSAYN'S SUFFERING: *QAMAHZANĪ* IN THE SHĪʿĪ MOURNING TRADITION

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Abstract

Qamahzanī (or *qamazanī*, *qama-zanī,* i.e., mortifying oneself with a sharp object) is one of the most controversial components of the Shīʿī mourning culture. This ceremony aims to share and experience al-Imām al-Ḥusayn's pain, and it has been performed by various Shīʿī communities for the last centuries. Historical data show that *qamahzanī* has been practiced in Iran since the Safavid period and spread to other countries with large Shīʿī populations, such as Syria and Iraq, during the Qajar period. Travel books that describe mourning in Iran during the Safavid period provide essential data about the first examples of *qamahzanī*, its transformation, and its place in popular religiosity. In addition, since the Safavid era, Shīʿī scholars have adopted different attitudes toward *qamahzanī*, and this ritual has been

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the subject of politics as well as piety. This article aims to understand the historical course of *qamahzanī* as well as its relationship with religion and politics and, indirectly, to question the power of high religious discourse to shape popular religiosity.

Keywords: Islamic sects, Shīʿah, Muḥarram, al-Imām al-Ḥusayn, Karbalāʾ, self-flagellation, *qamahzanī*.

Introduction

The incident of Karbalāʾ, which resulted in the martyrdom of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn and many of his companions, deeply affected the Islamic ummah. Since 61/680, when the incident of Karbalāʾ took place, various ceremonies have been performed, primarily by Shīʿī Muslims, to mourn the martyrdom of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. Mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn in the Islamic month of Muḥarram has an irreplaceable role in the construction of Shīʿī identity.[1] In this context, the ceremonies performed in Muḥarram constitute the strongest fortress of Shīʿī spirituality.

Even though mourning for imāms, especially for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn, has been encouraged by both written and oral traditions, these mourning rituals harbor several problems. Religious rulings on many issues, such as the falsification caused by the telling of stories that lack historical authenticity in *rawḍahkhānī* assemblies, the role of women or the disguise of men as women in religious dramas known as the *taʿziyah*, the use of pop music in mourning ceremonies, and loud wailing in mourning assemblies, have long been debated. One controversial issue is the *qamahzanī* ceremony. This study primarily aims to identify the historical journey of *qamahzanī*, which can be considered an essential component of Muḥarram ceremonies today, and to understand its importance in the religiosity of the Iranian people. In this context, this paper examines the performance of the *qamahzanī* ceremony, its underlying philosophy, and claims about its origin. Subsequently, this study discusses the historical course of

[1] Behram Hasanov - Agil Shirinov, "Suffering for the Sake of Cosmic Order: Twelver Shīʿah Islam's Coping with Trauma", *Ilahiyat Studies* 8/1 (2017), 65-93.

qamahzanī and the attitude of Shīʿī scholars toward it.[2] Finally, using the case of *qamahzanī*, it aims to discuss the power of public religiosity vis-à-vis official/high religious discourse.

There are several studies on this topic in various languages. Since it is a contemporary issue in Iran, there are many Persian-language studies on the subject, but most seem to be based on either the defense or rejection of *qamahzanī*. Some English-language studies have also been written on the Islamic ruling on *qamahzanī* and its historical journey.[3] While there have been several studies in Turkish on the ceremonies performed during Muḥarram,[4] there has been no independent study of *qamahzanī* and other self-mutilation rituals. In general, it is noteworthy that such a popular topic has received relatively little academic attention compared to other rituals.

Studies have expressed different opinions about the period of the emergence of the *qamahzanī* ceremony. This study identifies the period of the emergence of *qamahzanī* and its first examples in light of historical data, especially the travelogues of the Safavid period, and draws attention to the transformation of this ceremony over time. In addition, through the case of *qamahzanī*, this study draws attention to

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2 This study is not concerned with determining the religious ruling on *qamahzanī* and similar acts but merely explains the opinions of some of the Shīʿī scholars on the subject.

3 Yitzhak Nakash, "An Attempt to Trace the Origin of the Rituals of *ʿĀshūrā'*", *Die Welt Des Islams* 33/2 (1993), 161-181; Jean Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II. The Consolidation of Safavid Shiʿism: Folklore and Popular Religion", *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 139-190; Werner Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamā'", *Der Islam* 55/1 (1978), 19-36; Ingvild Flaskerud, "Ritual Creativity and Plurality: Denying Twelver Shia Blood-Letting Practices", *The Ambivalence of Denial: Danger and Appeal of Rituals*, ed. Ute Hüsken - Udo Simon (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 109-134; Oliver Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism: Modernism, Sectarianism and the Politics of Self-Flagellation (*Taṭbīr*)", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 50/5 (2023), 1067-1090.

4 Metin And, *Ritüelden Drama: Kerbelâ-Muharrem-Taʿziye* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2012); Fatih Topaloğlu, "Şia'da Kerbelâ Mateminin Ortaya Çıkışı ve Eski İran Kültürüyle İlişkisi", *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Kerbela (Tarih Bilimleri)*, ed. Alim Yıldız - Ali Aksu (Sivas: Asitan Yayıncılık, 2010), 1/501-509; Zeynep Sena Kaynamazoğlu, "Matemin Gölgesinde Sivil Bir Fenomen: İran'da Dinî Heyetler", *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* 58 (December 2022), 67-76; Behruz Bekbabayi - Umut Başar, "Muharrem Ritüellerinde İslam Öncesi İnanç İzleri: İran Türkleri Örneği", *Millî Folklor* 16/125 (Spring 2020), 110-122; Zeynep Sena Kaya, *İran'da Âşûrâ Merasimleri ve Tarihsel Gelişimi* (Bursa: Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2018).

the practical and transformative power of public religiosity in Shīʿah, over which scholars have undisputed religious and political authority, and aims to enrich the literature by seeking answers to new questions on the issue of *qamahzanī*.

1. Nomenclature, Performance, and Origin of the *Qamahzanī* Ceremony

Qamahzanī[5] is an act of self-harm in which a person strikes a cutting object, such as a dagger, knife, or razor blade, on the head, forehead, or any other part of the body, causing blood to flow from the body. This constitutes one of the mourning ceremonies of the Shīʿīs. In Iran, those who strike themselves with the dagger (*qamah*) are referred to as *qamahzan* (dagger striker), and this action is referred to as *qamahzanī*, *tighzanī*, or *shamshīrzanī*. The Arabic equivalent of the term is *taṭbīr,* while in Türkiye and Azerbaijan, it is known as *baş yarma* (head splitting) and *baş vurma* (head hitting). Today, Muḥarram ceremonies are performed in many countries with Shīʿī populations. While the intensity and form of the *qamahzanī* ceremony varies depending on the region, it is performed in Iran, Iraq, India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Bahrain, and many other countries.[6] Although this ceremony is basically part of Muḥarram ceremonies, some records show that it has also been performed at ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of the first Shīʿī Imām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and even at the funerals of some civilians.[7]

As will be discussed in the following sections of this article, historical records demonstrate that in addition to the head and forehead, the biceps, wrists, and chest were mutilated/flagellated during Muḥarram ceremonies during the Safavid period. Indeed, it seems that self-mutilation of other parts of the body was more common than the head and forehead. However, the expression *qamahzanī*

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5 This expression is a Persian phrase and the noun-verb form of the verb *qamahzadan* (to strike a dagger).

6 Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī, "Qamah'zanī", *Farhang-i Sūg-i Shīʿī*, ed. Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī (Tehran: Khaymah, 1395 HS), 388-389.

7 Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power", 142; Sir Anthony Sherley, *The Broadway Travellers: Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 128.

currently means "to strike the head with a sharp object".[8] It seems that in Iran and neighboring countries, over time, the self-mutilation of other parts of the body gave way to self-mutilation of the head, and today, the term *qamahzanī* refers only to cutting off the forehead. The fact that the focal point of scholarly discussions during the Qajar period was "to injure the head" suggests that the act of *qamahzanī* began to be limited gradually to the head, at least from this period onward. In this article, to determine the historical development of *qamahzanī*, all acts of self-mutilation of different parts of the body with a sharp instrument as part of Muḥarram ceremonies are considered within the scope of *qamahzanī*. Indeed, there are records of self-mutilation of both the head/face and other body parts since the early Safavid period. These practices performed as part of Muḥarram ceremonies are similar and should, therefore, be analyzed together.

Although the *qamahzanī* ceremony, which is currently limited to the self-mutilation of the head, vary in intensity and form between cities and even villages, it is possible to give a general description of its performance. The *qamahzanī* performers gather at dawn on the 10th day of Muḥarram (*ʿĀshūrāʾ*), when al-Imām al-Ḥusayn was martyred, in long white dresses similar to shrouds and with the front part of their heads shaved. The gathering place could be a mosque, *tekke* (monastery), *ḥusayniyyah*, *imāmzādah,* or square. Performers perform their prayers with the congregation and then recite *ziyārat-i ʿāshūrāʾ*. Then, they gather in circles and initiate the *qamahzanī* ceremony. Each group has an experienced person in charge of the ceremony who strikes the first dagger. Various *dhikr*s are also recited rhythmically while striking with the dagger. The *mayandār*, who stands in the center of the circle and leads the ceremony, and the surrounding *qamahzan*s shout "*Shāh Ḥusayn/Wāh Ḥusayn"* or

[8] Sharp objects or razor blades are attached to the ends of chains, and the back is self-mutilated in the Muḥarram ceremonies in the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, these ceremonies are not referred to as *qamahzanī* in contemporary usage. The meaning of *qamahzanī*, which is restricted to self-mutilation of the head, is reflected in the Turkish names of the ceremony as *baş yarma* (head splitting) and *baş vurma* (head hitting).

"Ḥaydar/Ṣafdar". At the end of the ceremony, the observers offer food and sweets to the performers.[9]

The purpose of the *qamahzanī* ceremony is to show commitment to do anything for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn and to perpetuate the memory of the Karbalāʾ incident. This act is fundamentally associated with sacrifice and courage. According to the widespread Shīʿī tradition, al-Imām al-Ḥusayn rose up and sacrificed himself for the sake of Islam even though he knew that he would be assassinated.[10] In particular, voluntary martyrdom[11] and sacrifice, or going to death deliberately and willingly, constitute one of the main themes of the mourning tradition. By sacrificing their own blood, the *qamahzanī* performers demonstrate that they are ready to do whatever it takes to uphold the cause of al-Ḥusayn and fight on his side. The bloodshed and wounds inflicted for his sake are a badge of pride, a demonstration of power, and a symbol of "manhood".[12] Young men demonstrate their strength and prove their masculinity through *qamahzanī*, which is an exclusively male ceremony. Refraining from such actions is associated with cowardice and weakness.[13] It is evident that the shedding of blood in the *qamahzanī* ceremony is not a result but a goal. The organization of blood donation campaigns organized by Shīʿī communities living in various countries in the month of Muḥarram is an indication of this.[14]

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9 Maẓāhirī, "Qamah'zanī", 390-391; Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaydarī, *Tirāzhīdiyā Karbalāʾ: Sūsiyūlūjīyā al-khiṭāb al-Shīʿī* (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2015), 114-116; Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 149-150.

10 Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, "Çağdaş Şîa Düşüncesinde Kerbela'nın Problemli Mirası: İmam Hüseyin Kazanmak İçin mi Yoksa Canını Feda İçin mi Ayaklandı?", *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Kerbela (Tarih Bilimleri)*, ed. Alim Yıldız - Ali Aksu (Sivas: Asitan Yayıncılık, 2010), 1/383-407.

11 A Christian-like understanding that al-Imām al-Ḥusayn sacrificed himself to redeem people's sins is also present. This emphasis on voluntary martyrdom has caused the al-Imām al-Ḥusayn and the mourning after him to be addressed in relation to Christianity.

12 In 2016, during the mourning processions that I observed in the province of Iğdır (in Turkey), a *qamahzanī* performer in his 60s reported that when he hit his head with a dagger for the first time as a child, his father bought him ice cream and told him, "You are a real man now". In this example, it is noteworthy that *qamahzanī* is perceived as a criterion of masculinity and a kind of rite of passage.

13 Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power", 170; David Pinault, *The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 102-104.

14 For differences of opinion on blood donation campaigns organized in Muḥarram, see Flaskerud, "Ritual Creativity and Plurality", 116-117.

Another feeling inherent in the *qamahzanī* ceremony is regret. Shortly after the Karbalāʾ incident, those who invited al-Ḥusayn left him alone and watched his martyrdom came together with regret for being unable to save al-Ḥusayn; thus, the movement of *Tawwābūn* was born. The members of *Tawwābūn* adopted the belief that the burden of the sin they had committed would only be lightened by avenging al-Ḥusayn's death or dying for this cause.[15] Today, the same regret manifests in the form of self-flagellation. The *qamahzan*s also regret the failure to save their Imām and, in some sense, punish themselves.

The performers of the ceremony revive al-Imām al-Ḥusayn's experience by shedding their blood, sharing his pain, and identifying themselves with al-Ḥusayn. In this sense, individuals also rebel against loneliness, betrayal, and troubles in their own lives through the Karbalāʾ incident. The ceremonies performed for family members in countries such as Iran and Azerbaijan, where the culture of mourning remains strong, are shaped by the example of Muḥarram ceremonies. This is a clear example of the bond established with the Ahl al-bayt.

It is challenging to reach a definite conclusion about the origin of *qamahzanī* and similar acts of self-mutilation. Researchers have identified four main points of origin for these acts: the Kızılbaş Turks, Christianity, the Indian region, and the Sufi groups.[16] It is reasonable to evaluate these elements, which interact with each other, together rather than selecting a single one as the origin. At this point, many studies favor the claims of the Kızılbaş or Christian cultures as the origin.

It is noteworthy that some of the funeral ceremonies of the Turks are in the form of a procession and include the presence of mourners, the hanging of flags over the tent of the mourning, and customs of self-mutilation and blood-shedding, such as cutting the nose and ears and wounding the face, which are quite similar to the Muḥarram mourning. In fact, it has been reported in historical records that the Göktürks,

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[15] Hasan Onat, *Emevîler Devri Şiî Hareketleri ve Günümüz Şiîliği* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), 72.

[16] Muḥammadʿ Alī Afḍalī, *Qamah'zanī: Zakhmī bar Chahrah-yi Tashayyuʿ* (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 1394 HS), 22-29; Muḥammad Mashhadī Nūshābādī, *Taṣawwuf-i Īrānī wa-ʿAzādārī-yi ʿĀshūrā: Naqsh-i Ṣūfiyyah, Ahl-i Futuwwat wa-Qalandariyyah dar Bunyān'gudhārī-yi Āyīnhā-yi Muḥarram* (Isfahan: Nashr-i Ārmā, 1396 HS), 291-302.

Huns, and Kazakhs cut their hair, cut off their ears, and scratched and wounded their faces with knives while mourning. Even in Kazakh culture, the household of the deceased is called "*cüzi caralı, üyi garalı*" (whose face is wounded, and the house is in darkness).[17]

In a 6th-century record, a description of the burial rites of the Tan Dynasty of the Göktürks bears a striking resemblance to *qamahzanī*: "... they put the dead in the tent. His sons, grandsons, and other male and female relatives sacrifice horses and sheep and lay them in front of the tent. They ride around the tent, where the dead is placed, seven times on horseback. In front of the door, they cut their faces with a knife and weep. The blood flowing from their faces and the tears flowing from their eyes mix together. They perform this ceremony seven times."[18] Such data support the opinion that some of the rituals in Muḥarram ceremonies may be rooted in Shamanism and have continued to exist in a new form with Islam.[19]

Another assertive claim to which researchers draw attention is that self-flagellation rituals emerged under the influence of Christian culture. Activities such as *zanjīrzanī* (chain striking) and *qamahzanī* are likened to the blood-shedding by Catholic Christians for Jesus Christ. In fact, it is noteworthy that in the Christian and Islamic worlds, rituals of self-harm emerged at the same time. With the influence of the Armenians, who were converted to Shīʿah by the Safavids and other Christian groups in the region, Sufi and Christian elements may have been fused into the Kızılbaş rituals and incorporated into the Imāmiyyah by the Kızılbaş groups.[20]

A special place is also allocated to India and the Sufi tradition with regard to the inclusion of blood and violence in Muḥarram ceremonies. According to this approach, the Shīʿī Muḥarram tradition and Sufi rituals and practices influenced each other. Particular attention is drawn to the role of Sufism and Qalandarī dervishes in the emergence

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17 Kaya, *İran'da Âşûrâ Merasimleri ve Tarihsel Gelişimi*, 14-18.

18 Abdülkadir İnan, *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm: Materyaller ve Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 177-178.

19 Mehmet Ali Hacıgökmen, "Türklerde Yas Âdeti Temelleri ve Sonuçları", *Tarihçiliğe Adanmış Bir Ömür: Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç'e Armağan*, ed. Hasan Bahar et al. (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2013), 413.

20 Nakash, "An Attempt to Trace the Origin of the Rituals of *ʿĀshūrā'*", 177-178; Babak Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran: Studies on Safavid Muharram Rituals, 1590–1641 CE* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 213-214.

and popularization of the *qamahzanī* ceremony. According to the Iranian scholar Nūshābādī, the *Ghulāt* (i.e., extremist groups) and the Qalandarīs were active in a large region extending from India to Herāt and from Baghdad to Damascus. They caused radical changes in Iranian culture over time, and *qamahzanī* was incorporated into Shīʿī mourning ceremonies through the Qalandarīs.[21]

2. The Emergence and Historical Adventure of the *Qamahzanī*

The history of mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) is almost as old as the day he was martyred. For centuries, societies have wept and mourned after their losses in a unique way depending on their beliefs and local culture. Accordingly, within a short period, Ahl al-bayt and other people saddened by this tragic incident began to mourn and visit the grave of al-Ḥusayn. Muḥarram ceremonies, which in their present form consist of rituals such as *rawḍahkhānī* assemblies, grave visits, processions, and *shabīh/taʿziyah* performances, have emerged gradually. Over the centuries, many different elements have been added to their structure, taking on different appearances. One of the breaking points of Muḥarram ceremonies was the inclusion of acts of self-mutilation, such as *qamahzanī*, *zanjīrzanī,* or the burning of certain parts of the body.

Supporters of *qamahzanī* attribute the emergence of this action to an incident reported to have taken place in the immediate aftermath of Karbalāʾ. According to the narration, when Zaynab, al-Ḥusayn's sister, first saw her brother's head on the tip of a spear, she hit her forehead on the board of the palanquin (*maḥmal*) on which she was sitting under the influence of the scene she had just encountered, and as a result, her head bled. Based on this narration, which also appears in *Biḥār al-anwār*, it has been claimed that Zaynab was the first performer of the *qamahzanī*. The fact that ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the fourth Imām of the Imāmiyyah, did not object to his aunt Zaynab's performance of the *qamahzanī* has been deemed an affirmation.[22]

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[21] Nūshābādī, *Taṣawwuf-i Īrānī wa-ʿAzādārī-yi ʿĀshūrā*, 294-302.

[22] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Wafāʾ, 1983), 45/114-115; Maẓāhirī, "Qamah'zanī", 391; Afḍalī, *Qamah'zanī*, 88-89; Muḥammad

This famous narration has been criticized for its authenticity.[23] In addition, the absence of any record of the performance of the *qamahzanī* ceremony in the early period implies that this narration was merely the product of a typical reflexive attempt to justify the practice of *qamahzanī* by attributing it to early Islamic society. The books of Shīʿī theological scholars such as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015), al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá (d. 436/1044) lack rulings on rituals of bodily harm. Furthermore, no historical record has been found regarding the performance of such ceremonies in periods of Shīʿī rule, such as the period of the Buyid Dynasty, when Shīʿī mourning rituals gained visibility.[24] The available data identify the Safavid period as the birth of the *qamahzanī*.

The descriptions of the Shīʿah mourning ceremonies by travelers who visited Iran during the Safavid period constitute one of the essential sources for determining when and in what form the practice of self-mutilation was incorporated into the ceremonies.[25] Some of the travelers were unfamiliar with the Shīʿī tradition, literature, and religiosity, so their records may contain various mistakes. However, these works still serve as unique sources for understanding the period.

Although there is no record of the official commemoration of Muḥarram during the reign of Shāh Ismāʿīl (d. 930/1524), Shams al-Dīn

al-Ḥassūn, *Rasāʾil al-shaʿāʾir al-Ḥusayniyyah* (Tehran: Manshūrāt-i Dalīl-i Mā, 2019), 1/439-445.

[23] This report is narrated by a famous narrator named Muslim al-Jaṣṣās and called "the Muslim al-Jassās narration" in his honor. For various criticisms of the narration, see "Ṣiḥḥat-i Kūbīdan-i Sar Ba Maḥmal, Tawassuṭ-i Haḍrat-i Zaynab(s)?", *Pāygāh-i Iṭṭilāʿ-yi Rasānī-yi Daftar-i Haḍrat-i Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmá Makārim Shīrāzī* (Accessed January 13, 2023); Afḍalī, *Qamahʾzanī*, 88-93.

[24] Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh* (Ṣaydā: Maṭba ʿat al-ʿIrfān, 1347 AH), 25.

[25] With the political stabilization in Iran by the time of Shāh ʿAbbās, Westerners were given economic and diplomatic confidence. Thus, many more diplomats, merchants, and travelers arrived in the country during this period, and Muḥarram ceremonies performed in this period were described in Western sources in a much more detailed manner than ever before. This study will discuss only the reports of the travelers who witnessed the bloody acts. Detailed information about the mourning ceremonies of the Safavid period in general can be found in the works of scholars such as Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī, Jean Calmard, and Babak Rahimi. See Maẓāhirī, *Trāzhedī-yi Jahān-i Islām*, 1/59-214; Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power"; Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran*; Jabbār Raḥmānī, *Taghyīrāt-i Manāsik-i ʿAzādārī-yi Muḥarram: Insānʾshināsī-yi Manāsik-i ʿAzādārī-yi Muḥarram* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Tīsā, 1393 HS), 77-140.

Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546) reports that on the 10th of Muḥarram in Damascus (907/1501), months before Shāh Ismāʿīl's seized power in Tabriz, "a group of *ʿajam* and *Qalandarī* vagrants" gathered together and committed *rāfiḍī* acts such as mutilating their faces. Those who were disturbed by these behaviors made a complaint to the governor.[26] This and similar records[27] suggest that such acts of self-mutilation were known and practiced by some (arguably marginalized) religious and ethnic groups even before the Safavids rose to power.

The first conclusive record of the ceremonies of self-mutilation in Safavid Iran comes from Anthony Sherley (d. 1635), an English traveler who visited Iran in 1598 during the reign of Shāh ʿAbbās. According to Sherley's records, on the anniversary of the martyrdom of ʿAlī, *holy men* slash themselves over their arms and breasts with knives, sometimes even leading to death. In this record, Sherley seems to be referring to the Qalandarīs, who are depicted as "wearing only a felt gown of blue and rest of their bodies being naked".[28] This narration is worth noting because it indicates that *qamahzanī* and similar acts were also performed apart from the mourning ceremonies held in the month of Muḥarram during the Safavid period.[29]

After Sherley, travelers such as Georg Tectander von der Jabel (d. 1614), António de Gouvea (d. 1628), Fedot Kotov (d. 1624), Adam Olearius (d. 1671), Awliyāʾ Chalabī (d. 1095/1684 [?]), and John Struys (d. 1694) also recorded their testimonies of various bloody acts of self-mutilation with knives or chains.[30] According to the records of

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[26] Abū l-Faḍl Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1998), 198; Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power", 142.

[27] Jean Calmard cites a similar narration. According to the narrative of the mid-16th century, the Shīʿī minority on the island of Hormuz held their *ʿĀshūrāʾ* ceremonies in the great mosque of Jalalabad, and every year, "for the love of Muḥammad", they cut themselves with knives. See Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power", 142.

[28] Sherley, *The Broadway Travellers*, 128.

[29] For another example, see Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power", 142.

[30] Jan Janszoon Struys, *The Perillous and Most Unhappy Voyages of John Struys, through Italy, Greece, Lifeland, Moscovia, Tartary, Media, Persia, East-India, Japan, and Other Places in Europe, Africa and Asia*, trans. John Morrison (London: Samuel Smith, 1683), 264-265; Adam Olearius, *The Voyages & Travels of the Ambassadors from the Duke of Holstein, to the Great Duke of Muscovy, and the King of Persia*, trans. John Davies (London: Printed for Thomas Dring, and John Starkey, 1669), 175-176; Awliyāʾ Chalabī (as Evliyâ Çelebi), *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi 4. Kitap*, trans. Seyit Ali Kahraman - Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 2/476-478; Rahimi, *Theater State and the*

Olearius, during the Muḥarram ceremonies in Ardabil in 1637, a large number of men gathered together and "slash'd and cut themselves above the Elbow, and clapping the Wounds with their hands, they made Blood spurt out all over the Arm, and about the Body". They then scampered around the city in that condition. There was so much bloodshed that anyone who witnessed this scene would think that many oxen had been killed there.[31]

The accounts of Awliyāʾ Chalabī in his travelogue are an early record of the involvement of violence in the ceremonies. On the 11th day of Muḥarram 1655, according to Awliyāʾ Chalabī, colorful decorated tents were pitched at the outside of the city of Dargazīn, *ʿāshūrāʾs*[32] and other delicious meals were cooked, and everyone listened to *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*[33] in the Khan's tent. When the subject came to the battle of Karbalāʾ, *ʿAjam* soldiers shouted and wailed, everyone started to cry for al-Ḥusayn, and they were utterly ecstatic. When it came to the chapter in which al-Imām al-Ḥusayn was martyred, a man disguised as al-Imām al-Ḥusayn, with blood flowing from his neck and his head detached from his body, and others representing the people in Karbalāʾ took the stage, and all the lovers of the Ahl al-bayt began to cry out. They shout "*Āh Ḥusayn, Shāh Ḥusayn*" and pointed their chests and wrists at the Salmānī darwishes. The Salmānī darwishes struck the biceps and chests of these people with razors and cut their chests into slices and made them bleed for the love of al-Ḥusayn. Several hundred men shed their blood and pulled out their teeth for the blessed teeth of the Holy Prophet, whose teeth were broken in the Battle of Uḥud. That day, the countryside of Dargazīn was colored with human blood and the ground of Dargazīn turned into the color of tulips with human blood. After these grievances, all the companions, by shedding their blood, made a *tawḥīd-i sulṭānī* [a special kind of *dhikr*, i.e., practice of the rhythmic repetition of a phrase], and they were all enraptured and mesmerized by it.[34]

Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran, 228-229; Maẓāhirī, *Trāzhidī-yi Jahān-i Islām*, 1/67.

31 Olearius, *The Voyages & Travels of the Ambassadors*, 176.

32 A traditional dessert cooked on the 10th day of Muḥarram.

33 Classical Turkish poet Fuḍūlī's (d. 973/1556) prose work called *Ḥadīqat al-suʿadāʾ* on the incident of Karbalāʾ.

34 Chalabī, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi 4. Kitap*, 2/476-478.

It is seen that in this ceremony, a theatrical presentation was made to impress the participants and that the barbers present there used razors to injure the performers' bodies (as opposed to the individuals mutilating their own bodies in general *qamahzanī* practice). Before the climax of the show, the Khan, who was a Kızılbaş, encouraged Awliyāʾ Chalabī to watch the show, indicating that the ceremony was in the form of a systematic show. Notably, the Khan's and other notables' tents were present at ceremonies, and decorative tools were used. The Salmānī darwishes, of which Awliyāʾ Chalabī says there were 700-800, and *ʿAjam* soldiers seem to be a part of this show.[35]

The Shīʿī mourning ceremonies were closely related to the sociopolitical structure of the Safavid period, just as they are today. Many shāhs and local rulers, especially Shāh ʿAbbās, personally participated in the ceremonies and kept the ceremonies under control. The Safavid Shāhs have been regarded as the heirs of ancient Iranian rulers and the representatives of al-Mahdī on earth.[36] In addition, the Shāhs drew power from the charismatic personalities of ʿAlī and al-Ḥusayn, and the historical events that were the subject of the ceremonies were reinterpreted in the social context of the time. In this context, during the Safavid period, Yazīd's army was associated with the Ottoman army and al-Ḥusayn with the Shāhs. The *qamahzanī* and similar actions during this period may have indicated that the *qamahzanī* performers, especially the military, were ready to do anything for the "Ḥusayn of that day," who was the present shāh or local ruler.

It is remarkable that in many records of the Safavid period, violent ceremonies were performed by large groups of people, sometimes in the presence of rulers, in open squares and streets in a highly organized manner. These recordings fail to provide sufficient data on small-scale individual acts of bodily harm that were not open to the audience. On the other hand, the beginning of discussions of the *qamahzanī* ceremony in the late Qajar period and the silence of the Safavid scholars on the issue indicate that either the ceremonies had not yet gained significant popularity among the public at this time or

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35 Chalabī, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi 4. Kitap*, 2/477.

36 See Roger Savory, *Iran under Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 2; Cihat Aydoğmuşoğlu, "Safevi Tarih Yazıcılığı ve Safevi Çağı Kronikleri", *Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4/1 (Spring 2019), 151.

that scholars remained deliberately silent in favor of reconciliation with political power.[37] Because such violent mourning ceremonies favored the Safavid state. Through ceremonies such as *qamahzanī*, the dissatisfaction and anger of the people, especially the young, were directed toward the past and the enemies of Ahl al-bayt "outside" rather than the current power. In this sense, the *qamahzanī* ceremony served as a "safety valve"[38] to control the youth's anger.

Regardless of their popularity among the masses, it is evident that such ceremonies have been performed in Iran since the Safavid period and have been adopted by the masses over time. The records of Tancoigne, who served as ambassador to Iran during the Qajar period, from Tehran in 1807 reveal that the Qajar period was not significantly different from the Safavid period in terms of bloody ceremonies. Tancoigne reports that some almost naked men struck their breasts, while others pierced their arms and legs with knives, fastened padlocks under their breasts, and made wide gashes in their heads, all the while shouting out "al-Ḥasan" and "al-Ḥusayn."[39] Under the Pahlavi regime, these acts continued to be performed and were banned several times.[40]

These practices, which developed within the framework of Iranian-centered public religiosity, also influenced and transformed Arab Shiʿism. However, based on oral tradition, bloody ceremonies found a

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[37] For an evaluation of the scholars practicing *taqiyyah* (dissimulation) in this regard, see ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, *Tashayyuʿ-i ʿAlawī wa-Tashayyuʿ-i Ṣafawī* (Tehran: Muʾassasah-yi Ḥusayniyyah-yi Irshād, 1350 HS), 208.

[38] John Perry has used this analogy for the rivalries and conflicts between the Ḥaydarī and Niʿmatī factions, which confronted each other during the Safavid period on various occasions, including mourning ceremonies, noting that the state supported this schism as a safety valve. I believe it would be correct to use a similar expression for *qamahzanī*. See John R. Perry, "Ḥaydari and Neʿmati", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Accessed January 23, 2023).

[39] J. M. Tancoigne, *A Narrative of a Journey into Persia and Residence at Teheran, Containing a Descriptive Itinerary from Constantinople to the Persian Capital* (London: Printed for William Wright, 1820), 197-198.

[40] During the rule of Reza Shah, *qamahzanī*, *zanjīrzanī*, and other ceremonies were banned. Although these bans were lifted after Reza Shah's removal from power, these ceremonies were banned again in various periods under the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah. For example, in 1314/1934 and 1334/1955, the performance of *zanjīrzanī* and certain rituals were banned by the Pahlavi government. In 1955, when the news of the ban spread, reactions were raised, and the ban had to be withdrawn. See Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī, "Zanjīrzanī", *Farhang-i Sūg-i Shīʿī*, ed. Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī (Tehran: Khaymah, 1395 HS), 391.

place in neighboring countries such as Iraq and Syria[41] much later. Historical records indicate that such ceremonies were not performed in these regions until the 19th century.[42] It has been argued that such rituals were initially introduced to the holy sites in Iraq by the Kızılbaş groups and that in Iraq, the *qamahzanī* ceremony was practiced primarily by pilgrims from the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, and Tabriz. Thomas Lyell, who witnessed the ceremonies in Najaf, also stated that this ceremony was more specific to the Iranians, especially to the "Turcoman tribe" there.[43]

While some works have claimed that the bloody aspect of the Karbalāʾ ceremonies originated with Christian influence[44] or was popularized by the British,[45] the abovementioned records indicate that *qamahzanī* and similar acts were already known to some regions of Islamic societies and subsequently became part of Muḥarram culture. For instance, in 1638, Adam Olearius observed a Circassian burial ceremony in which people were reported to tear their foreheads, arms, and breasts with their nails and to continue mourning until their

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41 The arrival of Iraqi and then Iranian ceremonies in Syria is quite recent. During the Ottoman rule, mourning assemblies were not performed openly. At that time, mourning was held in homes and in a simple form. With the introduction of the Ottoman policy of pan-Islamism in 1895, when Iranians living in Damascus and *Jabal ʿĀmil* were given relief, Shīʿī ceremonies began to be performed openly, including marches, *shabīh* ceremonies, and *qamahzanī*. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Iranian rituals became even more widespread. See Sabrina Mervin, "'Âshûrâ': Some Remarks on Ritual Practices in Different Shiite Communities (Lebanon and Syria)", *The Other Shiites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia*, ed. Alessandro Monsutti et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 137-138.

42 Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamāʾ", 27-28.

43 Thomas Lyell, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia* (London: A. M. Philpot Ltd., 1923), 67-70; Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, 149; Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī, *Rasānah-ʾi Shīʿah: Jāmiahʿshināsī-yi Āyīnhā-yi Sūgwārī wa -Hayʾathā-yi Madhhabī dar Īrān* (Tehran: Nashr-i Bayn al-Milal, 1374 HS), 70.

44 According to ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, many of the new ceremonies and symbols that emerged under the Safavids were borrowed from Christianity. During this period "European Christian patterns were given an Iranian Shīʿī content." *Zanjīrzanī*, lamentation, *qamahzanī*, and the like are also included in this context. See Sharīʿatī, *Tashayyuʿ-i ʿAlawī wa-Tashayyuʿ-i Ṣafawī*, 205-211.

45 In *Dast-i Pinhān*, a work published by the Administration of Foundations of Iran, it is asserted that *qamahzanī* was first taught to the Shīʿīs of India by British colonialists and then introduced into Iran and Iraq. The British embassy allegedly supported the spread of this practice until recently. See Wāhid-i Pazhūhash-i Daftar-i Farhangī-yi Fakhr al-l-Aʾimmah (ʿalayhimā al-salām) Qom al-Muqaddasah (ed.), *Dast-i Pinhān* (Qom: Sāzmān-i Awqāf wa-Umūr-i Khayriyyah-yi Āstan-i Qom, 1387 HS), 22-24.

wounds healed. Although this account postdates the introduction of the *qamahzanī* into Shīʿī mourning ceremonies, it is noteworthy that similar rites existed in the local cultures.[46] Various factors may have played a role in the popularization of the *qamahzanī*, including interaction with Christian societies. However, seeking the origins of this ceremony entirely outside would appear to be an attempt to deny the legacy of *qamahzanī*. The accounts of travelers indicate that (at least) since the 16th century, "suffering" for al-Ḥusayn was known and accepted by the Shīʿī community. Its form has changed over time and space, and in its present form, it has spread to the commons. The lack of consensus among Shīʿī scholars against these ceremonies must have facilitated the spread of these acts among the general public.

3. Differences of Opinion on the Religious Ruling of *Qamahzanī* in the Shīʿī Tradition

The practice of *qamahzanī* and similar bloody acts have caused serious disagreements among Shīʿī scholars. When the religious debates and judgments on *qamahzanī* are analyzed, it is clear that the issue has been addressed with regard to several main issues. The most critical issues are whether bodily harm is inflicted during these acts, the extent to which bodily harm is acceptable, and whether *qamahzanī* is a traditional ritual. One of the most frequently raised objections is that *qamahzanī* and similar rituals tarnish the image of the Shīʿah denomination both to the West and to non-Shīʿī Muslims.

The scholars of the Safavid period seem to have either approved of or remained silent about the changes in Muḥarram mourning rituals that took place in their period. During that period, opposition to these rituals was relatively scarce.[47] The fact that controversy emerged at the end of the Qajar period suggests that self-mutilation rituals became increasingly visible during this period and began to be practiced in different regions. While analyzing modern and contemporary *fatwá*s on *qamahzanī*, Scharbrodt found that most scholars were either sympathetic or indifferent to this act. However, the modernist discourse within the Shīʿī jurisprudence emphasizes the case of Karbalāʾ for the universal message of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn's uprising and

[46] Olearius, *The Voyages & Travels of the Ambassadors*, 311.
[47] Maẓāhirī, *Rasānah-ʾi Shīʿah*, 72-73.

seeks to rationalize Shīʿī rituals by opposing practices such as *qamahzanī*.[48]

The controversy among Shīʿī scholars over *qamahzanī* began in 1924 (1343 AH) when Āyat Allāh Sayyid Mahdī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1965) criticized some Muḥarram ceremonies. Al-Qazwīnī pointed out the inaccuracies and misconceptions in the mourning ceremonies and complained that other nations mocked the Shīʿah due to some of these ceremonies. According to him, the existence of mourning processions is contrary to the unity of the Islamic sects, and *qamahzanī* is a savage act lacking in evidence. Al-Qazwīnī's harsh criticisms were met with harsh reactions in Basra, and many refutations were written against him.[49]

Another widely known debate took place between Muḥsin al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1952), the author of the famous biography *Aʿyān al-Shīʿah*, and his opponents. Muḥsin al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, who was *marjiʿ al-taqlīd* (the supreme religious authority) in the region of Damascus and Jabal ʿĀmil, criticized some Muḥarram ceremonies in his work *al-Majālis al-saniyyah* and consequently encountered serious reactions. Al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq (d. 1942) penned a work entitled *Sīmāʾ al-ṣulaḥāʾ* against him in which he accused Muḥsin al-Amīn of opposing the foundations of religion. In response, al-Amīn wrote the treatise *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, which firmly reflects his reformist orientation. While Muḥsin al-Amīn was not the first to criticize some aspects of the ceremonies, his work and views sparked great debate.[50]

In addition to rituals such as *qamahzanī* and *zanjīrzanī*, Muḥsin al-Amīn's criticisms targeted the recitation of false stories in the *minbar*s, the use of instruments such as the drum and zurna during mourning, the loud wailing of women, the shouting of ugly voices in the *minbar*s, and the riding of camels by women with their faces uncovered to portray the family members of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. According to him, the real disfigurement in these practices was that they were performed in the name of worship and obedience.[51]

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[48] The study conducted by Scharbrodt analyses the views of the Shīʿite scholars on the subject in detail and emphasizes the political aspect of the *qamahzanī* ritual. See Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1068.

[49] Afḍalī, *Qamah'zanī*, 88-89.

[50] Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamāʾ", 21-36.

[51] Al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, 2-4.

The most striking of the arguments that al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq used in his work to justify the legitimacy of *qamahzanī* is that striking the head with a sharp instrument is a form of cupping/bloodletting (*ḥajāmah*) and is therefore *sunnah* in terms of the *sharīʿah*. According to him, it is essentially a permissible (*mubāḥ*) act, a recommendable (*mustaḥabb*) act according to the preponderant (*rājiḥ*) view, and a disliked (*makrūh*) act according to the less preponderant (*marjūḥ)* view. If it is a cupping that causes harm to the person, then it is forbidden (*ḥarām*). Because it is obligatory (*wājib*) to preserve one's health, it is sometimes necessary to carry out serious surgical operations and even the amputation of limbs to preserve one's worldly life and the health of one's body as a whole. At this point, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq makes a comparison between *qamahzanī* and cupping and questions whether an earthly wound or a spiritual wound is more important. According to him, treating a wound that is important for one's eternal bliss is of greater value than treating a wound that would benefit only one's worldly life.[52]

Muḥsin al-Amīn strongly opposed this argument. According to al-Amīn, cupping is essentially forbidden (*ḥarām*) because it causes harm and pain to the human being, and it is permissible (*ḥalāl*) only in case of necessity. If striking the head is considered a form of cupping, the person who does it must be afraid that he will die if he does not strike his head because only then would the action be obligatory (*wājib*). This can only happen in the condition that a specialized doctor diagnoses a fatal disease and declares that the only cure for it is striking the head. If a person strikes his head, for example, because he is suffering from a severe fever and the doctor has advised him to strike his head and let the blood flow out to relieve his trembling, then this action would be recommendable (*mustaḥabb*). Finally, it would only be forbidden (*ḥarām*) to perform this action if it causes only pain and harm to a person, for example, if the person does not have a wound on his head or a fever in his body and this action is not considered necessary by a doctor. When forbidden, it neither brings one closer to God nor entails reward but rather punishment.[53]

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[52] Al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq, *Sīmāʾ al-ṣulaḥāʾ* (Ṣaydā: Maṭbaʿat al-ʿIrfān, 1345 AH/1927), 79.

[53] al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, 14-16.

In his work, Muḥsin al-Amīn discusses issues such as the limitations of performing arduous tasks that are difficult for the human *nafs* (the self) and torment the *nafs* and whether there is a silent consensus *(al-ijmāʿ al-sukūtī)* among past scholars on the subject; he also harshly criticizes the *qamahzanī* ceremony and the scholars who consented to it.[54] This triggered a strong reaction against al-Amīn. The pro-*qamahzanī* group called themselves "'Alids" and the supporters of al-Amīn "Umayyads". As a consequence of these disputes, which went so far as to lead to the cursing of al-Amīn during the Muḥarram ceremonies held in Najaf, such actions were carried out more vigorously during the ceremonies of 1929, and the "Umayyads" had to hide for fear of their lives or temporarily leave their places of residence.[55] Although Muḥsin al-Amīn's views were not accepted because there were scholars who opposed him in the Jabal ʿĀmil region, he was successful in preventing these acts in Syria because there was no rival religious authority.[56]

Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1946), who had unrivaled religious authority for many years due to his position as *marjiʿ al-taqlīd*, also objected to some practices performed during Muḥarram

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[54] Al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq mentions the existence of a silent consensus among the previous scholars in favor of permitting *qamahzanī*. However, Muḥsin al-Amīn opposes this. For discussion on the subject, see Ṣādiq, *Sīmāʾ al-ṣulaḥāʾ*, 82; al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, 22-25. Another topic of discussion is the limit of tormenting the self. Al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn argues that the Prophet Muḥammad and his Ahl al-bayt undertook arduous tasks that were challenging even though these tasks were not necessary. Therefore, those who take the Prophet and his Ahl al-bayt as an example today can also perform tasks that cause distress to themselves. Muḥsin al-Amīn, on the other hand, discusses the examples given by al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn one by one and attempts to draw the limits of acts of self-mutilation based on the principles of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). See Ṣādiq, *Sīmāʾ al-ṣulaḥāʾ*, 80-81; al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, 20-21. A similar argument was made by ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥillī (d. 1956), who compared the custom of self-beating with chains to the hardship imposed on the body by fasting during the month of Ramaḍān and the pilgrimage. See Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, 156-157. The absence of evidence that the practice is *ḥarām* is also one of the arguments raised by *qamahzanī* advocates. According to al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn, since there is no evidence that this action is *ḥalāl* and there is no evidence that it is *ḥarām*, this action remains permissible (*mubāḥ*). See Ṣādiq, *Sīmāʾ al-ṣulaḥāʾ*, 81.

[55] For detailed information on the religious, sociopolitical, and economic aspects of the debates on rituals of self-mutilation in this period, see Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamāʾ".

[56] Mervin, "'Âshûrâ'", 139.

ceremonies and therefore even experienced a security threat. Al-Iṣfahānī did not neglect the defense of al-Amīn and his followers, and he succeeded in achieving this to a certain extent thanks to the power he possessed.[57] Although many scholars, including al-Iṣfahānī, condemned such practices, they could not halt their spread.[58]

Āyat Allāh Abū l-Qāsim al-Khūʾī (d. 1992), who was regarded as the most prominent *marjiʿ al-taqlīd* for Shīʿīs living outside Iran between 1970 and 1992, was among those who approved of such practices as *qamahzanī* and *sīnahzanī* (chest beating). According to al-Khūʾī, provided that they are performed to illustrate the calamities that befell the Ahl al-bayt and do not cause significant harm, there is nothing wrong with slapping the body and striking the head with a sword to the extent that it may cause bleeding during the mourning ceremonies.[59] What is noteworthy in al-Khūʾī's *fatwá* is the stipulation "to not cause significant harm" for the action to be permissible. This statement, which appears in the *fatwá*s of many other scholars, leaves a loophole for different interpretations. When the expression "slapping the body to the extent of causing bleeding" is considered, it is understood that what is meant by "significant damage" is an act that would cause a life-threatening injury or a permanent illness. This loophole regarding harm from self-mutilation probably contributed to the popularization of *qamahzanī*.

Āyat Allāh ʿAlī Khamenei, on the other hand, considers *qamahzanī* to be unconditionally forbidden (*ḥarām*). According to him, *qamahzanī* is not a traditional way of expressing sorrow and grief, nor does it have a history dating back to the time of the Imāms and their successors. Furthermore, it leads to the weakening of the Shīʿah and the defamation of its name.[60]

It is noteworthy that Āyat Allāh Khamenei is not as harsh with regard to *qamahzanī* regarding *zanjīrzanī*. According to Khamenei, *zanjīrzanī* "does not pose any problem as long as it is done in a manner known by the society and can be regarded as one of the

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57 Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamāʾ", 33-34.

58 Al-Amīn, *Risālat al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*, 23.

59 Abū l-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khūʾī, *Ṣirāṭ al-najāh fī ajwibat al-istiftāʾāt* (Qom: Intishārāt al-Ṣiddīqah al-Shahīdah, 1418 AH), 3/315.

60 ʿAlī Khamenei, "Istiftāʾāt - Marāsīm-i ʿAzādārī, Suʾāl 1461", *www.Khamenei.ir* (Accessed January 23, 2021).

customary ways of expressing sorrow."[61] Here, chain-striking is accepted as a traditional way of expressing sorrow. Nevertheless, this ritual originated at a similar time as *qamahzanī* and, like *qamahzanī*, lacks an early religious and historical basis.[62]

Today, the debate over *qamahzanī* and similar rituals has been supplemented by the view that "the judgment of the *walī-yi faqīh* (the ruling jurist) must be followed" (i.e., if he disapproves, it should not be practiced on that ground alone). Despite refraining from using sharp expressions, Āyat Allāh Khumaynī states that "he does not consent with those who strike the dagger"[63] and advises "not to strike the dagger in the present situation."[64] As noted above, Āyat Allāh Khamenei opposed the *qamahzanī* ceremony and declared it illegal in Iran.[65] In addition to Iran, this ban affected the followers and imitators of Khumaynī and Khamenei in countries such as Lebanon, Pakistan, and India; for instance, Hezbollah banned the practice of this action in Lebanon.[66] In a sense, this judgment issued by the *walī-yi faqīh* appears to be an attempt to test the authority and power over the Shīʿī world.[67]

The issue of *qamahzanī* in contemporary Iran has become a matter of distinction in terms of whether to accept the authority of the *walī-yi faqīh*. In this sense, it has been transformed beyond the religious sphere into the political sphere. In fact, *qamahzanī* has become a banner and constitutes a sort of symbol in the struggle for power among Shīʿī scholars, similar to the issue of *khalq al-Qurʾān* (the question of whether the Qurʾān was created or has existed for eternity)

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61 Khamenei, "Istiftāʾāt - Marāsīm-i ʿAzādārī, Suʾāl 1463".

62 The ritual of *zanjīrzanī*, in which a person beats himself with chains in rhythm, was first performed during the Safavid period and was recorded by the traveler Fedot Kotov in 1624. Nevertheless, other travelers who visited Iran during the Safavid period did not mention this ritual. See Muḥsin Ḥasām Maẓāhirī, *Tirāzhidī-yi Jahān-i Islām: ʿAzādārī-yi Shīʿiyān-i Īrān ba Riwāyat-i Safarnāmah'niwīsān, Mustasbriqān wa- Īrān'shināsān (az Ṣafawiyyah tā Jumhūri-yi Islāmī)* (Isfahan: Nashr-i Ārmā, 1397 HS), 1/67.

63 Afḍalī, *Qamah'zanī*, 74.

64 "Istiftāʾāt-i Imām Khumaynī", *Portāl-i Imām Khumaynī* (Accessed January 24, 2023).

65 See Maẓāhirī, "Qamah'zanī", 391; Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1079-1082.

66 Mervin, "'Âshûrâ'", 145.

67 For the place of *qamahzanī* in Khamenei's political agenda, see Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1075-1090.

during the *Miḥnah* period. It seems that Ṣādiq Ḥusayn Shīrāzī, the strongest proponent of the *qamahzanī* ritual in Iran, opposed the current form of the doctrine of *walāyat-i faqīh* and, in recent years, was in conflict with the current regime. Shīrāzīs and other opponents of the Islamic Republic have portrayed *qamahzanī* as "a sign of Shīʿī identity" and themselves as "guardians of true Shīʿah"[68] In 2016, Khamenei described the Shīrāzī family and their religious approach as "British Shīʿah".[69] The allegation that the *qamahzanī* was introduced into Muḥarram culture by the British[70] becomes even more important when considered together with the expression of "British Shīʿah".

4. The Position of the *Qamahzanī* Ceremony in Public Religiosity

It could be argued that the most important factor facilitating the inclusion of *qamahzanī* and similar rituals in the mourning tradition is the belief that any form of mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn must be permissible. This belief led to the popular perception that all forms of mourning are legitimate and that expressing a contradictory opinion is perceived as a desire to ban people from mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. For this reason, Shīʿī scholars have always been cautious when discussing these actions to avoid antagonizing the public. In the same way that a Shīʿī Muslim needs a supreme authority to follow, a supreme authority needs people to follow him.[71] In this sense, the authority of jurisprudence and scholars in shaping public religiosity needs to be questioned. This section discusses some examples of interventions and reactions to Muḥarram mourning in the historical process.

As early as the Safavid period, there were hints that all kinds of ceremonies to commemorate al-Imām al-Ḥusayn were legitimate in the eyes of the people. A narrative about Muqaddas Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585), the author of the famous book *Ḥadīqat al-Shīʿah*, offers an explicit example. According to the narration, Ardabīlī was disturbed by the inappropriate practices carried out in the name of mourning for al-

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68 Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1085-1088.

69 Mustafa Melih Ahıshalı, "Şirazilerin İran Muhalefetinde Yer Edinme Çabası", *Anadolu Ajansı* (Accessed January 18, 2023).

70 Wāḥid-i Pazhūhash-i Daftar-i Farhangī-yi Fakhr al-Aʾimmah (ʿalayhimā al-salām) Qom al-Muqaddasah, *Dast-i Pinhān*, 22-24.

71 Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1071.

Imām al-Ḥusayn and forbade people from engaging in such activities, stating that they were not part of mourning and that the Ahl al-bayt did not engage in such practices. People refused to listen to him; instead, they increased these practices. Ardabīlī left Ardabil and traveled to a nearby village to avoid hearing the sounds of this mourning, and at night, he dreamed of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn, who asked him, "How can you prevent people from honoring my mourning?" Ardabīlī replied, "I did not prevent them from your mourning. I prevented them from the practices other than mourning." In response, the Imām stated that mourning for him was not subject to any restrictions or formalities and added that whatever the form and the way his calamity was expressed, this was what was meant by mourning. Upon this event, Ardabīlī abandoned his former attitude and began to mourn like the people he had condemned.[72] Regardless of whether this narrative, recorded by Mīrzā ʿAbd Allāh Efendī (d. 1131/1719), actually took place, it indicates that the idea that "all forms of mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn are legitimate" was already present in the Safavid period.

A similar incident was recorded by John Struys, who witnessed a *qamahzanī* ceremony in the city of Shamakhi (in present-day Azerbaijan) in 1672. According to Struys, three days after the ceremonies, the khan or governor issued an interdiction that "none should hew and cut (as was their custom) with swords in the streets." A young man wrote a letter of complaint to the governor in which he criticized the governor: "How comes it that your Lordsh [sic], grows such a great Saint all on a sudden? Who has possessed your mind to alter those long continued Customs of the Persians? And do you not know what Dishonour it is to all the *Musulmans* and the whole Kingdom in general? Or are you indeed becom [sic] a Christian?" As a result, this young man was beaten to death with sticks as a punishment.[73] This record is significant not only because it shows the prestige of the *qamahzanī* in the eyes of the people but also because it points to an administrative restriction on mourning ceremonies.[74] The phrase "long continued customs of the Persians" suggests that, at least in that region, *qamahzanī* had become the subject of national affiliation and had already been called a custom.

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[72] Maẓāhirī, *Rasānah-'i Shīʿah*, 72-74.
[73] Struys, *The Perillous and Most Unhappy Voyages of John Struys*, 268.
[74] Maẓāhirī, *Tirāzhidī-yi Jahān-i Islām*, 1/184.

As revealed in the travelogues, in this period, it was believed that those who died as a result of bloody rituals performed to mourn the death of ʿAlī or al-Ḥusayn would achieve salvation, and those who voluntarily shed their blood for the sake of al-Imām al-Ḥusayn were honored.[75] Olearius reported that it was believed that those who mutilated their bodies expiated some of their sins and that a person who died during the *festival* (*ʿĀshūrāʾ* mourning rituals) attained salvation.[76] Even today, more than one person can be cut on the head with the same dagger. Although this evokes concerns about blood-borne diseases, the *qamahzanī* performers consider it sufficient to be cleansed and receive a simple dressing at the end of the ceremony. This is because they strongly believe that this practice in no way harms their health. In addition, it is believed that sins committed during the rest of the year can be cleansed by participating in Muḥarram ceremonies, even though this belief lacks any religious foundation.[77]

The most striking example of the power of public religiosity in the exemplification of the *qamahzanī* ceremony was narrated about Āyat Allāh Khumaynī's teacher, the supreme religious authority Āyat Allāh Burūjardī (d. 1961). When al-Ḥājj al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Karīm Ḥāʾirī (d. 1937) traveled to Qom, he saw people practicing *qamahzanī* and opposed it. Subsequently, Burūjardī summoned the heads of the performer group (*dastah*)[78] and forbade the group from performing *qamahzanī*. Some of these people challenged him, saying, "We follow Burūjardī all year round, but for the first ten days of Muḥarram, we apply our own rulings" because it was not possible for them to "abandon al-Imām al-Ḥusayn."[79]

The examples presented above require a rethinking of the authority of scholars in the context of public religiosity in Shīʿism. Although it is a fact that the Shīʿī governments patronized the ceremonies, I argue that these ceremonies were not under the control of the state or the scholars but essentially remained in the hands of the common

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75 Struys, *The Perillous and Most Unhappy Voyages of John Struys*, 265.

76 Olearius, *The Voyages & Travels of the Ambassadors*, 176.

77 For an example of this belief, see Lyell, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia*, 61-62.

78 The word *dastah* is used for small groups of people who come together to mourn and perform actions such as *sīnahzanī*, *zanjīrzanī* or marching through the streets while carrying symbolic objects.

79 Afḍalī, *Qamahʾzanī*, 45-46. ʿAlī Sharīʿatī narrates a similar dialog without giving names. See Sharīʿatī, *Tashayyuʿ-i ʿAlawī wa-Tashayyuʿ-i Ṣafawī*, 208.

people.[80] The reason for the bans and restrictions imposed on these ceremonies from time to time was their dynamism and popularity.[81] Furthermore, the divergent attitudes of the supreme religious authorities toward the act of *qamahzanī* created a space for the people to adopt this ritual, which in turn became one of the most critical factors in the spread of *qamahzanī*.[82] At this point, to better understand the authority of the state and scholars over the public religiosity of the Shīʿīs, it is necessary to examine the manifestations of religiosity in everyday life and to examine in detail the position of the supreme religious authorities in the religious and social lives of individuals.

Conclusion

Qamahzanī ceremony, the most prominent example of self-mutilation rituals in contemporary Islamic societies, was included in Shīʿī mourning ceremonies in the Safavid period. The close association of religious celebrations and mourning with the religious propaganda of the Safavids suggests the possibility that the *qamahzanī* ceremony had political significance and was performed by only a narrow circle of people. While it is difficult to determine how widespread the *qamahzanī* ritual was among the common people during the Safavid period, the historical records discussed in this article demonstrate that it quickly became part of public religiosity and that the people perceived criticism of the *qamahzanī* as an attempt to ban them from mourning for al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. Despite various obstacles and prohibitions, this belief must have been one of the main factors behind the spread of the *qamahzanī* ceremony.

In addition, it appears that the rituals of self-mutilation in the Muḥarram ceremonies of the Safavid period were not limited to mutilation of the head. Other parts of the body, such as the arms, biceps, and chest, were also mutilated. From the Qajar period on, the practice of *qamahzanī* gradually began to be limited to mutilation of the head. Again, from this period onwards, *qamahzanī* became

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[80] For a similar evaluation, see Scharbrodt, "Contesting Ritual Practices in Twelver Shiism", 1070-1071.

[81] On the dynamic nature of mourning ceremonies and efforts to control them, see Kaynamazoğlu, "Matemin Gölgesinde Sivil Bir Fenomen", 72-73.

[82] Flaskerud, "Ritual Creativity and Plurality", 110-111.

widespread in other regions and the subject of scholarly debate. The adoption of Iranian-style mourning rituals by Shīʿī Muslims living in other countries is considerable and worthy of further research.

Qamahzanī is also striking in demonstrating the political atmosphere in the background of a ceremony that is basically the subject of individual religiosity. Even though it is officially banned in contemporary Iran, this ceremony, which continues to be performed despite the *walī-yi faqīh*, has become the symbol of political polarization. In this context, the example of *qamahzanī* calls for a new discussion of the power of followers and the supreme religious authorities over one another and the influence of politics on this relationship.

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MULTIDIMENSIONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SULTAN ʿABD AL-ḤAMĪD II AND POPE LEO XIII AND THE REFLECTIONS OF THESE RELATIONS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ROME

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Abstract

The last quarter of the 19th century was a period of good relations between Rome and Istanbul, with the Ottoman Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II (1876-1909) on the one side and the Roman Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) on the other. The many Catholics living in the Ottoman Empire were an important factor in their cooperation. The correspondence between the Pope and the Sultan intensified during this period. The two parties were not indifferent to each other's important days and provided mutual gifts. This study predominantly references the Ottoman Archive Documents and news from Istanbul and the European press at that time in addition to basic sources.

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Methodologically, descriptive and comparative approaches are extensively used.

Key Words: Pope Leo XIII, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, Ottoman, Rome, Pontifical Maronite College

Introduction

The 19th century was one of the most difficult periods of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottoman Empire reached its greatest limits, it was able to keep elements of different religions and sects together within it. However, the loss of land along with regression affected non-Muslim religious structures. For example, Greece, which declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830, established an independent church, but the Istanbul Orthodox Patriarchate recognized a separate Greek Orthodox Church only in 1850. Thus, after the development of an independent state, a separate church was formed. The opposite situation occurred in the Bulgarian Church. The Bulgarian Exarchate, which was established in 1870 due to pressure from Russia, was not recognized by the Istanbul Orthodox Patriarchate for many years.[1] Unlike the Greeks, the Bulgarians gained an independent state only after an independent church. In addition to the Orthodox Church, another important Christian sect in the Ottoman lands was the Catholics. They were divided into two groups: Catholics who were Ottoman citizens and Catholics who were foreigners and were more often called Latins. While Catholics with foreign status were mostly under the administration of Catholic countries and papal authorities, Catholics such as Catholic Armenians and Catholic Assyrians were mostly members of the Eastern Catholic Churches (Uniate). In a milestone for Eastern Catholics, Catholic Armenians broke off their relations with the Patriarchate in Kumkapı in 1830 and had a separate patriarchate administration with the permission of the

[1] Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov, "Bulgarian Christianity", *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity,* ed. Ken Parry (Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 55-56; Peter Petkoff, "Church-State Relations under the Bulgarian Denominations Act 2002: Religious Pluralism and Established Church and the Impact of Other Models of Law on Religion", *Religion, State & Society* 33/4 (December 2005), 320.

Ottoman Empire.[2] The fact that these groups, which were mostly monophysites, separated from their ancient churches and established a separate patriarchate revealed a different situation. Because they were not like the Latins, their appointments were carried out by the Ottomans, whereas their spiritual affairs were conducted through the Papacy. However, the intervention of the Papacy in the civil affairs of the congregation from time to time caused quarrels within the Uniate Church and problems between the Papacy and the Ottoman Empire. These problems, which started in the second half of the 19th century, were greatly reduced during the reign of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd in the last quarter of that century. However, the news in the European press during this period, especially due to the Armenian events, is mostly reflected as anti-Christianity rather than a political problem.[3]

Some Westerners, such as Müller who observed the event on the ground, stated that the problem was political rather than hostility to Christianity and that it stemmed from the dream of establishing a separate state for the Armenians.[4] When the Archival Documents of the period are examined, it is clear that many Christians in the Ottoman Empire lived comfortably, and even Christian statesmen held duties in the highest office of the State.[5] On the other hand, the relations between the Vatican and Istanbul are also an important indicator. Contrary to the claims of the mainstream newspapers of the 19th century, this study will discuss the point that Muslims do not have a problem with Christians in the context of the relations between the Pope, the highest spiritual leader of the Catholics, and Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd.

In the literature on the subject, Rinaldo Marmara's work titled *Vatikan Gizli Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Türkiye ile Vatikan: Diplomatik İlişkilere Doğru/Secondo Documenti dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano Verso le Relazioni Diplomatiche tra la Santa Sede e la Turchia* contains important information about the Papacy and Ottoman relations in the period of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. This work has been discussed in

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2 Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), *Hatt-ı Hümâyûn [HAT],* no. 1333, Folderno. 52025.

3 *The Times,* "The Armenian Question" (28 September 1895), 5.

4 Georgina Max Müller, *Letters from Constantinople* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), 131; Philip Mansel, *Konstantiniyye: Dünyanın Arzuladığı Şehir 1453-1924,* trans. Şerif Erol (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2008), 448.

5 Ercan Karakoç, "Osmanlı Hariciyesinde Bir Ermeni Nazır: Gabriyel Noradunkyan Efendi", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 7/25 (March 2010), 157-177.

light of documents in the Vatican Archive.[6] In an article titled "Turkey-Vatican Relations from the Ottomans to the Republic" written by Ahmet Türkan, historical Ottoman-Vatican relations are discussed. In the study, which draws upon the Ottoman Archive Documents, the period of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II is generally handled from a diplomatic point of view.[7]

In the book titled *Beyaz Diplomasi: Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Osmanlı-Vatikan İlişkileri* by Tacettin Kayaoğlu,[8] there are documents on mutual gifts, including medals and letters of goodwill between different Ottoman sultans and popes, including Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII. In the content of the book, some Ottoman Archive Documents were selected, and their Turkish equivalents were written in the Latin alphabet. However, no comments or evaluations were made on the documents. In our study, only the relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII are discussed. The originals of the Ottoman documents were used, and an evaluation was made by comparing the archive documents with other sources in addition to the local and foreign press of the period.

In this study, the relations with all popes during the reign of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd as well as his relations with Pope Leo XIII are discussed in more detail in the context of education, religious institutions, and historical artifacts as well as diplomatic relations. The contributions of Azarian Efendī and Ṣābūnjīzādah Louis Alberi, both of whom were members of the Eastern Catholic Church (Uniate), in the relations between the Sultan and the Pope are examined in a multidimensional way. Primary sources are used extensively, including the Ottoman Archive Documents as well as foreign newspapers of the period, especially *The Times*. Additionally, archive documents and newspapers of the period are evaluated and compared.

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6 Rinaldo Marmara, *Vatikan Gizli Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Türkiye ile Vatikan: Diplomatik İlişkilere Doğru/Secondo Documenti dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano Verso le Relazioni Diplomatiche tra la Santa Sede e la Turchia* (İstanbul: Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012).

7 Ahmet Türkan, "Turkey-Vatican Relations from the Ottomans to the Republic", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IJHSS)* 5/5 (May 2015), 148-163.

8 Tacettin Kayaoğlu, *Beyaz Diplomasi: Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Osmanlı-Vatikan İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Fide Yayınları, 2007).

1. Internal and External Factors in Relations

In the last quarter of the 19th century during the reign of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, Ottoman relations with the Holy See continued to be semiofficial. During the reign of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II (1876-1909), there were three popes in Rome in different periods. These included Pope Pius IX (1846-1878), Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), and Pope Pius X (1903-1914). Among them, the most intense contact was between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII.[9]

The relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII were more colorful, intense, and multidimensional than previous periods as far as the Ottoman and the Holy See were concerned. It can be said that these relations were generally positive, albeit with some exceptions. Both internal and external factors are important. The failure of the Ottoman Empire in the war with Russia in 1877-1878 and the Berlin Treaty (1878) made Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII draw closer. The increase in Russian influence in the Balkans was against the Holy See as much as the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the orthodoxization policy by Russia in the regions where it expanded its dominance was one of the most important factors that increased anxiety. Bedros Efendī (Stephan Bedros X Azarian; 1826-1899), a member of the Council of State (*Shūrā-yi Dawlah*), was sent to the Holy See by ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II to discuss the Russia issue with the authorities in Rome. It was decided that the two parties would act together against Russia.[10]

The Pope attached so much importance to the war between the Ottomans and Russia that he even asked the age of ʿUthmān (Osman) Pasha (1832-1900) and appreciated his defense in Pleven. Bedros Efendī was sent to Rome because of Pope Leo's inauguration so that he could congratulate Pope Leo on behalf of the Sultan.[11]

When we look at the Ottoman Archive Documents on the subject, two issues draw attention. The first is the congratulations to Pope Leo

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9 Ahmet Türkan, "Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi'nde Papalıkla İlişkiler", *Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Sempozyumu 20-21 Şubat 2014, Selanik İç ve Dış Siyaset Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), 322.

10 BOA, *Yıldız Tasnifi Perakende Hariciye Nezareti Maruzatı [Y. PRK. HR]*, no. 3, Folderno. 5; *The Globe*, "Turkey's Internal Affairs" (29 May 1877), 1; *The Times*, "The Vatican" (16 May 1878), 5.

11 Türkan, "Turkey-Vatican Relations from the Ottomans to the Republic", 152.

on the friendship of the two sides. The second is that because they were under Ottoman citizenship, Catholics were loyal to the state. In this regard, the Pope's advice to the Ottoman Catholics was very effective in terms of maintaining that loyalty.[12]

2. The Contribution of Patriarch Azarian

The promotion of Patriarch Hassoun as a cardinal was one of the important developments for Eastern Christians. Since Basilios Bessarion (1403-1472), there was no appointment of an Eastern Christian to cardinal.[13] However, the promotion of Andon Bedros IX Hassoun (1809-1884) to this authority without informing the Ottoman state drew the reaction of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. Aware of this situation, Pope Leo XIII sent Cardinal Vincenzo Vannutelli (1836-1930) to Istanbul to convey his message. Vannutelli explained that the promotion of Hassoun to cardinality was important for Eastern Christians and that this would benefit the Ottoman state. Ottoman government officials stated that they reacted not to bring Hassoun to a higher religious level but because of a procedural error. As a result of the negotiations, the Hassoun issue was resolved, and the reactions to Hassoun being a cardinal were abandoned.[14]

After Hassoun, Catholic Armenians chose Stephan Bedros X Azarian as their new patriarch. Later, Patriarch Azarian went to Rome with the permission of the Sultan. After the necessary ceremony was held by the Pope in Rome, Azarian returned to Istanbul. The election of Azarian as a patriarch also made Pope Leo happy. Therefore, the Pope gave Azarian various medals to be presented to Ottoman state officials. The owners of these medals were Saʿīd Pasha (the Minister of Foreign Affairs), Jawdat Pasha (the Minister of Justice), Agob Pasha (the Minister of Treasury), Rāʾif Efendī (Beglikjī-yi Dīwān-i Humāyūn), and Zīwar Beg (the Director of Sects [*Madhāhib*]).[15]

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12 BOA, *İ. HR*, no. 276, Folderno. 16827.

13 Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans, The Church and the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 269.

14 Türkan, "İstanbullu Kardinal Hasun Efendi'nin Osmanlı ve Katolik Dünyasında Bıraktığı Etki", *Türk-İslam Medeniyeti Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 16 (2012), 195-196.

15 BOA, *HR. TO,* no. 530, Folderno. 83; *İrâde Dahiliye [İ. DH]*, no. 1027, Folderno. 80963.

Having received the patriarchal certificate (*Barāt*[16]) from the Sultan, Azarian Efendī was dealing with the affairs of his own community and was also interested in the issues of the Eastern Catholics. In the context of the Eastern Catholics, the Patriarch Azarian is an important figure who made an impact on the last quarter of the 19th century.

The influence of an important person in the good relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo should not be underestimated. This was the Catholic Armenian Patriarch Stephan Bedros X Azarian (1881-1889). Azarian, who was known as a "diplomatic patriarch", had a significant impact on the relations between Pope Leo and Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. Because of his ability, a French academician said that there were three diplomats in the East, and one of them was Azarian. He had many printed works and spoke eight different languages.[17]

Indeed, Azarian's influence in the bilateral relations between Pope Leo XIII and Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II cannot be ignored.[18] He delivered the Sultan's gifts and letters to Pope Leo.[19] From time to time, he helped the Ottoman government solve the problems of the Eastern Catholics. On February 17, 1887, Azarian met with Pope Leo XIII in the Vatican. The Pope congratulated Patriarch Azarian for solving the problems of Catholic Armenians. He also thanked Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd for granting all kinds of religious freedom to Christians.[20] In addition to being valuable in the eyes of both the Pope and the Sultan, Azarian gained the respect of the Eastern Catholics. In particular, efforts to find a middle way for church problems relieved the Ottoman government. One example is the Assyrian church debate in Mosul regarding the Ottoman Empire's struggle about whether the churches belonged to Orthodox or Catholic Syriacs.[21] Both Christian groups claimed their right to the church. In the resolution of the issue, the Ottoman government benefited from Azarian's views. Azarian was called to the

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16 *Barāt (Berat)* is the official document given by the sultan stating that an appointment or exemption has been provided.

17 Armenian Catholic Church, "Biographies Past Catholicos Patriarchs", (Accessed June 1, 2021).

18 BOA, *Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat [Y. A. HUS]*, no. 272, Folderno. 79.

19 *Ṣabāḥ* (Rajab 12, 1310/ January 30, 1893).

20 *The Manchester Guardian*, "The Papacy" (February 17, 1887), 8.

21 BOA, *Sadaret Mektubî Kalemi Mühimme Evrakı [A. MKT. MHM]*, no. 491, Folderno. 65.

Sublime Porte in 1886, long negotiations were held, and a solution was obtained with his efforts.[22]

3. Letters of Condolence

When referring to popes in the Ottoman official correspondence, the term "Rīm Papa", which means "Pope in Rome", was used.[23] However, after the period of the Sultan ʿAbd al-Majīd, the words "His Holiness" were used more often. Statements about the Pope appear not only in official documents but also in the newspaper pages of the period.[24]

When we look at the official correspondence in the period of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, the following expressions are used that have the same meaning as "His Holiness": "Haşmetli Papa Hazretleri", "Haşmetli Papa Cenapları", "Papa Cenapları", "Papa Hazretleri", and "Haşmetli Papa".[25] These expressions were frequently used, especially in the letters Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II wrote to Pope Leo. For example, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II sent a condolence letter to the spiritual council in the Vatican on the death of Pope Pius IX. Thereupon, the Vatican delegation sent Monsignor Antonio Maria Grasselli to Istanbul for ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's kindness. One of Graselli's aims was to convey to the Sultan that Pope Leo XIII was the new pope. Graselli came to Istanbul and had good discussions with ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. These developments further enhanced the good relations between the Vatican and the Ottomans.[26]

Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II paid close attention to issues related to the relatives of Pope Leo. When Pope Leo's older brother passed away, he sent this condolence telegram: "I have heard with great sadness the death of Jean Pecci. I would like to express my condolence for this death."[27]

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22 BOA, *Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları [MV]*, no. 11, Folderno. 76.

23 BOA, *Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn Sicilleri Mühimme Defterleri (A. DVNSMHM.d)*, no. 7, Folderno. 1555.

24 *Başīrat* (Rabīʿ al-awwal 3, 1289/May 11, 1872); *Jarīdah-ʾi Ḥawādith* (Muḥarram 18, 1284/May 22, 1867).

25 BOA, *İrade Taltifat [İ. TAL]*, no. 26, Folderno. 12; *İ. TAL*, no. 71, Folderno. 27; *İ. TAL*, no. 73, Folderno. 47; Bâbıâli Evrak Odası Evrakı [BEO], no. 539, Folderno. 40368.

26 BOA, *İ. HR*, no. 276, Folderno. 16813.

27 BOA, *Yıldız Sadaret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı [Y. A. RES]*, no. 10, Folderno. 23.

Pope Leo responded to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's condolences with this telegram: "The condolence of the honorable Sultan due to the death of our brother has been highly appreciated by us. I sincerely thank you for the continuation of your supreme reign and wish you happiness."[28]

There were communication problems from time to time because there was no official relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy See. The negotiations in Istanbul generally took place through the French embassy. However, sometimes Papal authorities' desire to meet directly with Ottoman state officials drew a harsh reaction from France.[29] Likewise, the fact that the Ottoman ambassador in Italy wanted to meet with Pope Leo XIII and other Papal authorities caused a communication problem. Due to the problem between the Italian state and the Holy See, Pope Leo XIII did not want to meet with the ambassadors in Italy. This was even more apparent in the appointment of the Ottoman ambassador to congratulate the new Pope. In return for the visit of the Pope's deputy in Istanbul, the Sultan appointed the Roman ambassador for congratulations. However, Pope Leo XIII did not accept any envoy in the Italian state. The envoy obtained this impression from the cardinal at the head of Propaganda Fide. Upon this occurrence, the Ottoman ambassador requested the appointment of the Ottoman consul in Rome from the Porte. According to the ambassador, the consul not only knew a few of the cardinals but also had close relations with Monsignor Franchi.[30]

Friendly relations between the Ottoman and Holy See continued despite diplomatic difficulties. When we consider the past years, it is clear that the Ottoman consulate in Rome was established due to the problem between Italy and the Holy See. Yanko Fotiyadi Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador to Italy, explained the reasons for the establishment of this consulate. According to him, many citizens lived in Rome, and most of them were clergy. Therefore, it would be appropriate to establish a consulate to meet their needs and maintain close contact with the Vatican. This request of Fotiyadi Pasha was

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[28] BOA, *Y. A. RES*, no. 10, Folderno. 23.

[29] Marmara, *Vatikan Gizli Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Türkiye ile Vatikan*, 5.

[30] BOA, *Hariciye Nezareti Mütenevvia Kısmı Evrakı [HR. MTV]*, no. 202, Folderno. 4.

approved by Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and a consulate was established in Rome in 1871.[31]

4. Mutual Gifts and the Pope's Jubilee

Another detail observed in the Ottoman-Vatican relations was the reciprocal courtesy between ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII. For instance, when Cardinal Vincenzo Vannutelli came to Istanbul in 1880, he presented a mosaic table with a letter written by Pope Leo XIII.[32] In return, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II sent gifts and letters to the Pope many times. The most striking of these was the ring sent to Pope Leo XIII by ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II in 1887.

Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II also showed great interest in Pope Leo's jubilee ceremony. We can take a closer look at this jubilee ceremony, which had an important influence in Rome in the second half of the 19th century. The jubilee ceremony, which lasted from the spring of 1887 to the beginning of 1888, took place after great preparations.[33]

Considering Pope Leo's policies in general, he was an important success in opening the Catholic Church to the outside. This situation drew attention at the ceremonies held in the Vatican. The gifts presented at the jubilee of the Pope in 1887 are a good example. The gold ewer and basin given by Queen Victoria, the crown given by the German emperor, and the diamond ring given by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II are among the most important.[34]

In the press of the period, all the preparations in the Vatican were discussed. The most remarkable news in the press was related to the gifts presented to the Pope. A few of these news items can be mentioned. For example, the German Emperor presented two gifts to the Pope as a gift for the jubilee. One of them was a mitre set with precious stones that was worth 20,000 francs. The second was a set of mass robes with a value of 30,000 francs offered by the Empress. The Queen of Saxony, Carole, gifted a beautiful basin worth 5,000 francs.

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31 BOA, *İ. HR,* no. 254, Folderno. 15151.

32 BOA, *Y. A. HUS,* no. 164, Folderno. 49.

33 Bernard O'Reilly, *Life of Leo XIII, From an Authentic Memoir Furnished by His Order* (New York: The John C. Winston Company, 1903), 603.

34 John Ireland, "Leo XIII., His Work and Influence", *The North American Review* 177/562 (September 1903), 363.

The Prince of Bavaria Regent presented a pair of stained-glass windows representing Popes Gregory and Leo.[35]

Austria, which has a dense Catholic population, also gave great importance to the Pope's jubilee. *The Times* tells about the great preparations for the jubilee in Austria as follows:

> The 50th anniversary of the Pope's ordination as priest will be celebrated by the Catholics in Austria-Hungary with great pomp. Several pilgrimages to Rome have been organized, and Pope will receive numerous beautiful and costly gifts from the Emperor, the members of the Imperial family, the Austrian and Hungarian aristocracies, the ecclesiastical bodies, and other corporations. These gifts are now being exhibited at the Austrian museum here, and among them is a collective offering from all the Archdukes, which attracts special attention. It is a magnificent reliquarium in silver of great artistic value dating from the end of the 15th century and is enclosed in a velvet case, which bears outside a golden plate with the names of all the Archdukes, the list being headed with the name of Crown Prince Rudolph. The reliquarium contains 365 relics, one for each day of the year and in the order of the calendar.[36]

The jubilee took place despite several concerns due to the tension between the Holy See and the Italian government. *The Times*, in an article titled "Italy and The Pope's Jubilee" dated January 3, 1888, mentions the end of the jubilee without a negative demonstration. The newspaper also added that the strict measures taken by the Italian government bothered people.[37]

There is also news in *The Times* about the gift of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. In a piece titled "Turkey and the Vatican" dated January 10, 1887, the following information is given:

> Monsignor Azarian, Patriarch of the Catholic Armenians, who will leave for Rome on the 19th inst., will be the bearer of an autographed letter from the sultan to the Pope congratulating His Holiness on the occasion of the jubilee anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. The Patriarch will also take presents, including a very valuable diamond ring, from His

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35 *The Times*, "The Pope's Jubilee" (October 11, 1887), 5.
36 *The Times*, "The Pope's Jubilee" (October 10, 1887), 6.
37 *The Times*, "Italy and the Pope's Jubilee" (January 3, 1888), 5.

> Majesty to the Pope, as well as decorations for various Cardinals. It is believed that Monsignor Azarian will be made Cardinal on the occasion of his visit to Rome.[38]

In news from the same newspaper titled "The Sultan and the Pope" on February 15, 1887, the following information is reported:

> The Armenian Patriarch will be received by the Pope at noon tomorrow, when he will present to His Holiness a diamond ring as a present from the Sultan, as well as the decorations lately conferred by His Majesty upon the various prelates. The latter will afterward receive decorations from the Pope himself.[39]

The satisfaction and excitement of the Pope due to the gift from the Sultan drew attention both in the letter he wrote and in the information given by Azarian. The documents in the Ottoman Archives also contain detailed information on this subject. The Catholic Armenian Patriarch Azarian Efendī conveyed the Sultan's gift to the Pope. When the Pope received the ring, he stated that he was honored and commented on its beauty to the people around him. In addition, Cardinal Parocchi presented his appreciation for the ring, saying that its stone was a rare artifact and even more superior than the gift sent to the Pope a year before by the German Emperor.[40]

The assignment of Azarian by the Sultan to present the gifts brought joy to the Catholic Armenian community. They stated that this was an honorable behavior for them by the Sultan.

5. Thanking the Sultan from the Pope

The Catholic Armenian Patriarch Azarian Efendī informed the Sultan about the developments in Rome. In his speech before the Pope, he briefly underlined the following points. He was proud to be a citizen of the Ottoman Empire and to convey the gift of the Sultan to the Pope. He was grateful to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II for giving favor to all his people. The greatest ambitions of the Sultan were the welfare and happiness of his people. They had great freedom in carrying out their religious worship, and this was a situation to be envied by the Christian people of many countries. Therefore, they prayed for the Sultan's long life and for his happiness to increase. His appointment to

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[38] *The Times*, "Foreign News, Turkey and Vatican" (January 10, 1887), 6.
[39] *The Times*, "Foreign News, The Sultan and the Pope" (February 15, 1887), 5.
[40] BOA, *Yıldız Perakende Sadâret Maruzâtı Evrakı [Y. PRK. A]*, no. 4, Folderno. 71.

this duty, which was a means of pride, was the result of the Catholics' loyalty to their Sultans and the Sultan's satisfaction with the Catholics in turn.[41]

After Patriarch Azarian finished his speech, he stated his loyalty to the Pope and demanded his prayer. Then, the following speech was delivered by Pope Leo:

> We are happy to receive the letter and gift you have been assigned by the Sultan (Padişah hazretleri) to deliver to us. We are extremely grateful and thankful for the Sultan's friendly feelings for us. The mentioned supreme feelings are proven by medals given to some cardinals and priests. We take pride in seeing that the extraordinarily important task given to a Catholic patriarch is the result of Catholics' loyalty to the Sultan. We are confident that the Catholics will not leave their loyalty, which is a sacred duty. We fully believe that Catholics' loyalty will increase much more, as we witness that they are being tolerated too much in terms of religious freedom. It is evident that satisfaction with religious freedom will bring about better works. We ask you to express our feeling in the presence of the Sultan, and we wish his happiness to increase. Therefore, we pray to you and to all Catholics from your Patriarchate. May God accept our wishes.[42]

Patriarch Azarian did not return to Istanbul immediately after delivering the Sultan's gift and letter in the Vatican. According to him, his duty had good results not only in the Vatican Palace but also among many top foreign diplomats in Rome. He stayed in Rome for another twenty days and then visited Lyon and Paris.[43]

Azarian also visited the Ottoman ambassador before leaving Rome. The letter sent by the Ottoman ambassador from Rome to Istanbul is important. In his letter, the Ambassador stated that he was interested in Azarian and that they talked about the ceremony in the Vatican. According to what Azarian told the ambassador, the gift of any president was not discussed as much as the gift of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II.[44]

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41 BOA, *Y. PRK. A*, no. 4, Folderno. 71.
42 BOA, *Y. PRK. A*, no. 4, Folderno. 71.
43 BOA, *Y. PRK. A*, no. 4, Folderno. 71.
44 BOA, *Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım Evrakı [HR. SYS],* no. 1769, Folderno. 54.

Azarian's travels in Rome and other European cities and the gift of the Sultan to the Pope were the subject of many domestic and foreign newspapers of the period, as well as archival documents. According to the news of the *Ṣabāḥ* newspaper published in Istanbul, Azarian, who conducted a series of meetings in Rome in March 1887, is reported to have moved to Paris and had meetings there. Azarian had a special meeting with the Emperor of Austria in Vienna during his visit in 1887. An Ottoman Pasha was present with Azarian at the feast given later.[45]

After a long journey, he returned to Istanbul with "Varna Post". Then, he went to Yıldız Palace and presented the letter sent by the Pope to the Sultan. Azarian also went to the Porte and had a meeting with the Grand Vizier and presented him with medals sent from the Vatican.[46] *The Times* reported the following news: "The Armenian Catholic Patriarch Azarian, on his return from his mission to Rome to present the Pope with a gift of a valuable ring from the Sultan and Turkish orders to Cardinals, has brought an autographed letter of thanks from Leo XIII. He will be received in audience by the Sultan this week."[47]

In the aforementioned section, what Pope Leo meant by the medals given to the cardinals was the gifts given by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. Pope Leo had sent a special gift to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and medals to some Ottoman officials. The gift brought to the sultan by the Istanbul Deputy of the Pope was a mosaic table. Deputy Pope Monsignor Vincenzo Vannutelli also brought a letter from Pope Leo to convey to the Sultan.[48] Rejoicing, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II sent medals to high-ranking Catholic clergymen along with a special gift to the Pope. These were Cardinal Simoni, Cardinal Nina, Pope Istanbul deputy Monsignor Vincenzo Vannutelli and Abbot Antuan Vigo.[49]

Like the jubilee ceremonies in 1887-88, the Pope's jubilee in 1893 drew great attention. Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II paid close attention to the celebrations commemorating the Pope's attainment of the bishopric. For example, in 1893, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II presented a decorated box to the jubilee for the fiftieth year of Pope Leo's reign as

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45 *Ṣabāḥ* (Rajab 17, 1304/April 11, 1887).
46 *Ṣabāḥ* (Rajab 21, 1304/April 15, 1887).
47 *The Times,* "Turkey, Constantinople April 20" (April 21, 1887), 5.
48 BOA, *Y. PRK. A,* no. 4, Folderno. 71.
49 BOA, *İ. HR,* no. 225, Folderno. 13183.

bishop.[50] Azarian brought a letter to the Pope along with a gift. Considering the news received from Rome, Azarian was treated as an extraordinary ambassador and, although not official, as the representative of the Sultan. He was accompanied by Armenian clergy and other civilians in Rome and elsewhere in Italy.[51]

There were two gifts from the Sultan. The first was a valuable snuff box, and the other was a religiously valuable inscription. The value given to the Pope's jubilee can be seen in the preparation of the gift. Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II did not initially like the snuff box that was prepared to be presented to the Pope. According to the Sultan, the value of the gift was too low for the Pope. Therefore, the Sultan requested the removal of the stone in the middle of the snuff box and the placement of precious large stones on both sides and in the middle. When the Ottoman Archive Documents are examined, it can be seen that the preparation of the gift was completed after many official correspondences.[52]

Another gift from the Sultan was the Inscription of Abercius, which contained valuable information in terms of early Christianity. We can take a closer look at this gift.

6. Gift of Abercius' Inscription

Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II sent the Pope a religiously important gift, the Inscription of Abercius. The two parts of this inscription were found in 1883 by the British archaeologist William Mitchell Ramsay in Phrygia (the city of Hieropolis) in Turkey. Today, this place is located in the district of Sandıklı, Afyon province in western Turkey. It is exhibited in the Lateran Museum.[53]

The Inscription of Abercius, the oldest historical monument in the Eucharist, has great theological significance in the context of the

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50 BOA, *BEO*, no. 132, Folderno. 9885.

51 *The Manchester Guardian*, "The Pope's Episcopal Jubilee" (February 22, 1893), 8.

52 BOA, *BEO*, no. 130, Folderno. 10392; *BEO*, no. 132, Folderno. 9885.

53 Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 97, 101; Margaret M. Mitchell, "Poetics and Politics of Christian Baptism in the Abercius Monument", *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity,* ed. David Hellholm et al. (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 1744; Musei Vatican, "Inscription of Abercius" (Accessed May 20, 2019).

history of the church doctrine.[54] The importance of the Inscription of Abercius to the Eucharist is detailed as follows:

> The Eucharist is the living presence of Christ in the Church. The Lord's passion led to his transformation into food for humanity (cf. 1 Cor 10:16; 11:23ff). One of the traditional symbols of this mystery is the fish. The most ancient reference on the subject is found in the celebrated epigraph of St. Abercius, a bishop of the second century: '...he abundantly feeds me with fish from clear waters..., which the chaste virgin takes and offers each day to her friends so they can eat it with choice wine together with bread.'[55]

Abercius, the Bishop of Hieropolis (Denizli), printed the inscription at the end of the 2nd century at the age of 72. The inscription consisted of 22 verses describing the life and deeds of Abercius. One of the most important events in his life was his journey to Rome.[56] His epitaph speaks of the glorious seal in connection with baptism.[57] The following text is included in the translation of the inscriptions of Abercius:

> The citizen of an eminent city, this monument I made whilst still living, that there I might have in time a resting place for my body. My name is Abercius, the disciple of the holy shepherd having Paul [as my companion]. Everywhere faith was my guide and everywhere provided as my food the fish of exceeding great size and pure whom the spotless virgin caught from the spring, who feeds his flocks of sheep on the mountains and in the plains, who has great eyes that see everywhere. This shepherd taught me the Book worthy of belief. It is he who sent me to Rome to behold the royal majesty and to see the queen arrayed in golden vestments and golden sandals. There also I saw the people famous for their seal. And I saw the plains of Syria and all its cities, and also Nisibis when I crossed the Euphrates.

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54 J. Quasten, "Abercius, Epitaph of", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Michigan: Gale, 2003), 1/20; M. R. P. Mcguire, "Epigraphy, Christian", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Michigan: Gale, 2003), 5/286.

55 The Holy See, "Synod of Bishops XI Ordinary General Assembly the Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church" (Accessed January 20, 2020).

56 Quasten, "Abercius, Epitaph of", 1/20.

57 F. X. Murphy, "Symbolism, Early Christian", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Michigan: Gale, 2003), 13/667.

> Everywhere I met brethren in agreement, and faith ever gives this food to his disciples to eat, having the choicest wine and administering the mixed drink with bread. I, Abercius, standing by, ordered these words to be inscribed, being in the course of my seventy-second year. Let him who understands these words and believes the same pray for Abercius. No one shall place another tomb over my grave; but if he does so, he shall pay to the treasury of the Romans two thousand pieces of gold and to my beloved native city Hieropolis, one thousand pieces of gold.[58]

6.1. Ṣābūnjīzādah Louis Alberi's Report on the Inscription

Another important person to be considered in the relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and the Pope is Louis Ṣābūnjīzādah (1838-1931). Ṣābūnjīzādah, a Maronite pastor, was educated at Propaganda Fide in Rome.[59] After various duties, he entered Yıldız Palace in 1891 and advised Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II for 18 years. He reviewed newspapers published in Arabic, French, and Italian languages in the foreign press and reported them to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. Ṣābūnjīzādah, who also met with the Pope's deputy in Istanbul from time to time, had important consultations with him.[60] Since he had a deep knowledge of Christianity, he gave important information about this subject to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. In his report to the Sultan, he made the following evaluations about "The Inscription of Abercius":

> It is admirable for our sultan to strive for the discovery and preservation of ancient artifacts in his property. The famous tomb of St. Abercius is also one of the valuable discoveries. St. Abercius was a bishop who lived in the second century AD and had important knowledge. Because he was very enthusiastic about travel, he would travel to places known in his time. He also wrote a travel book about the places he visited. When he came to his hometown (Sandıklı), he wrote inscriptions on the walls of the tomb he had built for himself. In these writings, there

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58 The Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), "Eucharistic Belief Manifest In the Epitaphs of Abercius and Pectorius" (Accessed January 4, 2020).

59 Rogier Visser, *Identities in Early Arabic Journalism: The Case of Louis Ṣābūnjī* (Inowroclaw: Totem Press, 2014), 163.

60 Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, *Yıldız Sarayı'nda Bir Papaz,* ed. Mehmet Kuzu (İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007), 134.

> was some historical information about science, the emergence of Christianity, the status of Christianity until its time, and the spiritual leadership of the popes. His body was buried in this tomb after Abercius's death. This tomb remained under the ground as time passed, and it was discovered ten years ago by archaeologist Ramsay in a stream in Sandikli (a district of Afyon province). It is stated by archaeologists that this inscription has much importance compared to ancient works. Because this inscription is considered as the sum of travel book, religious and natural sciences that were available at that time. It is understood that the person who owns this work wants to do something by imitating the pyramids in Egypt. If they found a way to transfer this work to the London Museum, they would not refrain from paying the necessary cost.[61]

Louis Ṣābūnjīzādah, who gave information to the Sultan about the process, was against sending the inscription to Rome. According to him, the Catholic Armenian Patriarch and Museum (*Mūzah-yi Hümāyūn*) Director Ḥamdī Beg were in a bad alliance. Azarian, who was going to Rome during the year of his appointment to the bishopric of the Pope, would give the inscription to one of the scientists in Europe. It was a great mistake to take precious stones from their places and take them to other places. This situation was similar to destroying pages of an ancient history book. The best thing for the Ottoman government was to preserve this inscription.[62]

Considering the overall report of Ṣābūnjīzādah, it is clear that he was concerned with Abercius' inscription. He even wrote the same text in the inscription and gave it to the Sultan. First, Ṣābūnjīzādah was against the transfer of this inscription to Rome through the Patriarch Azarian. It is not fully understood whether he had personal anger toward the Patriarch. However, the negative thoughts about Patriarch Azarian suggest that he might have personal anger. When we look at the Ottoman Archive Documents, it is understood that this inscription would be sent to the Holy See through official channels, and there are interviews with Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro (1843-1913). This inscription was sent to Pope Leo as a result of correspondence

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61 BOA, *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği [Y. PRK. TKM]*, no. 27, Folderno. 2.

62 BOA, *Y. PRK. TKM*, no. 27, Folderno. 2.

with some related people and ministries. First, Patriarch Azarian sent a letter to the Prime Ministry with a request to take the inscription to Rome as a gift from the Sultan. One of the most remarkable points in the official petition of Patriarch Azarian is the statement that he himself had a role in the discovery of this inscription.[63]

6.2. Sending the Inscription from Istanbul to Rome

When Azarian's petition was sent to the Yıldız Palace through the Prime Ministry, it was said that it was appropriate to send the gift on behalf of the Museum (*Mūzah-yi Hümāyūn*). Later, in the official letter from the Prime Ministry to the Ministry of Education, it was requested that the museum take over the process.[64]

Regarding this subject, the Museum Director Ḥamdī Beg summarized the process as follows in his official letter to the Ministry of Education:

> This inscription, which was brought to the museum in Istanbul from Sandıklı upon the request of the Catholic Armenian Patriarch Azarian, consists of nine lines. The gift of this inscription, which is important for the Christian religion, is appropriate for the museum. In return, Patriarch Azarian informed us that the Pope would also give precious books to the Museum.[65]

After the positive opinion of the Ottoman statesmen, it was decided to send the inscription to the Holy See by ship on February 1, 1893. The inscription, which was placed in a specially made chest, was handed over to the Catholic Armenian Patriarchate, Ṭāshjiyan Efendī, and the officers were asked to provide convenience at the customs.[66]

As a result, despite the negative approaches of Louis Ṣābūnjīzādah, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's willingness to gift the inscription to the Holy See had an important reflection in the relations between the Papacy and the Ottoman Empire. This positive atmosphere is also seen in the Roman newspapers of the period. For example, the newspaper *Le Moniteur de Rome* described the process of bringing the inscription to

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63 BOA, *BEO*, no. 141, Folderno. 10510.
64 BOA, *BEO*, no. 146, Folderno. 10910.
65 BOA, *Maarif Nezareti Mektubî Kalemi [MF. MKT]*, no. 159, Folderno. 143.
66 BOA, *MF. MKT*, no. 159, Folderno. 143.

Rome in detail. In the same newspaper, the behavior of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II was described as delicate and generous.[67]

Abercius' inscription was an important agenda in the British press as much as in Rome in the last quarter of the 19th century. The discovery of the book by William Mitchell Ramsay of Scotland affected this. Ramsay, who was awarded a gold medal by Pope Leo in 1893, was mentioned in the United Kingdom at that time. A remarkable point is that it was the agenda in England ten years before the inscription was brought to Rome. Durham Bishop and the British theologian Joseph Barber Lightfoot made a speech about Abercius' inscription and Ramsay at the Church Congress. *The Times* gives the following news in a column titled "Church Congress":

> The Bishop of Durham read the first paper, in which he dealt mainly with two discoveries. Speaking of the inscription on a tomb discovered by Mr. Ramsay in 1883, he said, though comprising only 22 lines, it is full of matter illustrating the condition and usages of the Church in the latter half of the second century. Abercius declares himself to be a disciple of the pure shepherd who feeds his flocks on mountains and plains. This shepherd is described as having great eyes which look on every side. The author says, likewise, that the shepherd taught him 'faithful writings,' meaning, doubtless, Evangelical narratives and the Apostolic Epistles. The writer tells us that he went to Syria and crossed the Euphrates, visiting Nisibis. Everywhere he found comrades –that is, fellow Christians. Faith led the way, and following her guidance, he took Paul for his companion- or, in other words, the Epistles of the Apostle were his constant study. The miraculous incarnation and the omniscient, omnipresent energy of Christ, the Scriptural writings, the two Sacraments, the extension and catholicity of the Church –all stand out in definite outline and vivid colours, the more striking because this is no systematic exposition of the theologian, but the chance expression of a devout Christian soul. A light is thus flashed in upon the inner life of the Christian Church in this remote Phrygian city…[68]

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67 *Le Moniteur de Rome*, "Rome, Très Saint Père" (February 26, 1893), 3.

68 *The Times*, "The Church Congress" (October 2, 1884), 6.

As a result, Azarian's gifts to the Pope in Rome in 1877 and 1893 on behalf of the Sultan made the relations between the Vatican and Istanbul even better. In addition to hosting Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II Patriarch Azarian in his palace, he later honored him by increasing his salary from 2550 gurush to 4000.[69]

7. The Development of Catholic Institutions in Istanbul

As a result of the good relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo, the number of Catholic institutions in the Ottoman Empire increased considerably. One of the most important examples of this is Istanbul.[70] There are many documents on the subject in the Ottoman Archives. Some of these Catholic groups are the Frères,[71] Lazarists,[72] Saint Jean Chrysostome,[73] and Order of Friars Minor Capuchin.[74] From time to time, the deputy of the Pope in Istanbul visited these schools.[75] The deputy of the Pope also visited many cities other than Istanbul and the Catholic institutions there. The Ottoman government was aware of the visit and gave orders to the city's rulers to help Bonetti and show respect.[76]

The problems of these Catholic institutions were solved by the state, and a medal was presented to the administrators of institutions by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II.[77] The Sultan ordered the building of a new church next to the schools.[78]

The historian Frazee describes the development of Catholic institutions in Istanbul as follows:

> During the sultanate of Abdulhamid II, from 1878 to 1909, the role of the apostolic delegate in Istanbul was enhanced. The Latin archbishop considerably overshadowed the civil head of the Latin community, since the duties of the Latin consuls, after

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69 BOA, *BEO*, no. 499, Folderno. 37385.
70 O'Reilly, *Life of Leo XIII*, 388.
71 BOA, *BEO*, no. 2152, Folderno. 161343.
72 BOA, *BEO*, no. 173, Folderno. 12903; *Y. A. HUS*, no. 272, Folderno. 37.
73 BOA, *İrade Adliye ve Mezahib [İ. AZN)]*, no. 80, Folderno. 41; *Y. A. RES*, no. 151, Folderno. 1.
74 BOA, *Hariciye Nezareti Tahrirat [HR. TH]*, no. 151, Folderno. 79.
75 BOA, *Yıldız Parakende Evrakı Zabtiye Nezareti Maruzatı [Y. PRK. ZB]*, no. 22, Folderno. 67.
76 BOA, *BEO*, no. 765, Folderno. 57361.
77 BOA, *İ. TAL*, no. 265, Folderno. 24.
78 BOA, *İ. AZN*, no. 4, Folderno. 25.

> the Tanzimat legal reforms, had been assumed by the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the lay consuls' activities became more ceremonial than substantial. The apostolic delegate was responsible for supervising the eleven Latin Catholic parishes in existence in Galata and its environs. He also kept watch over the larger number of educational institutions which now served several thousand students in the capital. In addition, he was charged with the direction of the Catholic orders which were involved in staffing hospitals, orphanages and asylums. At that time, there were eleven religious orders of men located in sixty-one houses, totalling five hundred and twenty-eight priests and brothers. Catholic women's orders numbered fifteen in fifty-four houses holding six hundred and seventy-four sisters. Thirty Catholic schools were in operation, extending from primary institutions to colleges.[79]

Another example of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's tolerance of different religions was the opening of a new synagogue in Haydarpaşa, a district of Istanbul. Upon the request of prominent Jews, the Sultan allowed the construction of the synagogue in the Haydarpaşa district. Despite the objections of the residents around the synagogue, the Sultan did not retreat from this decision and prevented any incident by sending a group of soldiers at the opening of the synagogue. Therefore, the Jews also named this synagogue "Hemdat", not only because it meant "mercy of Israel" but also because it was similar to the name of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. They expressed their gratitude to the Sultan by using this name.[80] Considering the attitude of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II throughout his reign, he was tolerant of all religious groups.

8. The Financial Support to Religious Institutions

The religious days of the Christians and Jews were given great importance in the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman Archival Documents are examined, it is seen that this was more intense during the reign of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. The so-called "ʿAṭiyyah-ʾi Saniyyah"[81] was given to Christians on Easter and other feast days,

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79 Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 230.

80 Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), 204.

81 Bestowed by the Sultan.

while the Jews were given more on the Passover holiday.[82] In turn, the heads of religious groups sent letters thanking the Sultan for his assistance. In 1901, such thanks came from the patriarchs of the Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Assyrians, and Catholics. The Patriarchs thanked Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II for his help to the orphans and their poor children on Easter.[83]

In addition to the religious days, the Ottoman Empire provided assistance to the institutions of other religious members as well as Muslims in need. A few of many examples of Catholics can be mentioned. For example, Catholics living in the city of Sivas in the Ottoman Empire began building a school for their children but could not complete it. They requested help, and in a short period of time, with the permission of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, necessary assistance was provided.[84] Similarly, the girls' school under the supervision of the Catholic Armenian nuns in Ankara was assisted, and the needs of the students were met.[85]

8.1. Pontifical Maronite College in Rome

Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's support for Catholic Christians was also apparent outside the borders of the state. For example, financial support was given to the religious institution of the Catholic Mekhitarists in Venice, and medals were given to the monks in the monastery.[86] In the same way as in Venice, financial support was provided to the Pontifical Maronite College in Rome by the Sultan in 1891. In addition, the Mekhitarist college on the Island of San Lazzaro in Venice included a photograph of the Sultan, the Sultan's signature (*ṭughrā*), and an Ottoman *sanjaq*.[87] Especially during the award ceremonies held at the college, prayers were given to the Ottoman Sultan.[88]

The history of Pontifical Maronite College in Rome dates back to the 16th century. The college was opened in 1582 under Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585). This educational institution where Jesuit fathers served

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82 BOA, *İ. AZN*, no. 65, Folderno. 30.
83 BOA, *Yıldız Perakende Adliye ve Mezâhib Nezâreti Maruzâtı [Y. PRK. AZN]*, no. 21, Folderno. 79.
84 BOA, *İrade Hususi [İ. HUS]*, no. 25, Folderno. 23.
85 BOA, *MV*, no. 23, Folderno. 24.
86 BOA, *İ. DH*, no. 1037, Folderno. 81599.
87 BOA, *BEO*, no. 3788, Folderno. 284028; *HR. TO*, no. 407, Folderno. 17.
88 BOA, *Y. A. HUS*, no. 239, Folderno. 7.

played an important role in both the Maronite Church and the Eastern studies in the West.[89] This college was an important source of contact between Rome and the East. Students came from the East to adopt a significant number of Latin theology and practices. Important books were published thanks to the printing press set up there. Significant manuscripts of the Maronites were printed and changed to suit Latin practice.[90]

Important students were also trained in this college. The Biblical scholar and linguist Gabriel Sionita, Abraham Ecchellensis, and the famous orientalist Joseph Simon Assemani, who was responsible for the Vatican Library, are among its most famous students.[91] However, the Maronite College in Rome was suppressed by the armies of Napoleon in 1808. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII erected this college in Rome with the Maronite Bishop Elias Hayek.[92]

The documents in the Ottoman Archives show that Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II was interested in this college. It was through the sub-governor (*mutaṣarrif*) of Lebanon that the Sultan knew the subject. The *mutaṣarrif* stated in his letter that the Pope provided a significant amount of money for the college to be built in Rome, and it would be appropriate for the Ottoman to provide such financial aid. The reason why the *mutaṣarrif* made such an assessment was the result of his meeting with the Maronite Patriarch. The Ottoman government first conducted research on the purpose of the school. As a result of the evaluations, it was thought that the school would contribute to the education of Maronite youth, so it was deemed appropriate to give 10,000 francs.[93]

Ottoman statesmen were interested in the opening of colleges. It is noteworthy that the Ottoman ambassador in Rome corresponded with the Sublime Porte in Istanbul in many telegraph correspondences. The messenger's telegram dated December 17, 1891, contains the following information: "The content of his speech addressing the Maronite clergymen by Pope Leo XIII about the reopening of the old Maronite

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89 Elias Youssef El-Hayek – Seely Joseph Beggiani, "Maronite Church", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Michigan: Gale, 2003), 9/198.
90 Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 138-139.
91 El-Hayek – Beggiani, "Maronite Church", 9/198.
92 El-Hayek – Beggiani, "Maronite Church", 9/198.
93 BOA, *MV*, no. 66, Folderno. 35.

College built in Rome in 1584 by Pope Gregor XIII will be published by the Catholic newspapers this evening."[94]

The close attention of the Ottoman State to this college in Rome was not left unrequited by the authorities of this educational institution. They also expressed their thanks to the Ottoman State in every way for these favors. Deputy Maronite Patriarch Bishop Elias Hoyek came to Istanbul shortly after the opening of the college and met with the Grand Vizier. During his meeting with the Grand Vizier, Bishop Elias stated that they were grateful for the assistance given to the college and the medal given to the Patriarch by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. He also stated that awarding medals to other Maronite notables and clergymen would honor them.[95] Soon, medals were given by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II.[96]

The officials of the Maronite college in Rome were not indifferent to the official ceremonies in the Ottoman Empire. They wrote Arabic poems about the ceremony called "julūs-i humāyūn" in memory of the Sultan's throne and sent them to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. In addition, both the director of the Maronite College and the director of the Antonian Catholic College in Rome went to the Ottoman ambassador of Rome to the Sultan's "julūs-i humāyūn".[97]

9. Mutual Cooperation in the Balkans

Increasing the influence of Russia through the Orthodox Church in the Balkans was a situation against both the Ottoman Empire and the Holy See, so there was close cooperation on both sides. The Holy See helped the Ottomans in this regard, mostly suggesting that Catholics living in the Balkan region did not attempt to rebel. These suggestions were made in the time of both Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII. Here, Cardinal Franchi, who conducted an active policy on behalf of the Holy See, attracted attention. Another important person was the Catholic Armenian Patriarch Azarian. For example, in a letter sent to Patriarch Azarian by Cardinal Franchi on April 20, 1877, the following issues were emphasized. The Ottoman State official Safvet Pasha made a request to the Patriarch Azarian about the Catholics in the Balkans.

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94 BOA, *HR. TO*, no. 536, Folderno. 61.
95 BOA, *İ. DH*, no. 1260, Folderno. 98944.
96 BOA, *İ. TAL*, no. 210, Folderno. 53.
97 BOA, *HR. TO*, no. 94, Folderno. 45; *İ. HR*, no. 264, Folderno. 15810.

When this request was delivered to the Vatican, Cardinal Franchi was assigned to this task, and calls were made to the Mirditë Catholics. Cardinal Franchi condemned the Mirditë Catholics' rebellion efforts and called for calm. Franchi wanted the Mirditë Catholics not to rebel against the Ottomans as a requirement of their religion. If they tried to attempt a revolt and did not heed the Pope's order, a sanction would be imposed by the Church. These instructions from Franchi were reported to all clergy in Albania.[98]

Another letter from Cardinal Franchi concerned Mirditë Catholics in Shkoder. There was a priest among the Shkodra who caused confusion. Complaints about the movements of this priest were made to the Holy See officials by the Ottoman State. Therefore, Cardinal Franchi acted in line with the request of the Pope and gave instructions to Shkodra and Bar Bishops. As a result, the attitude of the priest who caused confusion was condemned, and it was stated that attempting to revolt against the Ottoman Empire was completely against the consent of the Pope.[99]

The instructions that the Holy See sent to the Albanian Catholics in 1883 are also important. During this period, Pope Leo XIII sent a letter to the Shkodra Latin Archbishop and made great efforts to prevent the rebellion of Albanian Catholics. In this letter, Pope Leo stated that it was a religious duty for all Catholics to rely on the Ottoman state, especially Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. Those who opposed it would be considered sinful and traitors according to Catholicism. In a letter he sent to Azarian, the Archbishop of Shkodra talked about his activities. As a result of his efforts, the Pope's instructions were read in all Catholic churches, and sermons were made by the priests accordingly. In the continuation of his letter, the Archbishop explained in detail that he had been constantly giving advice to his community for loyalty to the Ottoman Empire.[100]

Pope Leo's advice to Catholics in the Balkans was welcomed by Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II. He also helped the Pope solve the problems of Catholics in many places, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Reviving the Latin Episcopal in Skopje and opening a

98 BOA, *HR. TO*, no. 518, Folderno. 61.
99 BOA, *HR. TO*, no. 518, Folderno. 76.
100 BOA, *Y. A. RES*, no. 20, Folderno. 58.

church there was one of the most important indicators of this.[101] Due to the attitude of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, many Catholic bishops sent letters of thanks to Istanbul. The Skopje Catholic bishop deputy Francisco (Fransko) was one of them.[102]

However, in many parts of the Balkans, the rebellion of Orthodox society against the Ottomans was observed under the influence of Russia, although much less so in the Catholic context. In addition to the special efforts of Pope Leo XIII, the Deputy of the Pope in Istanbul, Patriarch Azarian, and some cardinals contributed greatly to this.

10. The Death of the Pope

The Ottoman Foreign Minister Aḥmad Tawfīq Pasha (1845-1936) went to Rome in May 1903 to present the gifts of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II to the Pope and interviewed him. Later, the Foreign Minister met Pope Leo XIII in Saint Pierre Square. As the Pope entered the church, the crowds there shouted, "Long live the Pope". The Ottoman Minister was accompanying him during that visit. The Pope then turned to the minister and said, "Long live Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd". In his letter to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, Aḥmad Tawfīq Pasha says that the honor of the Pope was unprecedented.[103] In June of the same year, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II wanted to send a gift to the Pope, and Bonetti (Apostolic Delegate in Turkey) was informed of this. It is understood from the Ottoman Archive Documents that Bonetti, who received the gift, left Istanbul on June 29, 1903.[104] Taking the journey time between Istanbul and Italy into account, Bonetti is unlikely to have given the gift to the Pope in person. In July 1903, Pope's disease began to mention in the news titled "The Illness of the Pope".[105] *The Times* reported the passing of the Pope in its article titled "Death of the Pope" dated July 21, 1903. Under the headline, it stated that Pope Leo passed away at four in the afternoon and briefly included his policies regarding the Papacy period.[106]

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[101] BOA, *Yıldız Perakende Umum Vilayetler Tahrirâtı [Y. PRK. UM]*, no. 61, Folderno. 29; *HR. SYS*, no. 123, Folderno. 23.

[102] BOA, *Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi [DH. MKT]*, no. 2358, Folderno. 12.

[103] BOA, *Y. PRK. HR*, no. 33, Folderno. 25.

[104] BOA, *Y. PRK. HR*, no. 7, Folderno. 13.

[105] *The Times*, "The Illness of the Pope" (July 17, 1903), 3; *The Times*, "The Illness of the Pope" (July 18, 1903), 7; *The Times*, "The Illness of the Pope" (July 20, 1903), 3.

[106] *The Times*, "Death of the Pope" (July 21, 1903), 5.

Pope Leo, who served a quarter century, passed away at the age of 93. The Ottoman ambassador in Rome reported the Pope's death to the Porte on the telegram dated July 20, 1903.[107] Later, a letter was written to Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II by the council of cardinals about the Pope's death. Thereupon, the Sultan decided to write a letter of condolence for the death of Patriarch Leo. In addition, due to the election of the new pope, the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Naum Efendi was decided to attend in the ceremony held in Pangaltı Church on August 15, 1903.[108] After a while, a congratulatory letter was sent to the new Pope by the Sultan. Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II continued relations with the new Pope Pius until 1909 when his duty ended.[109]

Conclusion

This paper has shown that a multidimensional relationship was established between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo XIII. Letters written by both Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo expressed the sincerity of both sides. Medals given to officials in different fields were also factors that reinforced this sincerity. The Sultan gave medals to both Catholics in the Ottoman Empire and many clergymen in the Vatican, especially cardinals, while the Pope also gave medals to both Ottoman officials and religious leaders of the Ottomans. In general terms, the Ottoman Catholics brought the Sultan and the Pope together on common ground. In addition to providing freedom to Catholic institutions, Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II occasionally provided financial assistance to them. These aids were sometimes to Catholics within the Ottoman Empire and sometimes outside the Ottoman borders. The colleges of the Mekhitarists in Venice and the Maronites in Rome are among the best examples. While Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II provided a free religious life to the Catholic citizens of the Ottoman Empire, Pope Leo XIII encouraged them to be loyal to their state. Pope's advice to the Balkan Catholics, especially those with intense problems, was very valuable for the Ottomans. Here, a question can be asked whether there was any problem between the two. The answer to this is, of course, that some problems arose from time to time. However, both

[107] BOA, *Y. A. HUS*, no. 452, Folderno. 91.
[108] BOA, *Y. A. HUS*, no. 454, Folderno. 39.
[109] BOA, *Y.A. HUS*, 454/39; *Hariciye Nezareti Mütenevvia Kısmı Belgeleri [HR. MTV]*, no. 202, Folderno. 12; *HR. MTV*, no. 202, Folderno. 13.

sides found a way to reconcile in a short time due to their wisdom. The most important feature of this period is that even the problems that seem great could be solved by mutual dialog. As a result, sincere relations between the Sultan and the Pope were influenced by mutual goodwill as well as external factors. The Inscription of Abercius in the Lateran Museum and the presence of the Maronite College in Rome are among the most important pieces of evidence showing the level of relations between Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and Pope Leo at that time. These are important examples from the past to the present in terms of expressing the feeling of living together on common ground despite different religious and political thoughts.

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BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası [HR. TO]*. No. 94, Folderno. 45; No. 407, Folderno. 17; No. 518, Folderno. 61; No. 518, Folderno. 76; No. 536, Folderno. 61; No. 530, Folderno. 83.

BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *Hatt-ı Hümâyûn [HAT]*. No. 1333, Folderno. 52025.

BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *İrade Adliye ve Mezahib [İ. AZN]*. No. 4, Folderno. 25; No. 65, Folderno. 30; No. 80, Folderno. 41.

BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *İrâde Dahiliye [İ. DH]*. No. 1027, Folderno. 80963; No. 1037, Folderno. 81599; No. 1260, Folderno. 98944.

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BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *Maarif Nezareti Mektubî Kalemi [MF. MKT]*. No. 159, Folderno. 143.

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BOA, Osmanlı Arşivi. *Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Evrakı [Y. A. HUS]*. No. 164, Folderno. 49; No. 239, Folderno. 7; No. 272, Folderno. 37; No. 272, Folderno. 79; No. 452, Folderno. 91; No. 454, Folderno. 39.

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LAW AND CHANGE: A STUDY OF THE CULTIVATION OF WASTELAND IN THE 16TH-17TH CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Abstract

This article examines the nature of legal change in Islamic law through the case of the cultivation of wasteland (*iḥyāʾ al-mawāt*) in the 16th-17th century Ottoman Empire. Imber, one of the leading scholars in modern Ottoman historiography, argues that there was an incompatibility between *qānūn* and *sharīʿah* regarding the legal consequences of opening up wastelands (*mawāt*s) for agriculture in the Empire. He asserts that the legal doctrine of the Ḥanafī school gives the right of full ownership (*al-milk al-tāmm*) to a person cultivating a wasteland with the permission of the ruler (*imām*), while the Ottoman sultans' *qānūn*s only grant this person the right of disposal (*ḥaqq al-*

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taṣarruf). Imber's observation about the practice is accurate; however, his claim regarding the Ḥanafī school's legal doctrine of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* needs revision. This article takes into consideration Ḥanafī *nawāzil* and *fatāwá* literature originating from Central Asia and Ottoman Anatolia to demonstrate that the doctrine in question underwent a slow and gradual but essential change over centuries, and then Ottoman Ḥanafī scholars interpreted the practice of the Empire based on this new doctrine, recognizing the sultan's authority to grant only the right of disposal to those who wished to cultivate the wasteland, suggesting that there was not an actual contradiction between *qānūn* and *sharīʿah* on this issue.

Key Words: Central Asia, Ottoman Empire, cultivation of wasteland, *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt*, Islamic law, *qānūn*, *sharīʿah*, legal change, *nawāzil*, *fatāwá*, *wāqiʿāt*, *al-milk al-tāmm*, *ḥaqq al-taṣarruf*.

Introduction[1]

There are two main narratives in the literature that explain the nature of the doctrinal growth and change of Islamic law. According to an old narrative embraced by Schacht, Coulson, and Chehata, Islamic law largely completed its growth during the 8th to 10th centuries, which is referred to as the formative period.[2] The pioneer of this narrative, Schacht, claims that during the early Abbasid period, Islamic law was in a dynamic interaction with political, social, and economic developments, but "from then onwards became increasingly rigid and

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[2] Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 70; Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 329; Noel James Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964), 75, 80-85; Chafik Chehata, *Etudes de Droit Musulman* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 1/17. For the critics against this approach, see Baber Johansen, *The Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent: The Peasants' Loss of Property Rights as Interpreted in the Hanafite Legal Literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 1-6; Wael B. Hallaq, "From *Fatwās* to *Furūʿ*: Growth and Change in Islamic Substantive Law", *Islamic Law and Society* 1/1 (1994), 29-31.

settled into its final form".[3] Coulson, taking Schacht's claim one step further, argues that Islamic law had no connection with practice during the formative period as well. He suggests that the scholars of that period had a speculative and idealistic approach, enabling them to establish a comprehensive and ideal system of rules, but they were "largely in opposition to existing legal practice".[4] Moreover, Schacht asserts that Islamic law experienced only some minor changes after the formative period, and these changes "were concerned more with legal theory and the systematic superstructure than with positive law".[5] Coulson and Chehata also share this observation in general.[6]

This was the narrative that gained wide acceptance in the orientalist circles in the second half of the 20th century. However, throughout the end of the century, this narrative started to be criticized by various researchers whose studies focused on the *fatwá* institution, such as

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3 Schacht, *An Introduction*, 75. He accordingly claims that the gate of *ijtihād* was closed after the formative period, see *Ibid*., 70-71, 74-75; For a detailed critique of this claim, see Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of *Ijtihad* Closed?", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16/1 (1984), 3-41. Schacht, interestingly and ironically, accepts the role of *muftī*s and their *fatwá*s in the doctrinal development of Islamic law and says: "The doctrinal development of Islamic law owes much to the activity of the *muftis*... As soon as a decision reached by a *muftī* on a new kind of problem had been recognized by the common opinion of the scholars as correct, it was incorporated in the handbooks of the school". Schacht, *An Introduction*, 74-75.

4 Noel James Coulson, "The State and the Individual in Islamic Law", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 6/1 (January 1957), 57.

5 Schacht argues that these changes do not have influence over the substantive law (*furū'*) or the legal theory (*uṣūl*) of Islamic jurisprudence by saying: "This original thought could express itself freely in nothing more than abstract systematic constructions which affected neither the established decisions of positive law nor the classical doctrine of the *uṣūl al-fiqh*". Schacht, *An Introduction*, 75.

6 Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, 140-142, 148; Chehata, *Etudes de Droit Musulman*, 1/24-25.

Johansen,[7] Hallaq, Gerber,[8] Bedir,[9] and Ayoub.[10] These critics assisted in establishing a counter-narrative for the nature of doctrinal growth and change of Islamic law. This new narrative assumes that Islamic law had a dynamic and viable interaction with real life in every period of history and continued its doctrinal growth and change through a special literary genre called *fatāwá*, *wāqiʿāt*, or *nawāzil* (the compilation of legal opinions) after the formative period. According to this new narrative, when a legal opinion (*fatwá*) issued by an authoritative jurisconsult (*muftī)* of a legal school to solve a newly encountered problem reached a certain prevalence and acceptance among other *muftī*s in the following period, it was usually incorporated into the *furūʿ* (substantive law) works, particularly commentaries of the school.[11] Because the practical function of these

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7 Johansen argues that Ḥanafī legal doctrine concerning fundamental regulations of agricultural lands in Egypt, such as "tax", "wage", and "property", underwent significant changes during the last century of the Mamluks and the transition period to the Ottomans, and the *fatwá*s issued by scholars played a crucial role in these changes, see Johansen, *The Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent*, 2; Baber Johansen, "Legal literature and the Problem of Change: The Case of the Land Rent", *Islam and Public Law*, ed. Chibli Mallat (Londra: Graham & Trotman, 1993), 29-47.

8 Gerber disagrees with the claims that Islamic law is increasingly withdraw from the real life and based on imitation (*taqlīd*). On the contrary, he claims that the *fatwá*s of Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī (d. 1081/1671), as a jurist of post-formative period, exhibit qualities of "openness", "flexibility", and "dynamism" in the sense of interacting with practical applications, see Haim Gerber, "Rigidity Versus Openness in Late Classical Islamic Law: The Case of the Seventeenth-Century Palestinian Muftī Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī", *Islamic Law and Society* 5/2 (1998), 165-195. For another study of Gerber in which he emphasizes the dynamic character of Islamic-Ottoman law, see Haim Gerber, *State, Society, and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* (New York: State University of New York, 1994), 79-112.

9 Bedir asserts that the Ḥanafī endowment doctrine has undergone significant changes in Central Asia since the 4th/10th century, and claims that these changes were mainly directed by the *fatwá*s of authoritative jurists of the region that were compiled in the "*wāqiʿāt*" and "*nawāzil*" literature, see Murteza Bedir, *Buhara Hukuk Okulu: Vakıf Hukuku Bağlamında X-XIII. Yüzyıl Orta Asya Hanefî Hukuku Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2014).

10 Ayoub, examining the development of Islamic law, focuses on the impact of political authority on the formation of legal norms during the early modern Ottoman Empire. See Samy A. Ayoub, *Law, Empire and the Sultan: Ottoman Imperial Authority and Late Hanafi Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); see also Id., "The Sulṭān Says: State Authority in the Late Ḥanafī Tradition", *Islamic Law and Society* 23/3 (2016), 239-278.

11 Hallaq tries to show that Islamic law indeed follows such a course of development, see Hallaq, "From *Fatwās* to *Furūʿ*", 29-65; see also Id, *Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 166-235.

works "was to provide the jurisconsults with a comprehensive coverage of substantive law" and therefore, they "were expected to offer solutions for all conceivable cases so that the jurisconsult might draw on the established doctrine of his school, and to include the most recent as well as the oldest cases of law that arose in the school".[12] In short, the incorporation of *fatwá*s into these works indicated that they became part of the legal doctrine of the school.[13]

The article, in line with this new narrative, sheds light on the phenomena of the legal change in Islamic law through the practice of cultivation of wasteland (*iḥyāʾ al-mawāt*) in the 16th-17th century Ottoman Empire. It aims to show that the doctrine of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* of Ḥanafī legal tradition underwent a slow and gradual but essential change over a period of centuries in the Central Asia, and then the Ottoman Ḥanafī scholars interpreted the practice in question on the basis of this new doctrine. However, the Ottoman legal-historian Imber claims that there was not a conformity between *qānūn* and *sharīʿah* in terms of the practice of cultivation of wasteland in the Empire and thus that the Ḥanafī doctrine of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* was not applied there.[14] For, according to him, Ḥanafī interpretation of Islamic law

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In fact, it was a theory previously proposed by Schacht, but for some reason, he didn't give it much attention. See Schacht, *An Introduction*, 74-75. Powers and Peters also claim that the *fatwá*s can be incorporated into the *furūʿ* books over time. See David Powers, "*Fatwās* as Sources for Legal and Social History: A Dispute over Endowment Revenues from Fourteenth-Century Fez", *al-Qantara* 11/2 (1990), 339; Rudolph Peters, "What Does it Mean to be an Official Madhhab? Hanafism and the Ottoman Empire", *The Islamic School of Law: Evolution, Devolution, and Progress*, ed. Peri Bearman et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 149.

12 Hallaq, "From *Fatwās* to *Furūʿ*", 55.

13 Hallaq, "From *Fatwās* to *Furūʿ*", 61. Hallaq offers a new classification for the legal literature of the schools of Islamic law. For, he refers to *mukhtaṣar*s (concise texts), *sharḥ*s (commentaries), and *ḥāshiyah*s (glosses) as "*furūʿ* books" distinguishing them from *fatwá*-type works, and views the development of the Islamic law as a process that progresses "*from fatwá*s *to furūʿ*". However, according to the general acceptance of Islamic legal traditions, *fatwá*-type works are also considered as part of *furūʿ* (substantive law) in terms of their content. Since a *fatwá* that gradually gains authority within a particular legal tradition is often incorporated into *shurūḥ* (plural of *sharḥ*), it is more accurate to define this process as "from *fatwá*s to *shurūḥ*". Therefore, as you will see below, I will use this definition.

14 Colin Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland in Hanafī and Ottoman Law", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61/1-2 (March 2008), 101-112.

gives the right of full ownership (*al-milk al-tāmm*)[15] of a wasteland to a person cultivating it with the permission of the ruler, but the Ottoman land law stemming from the orders of the sultan grants only a limited right of disposal (*ḥaqq al-taṣarruf*) to the person apart from exceptional circumstances. In a similar approach to Schacht, Imber considers that *sharīʿah* remained unchanged for centuries after the formative period,[16] and hence, he does not give any credence to the possibility of change in the doctrine. Yet, as will be seen below, while Imber's observation of Ottoman legal practice is correct, his claim about the Ḥanafī legal doctrine and the relationship between *qānūn* and *sharīʿah* needs to be revised.

The article relying on the *fatāwá* literature, which is largely neglected by Imber, elucidates that the Ottoman Ḥanafī jurists interpreted the authority of sultans over the lands in the broadest sense with an inherited understanding from the Central Asian Ḥanafī legal tradition and authorized them to grant only the right of disposal to the person who wanted to cultivate the wasteland. Therefore, contrary to Imber's claim, the article argues that there was a clear conformity between *qānūn* and *sharīʿah* in this respect. To that end, the first part of the article clarifies the practice of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* in the Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries through *qānūnnāmah*s, *farmān*s, and the court registers. The second part examines the alteration process of the Ḥanafī doctrine of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* in the Central Asia. The last part deals with the approaches of the Ottoman Ḥanafī jurists of the period to the practice of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* in the Empire.

1. The Practice of *Iḥyâʾ al-mawāt* in the 16th-17th Century Ottoman Empire

The cultivation of wasteland was a widespread practice in the Ottoman Empire, particularly during the era of population growth and

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[15] In Islamic legal literature, the state of owning both the essence (*raqabah*) and the benefits (*manfaʿah*) of a property is expressed by the terms *al-milk al-muṭlaq*, *al-milk al-tāmm*, *al-milk al-kāmil*, or *milk al-ʿayn wa-l-manfaʿah*. It grants the widest authority to the owner on the property. However, the state of owning only *raqabah* or *manfaʿah* is referred to as *al-milk al-nāqiṣ*, meaning partial ownership. See Hasan Hacak, "Mülkiyet", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2020), 31/541-546. In this article, when I use the word "ownership" in an absolute way, I will be referring to the first meaning.

[16] Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 65.

territorial expansion in the late 15th and throughout the 16th century.[17] However, it surprisingly occupied a relatively small space both in the *qānūnnāmah*s regulating the land laws and in the *fatwá* compilations containing the legal interpretations of the scholars.[18]

First and foremost, it should be noted here that some of these regulations, which are rarely found in the documents from the 16th and 17th centuries, were not actually associated with the theoretical narrative of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* existed in the texts of the Ḥanafī legal tradition. Indeed, these regulations were mainly related to the cultivation of lands that were originally in the status of *mīrī* (state-owned) land,[19] located within the boundaries of a *sipāhī*'s *tīmār*, but left fallow and vacant for a long period of time while being previously prosperous.[20]

As clear from the documents, the act of cultivation would change the status of the land in question from *mawāt* to *mīrī*.[21] In other words, in the Ottoman practice, opening up a wasteland granted the occupier a limited right of disposal rather than a right of ownership. This rule was applied to both *mawāt* lands that were located within the boundaries of a *tīmār* and the ones that were defined as *khārij az-daftar* (unregistered) since they were not recorded in the *taḥrīr* registers as an income for the *sipāhī*s. However, these lands were subject to different regulations in some aspects. To illustrate these

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[17] Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1600*, ed. Halil İnalcık - Donald Quataert (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1/167-168; Id., "Filāḥa: iv. Ottoman Empire", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Bernard Lewis et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 2/907.

[18] For the same observation, see Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 104.

[19] The absolute ownership of this type of land belonged to the imperial treasury, but in practice it was at the disposal of the sultan for distribution as *tīmār*s to *sipāhī*s by virtue of military services. See Bayram Pehlivan, *Sultan, Reaya ve Hukuk: Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tarım Topraklarının Mülkiyeti Sorunu* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2023), 60-66.

[20] Khāliṣ Ashraf, *Kulliyyāt-i Sharḥ-i Qānūn-i Arāḍī* (Dārsaʿādah: Yuvanaki Panayotidis Maṭbaʿahsi, 1315 AH), 561, 571-572.

[21] This deep-rooted practice is also clearly protected in the Land Code of 1858 with the following statements: "And the rules of the code that are applicable to other arable [*mīrī*] lands are also completely valid for such [*mawāt*] lands". (Art. 103). ʿAlī Ḥaydar Efendī's interpretation of the article claims: "The lands opened up for agriculture through this way become *mīrī* lands. On the contrary, the person cultivating the wasteland is not considered to have owned it". ʿAlī Ḥaydar Efendī, *Sharḥ-i Jadīd li-Qānūn al-Arāḍī* (İstanbul: Shirkat-i Murattibiyyah Matbaʿahsi, 1321-1322 AH), 448.

differences more clearly, I will separately examine the practice for each type of land.

1.1. The Cultivation of Wasteland in the Status of *Khārij az-daftar*

The *Qānūnnāmah* of Silistre, dated 924/1518, regulates the cultivation of *mawāt* lands that are in the status of *khārij az-daftar*. It states:

> Clearing the roots from a field or opening it up with axes on this side of Balkan Mountain is acknowledged by ancient law (*qānūn-i qadīm*). But when the registrar has come and registered the province, the field from which the roots have been cleared is also among the *çiftlik*s of *raʿāyā*. The occupier's claim that "he cleared the field" should not be acted upon.[22]

According to the document, although the *raʿāyā* clearing the land had the right to manage it as he wished until the new tax survey, it did not mean that he had absolute ownership (*raqabah*) of the land. In other words, when the *mawāt* land was cultivated, it henceforth obtained the status of *mīrī* land. The aforementioned law stipulates that when the registrar of the province came and allocated the land in question to a *tīmār*, it would be managed according to the rules of the *mīrī* system like the other *çiftliks* of the *raʿāyā*. Because if opening up the land for cultivation entitled the *raʿāyā* with the right of ownership, it would have been legally impossible for the registrar to allocate it to a *tīmār* in the new tax survey. In the *Qānūnnāmah* of 1539 for Vize, sharing similar content, the matter is expressed more clearly:

> If a person clears the roots from a plot, he acquires possession[23] of the plot, and his claim that "I am clearing the roots from the plot" is heard until the arrival of the registrar of the province. However, when the registrar has come and registered the province, the plot from which the roots have been cleared is also like other *çiftlik*s of *raʿāyā*.[24]

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[22] Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 1991), 3/485.

[23] The word *sāḥib* that is frequently encountered in the legal documents of the empire usually does not mean "owner", but "possessor" (*dhū l-yad*). As can be understood from the text, it is used here in this meaning as well.

[24] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *XV ve XVIıncı Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları, Birinci Cilt: Kanunlar* (İstanbul: İstanbul

The last sentence of the quotation explicitly indicates that the cultivated wastelands were subject to the rules of the *mīrī* system. For example, the requirement of paying *ṭapu* (entry fee) and the prohibition of leaving these lands fallow for more than three years were also valid for the lands that were cultivated while they were previously *mawāt*. In this context, the *Qānūnnāmah* of Vize states more strongly than the *Qānūnnāmah* of Silistre that the cultivation of wasteland did not provide the right of ownership:

> If *çiftlik*s of this sort are left fallow for three years, the *sipāhī* should give them to someone else in return for *ṭapu*. If, after three years, he has not plowed [the land], his claim: "I am its owner. I am clearing the roots from it." should not be acted upon. The *sipāhī* should reallocate it by *ṭapu*.[25]

On the other hand, the same issue is addressed in a *qānūnnāmah* that seems to belong to Sulaymān the Lawgiver's reign, but it was published with an attribution to ʿAlī Chāwīsh of Sofia (Tr. Sofyalı Ali Çavuş) since copied by him in 1064/1653.[26] An article in this *qānūnnāmah* states that if the *raʿāyā* cultivated a wasteland that was in the status of *khārij az-daftar* and in the disposal of no one, including wilderness, forest, and mountain by drilling a well or cutting a tree, it was permissible for the register of the province to allocate these lands as *tīmār* to qualified persons. Additionally, it clarifies that a *sipāhī* holding a *barāt* from the sultan was also eligible to acquire these types of lands before their registration. The last sentence of the article implies that the absolute ownership of the land belonged to the treasury during the period from cultivation until a new tax survey as well.[27] In fact, another article of the *qānūnnāmah* addressing the same issue expresses it more clearly by stating:

> The official tax collectors occupy [this sort of cultivated wastelands on behalf of the treasury] until the arrival of a new

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Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türkiyat Enstitüsü Neşriyatı, 1943), 233-234. For the comment of Imber, see "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 104-105.

25 Barkan, *Kanunlar*, 233-234; see also Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 105.

26 For the critics of this attribution, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 4/456-457.

27 Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 4/494. For a short explanation of the article, see Midhat Sertoğlu (ed.), *Sofyalı Ali Çavuş Kanunnâmesi: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Toprak Tasarruf Sistemi'nin Hukukî ve Mâlî Müeyyede ve Mükellefiyetleri* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1992), 119; see also Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 108-109.

> registrar. There is no obstacle for [the registrar] to allocate them as *tīmār*s to qualified persons who want to obtain them by *barāt*, since they are in the status of *khārij az-daftar*. These are just like other *tīmār*s.[28]

On the other hand, an article in the *Qānūnnāmah* of 1539 for the Sanjaq of Bosnia gives the impression that the cultivation process conducted in the regions that were in the status of *khārij az-daftar* provided the *raʿāyā* with the right of full ownership. It states:

> And persons must draw a border line over the intersection point of their axes when they clear the mountain ... The black mountain does not belong to anyone, [but] it belongs to the cultivator of wasteland, and nobody must interfere [him].[29]

However, if this article is evaluated together with the aforementioned rules that were prevalent in the same territories during these dates, the last sentence probably alludes that the cultivator of wasteland would obtain only the right of disposal rather than the absolute ownership of the land in harmony with the general practice in the Empire. The article, which apparently aims to protect the cultivator against the unlawful interventions of the local authorities, strongly asserts that he had the right to dispose of the land as he wished without owning it.

When people started to cultivate these wastelands that were previously in the status of *khārij az-daftar*, they were excused from paying *ṭapu*-taxes. As a matter of fact, this issue was referred to with the same expressions in two separate edicts sent by Sulaymān the Lawgiver to Lofcha and Albanian judges in May 1549 (*awāsiṭ* Rabīʿ al-ākhir 956). They state:

> [As I have been informed] they [*raʿāyā*] are clearing and cultivating some plots with their axes, and they [local administrators] are demanding taxes even from people like them. You should inspect and, if they are doing so, prevent them from demanding taxes for the plots that... had no revenue attributed to *sipāhī*s in the register and were vacant places cleared by them with axes.[30]

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[28] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 4/491; 5/530.

[29] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 6/438.

[30] *Farmān Ṣūratlari* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Atıf Efendi, 1734), 44b, 46b; İnalcık also agrees with the claim, see "Filāḥa", 2/907.

1.2. The Cultivation of Wasteland within the Boundaries of a *Tīmār*

The cultivation of wasteland within the boundaries of a *tīmār* which was allocated to a *sipāhī* as a revenue in the register was subject to different regulations according to whether permission had previously been obtained from the *sipāhī* or not. So, I will examine the issue separately for both cases below.

1.2.1. Permissible Cultivation

As a rule, the *raʿāyā* who wanted to open up this type of wasteland for cultivation was first required to get permission from the *sipāhī*, pay him *ṭapu*-tax, and then clear and cultivate it within three years. A *qānūn*, attributed to the time[31] of Jalālzādah Muṣṭafá (d. 975/1567) and Ḥamzah Pasha (d. 1014/1606), the famous *nishānjī*s of the 16th and early 17th centuries, clearly states:

> If a person receives by *ṭapu* mountainous lands on the soil of a *tīmār*-holder to clear them with his axe, if he has cleared them within three years, well and good. But if three years pass and he has not cleared them, the *tīmār*-holder may give the lands by *ṭapu* to someone else.[32]

This practice means that the cultivators had the right to acquire only the right of disposal of these lands. According to the *mīrī* system of the Empire, if any type of land was unjustifiably left fallow and idle during three consecutive years, the *raʿāyā* would lose their rights over the land, and *tīmār*-holders were eligible to give it to the others by *ṭapu*.[33] The mentioned law stipulates the same duration for cultivated wastelands. However, contrary to the regulations of this system, it explicitly states that no excuses will be accepted for this sort of land.[34]

The *raʿāyā,* clearing a wasteland with the permission of the *tīmār*-holder and by paying him the *ṭapu* fee of the land, obtained a

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[31] Jalālzādah served as a *nishānjī* during 1534-1557 and Ḥamzah Pasha held the office in 1581, 1592-1596,1598-1599,1601-1605. See Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 105, footnote, 4.

[32] "Kânûn-i Cedîd", *İslâm ve Osmanlı Hukûku Külliyâtı: Kamu Hukuku*, ed. Ahmed Akgündüz (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 2011), 1/787. For the translation, see also Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 105.

[33] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 7/283.

[34] "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/787; see also Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 105. This provision was revised in the Land Code of 1858 and stated there that persuasive legal excuses such as illness would be given credence for these cases, see Art. 103.

privileged status for their daughters in the middle of the 16th century. Until that date, according to the established rule of the *mīrī* system, the daughters of the deceased *mutaṣarrif*[35] were unable to claim any rights on their father's lands. If the deceased left a son, the land was transferred to him without an obligation to pay a *ṭapu* fee like a *mulk-i mawrūth* (inherited private property).[36] If the deceased did not have a son but had a brother, the brother could acquire the right of disposal of the land by paying a fee called *ṭapu-yi mithl,* the amount of which was determined by the expert witnesses. If the deceased had neither a son nor a brother, the *tīmār*-holder had the right to give it to whomever he wished by *ṭapu*, but in this case, *ṭapu* fee was determined by himself. Abū l-Ṣuʿūd's legal opinion (*fatwâ*) in the *Maʿrūḍāt* states that Sulaymān the Lawgiver issued an edict in 958/1551,[37] revising the mentioned *qānūn-i qadīm* and, for the first time, he granted "*ṭapu* right"[38] to the daughter of the *raʿāyā* who cultivated the land that was previously a wasteland. The question part of the *fatwá* is related to whether the daughter has the inheritance right when the person clearing the wasteland passes away, leaving a son and a daughter.[39] In his response, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd firstly explained the common and well-known practice and then conveyed the recent regulation put in place for the cultivated wastelands. It states:

> In cases such as this, where [a person] has created fields and meadows by clearing forest and mountain and, in short, has expended money and effort, if such places are assigned to others by title, daughters would necessarily be deprived of the money

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35 This term is mainly used to signify that the *raʿāyā* acquire only the right of disposal of the land in question, rather than the ownership of it.

36 *Majmūʿat al-fawāʾid wa-l-fatāwá* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi, 914), 353a.

37 Another legal text recorded this date as 957/1550. See Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 5/302. Although Abū l-Ṣuʿūd clearly states here that the daughter obtained the *ṭapu* right for the first time with this edict, Imber, who seems to misinterpret the *fatwá*, argues that the edict of 1551 forbade the transfer of the deceased *mutaṣarrif*'s land to his daughter. See Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 106-107.

38 A right to acquire the possession of the land by paying *ṭapu* fee to the *tīmār*-holder.

39 Abū l-Ṣuʿūd Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Iskilibī al-ʿImādī [as Şeyhülislâm Ebussuûd Efendi], *Maʿrûzât*, ed. Pehlul Düzenli (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2013), 237.

> which their fathers have spent. It has, therefore, been commanded that they will be given to the daughters.[40]

As indicated in the edict, the practical rationale behind this regulation was that, under the current situation, the daughters were being deprived of the money spent by their fathers in cultivating the *mawāt* lands. The edict removed this deprivation by giving daughters the *ṭapu* right. However, the privilege granted to them still indicated a limited right when compared to that of the sons. Indeed, as mentioned in the continuation of the *fatwá*, unlike the sons, the daughters were also required to pay *ṭapu-yi mithl* –just like the brothers– to obtain the possession right of the land that their fathers opened up for cultivation.[41] However, the scope and nature of the daughter's rights on their deceased father's lands underwent significant changes over time, ultimately leading to them acquiring inheritance rights similar to those of sons. First of all, the *ṭapu* right of the daughters was expanded to include the *mīrī* lands that were originally prosperous and inherited from their fathers in Dhū l-qaʿdah 975/April 1568. Then, in *awāʾil* Rabīʿ al-awwal 980/July 1572, a new edict came into effect, stating that, in such a case, it would suffice for the daughters to pay the price of the annual yield from the land as *ṭapu* fee to the *tīmār*-holders.[42] Finally, on Jumādhá l-awwal 7, 1263 (April 23, 1847), for the first time, the daughters were granted the right to inherit their father's land "without the requirement to pay a *ṭapu* fee", just like the sons, and more importantly, in cases where the sons were also among the heirs, the daughters were granted the right to inherit it "with an equal share to that of the sons".[43] One week later, on Jumādhá l-awwal 14, 1263/April 30, 1847, the inheritance rights of both the sons and daughters were

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[40] *Ibid.* This rule is also integrated into subsequent laws, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 5/302; 6/463; 7/693. Nishānjī Jalālzādah Muṣṭafá inserted a marginal note into The *Qānūnnāmah* of Selim I by stating that the old rule was revised and now the daughter of the *raʿāyā* cultivating the wasteland has the right to obtain the disposal of the land, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 3/98-99, footnote 9.

[41] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 7/337.

[42] "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/766, 780, 789; see also Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi", *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi: Toplu Eserler 1* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), 306.

[43] ʿĀrif Ḥikmat, *al-Aḥkām al-marʿiyyah fī l-arāḍī l-amīriyyah* (İstanbul: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-Maʿmūrah, 1265 AH), 3.

extended to cover the lands left by their mothers.[44] It is worth saying that the cultivation of *mawāt* lands marked the beginning of these regulations that gradually came into effect in favor of the daughters of the deceased *mutaṣarrif*s over centuries.[45]

In this context, it is important to determine the amount of *ṭapu* fee that the *raʿāyā*, who cultivated the wasteland with permission, had to pay to the *sipāhī*s. However, before delving into this question, it should be noted that, as can be anticipated, the land being in a *mawāt* condition naturally required the *raʿāyā* to spend additional labor and money to open it up for cultivation in comparison to the prosperous state-owned (i.e., *mīrī*) lands. In fact, the *qānūnnāmah*s and the compilations of *fatwá*s indicate that the *raʿāyā* showed a strong reluctance to pay the *ṭapu*-tax to the *sipāhī*s for the lands that they cultivated by enduring various struggles and obstacles. On the other hand, the cultivation of *mawāt* lands served as an additional source of income for the *sipāhī*s. But, the question of whether the tax revenues from the lands cultivated after the tax-survey (*taḥrīr*) within the boundaries of a *tīmār* belonged to the *sipāhī*s or to the *bayt al-māl* (imperial treasury) occasionally led to tensions between them and the treasury officials.[46] In the early 17th century, following a dispute of this kind, Sultan Aḥmad I declared through an edict dated Muḥarram 1018/April 1609 that the tax revenues from these lands belonged to the *sipāhī*s.[47]

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[44] *Taqwīm-i Waqāyiʿ*, (Jumādhá l-awwal 14, 1263), 332, 1; Sarkis Karakoç, *Arāḍī Qānūnu ve Ṭapu Nizāmnāmahsi: Taḥshiyahli* (İstanbul: İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Ergin, 2258), 126.

[45] In the literature, it is a commonly held view that the transformation of *mīrī* lands into private property in the Ottoman Empire primarily took place from the first half of the 19th century onward due to external factors. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the sequential regulations carried out by the central government since the latter part of the 16th century, which progressively augmented the rights of *raʿāyā* over these lands reveals that it was, in fact, a deep-rooted process stemming from the internal dynamics within the empire. For a recent study that delves into this process by tracing the historical evolution of rules governing the transfer of *mīrī* land, see Pehlivan, *Sultan, Reaya ve Hukuk*, 225-247.

[46] A legal opinion clearly shows this disagreement, see *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd*, comp. Walī Yagān ibn Yūsuf (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İsmihan Sultan, 223), 89b.

[47] "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/779. For a *fatwá* of Abū l-Ṣuʿūd dealing with the same problem, see *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd*, comp. Bozānzādah (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Murad Molla, 1115), 33a-b.

In fact, with the aim of making the cultivation of *mawāt* lands more appealing for the *raʿāyā*, it was expected that the *ṭapu-tax* either wouldn't be demanded at all, as it would later be stipulated in the Land Code of 1858,[48] or at the very least, the amount would be kept at a symbolic level. However, the limited number of legal codes, such as the one attributed to Jalālzādah and Ḥamzah Pasha, clearly stated that the *raʿāyā* cultivating the wastelands with the permission of the *sipāhī*s was obliged to pay the *ṭapu*-tax.[49] In addition, the governor (*mīrliwā'*) of Trabzon, ʿUmar Beg, who conducted the land survey of the Bozok Province in 1572, noted at the beginning of this survey record that the *raʿāyā* opening up the idle and vacant places for cultivation were required to make a payment ranging from 15 to 30 *aqchah*s (Tr. akçe) depending on the fertility of the soil.[50] The regulation contained within this exceptional document should only be valid for this province and its surroundings. Because the rare examples of the court records shedding light on the issue indicate that this tax was 45 to 50 *aqchah*s for İstanbul and its surroundings. For instance, in a record from the Üsküdar Court dated 925/1519, a *sipāhī* named Muṣṭafá Chalabī ibn Saralu states that Qāsim ibn Ilyās, Murād ibn Tashoghlī and his brother Mursal opened up a piece of gravel land for cultivation located in Palidlu village of Gakwize (Gebze) district and he received 45 *aqchah*s from them as *ṭapu*-tax.[51] Furthermore, according to another record dated 988/1580, Darwish ibn Ḥusayn, the *sipāhī* of Kanlica village located in the Mafraz Kargali subdistrict of Üsküdar, entrusted (*tafwîḍ*) the right of disposal of a certain amount of mountainous forest within the boundaries of this village to Meḥmed ibn Daniz in exchange for 50 *aqchah*s as a *ṭapu*-tax.[52] In another record dated the same year, it is mentioned that Turakhān Beg ibn ʿAbd Allāḥ, the absolute representative of the same *sipāhī*, Darwish ibn Ḥusayn, gave a part of mountainous and vacant land belonging to the Alashli Mountain to a *raʿiyyah* (singular of *raʿāyā*) named Ilyās in exchange for 50 *aqchah*s

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48 Art. 103.

49 For another example, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 7/721.

50 Barkan, "Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi", 305.

51 *Üsküdar Mahkemesi 2 Numaralı Sicil (924-927/1518-1521)*, ed. Rıfat Günalan et al. (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2010), 2/142.

52 *Üsküdar Mahkemesi 51 Numaralı Sicil (987-988/1579-1580)*, ed. Rıfat Günalan et al. (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2010), 8/266.

as a *ṭapu*-tax.[53] In this context, it should also be noted that during the 16th and 17th centuries, although the amount of *ṭapu*-tax for the prosperous lands located in İstanbul and its surroundings varied depending on the size and fertility of the land, it sometimes reached hundreds, thousands or even tens of thousands *aqchah*s.[54] Actually, this clearly indicates that the Ottoman administration kept the amount of the *ṭapu*-tax required to be paid for the opening up the wastelands for cultivation at a very low level, though not purely symbolic, in order to make it more attractive for the *raʿāyā*.[55]

It is understood that the cultivation of wastelands with permission underwent a partial revision in the 17th century. For, *Qawānīn-i ʿUrfiyyah-ʾi Sulṭāniyyah* (The Imperial Customary Laws), a legal code compiled by an anonymous Ottoman bureaucrat who appears to have served as a court clerk in this century, clearly stated that no *ṭapu* payment would be demanded from the *raʿāyā* who opened up a forest for cultivation with permission; instead, it would be sufficient for them to pay only "a few *aqchah*s" to the *tīmār*-holder.[56] But it is not clear whether this rule, imposed on the forests in the 17th century, applied to all types of wastelands or not. However, the document still shows that when it came to the cultivation of forests, no *ṭapu*-tax was demanded from the *raʿāyā*; instead, a symbolic fee under the name of *idhn aqchahsi* (permission fee) or *ijāzat aqchahsi* (authorization fee) was received.

By the middle of the 19th century, a substantial change took place in this respect. Although the Land Code of 1858 accepted the cultivation

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53 *Üsküdar Mahkemesi 51 Numaralı Sicil*, 8/271.

54 "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/779. See also *Eyüb Mahkemesi (Havâss-ı Refîʿa) 19 Numaralı Sicil (1028-1030/1619-1620)*, ed. Yılmaz Karaca et al. (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2011), 24/234, 281, 284; *Balat Mahkemesi 1 Numaralı Sicil (964-965/1557-1558)*, ed. Mehmet Akman et al. (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2019), 41/133, 154; *Üsküdar Mahkemesi 2 Numaralı Sicil*, 2/155, 267; *Üsküdar Mahkemesi 51 Numaralı Sicil*, 8/268, 343.

55 İnalcık claims that the Ottoman authorities paid attention to keep the tax payments at a very low level with the purpose of increasing the attractivity of cultivating vacant and abandoned lands for people and groups, see İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 1/170. However, in the 16th and 17th centuries, this privileged situation was valid only for *yürük*s and janissaries in the military class rather than whole *raʿāyā*. See Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 110-112.

56 *Qawānīn-i ʿUrfiyyah-ʾi Sulṭāniyyah* (İstanbul: İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallim Cevdet, K223), 63a.

of wasteland as a means of obtaining only the right of disposal of the land, as it had always been, it clearly stipulated that *ṭapu*-tax would no longer be demanded for the wastelands cultivated with the permission of land officials who had replaced the status of *sipāhī*s as the holders of the lands at that time.[57] The commentators of the code stated that, in practice, the *raʿāyā* were not demanded to pay the *ṭapu*-tax in such cases, but they were only obliged to pay a kind of transaction fee under the name of "three *gurūsh*s (piastre) for paper cost and one *gurūsh* for clerkship" and then "a *ṭapu* title deed" was given to them for free.[58]

1.2.2. Unpermitted Cultivation: A Tension Between *Sipāhī*s and *Raʿāyā*

The unpermitted cultivation of wastelands within the boundaries of a *tīmār* also provided a limited right of disposal for the *raʿāyā* themselves. The issue, occasionally encountered in various legal codes from the 16th to the 17th centuries, was also included in the general code of Sulaymān the Lawgiver, known as *Qānūnnāmah-ʾi ʿUthmānī* (The Ottoman Imperial Code).[59] According to this code, the *raʿāyā* cultivating the wastelands without permission from the *tīmār*-holders had the right of disposal over the land for three[60] years.[61] However, if the *ṭapu*-tax was not paid at the end of that period, the land could be transferred to someone else. In this case, the right to acquire disposal rights of the land by paying the *ṭapu*-tax to the *tīmār*-holders, primarily belonged to the person who opened it up for cultivation. However, if this person refused to pay the *ṭapu*-tax, then the *tīmār*-holder could allocate the land to someone else in exchange for it.

The cultivation of wastelands without permission led to serious tensions between the *raʿāyā* and the *sipāhī*s in the early 17th century.

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57 Art. 103.

58 Ashraf, *Kulliyyāt*, 570; ʿAlī Ḥaydar Efendī, *Sharḥ-i Jadīd*, 448.

59 Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 4/310. This regulation was integrated into later legal codes. As for the examples, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 8/117, 9/509.

60 This duration was reduced to six months in the mid-19th century, see Ashraf, *Kulliyyāt*, 571.

61 In his article, Imber refers to another version of this law (see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 8/117), whose language is somewhat ambiguous, and infers that the *sipāhī* had the authority to reclaim the land from the person who cultivated it during this period. However, a clearer version of the law to which I referred (see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 4/310) in the footnote 59 shows that this inference is not correct.

Apparently, the *raʿāyā*, who might have been inclined to consider the act of cultivation alone sufficient to obtain the right of disposal of the wasteland, and perhaps even ownership of it, were unwilling to pay the *ṭapu*-tax to the *sipāhī*s to secure this right. It is probably for this reason that the wastelands were generally preferred to be cultivated by the *raʿāyā* without permission from the *sipāhī*s. However, the *sipāhī*s, who suffered significant loss of revenues because they couldn't obtain a *ṭapu*-tax in such cases, either personally or through other local officials (this is not clear in the documents) brought the issue to the attention of the sultan. The petition, dated Dhū l-qaʿdah 11, 1017/February 16, 1609, stated that the *raʿāyā* cultivating the wastelands without permission claimed that the *ṭapu*-tax would be invalid because they had started to pay tithe (*ʿushr*) and tax (*rasm-i chift*) to the *tīmār*-holder.[62] It was emphasized in the same petition that "a farm in the vicinity of İstanbul was given to the *raʿāyā* for twenty to thirty thousand *aqchah*s, and in some regions for five to ten thousand *aqchah*s, and in each region in the Empire for a significant amount of *aqchah*s" and thus pointed out that "if this actual situation were accepted, then the *raʿāyā* would have the right to disposal the state-owned and endowed lands as private property and therefore, especially the *tīmār*-holders, who have participated in campaigns for twenty to thirty years, would have been wronged".[63]

In response to the petition, Sultan Aḥmad I issued an edict on Muḥarram 1, 1018/April 6, 1609 ordering those who opened up wastelands for cultivation without permission to pay the *ṭapu*-tax to the *tīmār*-holders.[64] In return for the attitude of the *raʿāyā* who claimed the ownership of the wastelands, they opened them up for cultivation and therefore refused to pay the *ṭapu*-tax to the *tīmār*-holders, the edict, highlighting the sultan's authority over these lands, strongly showed that the *raʿāyā* only acquired the right of disposal over these lands rather than the ownership of them and hence, they were obliged to get permission from the *sipāhī*s who was the deputy of the sultan and to pay *ṭapu*-tax in order to gain this right.[65]

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62 Pīr Meḥmed al-Uskūbī, *Ẓahīr al-Quḍāh* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi, 852), 84a; see also 84a-b.

63 "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/779; see also Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 107-108.

64 "Kânûn-i Cedîd", 1/779. For another version of the *fatwá*, see Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri*, 7/339.

65 Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 108.

In short, the rules governing the practice of cultivation of wastelands during the 16th-17th century Ottoman Empire were determined by the edicts of the political authority or the legal codes consisting of them. The political authority or its local representatives in the provinces, known as *tīmār*-holders, granted the *raʿāyā* only the "right of disposal" over the wastelands, whether cultivated with permission or without. The absolute ownership of the lands, in all cases, belonged to the imperial treasury. Therefore, Imber is correct in claiming that the practice of cultivating wastelands in the Empire had its source in the "sultanic law".[66] However, his claim that this practice was in conflict with the Ḥanafī interpretation of the *sharīʿah* does not appear to be accurate. This issue will be elaborated upon in the subsequent sections of the article.

2. The Change in the Ḥanafī Doctrine of Cultivating Wasteland in Central Asia

This section will first present a summary of the classical Ḥanafī doctrine of *iḥyāʾ al-mawāt* in terms of the boundaries of the sultan's authority over the wastelands. Then, the coming section will explain that a new interpretation emerged on this subject in the second half of the 4th/10th century with Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) in Central Asia. Finally, the last one will elucidate that this interpretation was increasingly quoted in the *fatāwá* literature that was compiled in the same region during the following centuries, and then it became a part of the Ḥanafī substantive law through its incorporation into the *sharḥ* literature.

2.1. The Classical Ḥanafī Doctrine of Cultivating Wasteland: An Overview Regarding the Boundaries of the Sultan's Authority

The cultivation of wasteland, one of the oldest methods for acquiring the right of disposal or ownership of agricultural lands, has evolved into an integral part of Islamic substantive law, stemming from various practices of Prophet Muḥammad and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs,[67] and in the main sources of the Ḥanafī legal tradition, it has been dealt with either as a separate chapter or as a sub-chapter within

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66 Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 101-112.

67 Hamza Aktan, "İhyâ", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2000), 22/7.

the chapters titled *kitāb al-shirb* (the book of water sharing) or *kitāb al-zakāh* (the book of almsgiving).

In Ḥanafī legal doctrine, there are varying approaches regarding the definition of "*mawāt* land". However, according to the view that serves as the basis for legal opinions within the school, the lands that are currently unusable because of infertility and unsuitability for agriculture due to drought, flood, etc., which are ownerless or their owners are unknown, are all considered *mawāt* land.[68] *Iḥyāʾ*, which means to open up the *mawāt* land for agriculture, includes procedures such as irrigation, digging channels, making fountains, removing stones from the soil, drying the swamp, planting grain, planting trees and constructing buildings on the land.[69] The person claiming the land with this purpose first subjects it to a process called *taḥjīr* or *iḥtijār* and, as part of this process, surrounds the land with stones, bushes, or dry trees. Although *taḥjīr* is not sufficient to obtain the right of disposal or ownership of the land, it grants the person the right to cultivate the land ahead of others within a three-year period. However, the land that is not cultivated within three years returns to the status of *mawāt,* and the ruler (*imām*) can reallocate it to whomever he wishes.[70]

The question of whether the permission of the ruler is a requirement for acquiring ownership right to wasteland through cultivation is a subject of discussion in the doctrine. While Abū Ḥanīfah stipulates obtaining the permission of the ruler for this, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī consider the cultivation of the wasteland alone to be sufficient. The *Imāmayn* (i.e., the two latter jurists) mainly rely on the literal meanings of these prophetic narrations: "The person cultivating the wasteland owns it".[71] and "The

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[68] Zayn al-Dīn ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Ibn Nujaym al-Miṣrī, *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq sharḥ Kanz al-daqāʾiq*, along with *Minḥat al-khāliq* of Ibn ʿĀbidīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 8/238-9. Abū l-Ṣuʿūd also defines the *mawāt* lands as above in one of his *fatwá*s. See *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 261b. According to another view attributed to Abū Yūsuf by Qāḍīkhān, "lands that the ruler conquered by military force (*ʿanwat*^{an}) but did not distribute to the veterans and left them ownerless (*muhmal*)" are regarded as *mawāt* lands. See Abū l-Maḥāsin Fakhr al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn Manṣūr Qāḍīkhān al-Ūzkandī, *Fatāwá Qāḍīkhān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2009), 1/244.

[69] Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq*, 8/238.

[70] Abū Bakr Shams al-aʾimmah Muḥammad ibn Abī Sahl Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1993), 23/168.

[71] Abū Dāwūd, "al-Kharāj", 37; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Aḥkām", 38.

one who cultivates the ownerless land is more deserving of its ownership than anyone else".[72] They also argue, by comparing wastelands with the permissible properties (*al-amwāl al-mubāḥah*) such as water, wood, grass, prey, mines, or buried treasures, that the person cultivating these lands ahead of anyone else will obtain ownership of them without requiring permission from the ruler.

On the other hand, Abū Ḥanīfah, in this context, pays attention to these narrations of the Prophet Muḥammad: "*ʿĀdiyy al-arḍ*[73] belongs to Allah and His Messenger, then it is yours".[74] and "A person cannot have anything without the consent of his ruler".[75] He, therefore, associates such actions of the Prophet with his rulership (*imāmah*) and views the authority of the ruler as a measure "to prevent chaos and rights violations and to maintain the order in the cultivation of these lands".[76] To put it more clearly, according to him, the cultivation of wastelands is, in fact, a matter of politics (*siyāsah*) rather than *sharīʿah*.[77] Additionally, he argues, by comparing wastelands with spoils of war or treasury properties, that no one can claim ownership right over these lands without the permission of the ruler.[78]

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72 al-Bukhārī, "al-Ḥarth", 15; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Kharāj", 37.

73 *ʿĀdiyy al-arḍ* though literally translates to "the lands of *ʿĀd* people", refers as a term to the ownerless and barren lands, in other words, the *mawāt* lands. See al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, 23/168.

74 Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥabīb al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Saʿd - Saʿd Ḥasan Muḥammad (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li-l-Turāth, n.d.), 77.

75 Abū l-Qāsim Musnid al-dunyā Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1994), 4/20.

76 Aktan, "İhyâ", 22/9; For a firsthand commentary on Abū Ḥanīfah's approach, see Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 76-77.

77 As explicitly stated by the prominent figure of the Central Asian Ḥanafī legal tradition, Shams al-aʾimmah al-Ḥalwānī (d. 452/1060-1), Abū Ḥanīfah defines *mawât* lands as a right belonging to the entire Islamic community (*ḥaqq al-ʿāmmah*) and says that only the *imām* has the authority to dispose of such lands, and without his permission, no one can own them. See Shams al-aʾimmah ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥalwānī, *al-Mabsūṭ* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 1381), 71b.

78 For detailed information on the views and arguments of the scholars, see Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *al-Aṣl*, ed. Mehmet Boynukalın (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1433), 8/159, especially see 165-166; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 76-77; Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Rāzī al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭaḥāwī fī l-fiqh al-Ḥanafī* (Beirut - Medina: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyyah - Dār al-Sirāj, 2010), 3/443-445; al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, 23/167, 3/16.

The view relied upon as the basis for legal opinions (*muftá bih*) in the school is that of Abū Ḥanīfah. However, the mainstream Ḥanafī legal texts usually quote this view with the sentence: "The person cultivating the wasteland owns it". and do not provide a detailed explanation regarding the authority of the ruler over these lands.[79] The absolute language of these legal texts seems to imply that the authority of the ruler is limited to granting full ownership of the land in question to the relevant person. As can be seen below, Ottoman Ḥanafī jurists of the 16th and 17th centuries have thus occasionally grappled with questions such as:

> While it is clearly stated [in the legal texts of the school] that *Zayd* cultivating the wasteland with the permission of the ruler obtains full ownership of it, why does not he obtain it in our time, and why does it not pass to his heirs when he dies?[80]

In his analysis of the issue, Imber confines his examination of the school's doctrine of cultivating wasteland to only two main legal texts,[81] and perhaps for the same reason, he states that there was a clear inconsistency between the Ottoman practice and the Ḥanafī doctrine in this respect, and hence he claims that the practice in question was, in fact, established by the "secular law" independently of *sharīʿah*.[82] According to his research findings, in contrast to the prevailing view of the Ḥanafī school, the Ottoman sultans did not grant the persons cultivating the wastelands full ownership rights but a limited right of disposal of them, regulated by the rules of the *mīrī* system. This analysis is based on the assumption that according to the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, the sultan (i.e., *imām*) did not have the authority to grant only the right of disposal to the person cultivating the wasteland.

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[79] For the examples, see Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qudūrī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī fī l-fiqh al-Ḥanafī*, ed. Kāmil Muḥammad Muḥammad ʿUwayḍah (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1418), 140; Abū l-Ḥasan Burhān al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Abī Bakr al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah fī sharḥ Bidāyat al-mubtadī*, ed. Ṭalāl Yūsuf (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d., 4/383-4; Alāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥaṣkafī, *al-Durr al-mukhtār sharḥ Tanwīr al-abṣār wa-jāmiʿ al-biḥār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim Khalīl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2002), 671.

[80] Pīr Meḥmed al-Uskūbī, *Muʿīn al-muftī fī l-jawāb ʿalá l-mustaftī* (*Fatāwā-yi Uskūbī*) (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aşir Efendi, 133), 297b. This *fatwá* will be discussed below in a similar context.

[81] The legal texts referenced by Imber, in this context, are limited to al-Qudūrī's *al-Mukhtaṣar* and al-Marghīnānī's *al-Hidāyah*, see Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 102.

[82] Imber, "The Cultivation of Wasteland", 101-112.

Nevertheless, as elucidated in the preceding section, although Imber's observation regarding the Ottoman practice is accurate, the assumption he makes regarding Abū Ḥanīfah's view and the claim he puts forth based on it require revision. The Ḥanafī *nawāzil* and *fatāwá* literature compiled in Central Asia and Ottoman Anatolia, which he largely ignored in his study,[83] makes this revision imperative.

2.2. The Early Doctrinal Discussions in Central Asia

One of the leading jurists of the Central Asian Ḥanafī legal tradition, Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī, in his work titled *Fatāwá l-nawāzil*, indicates that a practice similar to the Ottoman experience regarding the cultivation of wasteland existed in this region during the first half of the 4th/10th century.[84] He relates that another prominent Ḥanafī jurist of the region, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad ibn Ḥām ibn ʿIṣmah al-Balkhī al-Ṣaffār (d. 336/947), was asked a question about whether the *imām* could grant permission to someone who wished to cultivate a wasteland on the condition that "he does not own it, but only benefit from it", and he responded as follows:

> If this person cultivates the land, he will own it because the condition proposed by the *imām* is invalid. It is just like when the *imām* demands that a person can hunt as long as he doesn't own the prey or gather wood from the mountains as long as he doesn't own it, or that a married couple can engage in *liʿān*[85] as long as they don't separate. It is the same in this case.[86]

Even though al-Ṣaffār asserts that the cultivation of a wasteland under this condition gives the person full ownership, al-Samarqandī is of the opinion that this is a response consistent with the view of Abū

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[83] Imber makes references in his article only to a few *fatwá*s belonging to Ibn al-Bazzāz from Central Asia and Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, Meḥmed al-Bahāʾī and ʿAbd al-Raḥīm from the Ottoman Anatolia, and he particularly disregards some of Abū l-Ṣuʿūd's *fatwá*s that are directly relevant to the issue. In addition, he devotes only one page of the 12-pages article to the examination of cultivating wasteland in the Ḥanafī doctrine.

[84] The question of which contextual circumstances gave rise to the practice of cultivating wastelands in Central Asia is important, but it lies beyond the scope of this research.

[85] *Liʿān* is a special type of divorce in which a husband accuses his wife of adultery without witnesses, and at the end they both invoke curses upon themselves in front of a judge, for detailed information see Mehmet Âkif Aydın, "Liân", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2003), 27/172-173.

[86] Abū l-Layth Imām al-hudá Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Fatāwá l-nawāzil* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah Efendi, 960), 36a.

Yūsuf and al-Shaybānī.[87] Indeed, as mentioned above, the *Imāmayn* compare wastelands to permissible properties like prey and wood and hence argue that a person who cultivates such a land will own it without the need for the *imām*'s permission. In his response to this question, al-Ṣaffār, basing his argument on their view, concludes that the condition put forth by the *imām* is not valid for the cultivation of wastelands just as it is not valid for the permissible properties. However, al-Samarqandī, giving the impression of not agreeing with al-Ṣaffār's mentioned *fatwá*, answered the same question, this time basing his response on the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, as follows:

> However, according to Abū Ḥanīfah's view, this condition is valid because no one can own the land without the permission of the ruler. Therefore, if the ruler does not allow the relevant person to own the land, it means that the ownership right does not occur for him.[88]

Al-Samarqandī's interpretation is in line with Abū Ḥanīfah's general approach. As I noted earlier, Abū Ḥanīfah, considering the cultivation of wastelands as a matter of politics with reference to various narrations of the Prophet, acknowledges that the authority to decide under what conditions these lands should be cultivated belongs to the ruler.

2.3. From *Fatwá*s to *Shurūḥ*: The Incorporation of al-Samarqandī's Interpretation into the Ḥanafī Legal Doctrine

The interpretation that al-Samarqandī developed based on Abū Ḥanīfah's approach to the problem also appeared in other important examples of *nawāzil* and *fatāwá* literature compiled in Central Asia during the later centuries. Some of these examples include: *al-Wāqiʿāt* of al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd (d. 536/1141), *al-Fatāwá l-Walwālijiyyah* of al-Walwālijī (d. after 540/1146), *Majmūʿ al-nawāzil wa-l-wāqiʿāt wa-l-ḥawādith* of al-Kashshī (d. 550/1155), *Khulāṣat al-nawāzil* of al-Yazdī[89] (d. after 559/1164), *al-Muḥīt al-Burḥānī, Dhakhīrat al-fatāwá*, and *Tatimmat al-fatāwá* of Burḥān al-Sharīʿah al-Bukhārī (d.

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87 Al-Samarqandī, *Fatāwá l-nawāzil*, 36a.

88 Al-Samarqandī, *Fatāwá l-nawāzil*, 36a.

89 For the biography of al-Yazdī, see Khayr al-Dīn ibn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām: Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-l-nisāʾ min al-ʿArab wa-l-mustaʿribīn wa-l-mustashriqīn* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002), 7/253.

589/1193), and *al-Fatāwá l-Ghiyāthiyyah* of Dāwūd ibn Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb[90] (d. first half of 7th/13th century).

First, considering that these compilations consist of the *fatwá*s related to commonly encountered events in the Central Asian Islamic community,[91] it is evident that the question of whether the rulers have the authority to give permission to people who wish to cultivate wastelands on the condition that they acquire only the right of disposal of the land remained a dynamic issue in this region during the 12th and 13th centuries.

Among these scholars, al-Kashshī, compiling the legal opinions of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl (d. 381/991), Abū l-Abbāṣ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Nāṭifī (d. 446/1054), and the other prominent scholars of the Ḥanafī school in his work, quotes exactly the mentioned words of Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī.[92] In his work summarizing *al-Fatāwá l-nawāzil*, al-Yazdī also conveys al-Samarqandī's statements just as they are.[93] al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd and al-Walwālijī, who seem to consider Abū Ḥanīfah's view to be correct (*taṣḥīḥ*) and give it preference (*tarjīḥ*),[94] respond the question by ignoring the views of the *Imāmayn*. They state:

> If the *imām* gives permission to a person to cultivate a *mawāt* land on the condition of not acquiring its ownership but only benefitting from it, he does not own the land upon cultivating it. Because this condition is valid according to Abū Ḥanīfah, as, in

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90 For the biography of Dāwūd ibn Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, see Adem Çiftci, "Hanefî Fetva Geleneğinin Önemli Bir Halkası: el-Fetâva'l-Gıyâsiyye", *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi* 35 (2020), 533-563.

91 For instance, among these scholars, al-ʿAttābī mentions in his work that he compiles the *fatwá*s of Ḥanafī scholars regarding the legal issues for which people often need judgments. See Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAttābī, *al-Fatāwá l-ʿAttābiyyah (Jāmiʿ al-fiqh)* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat İbrahim, 710), 0b-1a. For a comprehensive analysis of the nature of these works, see Bedir, *Buhara Hukuk Okulu*, 94-115.

92 Aḥmad ibn Mūsá al-Kashshī, *Majmūʿ al-nawāzil wa-l-wāqiʿāt wa-l-ḥawādith* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih, 2467), 20a.

93 Abū Ṣaʿd Jalāl al-Dīn al-Muṭahhar ibn Ḥusayn al-Yazdī, *Khulāṣat al-nawāzil* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah Efendi, 928), 124a.

94 For the terminological definitions of *taṣḥīḥ* and *tarjīḥ*, see Hallaq, "From *Fatwā*s to *Furūʿ*", 51 etc.

his view, no one can own it without the permission of the *imām*...[95]

In this context, both two scholars do not mention the names of Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī and Abū l-Qāsim al-Ṣaffār. However, Burḥān al-Sharīʿah al-Bukhārī addresses the issue that a farmer abandons a *mawāt* land after cultivating it with the permission of the *imām* and leaves it fallow, realizing that the land is not suitable for agriculture, and then, another farmer tills the same land with the *imām*'s permission as well. He states here that it is a controversial issue among the Ḥanafī scholars whether the first farmer can take the land from the second one or not and emphasizes that the scholars' responses to the question of "whether the cultivator of the wasteland, with the permission of the ruler, will obtain full ownership of the land or only the right of disposal"[96] determines their positions in this discussion. According to his narrative, al-Ṣaffār,[97] accepting that the person who cultivates the *mawāt* land with the permission of the *imām* will only have the right of disposal, argues that as long as the first farmer cultivates the land, he will have more rights over it than anyone else, but if he abandons it and leaves it fallow, he will lose this right. On the other hand, the majority of the Ḥanafī scholars, who acknowledge that the act of cultivation grants full ownership of the land to the person, argue that the first farmer can reclaim the land from the second one in any case. As can be noticed, there is a clear contradiction between Burḥān al-Sharīʿah's narrative in terms of al-Ṣaffār's view on the issue of cultivating the *mawāt* land with permission and the narrative of the other Ḥanafī scholars mentioned above, including al-Samarqandī. For, according to the narrative of al-Samarqandī and his followers, al-Ṣaffār states that even if the *imām* explicitly gives permission for the

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[95] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Bukhārī al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd, *al-Wāqiʿāt* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa, 1086), 33a; Abū l-Fatḥ ʿAbd al-Rashīd ibn Abī Ḥanīfah al-Walwālijī, *al-Fatāwá l-Walwālijiyyah*, ed. Miqdād ibn Mūsá Furaywī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2003), 1/214.

[96] Burḥān al-Sharīʿah, *Tatimmat al-fatāwá* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih, 2410), 206b. This narrative can also be found in almost the same expressions in al-Bukhārī's other two works. See Burḥān al-Sharīʿah Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-Bukhārī, *al-Muḥīṭ al-Burḥānī* (Karachi: Idārat al-Qurʾān wa-l-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyyah, 2004), 19/75; Id., *Dhakhīrat al-fatāwá* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah Efendi, 650), 225b.

[97] Burḥān al-Sharīʿah writes his full name like this: "Aḥmad ibn Ḥām ibn ʿIṣmah al-Ṣaffār al-Balkhī", see Burḥān al-Sharīʿah, *Tatimmat al-fatāwá*, 206b.

cultivation of the *mawāt* land on the condition of only benefiting from it, this condition would not be valid, and the person cultivating the land would have full ownership over it. This contradiction probably arises from Burḥān al-Sharīʿah's erroneous narrative. He must have mistakenly attributed this view to al-Ṣaffār instead of al-Samarqandī.[98] However, Burḥān al-Sharīʿah's other analysis is of considerable significance, indicating that this interpretation, which actually belongs to al-Samarqandī, had not yet gained widespread acceptance among the Ḥanafī scholars at that time and therefore had not reached a high position in the hierarchy of intra-school legal views.

Dāvūd ibn Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, on the other hand, transmits the narrative of al-Samarqandī and al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd in *al-Fatāwá l-nawāzil* and *al-Wāqiʿāt* respectively with a slight difference in wording and points out the divergence between the views of Abū Ḥanīfah and the *Imāmayn* on this matter.[99]

The interpretation developed by al-Samarqandī based on Abū Ḥanīfah's view began to be quoted in later centuries in the Ḥanafī school's literature of commentary (*sharḥ*), thus completing the process of becoming a part of the legal doctrine. Some of the works referring to this approach include: *Jāmiʿ al-muḍmarāt* of Yūsuf ibn ʿUmar al-Kādūrī (d. 832/1428-9), *al-Hidāyah* of Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), *al-Ikhtiyār* of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maḥmūd al-Mawṣilī (d. 683/1284), *Tabyīn al-ḥaqāʾiq* of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAlī al-Zaylaʿī (d. 743/1343), *al-ʿInāyah* of Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī (d. 786/1384), *al-Bināyah* of Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451), *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq* of Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Nujaym (d. 970/1563), *Majmaʿ al-anhur* of

[98] Although a summary of the narrative by Burḥān al-Sharīʿah is cited in later commentary literature without mentioning the name of al-Samarqandī or al-Ṣaffār, in some works the view that cultivation with permission gives the person only the right of disposal over the land is also attributed to the latter. For the commentaries that do not mention any names, see al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah*, 4/383-384; Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq*, 8/239. For the commentaries that attribute this view to al-Ṣaffār, see Akmal al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Bābartī, *al-ʿInāyah sharḥ al-Hidāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 10/71. For this narrative, see also Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Kardarī al-Khārizmī al-Bazzāzī, *al-Fatāwá l-Bazzāziyyah*, along with *al-Fatāwá l-ʿĀlamgīriyyah* (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Kubrá l-Amīriyyah, 1310 AH), 6/125.

[99] The author submitted his work to the ruler of Delhi Sultanate, Abū l-Muẓaffar Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balābān (d. 686/1287), see Dāwūd ibn Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, *al-Fatāwá l-Ghiyāthiyyah* (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Amīriyyah), 48-49.

Shaykhīzādah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 1078/1667), *Radd al-mukhtār* of Muḥammad Amīn Ibn ʿĀbidīn (d. 1252/1836).

Al-Kādūrī, among these scholars, quotes al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd's words identically.[100] The scholars, except Ibn ʿĀbidīn, generally content themselves with summarizing the narrative made by Burḥān al-Sharīʿah.[101] The late-period Ḥanafī scholar from Damascus, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, on the other hand, does not feel the need to refer to any previous legal authorities in this context since it appears that al-Samarqandī's interpretation has already become an integral part of the school's legal doctrine by this time. Hence, he just states that according to Abū Ḥanīfah, if the sultan allows a person to cultivate a *mawāt* land on the condition of just benefiting from it, the person has only the right of disposal, while according to the *Imāmayn*, he has the right of full ownership.[102]

3. The Approaches of 16th and 17th Centuries Ḥanafī Scholars towards the Problem of Cultivation of Wasteland

The Ottoman state, which gradually evolved into a universal empire starting from the mid-15th century, underwent a shift in its priorities after the 1530s and instead of expanding its borders through conquest, began to concentrate on establishing a strong centralized government within the existing territories.[103] Like many other empires during the

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[100] Yūsuf ibn ʿUmar ibn Yūsuf al-Kādūrī al-Bazzār, *Jāmiʿ al-muḍmarāt wa-l-mushkilāt*, ed. ʿAmmār Muḥsin Fuʾād al-Rāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2018), 3/460.

[101] Al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah*, 4/383-384; Abū l-Faḍl Majd al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maḥmūd al-Mawṣilī, *al-Ikhtiyār li-taʿlīl al-Mukhtār* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥalabī, 1937), 3/67; Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAlī al-Zaylaʿī, *Tabyīn al-ḥaqāʾiq sharḥ Kanz al-daqāʾiq*, along with *al-Ḥāshiyah* of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shalabī (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Kubrá l-Amīriyyah, 1895), 6/35; Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq*, 8/239; al-Bābartī, *al-ʿInāyah*, 10/71; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, *al-Bināyah sharḥ al-Hidāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1420), 12/287; Shaykhīzādah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Meḥmed, *Majmaʿ al-anhur fī sharḥ Multaqá l-abḥur*, along with *al-Durr al-muntaqá* of al-Ḥaṣkafī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī), 2/558.

[102] Ibn ʿĀbidīn is of the opinion that this difference of views stems from the disagreement on the extent of the *imām*'s authority over *mawāt* lands, see Muḥammad Amīn ibn ʿUmar Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd al-mukhtār ʿalá l-Durr al-mukhtār* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), 6/432.

[103] For detailed information about this transformation, see Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 119-133.

classical era, the primary source of income for the Ottomans was agricultural taxes. Consequently, the Empire's ability to strengthen its central authority and influence was heavily based on the equitable taxation of agricultural lands and the effective collection of taxes. During this period, as the central government implemented various administrative measures to reassert control over the lands, the Ottoman scholars, particularly the *shaykh al-islām*s, also exerted a considerable effort to explain the legal basis of the land system of the Empire.[104]

In this historical context, one of the main issues that preoccupied the scholars was the legal boundaries of the sultan's authority over the *mawāt* lands. To explain this, they primarily relied on the new interpretation developed by al-Samarqandī, often citing the important sources of Central Asian Ḥanafī legal tradition, such as *al-Fatāwá l-Walwālijiyyah* and *Dhakhīrat al-fatāwá*. For instance, some of these scholars include Chīvīzādah Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed (d. 954/1547) and Bālīzādah Muṣṭafá (d. 1073/1662) among the *shaykh al-islām*s, as well as Pīr Meḥmed al-Uskūbī (d. 1020/1611), a *muftī* from the province Uskub (Skopje), and ʿAlī al-Nithārī,[105] known as *Muḥyī-ʾi Qayṣarī*, who served as "the *muftī* of *Qayṣarī*".

Chīvīzādah quotes the interpretation in question separately from the works of al-Walwālijī and al-Kashshī, just as it is.[106] As understood from another *fatwá* by Chīvīzādah, he regards the legal nature of the relationship between *sipāhī* and *raʿāyā* as being invalid lease contract (*ijārah fāsidah*) in these cases.[107] Bālīzādah refers to *al-Fatāwá l-Walwālijiyyah* as well, but he rearticulates this interpretation in his own words, as follows:

> According to Abū Ḥanīfah, if the ruler allows a person to cultivate a [*mawāt*] land on the condition of only benefitting from it, he cannot own it. However, if he gives permission by

[104] For a study focusing on this effort, see Pehlivan, *Sultan, Reaya ve Hukuk*.

[105] For a detailed biography of al-Nithārī, see Ahmed Hamdi Furat, "17. Asır Osmanlı Taşrasında Bir Fakih Portresi: Ali en-Nisârî", *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 15 (2019), 13-33. For his *fatwá* compilation, also see Şükrü Özen, "Osmanlı Döneminde Fetva Literatürü", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 3/5 (2005), 314.

[106] Chīvīzādah Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed, *Majmūʿah-yi Chīvīzādah* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah Efendi, 845), 300b-301a.

[107] Chīvīzādah Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed, *Fatāwā-yi Chīvīzādah* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Kadızade Mehmed Efendi, 251), 1a-2a.

transferring the ownership of the land to him, then he becomes the owner.[108]

In the question part of a *fatwá*[109] addressed to al-Uskūbī, it is asked that how, despite the fact that the mainstream legal texts of the Ḥanafī school clearly state that the person cultivating the wasteland with the permission of the ruler owns it, the Ottoman sultans, in practice, grant the *raʿāyā* only the right of disposal over the land.[110] In his response, he states: "If the permission [of the ruler] does not include the right of ownership, but only of disposal, then [the person] does not acquire ownership as clearly explained in the *fatāwá* [literature]". He specifies here that the view expressed in the texts of the school as "the person who cultivates a wasteland with the permission of the ruler becomes its owner", contrary to what is initially understood, does not solely limit the authority of the ruler to granting full ownership of the land. Instead, it also gives the ruler the authority to grant only the right of disposal over it. He, at the end of his response, cites al-Walwālijī verbatim, stating that this explanation is found in the *fatāwá* literature.[111]

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[108] Bālīzādah Muṣṭafá, *al-Aḥkām al-Ṣamadiyyah fī l-sharīʿah al-Muḥammadiyyah ʿalá l-madhhab al-Nuʿmāniyyah* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yenicami, 675), 199b.

[109] Al-Uskūbī, *Muʿīn al-muftī* (Âşir Efendi, 133), 297b. This *fatwá* can also be found in other compilations with the same wording, such as *Ṣuwar al-fatāwá* (see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa, 243), 207a) attributed to a *muftī* named Mawlānā Pīrī Efendī, and *al-Fatāwá l-Sīwāsiyyah* (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Kılıç Ali Paşa, 487, 158b) which was compiled by an anonymous scholar among the commentators of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah* by Birgivī Meḥmed. In fact, the majority of the *fatwá*s found in these two compilations and al-Uskūbī's compilation are identical, with only some variations in their locations. In this respect, the actual author of *Ṣuwar al-fatāwá*, attributed to Mawlānā Pīrī Efendī, must also be Pīr Meḥmed Efendī al-Uskūbī. This is evident from the *ẓahriyyah* page of the mentioned copy of the compilation, which states that Mawlānā Pīrī Meḥmed Efendī served as the *muftī* of Thessaloniki and was an apprentice (*mulāzim*) to Chīvīzādah Meḥmed Efendī (d. 995/1587). These two pieces of information are historically accurate for al-Uskūbī as well. *Al-Fatāwá l-Sīwāsiyyah* by an anonymous compiler must also be another version of al-Uskūbī's compilation copied by someone else under a different title. I would like to thank my dear colleague Murat Sarıtaş for sharing with me his analysis that *Ṣuwar al-fatāwá* and *Muʿīn al-muftī* are largely same in terms of their content.

[110] The question part of the *fatwá* is previously quoted in another context. Additionally, see al-Uskūbī, *Muʿīn al-muftī* (Âşir Efendi, 133), 297b; *Ṣuwar al-fatāwá* (Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa, 243), 207a; *al-Fatāwá l-Sīwāsiyyah* (Kılıç Ali Paşa, 487), 158b.

[111] Al-Uskūbī, *Muʿīn al-muftī* (Âşir Efendi, 133), 297b; *Ṣuwar al-fatāwá* (Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa, 243), 207a; *al-Fatāwá l-Sīwāsiyyah* (Kılıç Ali Paşa, 487), 158b.

ʿAlī al-Nithārī was also asked the following question, which is, in fact, a reflection of the confusion caused by the tension between the literal meaning of the legal texts of the school and the Ottoman practice: "Does *Zayd* own either the ultimate ownership (*raqabah*) or usufructs (*manāfiʿ*) of the wasteland that he cultivated with the permission of the ruler?"[112] Al-Nithārī answers the question by stating that: "It is controversial. According to the majority of the scholars, he owns the ultimate ownership of the land, while some others argue that he owns only its usufructs". He then quotes exactly the narrative related to this issue, as it appears in *Dhakhīrat al-fatāwá* of Burḥān al-Sharīʿah al-Bukhārī, which was previously mentioned.[113] In his response, al-Nithārī, translating al-Bukhārī's words verbatim into Ottoman Turkish implies that the view accepting that the ruler has the authority to allow the cultivation of a wasteland only on the condition of benefitting from it is still a marginal view in the school at that time.

Moreover, some of the leading *shaykh al-islām*s of the period, such as Abū l-Ṣuʿūd (d. 982/1574), Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn (d. 1008/1599) and Meḥmed al-Bahāʾī (d. 1064), considering the existing practice in the core lands of the Empire, interpreted the authority of the sultan over *mawāt* lands in the broadest sense and gave him the authority to grant not only the right of ownership but also of disposal to the person cultivating the wasteland, drawing from an inherited understanding from the Central Asian Ḥanafī legal tradition. The analysis of Abū l-Ṣuʿūd's various *fatwá*s addressing the issue of opening up a wasteland for agriculture clearly shows that he adopted this understanding. When the edict of 958/1551, which granted the "*ṭapu* right" for the daughters of the *raʿāyā* who cultivated the *mawāt* lands, came into effect, it appears that they attempted to extend their privileges to the already cultivated *mīrī* lands as well. Therefore, the sultan later issued another edict by declaring: "If the land in the possession of deceased *Zayd* is not a place that he previously cleared with his own axe and put labour into, then it should not be granted to his daughter!"[114] Abū l-Ṣuʿūd was asked whether the meaning of the word "a place that he previously

[112] ʿAlī al-Nithārī, *al-Fawāʾid al-ʿaliyyah min al-masāʾil al-sharʿiyyah* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye, 2021), 81b.

[113] al-Nithārī, *al-Fawāʾid* (Nuruosmaniye, 2021), 81b.

[114] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b. Unfortunately, we do not have information about the date on which this edict of the Sultan was issued. However, judging by the content, it appears to have been issued after the edict of 958/1551.

cleared with his own axe and put labour into" mentioned in the edict refers to "the cultivation of *mawāt* land".[115] In his relatively long response to this question, he first states that the right of disposal over the *mīrī* lands, including the prosperous lands and the ones that had been initially wastelands but were opened up for agriculture, has been transferred to the *raʿāyā* through an invalid lease contract.[116] This part of the *fatwá* is important because of two reasons. Firstly, he states here that the cultivated wastelands acquire the status of *mīrī* lands. This actually means the legal confirmation of a practice that is clearly seen in the *qānūnnāmah*s and the court records of the period. Secondly and more importantly for the problem addressed in this research, he acknowledges that the sultan can grant only the right of disposal over a wasteland to the person wishing to cultivate it in return for a fee. As mentioned previously, in practice, the *raʿāyā* requesting to cultivate a wasteland were required to get permission from the *sipāhī* as being the deputy of the sultan, to pay him the "*ṭapu*-tax" and then to open up the land for agriculture within three years. As can be seen both in the continuation of this *fatwá* and in his other *fatwá*s, he interprets the legal contract between the *sipāhī* and the *raʿāyā* as "an invalid lease" (*ijārah fāsidah*) due to the unclear duration of disposal by the latter and he also considers the payment of *ṭapu*-tax, which has been a prevalent practice in the Empire, as an "advance fee" (*ujrah muʿajjalah*).[117] In fact, this interpretation is nothing more than the application of the understanding inherited from Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī to the Ottoman context. Indeed, according to the analysis of al-Samarqandī, Abū Ḥanīfah is of the opinion that the *imām* has the authority to grant only the right of disposal over the *mawāt* land to the person who wish to cultivate it. In this case, the transfer of the right of disposal can be either in the form of "loan" (*ʿāriyah*), or "lease"

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[115] This *fatwá*, contrary to the claims put forth by some researchers, especially Barkan (see Barkan, *XV ve XVI ıncı Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları*, xxxix-xl), shows that the *shaykh al-islām*s had the authority to interpret the imperial edicts. Indeed, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, in his response to the question, directly provides an answer himself, rather than referring the matter to the *nishānjī*.

[116] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b.

[117] The classical lease doctrine of Ḥanafī school requires certain conditions for the validity of the contract. One of these conditions is that the duration of disposal of the property must be specified. See al-Zaylaʿī, *Tabyīn al-ḥaqāʾiq*, 5/121.

(*ijārah*). Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, taking the existing practice of the Empire into account, makes his interpretation in line with the second one.

Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, who considers the *ṭapu* agreement conducted between the *sipāhī* and the *raʿāyā* as an invalid lease contract, states that "even if the contract is valid, it become null and void due to the death of the tenant",[118] and in such a case, according to *sharīʿah,* the *sipāhī* can give the land to another person in exchange for an advance fee. He also mentions that when a *mutaṣarrif* of a land passes away and leaves behind his son, it is considered "good and well" (*mustaḥsan*) by the sultan for his son to inherit land in question free of charge, and this practice is deemed as an "established law" (*qānūn-i muṭṭarid*).[119] Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, who, in the same context, asserts that the daughter and sister of the deceased *mutaṣarrif* also have the *ṭapu* right on the land, mentions that various edicts contain different statements regarding the amount of the tax to be demanded from them in such cases, and particularly emphasizes that "The noble *sharīʿah* does not provide a positive or negative ruling in any of these practices.[120] In the continuation of the *fatwá*, he emphasizes again that the act of cultivation does not make a person the owner of the land.[121] Lastly, drawing attention to the labor and *aqchah*s invested by the *raʿāyā* in order to open up the land for agriculture, he states that it would be appropriate, in terms of the ultimate goals of the *sharīʿah* and the protection of the *raʿāyā*'s rights, for the sultan to enact some just regulations regarding these lands.[122] In short, in harmony with the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, who evaluates the cultivation of *mawāt* lands within the scope of politics, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd indicates that the *sharīʿah* entrusted all the matters regarding the administration of these lands to the discretion of the sultan.

In the question part of another *fatwá* addressed to Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, it is stated that some meadows, which have been cultivated from wasteland and used under the name of *"bālṭahliq"* (copse) in Rumelia, are being transferred to the heirs according to the Islamic inheritance

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[118] The lease contract ends upon the death of one party, see al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah*, 3/247.

[119] Abū l-Ṣuʿūd interprets the edict of the sultan in this matter as follow: "The fact is, this is an accepted edict". See *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b.

[120] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b.

[121] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b.

[122] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 223), 34b.

rules and are bought and sold among the *raʿāyā*, moreover their taxes are neither paid to the imperial treasury nor to the local administrators,[123] and it is asked whether these meadows are private property (*mulk*) or not. This question clearly shows that, in practice, at least some of the lands opened up for cultivation by the *raʿāyā* were treated as private property. However, in his response to the *fatwá*, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd states that this practice is contrary to the *sharīʿah*, emphasizing that the person wishing to cultivate a *mawāt* land should first get permission from the *sipāhī*, and even if this is done, he asserts, the act of cultivation does not confer ownership but only the right of disposal, and in this case, he is obliged to pay the taxes of the land to the *sipāhī*.[124] Furthermore, referring again to the effort expended by the *raʿāyā* in cultivating the land, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd says that according to the imperial laws, after their death, the land would pass not to someone else but to their heirs, and neither they nor the heirs can engage in transactions that transfer ownership of the land.[125] He clearly opposes the buying and selling of these lands among the *raʿāyā* due to the fact that the cultivated wasteland obtains *mīrī* status and its ownership belongs to the imperial treasury. However, he does not consider completely denying this prevalent practice in society; instead, he resorts to another legal formula to establish a legitimate solution. According to this formula consisting of *farāgh* (renouncement) and *tafwîḍ* (delegation) procedures, the *raʿāyā* renounces his right, that he acquired by cultivating the wasteland, in favour of someone else and in return for a fee, and delegates to him the right of disposal over it, and then, the *sipāhī* rents out the same land to the same person with a *ṭapu*-tax.[126] As noticed, in this case, the new *mutaṣarrif* of the land makes two separate payments; to the previous *mutaṣarrif* under the name of *badal-i farāgh* (renouncement cost) or *badal-i tafwîḍ* (delegation cost) and to the *sipāhī* under the name of *"ṭapu*-tax" which is, in fact, *ujrah muʿajjalah* according to Abū l-Ṣuʿūd.

Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn, like his predecessors Chīvīzādah Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed and Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, accepts that the sultan has the authority to

[123] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd*, comp. Walī Yagān ibn Yūsuf (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İsmihan Sultan, 226), 89a-b.
[124] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 226), 89a-b.
[125] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 226), 89b.
[126] *Fatāwā-yi Abū l-Ṣuʿūd* (İsmihan Sultan, 226), 89b.

give permission the cultivation of wasteland on the condition of only benefitting from it. However, in contrast to them, he interprets the relationship between the *raʿāyā* and the *sipāhī* as *"ʿāriyah"* (loan) rather than *"ijārah fāsidah"* (invalid lease contract) in these cases. For instance, in a *fatwá* addressed to him, it is stated that *Bakr* dug a well, with the permission of the *sipāhī*, in a *tīmār* land located a hundred *dhirāʿ*s[127] away from a spring well in *Zayd*'s land that he had endowed to his sons through a valid endowment. *Bakr* conveyed the water coming out of the well to a suitable place by means of a channel, and built a fountain there, and endowed it. However, this caused a decrease in the water of the spring well. It is asked whether the trustee (*mutawallī*) has the right to demolish *Bakr*'s well.[128] In this context, it should first be noted that, according to the Ḥanafī legal doctrine of cultivating wasteland, an area with a radius of five hundred *dhirāʿ*s, located around the spring in the cultivated wasteland with the permission of the sultan is defined as *ḥarīm* and the disposal of this area is also allocated to the cultivator as a kind of servitude right (*ḥaqq al-irtifāq*).[129] In his response, Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn states that if the spring well located within the wasteland is cultivated and owned by the permission of the sultan and later endowed, then the trustee "has the right to prevent another person from disposing of properties in the boundaries of the *ḥarīm*. However, he adds: "The owning of the wastelands by cultivating them in this way is not known in this region", and "the ultimate ownership of them belongs to the imperial treasury, and they are granted to the cultivators as a loan (*ʿāriyah*)".[130] Nevertheless, the term *ʿāriyah* means "the transfer of the usufruct of a property to another person without any charge", but, in the Ottoman practice, when it comes to the cultivation of a wasteland within the boundaries of a *tīmār* the *raʿāyā* was required to pay the *ṭapu*-tax as an entry fee to the *sipāhī*. Therefore, it can be said that Abū l-Ṣuʿūd's interpretation of *ijārah fāsidah* is much more appropriate in

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127 *Dhirāʿ* is an ancient unit of length.

128 *Fatāwā-yi Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa, 2728), 0b.

129 ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Masʿūd ibn Aḥmad al-Kāsānī, *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ fī tartīb al-sharāʾiʿ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1986), 6/195. For detailed information regarding *ḥarīm,* see Salim Öğüt, "Harim", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1997), 16/188-190.

130 *Fatāwā-yi Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn*, 0b.

describing the legal nature of the relationship between the *sipāhī* and the *raʿāyā*.

Al-Uskūbī and al-Bahāʾī apparently accepts that the sultan has the authority to allocate only the right of disposal over the wasteland to those who wish to cultivate it. In such cases, they interpret the relationship between the *sipāhī* and the *raʿāyā* as *ijārah fāsidah*, like his predecessors Chīvīzādah and Abū l-Ṣuʿūd. For, in one of his *fatwá*s, al-Bahāʾī states that the villagers are obligated to pay a *ṭapu-yi mithl* to the *sipāhī* for "the fields they cultivate with the knowledge of the *tīmār*-holder using their own axes".[131]

This practice, where the *raʿāyā* had only the right of disposal over the *mawāt* lands, was largely preserved in the Land Code of 1858. However, as mentioned above, with this code, it was enacted that the *ṭapu*-tax would no longer be demanded from the *raʿāyā*, if the land was cultivated with permission. [132] Furthermore, in the *Majallah*, it was accepted that the sultan, according to his discretion, could allocate either full ownership or only the right of disposal of the *mawāt* land to those who cultivate it.[133] Taking into consideration that the legal views of the later period Ḥanafī tradition were given privilege[134] in the *Majallah* especially regarding the issues experiencing legal changes within the school such as the cultivation of wastelands, the article in question is important since it points the continuity in the legal discourse.

Conclusion

This study, contrary to Imber's claim, shows that the 16th-17th century Ottoman practice of cultivation of wasteland was compatible with the Ḥanafī interpretation of Islamic law. It also points out to the significant role of jurisconsults, and their legal opinions compiled in the *fatāwá* and *nawāzil* literature of the school in the doctrinal growth

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[131] *Ṭapu-yi mithl*, which means "market value" of the land, indicates that al-Bahāʾī interprets this relationship as *ijārah fāsidah*. For the *fatwá*, see al-Uskūbī [as Üskübî Pir Mehmed Efendi], "Zahîru'l-Kudât", *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, ed. Ahmed Akgündüz (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1996), 9/442.

[132] Art. 103.

[133] Art. 1272.

[134] For this aspect of the *Majallah,* see Ayoub, *Law, Empire, and the Sultan*, 129-151, 142-144.

and change of Islamic law. During this growth and change process, which took place in line with Hallaq's summarized narrative in the introduction, a practice, where the sultan had the authority to grant only the right of disposal over the wastelands to those who wish to cultivate them, emerged in the first half of the 4th/10th century in the Islamic society of Central Asia. Afterwards, one of the prominent Ḥanafī jurists of the time, Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī, reinterpreted the legal view of Abū Ḥanīfah, which was transmitted in an absolute language in the mainstream legal texts of the school, in order to show that this practice was in conformity with the Islamic law. He argued that in such cases, the authority of the sultan was not limited solely to granting ultimate ownership of the land to the relevant person, but he could also, if deemed appropriate, assign them the exclusive right of disposal over the land. This new interpretation was, in a sense, regarded as correct (*taṣḥīḥ*) and given preference (*tarjīḥ*) by later legal authorities in the same region, such as al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd and al-Walwālijī, thus increasingly cited in the *fatāwá* and *sharḥ* literature of the school, and it apparently became, at least to some extent, a part of the Ḥanafī legal doctrine towards the mid-16th century. *Shaykh al-islām*s such as Chīvīzādah Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed, Abū l-Ṣuʿūd, Khwājah Saʿd al-Dīn, Meḥmed al-Bahāʾī, and Bālīzādah Muṣṭafá, as well as the scholars from the provinces like Pīr Meḥmed al-Uskūbī, referred to the interpretation of al-Samarqandī to provide a legal explanation for the practice, which had a deep-rooted history in the core lands of the Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries.

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RELIGIOSITY, ECONOMIC STATUS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, AND PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL EFFECTIVENESS AS PREDICTORS OF BUYING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH MUSLIMS

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to examine the roles of religiosity, economic status, environmental concern, perceived behavioral effectiveness, and environmental dominance in purchasing environmentally friendly products. The study also examined the role of gender in relation to religiosity, environmental concern, environmental dominance, and the inclination to buy green products.

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This study was conducted among Turkish Muslims. The sample included 618 respondents who ranged in age from 18 to 84 years, with a mean age of 28 years (*SD*=10.1). An online questionnaire technique was used through Google Drive. The following scales were applied: a Personal Information Form, Environmental Orientation of Possessions Scale, Questions about Environmental Awareness, Religiosity Scale, and Purification of Environmental Products. The findings indicated that religiosity, economic status, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral effectiveness had positive effects on the purchase of environmentally friendly products. In addition, the research findings demonstrate that gender influences individuals' religiosity, environmental concerns, stance in relation to nature, and perceived behavioral effectiveness in buying green products. The consequences of these findings and recommendations for forthcoming research are discussed.

Keywords: Religiosity, environmental concern, perceived behavioral effectiveness, environmental dominance, buying environmentally friendly products

Introduction

Environmental issues that have evolved into global crises are crucial issues today. Pollution, the depletion of natural sources, climate change, and the extinction of animal and plant species are common, and each of these issues that cause ecocide is visible and perceptible to people worldwide. Particularly in the last two decades, interest in the ecological crisis has been increasing due to environmental protests and strikes on the streets and on social media across the globe as well as the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel with these developments, human beings are considered the culprits for these issues, and humans' relationship with the environment has been the subject of extensive academic interest. In an attempt to protect the environment, various proactive strategies and precautions have been developed. Some of these solutions focus on production and consumption activities. Numerous damaging factors that cause pollution, resource depletion, climate change, and the extinction of animal and plant species have emerged through production and consumption activities.[1] To mitigate the adverse effects of

[1] Michael Jay Polonsky - Philip J. Rosenberger III, "Reevaluating Green Marketing: A Strategic Approach", *Business Horizons* 44/5 (September - October 2001), 21-30.

manufacturing and consumption and minimize negative consequences, environmentally friendly products are being produced. In contrast to other products, these products do not pollute the environment or deplete natural resources and are recyclable. Research on green marketing has demonstrated that demand for these products is increasing steadily.[2] However, because research has tended to investigate the sociodemographic characteristics of customers, the factors that motivate them to purchase these products have not yet been identified. Although the influence of factors such as gender, education level, age, and marital status on environmentally friendly purchasing behavior is undeniable, it is impossible to completely explain this behavior.[3] Thus, additional research is needed that focuses on psychological, social, and cultural variables. The main aim of the current study was to explore the relationships among religiosity, economic status, environmental concern, perceived behavioral effectiveness, and environmentally friendly purchases. This study also aimed to contribute data to the gap in the literature by considering a Muslim sample.

1. Religion and Buying Environmentally Friendly Products

Religions throughout history have advised their adherents to respect and preserve the natural environment. For instance, in Islam, human beings are held accountable for protecting all living or nonliving things as vicegerents of God on earth.[4] The earth is sacred because of the creation of God, and people should care for it;[5]

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2 Johanna Moisander, "Motivational Complexity of Green Consumerism", *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 31/4 (July 2007), 404-409; Mustafa Yücel - Ümit Serkan Ekmekçiler, "Çevre Dostu Ürün Kavramına Bütünsel Yaklaşım: Temiz Üretim Sistemi, Eko-Etiket, Yeşil Pazarlama", *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 7/26 (2008), 320-333.

3 James A. Roberts, "Green Consumers in the 1990s: Profile and Implications for Advertising", *Journal of Business Research* 36/3 (July 1996), 217-231; Li Ling-Yee, "Effect of Collectivist Orientation and Ecological Attitude on Actual Environmental Commitment: The Moderating Role of Consumer Demographics and Product Involvement", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing* 9/4 (July 1997), 31-53; Tina Mainieri et al., "Green Buying: The Influence of Environmental Concern on Consumer Behavior", *The Journal of Social Psychology* 137/2 (April 1997), 189-204.

4 Fāṭir 35/39.

5 Al-Anʿām 6/38.

otherwise, they will be punished by God.[6] From this point of view, environmental problems stem from incorrect human attitudes and negative actions toward nature. The Qurʾān states, "*Whatever affliction befalls you is because of what own hands have committed, and He pardons much,*"[7] and it blames people for disrupting the environment.

With respect to Buddhism, nature and human beings are interrelated and interconnected. As the Buddha said, "This is because that is; this is not because that is not; this is born because that is born; this dies because that dies." In Buddhism, the relationship between nature and human beings circles around this belief. Therefore, if a person desires a peaceful life (that is, if a person wants to reach "nirvana"), he or she must be in harmony with nature.[8] In Hinduism, there is a similar approach toward nature. Based on the pantheistic faith of Hinduism, Hindus believe that Brahman pervades all created things in the universe. Everything is a part of the Creator, and the harmony of the cosmos remains with God's help.[9] In this sense, the universe both conceals and reveals the essence of being. It is incumbent on individuals to discover the truth by living in line with the cosmos.

With regard to the relationship between the Judeo-Christian faith and the environment, there is a conflict in the basic attitude of the Judeo-Christian tradition toward nature with regard to whether it promotes environmental stewardship or environmental mastery. Briefly, some researchers believe that God does not entrust human beings with full authority over nature. Moreover, both Judaism and Christianity give their followers responsibility for the preservation or protection of nature. Therefore, humans can neither spoil nature nor use it for their desires without reason.[10] Researchers cite the verse, "The

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6 Al-Rūm 30/41.

7 Al-Shuʿarāʾ 26/30.

8 Martin Palmer - Victoria Finlay, *Faith in Conservation: New Approaches to Religions and the Environment* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2003), 77-82.

9 Palmer - Finlay, *Faith in Conservation*, 91-96.

10 David Vogel, "How Green Is Judaism? Exploring Jewish Environmental Ethics", *Business Ethics Quarterly* 11/2 (2001), 349-363; Palmer - Finlay, *Faith in Conservation*, 83-86.

Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."[11]

Lynn White's contrary remarks on this matter have risen to prominence. He argued that the existing ecological crisis dates back to early times and is rooted in the book of Genesis. According to White, environmental difficulties arise from the Judeo-Christian tradition's positioning of humans over nature. Specifically, he takes this passage (Gen. 1:27-28) as a reference for information on humans' perception of the universe. White states that the Judeo-Christian tradition leads its followers to exhibit a dominant attitude toward the natural environment. In other words, Judeo-Christian religious belief gives rise to ecological issues rather than preventing harm to the environment.[12]

Based on this theoretical background, various empirical studies have been conducted to examine the degree to which individuals' religious beliefs affect their environmental approaches and behaviors. One of these environmental behaviors is purchasing environmentally friendly products, which has become increasingly popular in recent years. Research on the relationship between buying environmentally friendly products and religious belief has mostly been conducted with Judeo-Christian samples with reference to White's suggestion and has yielded conflicting results.[13] For instance, Minton et al. investigated the impact of religiosity on sustainable behaviors such as buying green cleaning supplies, preferring recycled products, and consuming organic foods with samples consisting of both South Korean and US consumers. The findings indicated that highly religious individuals were more likely than others to purchase sustainable products. Moreover, research shows that the effect of consumers' religion on participation in sustainable behaviors differs. Unlike Christians and atheists, Buddhist participants buy more sustainable products.[14]

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11 Gen. 2:15.

12 Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis", *Science* 155/3767 (March 1967), 1203-1207.

13 See Jared L. Peifer - Simranjit Khalsa - Elaine Howard Ecklund, "Political Conservatism, Religion, and Environmental Consumption in the United States", *Environmental Politics* 25/4 (March 2016), 661-689; Johan Graafland, "Religiosity, Attitude, and the Demand for Socially Responsible Products", *Journal of Business Ethics* 144/1 (August 2017), 121-138.

14 Elizabeth A. Minton - Lynn R. Kahle - Chung-Hyun Kim, "Religion and Motives for Sustainable Behaviors: A Cross-Cultural Comparison and Contrast", *Journal of Business Research* 68/9 (September 2015), 1942-1943.

Similarly, Felix and Braunsberger's research on the link between religiosity, environmental attitudes, and green product purchases in Mexico yielded significantly positive results. The findings indicated that highly intrinsically religious-oriented individuals are more inclined to buy green products.[15]

An examination of research on Muslim samples reveals that as individuals' level of religion increases, their intention to buy eco-friendly products increases as well.[16] Research conducted by Hassan in Malaysia studied the influence of Islamic values on green purchase intentions and produced significantly positive results. In other words, religious values directly affect both a natural environmental orientation and environmental concern. Thus, individuals who pray daily, include their faith in their lives, consider faith a source of inspiration and comfort, and include their faith in their decision-making are more environmentally concerned than others and tend to support environmental stewardship.[17] Similar findings were obtained from Khan and Kirmani's research conducted in India with a Muslim sample. Their study suggested that religiosity has a positive impact on the purchase of environmentally friendly products.[18] Islam and Chandrasekaran investigated the link between religiosity and ecologically conscious consumption behavior and collected data from 191 young Muslim males who lived in India. The findings showed that intrinsically religiously oriented individuals who internalized religious principles and values were more likely to participate in

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15 Reto Felix - Karin Braunsberger, "I Believe Therefore I Care: The Relationship Between Religiosity, Environmental Attitudes, and Green Product Purchase in Mexico", *International Marketing Review* 33/1 (February 2016), 137-155.

16 See Siti Haslina Md Harizan - Wan Afezah Wan Abdul Rahman, "Spirituality of Green Purchase Behavior: Does Religious Segmentation Matter?", *Journal of Research in Marketing* 6/3 (December 2016), 473-484; Abdulvahap Baydaş - Uğur Berdibek, "Yeşil Ürün Satın Alma Davranışı ile Dini Değerlerin İlişkilendirilmesi: Bingöl İli Örneği", *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 17/2 (2020), 922-943.

17 Siti Hasnah Hassan, "The Role of Islamic Values on Green Purchase Intention", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 5/3 (September 2014), 391-392.

18 Mohammed Naved Khan - Mohd Danish Kirmani, "Role of Religiosity in Purchase of Green Products by Muslim Students: Empirical Evidences from India", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 9/3 (September 2018), 504-526.

environmentally friendly purchase behavior than extrinsically religiously oriented individuals.[19]

2. Economic Status/Income and Buying Environmentally Friendly Products

Eco-friendly products have environmentally safe characteristics; they are non-polluting, recyclable, cruelty-free, energy safe, durable, and relatively healthy.[20] By virtue of these features, environmentally friendly products are preferred by consumers. However, these products are more costly than conventional products because of the inconvenience of manufacturing them. As a natural consequence, the purchasing power of the consumer is negatively affected.[21] This means that ecologically friendly products are not the first option for consumers with low incomes, and there must be reasonable grounds to purchase them. In his renowned theory of the "hierarchy of needs", Maslow indicates that individuals must primarily satisfy their fundamental needs for survival. After these needs are fulfilled, they can rise to the next stages. In other words, individuals cannot love, belong or engage in social problems until they fulfill their physiological needs.[22] Therefore, individuals with high incomes are expected to be more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products than others are. The relevant literature on this subject has revealed mostly consistent results with this assumption.[23] For instance, Ling-Yee conducted a study in Hong Kong to investigate the effects of consumers' collectivist orientation and ecological attitude on buying

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19 Tajamul Islam - Uma Chandrasekaran, "Religiosity and Ecologically Conscious Consumption Behaviour", *Asian Journal of Business Research* 5/2 (December 2015), 18-30.

20 Moisander, "Motivational Complexity of Green Consumerism", 404-409.

21 Nihan Özgüven Tayfun - Burak Öçlü, "Çevreci Ürünlerin Tüketicilerin Satın Alma Kararlarındaki Yeri Üzerine Bir Uygulama", *Niğde Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 9/3 (July 2016), 196.

22 A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation", *Psychological Review* 50/4 (1943), 370-396.

23 See Roberts, "Green Consumers in the 1990s", 217-231; Canan Ay - Zümrüt Ecevit, "Çevre Bilinçli Tüketiciler", *Akdeniz İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi* 10 (2005), 238-263; Collins Marfo Agyeman, "Consumers' Buying Behavior Towards Green Products: An Exploratory Study", *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy* 3/1 (January 2014), 188-197; Anastasios Pagiaslis - Athanasios Krystallis Krontalis, "Green Consumption Behavior Antecedents: Environmental Concern, Knowledge, and Beliefs", *Psychology and Marketing* 31/5 (May 2014), 335-348.

healthy food. The findings showed that consumers with high incomes preferred healthier food and purchased more green products.[24] Similarly, a study conducted by Çabuk, Nakıboğlu, and Keleş in Turkey indicated that income was one of the significant determinants of green product purchases.[25] Tilikidou reported that consumers who earned an annual income of 25-30,000€ intended to buy more organic foods, drinks, and clothes, recycled paper, and eco-friendly detergents – in short, pro-environmental products. In other words, environmentally friendly products are preferred by high-income consumers, and consumers usually choose these products if they are not expensive.[26] Mainieri, Barnett, Valdero, Unipan, and Oskamp examined the impact of consumers' environmental concerns on their buying behavior with a sample consisting of 800 households in Los Angeles. Unlike other studies, their research found no significant relationship between income level and the purchase of environmentally friendly products.[27].

3. Environmental Concerns and Buying Environmentally Friendly Products

Environmental concerns are defined as individuals' worries about the current destruction of the natural environment. Environmentally concerned people attach importance to climate change, water, air, and soil pollution, and the depletion of natural resources. These individuals feel guilty about these problems and wish to live in harmony with nature. On the other hand, individuals' levels of concern differ. Generally, people's level of concern ranges from highly concerned to less concerned about environmental problems. Highly concerned individuals are likely to behave with a more environmentally conscious attitude and prefer products whose purchase is not detrimental to nature.

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[24] Ling-Yee, "Effect of Collectivist Orientation and Ecological Attitude on Actual Environmental Commitment", 31-53.

[25] Serap Çabuk - Burak Nakıboğlu - Ceyda Keleş, "Tüketicilerin Yeşil (Ürün) Satın Alma Davranışlarının Sosyo-Demografik Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi", *Ç.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 17/1 (May 2008), 85-102.

[26] Irene Tilikidou, "The Effects of Knowledge and Attitudes upon Greeks' Pro-Environmental Purchasing Behaviour", *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 14/3 (July 2007), 121-134.

[27] Mainieri et al., "Green Buying: The Influence of Environmental Concern on Consumer Behavior", 189-204.

Environmental concern is well studied in the literature. Regarding the relationship between environmental concern and green product purchases, the majority of studies have yielded significantly positive results.[28] For example, Agyeman conducted an exploratory study to test the effects of price, environmental concern, quality, brand name, convenience, durability, and packaging variables in the purchase of green products. The findings indicated that consumers' environmental concerns positively influenced their willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products.[29] Pagiaslis and Krontalis investigated the extent to which environmental concern, environmental knowledge, beliefs about biofuels, and behavioral intentions affected consumers' willingness to buy biofuels. Their research showed that as consumers' environmental concern increased, their environmental knowledge and behavioral intentions to buy biofuels increased as well.[30] Similarly, an examination conducted by Aytekin and Büyükahraz in Turkey revealed that environmental concern, interest, and sensitivity were determinants of eco-friendly purchasing.[31]

4. Perceived Behavior Effectiveness and Buying Environmentally Friendly Products

Perceived behavior effectiveness is one of the important determinants that have an impact on purchase behavior. This concept refers to individuals' beliefs about the extent to which their individual contributions to a specific goal make a difference. Environmental concern, knowledge, or consciousness generally fail to clarify eco-

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[28] See James A. Roberts - Donald R. Bacon, "Exploring the Subtle Relationships Between Environmental Concern and Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior", *Journal of Business Research* 40/1 (September 1997), 79-89; Yeonshin Kim - Sejung Marina Choi, "Antecedents of Green Purchase Behavior: An Examination of Collectivism, Environmental Concern, and PCE", *NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 32,* ed. Geeta Menon and Akshay R. Rao (Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, 2005), 592-599; Rambalak Yadav - Govind Swaroop Pathak, "Young Consumers' Intention Towards Buying Green Products in a Developing Nation: Extending the Theory of Planned Behavior", *Journal of Cleaner Production* 135/2 (June 2016), 732-739.

[29] Agyeman, "Consumers' Buying Behavior Towards Green Products", 188-197.

[30] Pagiaslis - Krontalis, "Green Consumption Behavior Antecedents", 335-348.

[31] Mehmet Aytekin - Gül Büyükahraz, "The Impact of Between the Environmental Interest, Concern and Sensitivity Level and on Purchasing Behaviour of Environmentally Friendly Product", *International Journal of Business and Economic Development* 1/3 (November 2013), 37-45.

friendly purchase behavior. If consumers believe that their personal pro-environmental behaviors cannot prevent environmental problems, they are unlikely to turn their concerns into behaviors. Similarly, research on environmental behavior indicates that individuals are inclined to act in an ecological manner when they believe that their efforts have a purpose.[32]

When reviewing the relevant literature, previous research mostly underlines the positive impact of perceived behavior effectiveness on environmentally friendly product purchase behavior.[33] For instance, Vermeir and Verbeke investigated the antecedents of sustainable food consumption. Their results demonstrated that consumers who believed that personal efforts made a difference intended to buy more sustainable products.[34] Similarly, Yadav and Pathak studied the attitudes of 326 young consumers in India toward buying green products and found that perceived behavioral control had a positive impact on the purchase of green products. As the level of perceived behavioral control increased, individuals exhibited more green consumption behavior.[35] Kabadayı et al. conducted related research on university students living in Turkey to examine the degree to which consumer guilt, self-monitoring, and perceived consumer effectiveness affected consumers' green consumption intention. The results showed that perceived consumer effectiveness was the most influential factor when purchasing green products. In other words, even though a consumer believes that she or he has a hand in the environmental predicaments and takes responsibility for these issues,

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[32] See Roberts, "Green Consumers in the 1990s"; Kim - Choi, "Antecedents of Green Purchase Behavior"; Iris Vermeir - Wim Verbeke, "Sustainable Food Consumption: Exploring the Consumer 'Attitude-Behavioral Intention' Gap", *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19/2 (April 2006), 169-194.

[33] See Robert D. Straughan - James A. Roberts, "Environmental Segmentation Alternatives: A Look at Green Consumer Behavior in the New Millennium", *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 16/6 (December 1999), 558-575; John A. McCarty - L. J. Shrum, "The Influence of Individualism, Collectivism, and Locus of Control on Environmental Beliefs and Behavior", *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 20/1 (March 2001), 93-104; Kim - Choi, "Antecedents of Green Purchase Behavior", 592-599.

[34] Vermeir - Verbeke, "Sustainable Food Consumption", 184.

[35] Yadav - Pathak, "Young consumers' intention towards buying green products in a developing nation".

the consumer feels that he or she cannot partake in green consumption behavior because of low perceived consumer effectiveness.[36]

Based on the literature, to explore whether religiosity, economic status, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral effectiveness have an impact on the purchase of eco-friendly products, the current study addresses the following hypotheses:

H_1: Females are more religious than males are.

H_2: Females are more environmentally concerned than males are.

H_3: Males have greater intention than females to adopt a dominion approach toward nature.

H_4: Females score higher than males in perceived behavior effectiveness.

H_5: Religiosity has a positive effect on the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

H_6: Individuals with high income prefer to purchase more green products.

H_7: Environmental concern is a predominant factor in the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

H_8: The environmental dominion approach has a negative impact on the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

H_9: Customers who consider environmental efforts to prevent harm to nature to be beneficial buy more environmentally friendly products.

Method

In this study, the survey method and questionnaire technique were adopted as research methods.

Sample

The Personal Information Form was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. The form was composed of six items and asked the participants to indicate their gender, age, marital status, educational level, income state, and social environment. The sample of this study consisted of 618 people from different social environments (village, town, and city) in Turkey. A majority of the participants were female (59.7%), while 40.3% (N=249)

[36] Ebru Tümer Kabadayı et al., "Green Purchase Intention of Young Turkish Consumers: Effects of Consumer's Guilt, Self-Monitoring and Perceived Consumer Effectiveness", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 207 (July 2015), 172-173.

were male. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 84 years, and the mean age was 28 years. A total of 21.7% of the respondents were adolescents, 58.7% were young adults, 14.2% were adults, and 5.3% were in late adulthood. Of the participants, 74.3% (N=459) lived in an urban region, 18.4% (N=114) lived in towns, and 7.3% (N=45) lived in a rural region. The respondents were asked to report their educational level: 69.9% (n=432) were university graduates, 14.2% (n=22) were postgraduates, and 15.9% (n=98) had another educational level. The marital status of the participants was as follows: 66.3% (n=410) were single, 32.4% (n=200) were married, and 1.3% were other (widowed, engaged, or separated). The mean income of the individuals in the sample was 3048 TL.

Measures

Environmental Orientation of Possessions Scale

The Environmental Orientation of Possessions Scale was developed by Ayten[37] as a subscale of the Environmental Orientation Scale (EOS). The scale consists of six items (e.g., "Humans have mastery over nature") on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) to assess the basic approach of the participants toward the environment. Ayten (2010) found that the Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin parameter and Bartlett's test [*KMO*=.725, x^2= 402.60; *p*=.000] were acceptable. The Cronbach's alpha of the EOS in Ayten's study was α=85; in the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (*α*) was .637.

Questions about Environmental Awareness

Independent items were utilized by the researchers to evaluate the participants' environmental knowledge and awareness. First, the item "It doesn't matter what I do for environmental pollution and the depletion of natural resources" was used to measure the respondents' environmental consciousness and level of moral responsibility for environmental issues. This was named "Perceived Behavioral Effectiveness". Second, to evaluate the respondents' worries about environmental problems, the item "I am anxious about environmental problems that we encounter" was utilized and was named

[37] Ali Ayten, "'Sahip Olma' mı, 'Emanet Görme' mi? -Çevre Bilinci ve Dindarlık İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma-", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 10/2 (April 2010), 212.

"Environmental Concern". The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Religiosity Scale

The religiosity of the respondents was assessed by the *Brief Religiosity Scale* developed by Ayten.[38] The scale includes nine items that measure the degree to which participants believe in God, practice religious rituals (e.g., praying daily, reciting the Qurʾān, fasting during Ramadan) and integrate their religious teachings into their lives. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test and Bartlett's test showed the suitability of the data for factor analysis [KMO= 0.77, x^2=258.387; p=,000]. The measure consisted of two subscales labeled "religious faith and consequence" and "religious knowledge and ritual". In this study, the Cronbach's alphas were found to be comparable: 0.937 for the scale and 0.933 and 0.822 for the two subscales, respectively. The respondents were given 5 options, such as "*always*", "*sometimes*", or "*never*". Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the model fit values were acceptable [CMIN/df = 4.6942, CFI = .978, NFI = .973, RMSEA = .080].

Purchasing of Environmentally Friendly Products

In this study, the *Purchasing of Environmentally Friendly Products Scale* developed by Straughan and Roberts[39] was used to measure the degree to which participants preferred to purchase environmentally friendly products. The scale was composed of eighteen items (e.g., "I purchase recycled paper towels") on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*none of the time*) to 5 (*most/all of the time*). For this scale, a Cronbach's coefficient (α) of .637 was found.

Procedure

The data for the study were collected in October and November 2020 from people who lived in different social environments, such as villages, towns, and cities. The study was conducted online through Google Drive due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire included the Personal Information Form, the Environmental Orientation of Possessions Scale, the Questions about Environmental

[38] Ali Ayten, "Kimlik ve Din: İngiltere'deki Türk Gençleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 12/2 (July-December 2012), 108.

[39] Straughan - Roberts, "Environmental Segmentation Alternatives".

Awareness, the Religiosity Scale and the Purchase of Environmentally Friendly Products.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the descriptive statistics (number of participants, mean, standard deviation, range) of the study's central variables (environmental dominion, purchasing of environmentally friendly products (PEP), religiosity, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral effectiveness). Furthermore, an independent-sample *t* test was performed to determine whether differences existed between females and males in terms of the abovementioned variables.

	Females (*N*=369)			Males (*N*=249)		
	Range	*M*	*SD*	Range	*M*	*SD*
1. Environmental dominion	1-5	1,98**	,637	1-5	2.29**	,712
2. PEP	1-5	3.35	.656	1-5	3.35	0.687
3. Religiosity	1-5	3.90**	0.980	1-5	3.61**	1.124
4. Environmental concerns	1-5	4.45*	.624	1-5	4.30*	.779
5. Perceived behavioral effectiveness	1-5	1.78**	.905	1-5	2.17**	1.25

** p <.05; ** p <.001; PEP: Purchasing of environmentally friendly products*

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and ranges for the key variables of the study

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the aforementioned variables. The independent-sample test (*t* test) analysis indicated that males (*M*=2.29 and 2.17, respectively) scored higher on the Environmental Dominion Scale and the Perceived Behavioral Effectiveness Scale than females (*M*=1.98 and 1.78, respectively). The *t* test values were $t_{(618)}$ =-5.442 and $t_{(618)}$ =-4.362. However, females (*M*=3.90; 4.45) scored higher in religiosity and environmental concern than their counterparts (*M*=3.61; 4.30, respectively). The *t* test values were $t_{(618)}$ =3.346 and $t_{(618)}$ =2.537. The findings of the analysis also revealed that the differences between the two groups were statistically significant (p <.05 and p <.001). However, there was no statistically

significant difference between females and males in terms of purchasing products. These findings supported research hypotheses H_1, H_2, H_3, and H_4, that females score higher than males in religiosity and environmental concern, while males score higher than females in perceived behavioral effectiveness and the environmental dominion approach.

Regression Analysis

To evaluate the effects of religiosity, economic status, perceived behavioral effectiveness, environmental concern, and environmental dominion on the purchase of environmentally friendly products, multiple regression analysis (with a stepwise method) was performed. Except for environmental dominion, all the independent variables were included within the designed model in four steps. As shown in the multiple regression analysis presented in Table II, only the "environmental concern" factor was entered into the model. In step 4, the four predictors of environmental concern, religiosity, economic status, and perceived behavioral effectiveness were entered simultaneously.

	Step 1 *β (p)*	**Step 2** *β (p)*	**Step 3** *β (p)*	**Step 4** *β (p)*
Environmental Concern	.215 (.000)			
Environmental Concern & Religiosity		.240 (.000)		
		.186 (.000)		
Environmental Concern & Religiosity & Economic Status			.247(.000)	
			.193 (.000)	
			.135 (.000)	
Environmental Concern & Religiosity & Economic Status & Perceived Behavioral Effectiveness				
				.234 (.000)
				.185 (.000)
				.138 (.000)
				-.124 (.001)
ΔR²	***.045***	***.077***	***.094***	***.108***

Table 2. Multiple regression of scales fort he purchase of environmentally friendly products as a dependent variable

The findings indicated that environmental concern, religiosity, economic status, and perceived behavioral effectiveness were significant predictors of purchasing environmentally friendly products. In step 1, environmental concern alone accounted for 4% of the variance in purchasing environmentally friendly products (ΔR^2=.045; F=29.768=; p=.000). In step 2, environmental concern and religiosity together accounted for 7% of the variance in purchasing environmentally friendly products (ΔR^2=.077; F=26.766=; p=.000). In step 3, environmental concern, religiosity and economic status together accounted for 9% of the variance in purchasing environmentally friendly products (ΔR^2=.094; F=22.271=; p=.000). Finally, in step 4, environmental concern, religiosity, economic status and perceived behavioral effectiveness together accounted for 10% of the variance in purchasing environmentally friendly products (ΔR^2=.108; F=19.580=; p=.000). With regard to the beta coefficients, positive correlations were found between environmental concern, religiosity, economic status and the purchase of environmentally friendly products (see step 4: β=.234; t=6.042; p=.000 for "environmental concern"; β=.185; t=4.805; p=.000 for "religiosity"; β=.138; t=3.622; p=.000 for "economic status"), and a negative correlation was found between perceived behavioral effectiveness and the purchase of environmentally friendly products (see step 4: β=-1.24; t=-3.237; p=.001 for "perceived behavioral effectiveness"). The findings indicate that the respondents' inclination to purchase environmentally friendly products increased as "environmental concern", "religiosity" and "economic status" increased. Conversely, the respondents' inclination to purchase environmentally friendly products decreased as perceived behavioral effectiveness increased. The findings support H_5, H_6, H_7, and H_9, indicating that environmental concern, religiosity, economic status, and perceived behavioral effectiveness have an impact on PEP. However, the findings do not support H_8, which suggested that the environmental dominion approach toward nature prevents individuals' PEP.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to determine whether religiosity, economic status, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral

effectiveness have an impact on the process of purchasing environmentally friendly products.

Several conclusions can be drawn with reference to the findings. First, gender is an influential factor on religiosity, the attitude toward nature, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral effectiveness in buying green products. In terms of the environmental dominion approach, the results show that men are more inclined to behave with a manipulative attitude toward nature and to damage it for their self-interest if necessary. Women avoid the environmental dominion perspective more than men do. Similarly, with regard to the relationship between religiosity and gender, women were found to be more religious than men. These findings indicate that women perform religious rituals such as praying, fasting, and reciting the Qurʾān more than men do. Religious belief also affects social aspects of women's lives more. In other words, women consider their religious faith in the process of making friends, participating in activities, deciding on clothes, and eating and drinking habits. This can be explained by the pressure of sociocultural values framed by religion on women's lives. Regarding environmental concerns, the present study revealed that women are exceedingly aware of environmental issues and worried about pollution, climate change, and resource depletion, whereas men tend to be more indifferent to these issues. Finally, gender shapes individuals' perceived behavioral effectiveness levels when buying eco-friendly products. Women are more willing to take responsibility for global environmental problems and to participate in pro-environmental behaviors. Furthermore, men believe that their personal pro-environmental activities do not have an effect on current types of ecocide. The findings regarding the dominion approach, religiosity, environmental concern, and perceived behavioral effectiveness are consistent with previous research.[40] Thus, we can

[40] Joachim Schahn - Erwin Holzer, "Studies of Individual Environmental Concern: The Role of Knowledge, Gender, and Background Variables", *Environment and Behavior* 22/6 (November 1990), 767-786; Asım Yapıcı, *Ruh Sağlığı ve Din: Psikososyal Uyum ve Dindarlık* (Adana: Karahan Kitabevi, 2007); Kaman Lee, "Gender Differences in Hong Kong Adolescent Consumers' Green Purchasing Behavior", *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 26/2 (March 2009), 87-96; Ümit Alnıaçık, "Çevreci Yönelim, Çevre Dostu Davranış ve Demografik Özellikler: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma", *SÜ İİBF Sosyal Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 10/20 (December 2010), 507-532; Elif Sönmez - Zekeriya Yerlikaya, "Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Çevresel Bilgi Düzeyleri ve Çevreye Yönelik

depict women as more religious and environmentally concerned, less dominion-oriented toward nature, and as individuals who believe that their personal attempts to mitigate the damage of climatic change are effective. These results echo the culturally based social gender roles of women and men. With respect to the dominion approach to nature, environmental concern, and accountability, women's perceptions differ substantially from men's perceptions.

Second, in an attempt to answer the question "Do religiosity, economic situation, perceived behavioral effectiveness, environmental concern, and the environmental dominion approach lead individuals to purchase environmentally friendly products?", multiple regression analysis (a stepwise method) was employed. The results of the analysis demonstrated that, except for the environmental dominion approach, all variables positively influenced the preference for green products. Put differently, as individuals' concern about the global environmental crisis increases, their buying habits change in favor of protecting the environment. In addition, environmental concern is promoted by religiosity, high income, and a sense of responsibility and effectiveness for environmental issues, which also encourage customers to buy green products. It might be said that economic factors are significant[41] but inadequate to account for environmentally friendly purchases overall. These findings are similar to those of other studies. As previous research has shown, this study finds that environmentally conscious consumption behavior requires psychological factors such as anxiety, approach, and attitude as well as sociocultural factors such as religiosity.[42] Therefore, a high-income customer may not be interested in the current environmental disruption or consider exerting personal effort to reduce the destruction of nature to be sufficient. On the other hand, similar to the results of studies of Judeo-Christian samples,[43] the

Tutumları Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması: Kastamonu İli Örneği", *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi* 25/3 (May 2017), 1239-1249.

41 Ling-Yee, "Effect of Collectivist Orientation and Ecological Attitude on Actual Environmental Commitment", 50; Çabuk - Nakıboğlu - Keleş, "Tüketicilerin Yeşil (Ürün) Satın Alma Davranışlarının Sosyo-Demografik Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi", 96.

42 Alnıaçık, "Çevreci Yönelim, Çevre Dostu Davranış ve Demografik Özellikler: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma", 526-528.

43 See Minton - Kahle - Kim, "Religion and Motives for Sustainable Behaviors", 1937-1944; Peifer - Khalsa - Ecklund, "Political Conservatism, Religion, and

current research revealed that Islam encourages its followers to act in a pro-environmental manner. Surprisingly, the results showed that a perception of environmental dominion does not motivate the purchase of green products. Hence, for people who feel apprehension about climate change, pollution, and other disruptions and believe that individual endeavors are essential and influential to prevent these issues, fulfilling religious rituals and integrating their faith into their life are likely to catalyze environmental purchasing behavior more than basic approaches to nature.

Limitations

This research has a number of limitations. **(a)** This model excluded the effects of other personal, psychological, and sociocultural elements that influence buying behavior for environmentally sensitive products. Therefore, further research is needed to examine other factors to elucidate green purchasing. **(b)** To ascertain whether environmental concern and accountability encourage customers to maintain an environmental attitude when buying environmentally conscious products, two independent questions were asked. It might be beneficial to use adapted scales that are relevant to both factors. **(c)** In this study, religiosity was found to be a positive significant variable. However, the questions of the degree to which religiosity affects individuals' environmental behavior or why religious people tend to perform more pro-environmental activities have not yet been answered. Open-ended investigations with Muslim samples are needed.

Conclusion

Gender is a significant variable for religiosity, attitudes toward nature, environmental concern, and accountability. Furthermore, religiosity, economic situation, perceived behavioral effectiveness, and environmental concern have a positive influence on the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

Environmental Consumption in the United States", 661-689; Graafland, "Religiosity, Attitude, and the Demand for Socially Responsible Products", 121-138.

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A REPLY TO MORRISTON'S OBJECTION TO PLANTINGA'S FREE WILL DEFENSE

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Abstract

The logical problem of evil holds that the existence of the theistic God, who is considered omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent, is logically incompatible with the existence of evil. Since there is evil in the world, the existence of the theistic God is then logically impossible. Alvin Plantinga has argued that if God has a good reason to allow evil to exist, the logical problem of evil fails. And the good reason that God has might be the great value of significant freedom – the freedom to choose between moral good and evil. Wesley Morriston objects that Plantinga's free will defense is incompatible with one of the components of his ontological argument that God is omnibenevolent

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in every possible world. This paper aims to show that Morriston mistakenly assumes that the free will defense theorist holds the account of significant freedom for both human and divine freedom. If I am right, Plantinga's defense of free will can meet Morriston's objection.

Keywords: Philosophy of religion, defense of free will, ontological argument, Alvin Plantinga, Wesley Morriston

Introduction

In his book *God, Freedom, and Evil*,[1] Alvin Plantinga provides a strong version of the free will defense (hereafter, the FWD) against the logical problem of evil. He attempts to show that the existence of God is logically compatible with the existence of evils if God has a good reason to create some beings who may perform morally bad actions. He claims that one such good reason might be the great value of *significant freedom* – the freedom to choose between moral good and evil. If those beings had not had significant freedom, they would not have been morally responsible and could not have realized moral goodness. In his article, *Is God "Significantly Free?"*,[2] Wesley Morriston, however, argues that a serious problem arises from the FWD if we consider it alongside Plantinga's ontological argument (henceforth, the OA). According to the OA, God has omniscience, omnipotence, and moral perfection in every possible world. Morriston holds that even if the OA states that God has moral perfection in every possible world, when it is combined with the FWD, it entails that God is neither morally perfect nor significantly free. Given the OA, since God is omnibenevolent in every possible world, it is logically impossible for him to commit a morally wrong action in any possible world. However, since significant freedom requires that God commits a morally wrong action in at least one possible world, God cannot be significantly free provided that the OA is true. So, if the OA is true, the FWD is false. Given the FWD, since significant freedom is a necessary condition of moral goodness, God cannot be morally perfect in every

[1] Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmands Publishing Co., 1977).

[2] Wesley Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 2/3 (1985), 257-264.

possible world. So, if the FWD is true, the OA is false. This means that either the OA or the FWD can be true, but not both. In this paper, I shall argue that Morriston mistakenly assumes that the libertarian theist, like Plantinga, holds the same account of freedom in both divine and human cases without considering any difference. I will attempt to show that the FWD does not maintain that God is morally perfect only if he is significantly free. In the first section, I will summarize Morriston's objection against the FWD. In the second section, I will claim that the theist who is committed to both the FWD and the OA does not have to give up one of those accounts to deal with the issue raised by Morriston. The theist only needs to provide two different conceptions of freedom, namely, creaturely freedom and divine freedom. In the last section, I will raise a possible objection (namely, the objection from the unified account of freedom) against my argument and will show why it fails.

1. Morriston's Objection to the Free Will Defense

Significant freedom, according to the FWD, has great value and requires the freedom to choose between moral good and bad. Even though God is omnipotent, it is logically impossible for Him to prevent free creatures from committing evil and, at the same time, give them significant freedom. This entails that if God wants to create free creatures, He cannot cause or determine them to perform only morally right actions. Plantinga's conception of freedom[3] is as follows:

> If a person is free with respect to a given action, then he is free to perform that action and free to refrain from performing it; no antecedent conditions and/or causal laws determine that he will perform the action, or that he won't. It is within his power at the time in question to take or perform the action and within his power to refrain from it.[4]

It is clear that Plantinga's conception of freedom is incompatible with determinism because if God or any antecedent conditions and causal laws determine an agent with regard to an action, then the agent is not free and morally responsible with respect to that action.

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[3] In this paper, I will claim that Plantinga thinks that this conception of freedom is the conception of creaturely freedom but not of God's freedom.

[4] Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, 29.

Plantinga's FWD, thus, presupposes two conditions: the sourcehood condition and the principle of alternative possibilities condition. Since there is not a widely accepted approach to understanding the necessary conditions of freedom, providing a standard libertarian account of freedom might not be easy. Regarding the sourcehood condition, the libertarian theorists hold a standard approach on the negative condition of the sourcehood: "True sourcehood—the kind of sourcehood that can actually ground an agent's freedom and responsibility—requires, so, it is argued, that one's action not be causally determined by factors beyond one's control."[5] They, however, are not united in understanding a positive condition on sourcehood or self-determination. They are divided into non-causal libertarians, event-causal libertarians, and agent-causal libertarians. Non-causal libertarians hold that a free action is constituted by a mental action (or actions) where there is neither external nor internal causal structure. If our choice or action is entirely uncaused, then "it is free and under our control simply in virtue of being ours."[6] According to event-causal libertarianism, a free action is nondeterministically caused by its causal antecedents (its prior events). If event-causal libertarians are right, self-determination requires that a free choice is a choice that is entirely reducible to causation by mental states and states of affairs.[7] Agent-causal libertarianism, however, contends that a free action must be indeterministically caused by an agent, who is either a thing or substance, but not by mental events, prior circumstances, or states of affairs.[8] As O'Connor has pointed out, the ontologically fundamental form of a free action is expressed by this agent-causal picture: *an agent S causes an intention i for reason r*.[9]

When it comes to the other necessary condition of libertarian freedom (the power to do otherwise or the principle of alternative possibilities), libertarians are united on the following categorical analysis:

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5 Timothy O'Connor - Christopher Franklin, "Free Will", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

6 O'Connor - Franklin, "Free Will".

7 O'Connor - Franklin, "Free Will". Also, Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45.

8 Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*, 45.

9 Timothy O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 29/1 (2005), 216.

> Categorical Analysis: An agent *S* has the ability to choose or do otherwise than ϕ at time *t* if and only if it was possible, holding fixed everything up to *t*, that *S* choose or do otherwise than ϕ at *t*.[10]

Libertarian freedom, then, requires that an agent can be free with respect to an action only if he is able to choose or act otherwise than that action.

Morriston believes that, given the OA and the incompatibilist presuppositions of the FWD, God is neither significantly free nor morally perfect. If we sketch the relevant features of the OA, Morriston brings to our consideration the following premises given by Plantinga:

> (27) A being has maximal greatness in a given world only if it has maximal excellence in every world.
>
> (28) A being has maximal excellence in a given world only if it has omniscience, omnipotence, and moral perfection in that world.[11]

Morriston claims that (27) and (28) together entail that God is morally perfect in every possible world. So, it is logically impossible for Him to commit a wrong action because He is determined by His perfectly good nature, necessarily excluding any morally wrong action. He reasons that it must be easy to see that the combination of the FWD and the OA entails that (a) God is not significantly free (the freedom requires that God commit a wrong action at least in one possible world) because it is impossible for Him to commit a wrong action in any possible world, and (b) God is not morally good or morally perfect because moral goodness presupposes significant freedom. Thus, he says, "A theist cannot consistently give the free will defense if he accepts the ontological argument, and *vice versa*."[12]

Morriston, however, thinks that there are two different strategies for dealing with this problem. First, it might be argued that even if God is not significantly free, He can still possess *maximal greatness* but not moral perfection. Even though He lacked moral perfection, he would still be essentially and perfectly good. So, we would be right to praise God for His goodness but not for His moral goodness: "In somewhat the way that we might praise a beautiful sunset, we can praise the

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[10] O'Connor - Franklin, "Free Will".
[11] Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, 108.
[12] Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 258.

absolute perfection of God's nature."[13] Morriston, however, reminds us that the FWD entails that moral goodness produced by significant freedom is superior to any kind of goodness that could have been realized by innocent automata. This means that freely-chosen/freely-actualized moral goodness is superior to non-freely chosen goodness. If, unlike what the FWD theorist holds, significant freedom was not superior, then God would not have had sufficient reason to create significantly free creatures (who perform both morally right and wrong actions) instead of innocent automata (who always perform non-moral good actions). But it seems that if God is essentially and perfectly good without possessing moral perfection or goodness, then innocent automata are much closer to the image of God than significantly free creatures are. Thus, it appears that "the goodness of innocent automata is superior to the moral goodness of significantly free beings, contrary to what is required for a successful free will defense."[14] Morriston, thus, thinks that the first strategy fails.

However, the proponent of the FWD, according to Morriston, does not have to give up the OA if the second strategy that he himself favors succeeds. According to the second strategy, we should revise Plantinga's (27) and (28) as follows:

> (27*) A being is maximally great in a given world if and only if: (i) it possesses maximal moral excellence in *that* world; and (ii) it possesses maximal nonmoral excellence in *every* world.[15]
>
> (28*) A being has maximal *nonmoral* excellence in a given world only if it has omniscience and omnipotence in that world.[16]

And taken together, (27*) and (28*) entail the following:

> (27**) A being is maximally great in a given world if and only if it possesses maximal moral excellence and maximal nonmoral *greatness* in that world.[17]

(27**), however, has a clear implication: no being could be maximally great in every possible world. Thus, the proponent of the FWD will have to accept that, though God is significantly free, He is

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13 Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 259.
14 Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 262.
15 Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 263.
16 Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 262.
17 Morriston, "Is God "Significantly Free?"", 263.

not morally perfect or maximally great in every possible world. This, according to Morriston, will be a disappointing conclusion for the libertarian theist because it appears that he can endorse either the FWD or the OA but not both.

2. Two Different Accounts of Freedom

As stated previously, the FWD entails both that significant freedom is the freedom to choose between morally right and wrong actions and that moral goodness requires significant freedom. We have also seen that Plantinga's account of freedom entails that if a person is free with respect to a given action, then there should not be any antecedent conditions and/or causal laws determining whether he will perform or refrain from performing the action. In this section, I shall examine two main questions: (1) Does the FWD presuppose that significant freedom is applicable to God as well? and (2) Does it imply that God's moral perfection requires significant freedom? I will argue that an affirmative answer to either (1) or (2) would be implausible. If I am right, the theist can consistently hold both the FWD and the OA, for he can show that God can be morally perfect in every possible world even if He is not significantly free.

Quentin Smith, in his *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language*, claims that Plantinga's FWD entails three kinds of freedom:

> A person is externally free with respect to an action A if and only if nothing other than (external to) herself determines either that she perform A or refrain from performing A.
>
> … A person is internally free with respect to an action A if and only if it is false that his past physical and psychological states, in conjunction with causal laws, determine either that he perform A or refrain from performing A.
>
> … A person is logically free with respect to an action A if and only if there is some possible world in which he performs A and there is another possible world in which he does not perform A. A person is logically free with respect to a wholly good life (a life in which every morally relevant action performed by the person is a good action) if and only if there is some possible world in

which he lives this life and another possible world in which he does not.[18]

Smith is right in claiming that Plantinga's version of the FWD entails that a person is free with respect to an action A if and only if he is externally, internally, and logically free.[19] When Plantinga says that an agent is significantly free if there are no antecedent conditions and/or causal laws that determine the agent to perform A or to refrain from performing A, he means that there are neither internal nor external conditions that determine the agent to perform A or to refrain from performing A. [20] Further, as Smith has pointed out, though Plantinga does not explicitly claim that the agent also should be logically free, the FWD presupposes that "there are no possible creatures who are internally-externally free with respect to a morally good life but logically determined."[21] So, according to Plantinga's version of the FWD, an agent is significantly free if and only if he is externally, internally, and logically free.[22]

Given Smith's definition of significant freedom along with Morriston's objections to the FWD, the main problem with Morriston's objection to the compatibility between the FWD and the OA seems to be the following: the FWD presupposes that we shall have a unified account of moral goodness and freedom that can be applicable to both

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[18] Quentin Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language* (Michigan: Yale University Press, 1997), 149.

[19] Following Kevin Timpe, one might suggest that internal and logical freedom are necessary for an agent to be free with respect to an action only if he has not yet formed a moral character by his previous choices in a way that the given action is no longer open to him. An agent, for example, might have formed a moral character by his previous choices in a way that he cannot refuse to believe in the existence of God but this should not mean that he is no longer free in his choice to believe in God's existence. It only means that he enjoys a derivative freedom with respect to the given action. I think Timpe's account of derivative freedom might be true regarding the inhabitants of the heavenly stage but not for the inhabitants of the earthly stage. I maintain that given that creatures have imperfect nature, a human agent with a morally virtuous character still has internal and logical freedom in a weak sense in the earthly stage.

[20] For Plantinga, as a proponent of the libertarian account of freedom, thinks that if a person is internally determined while he is externally free, then he can be neither free nor morally responsible. To my knowledge, however, he does not say anything about derivative freedom.

[21] Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language*, 152

[22] I shall note here that while external freedom is related to the sourcehood condition, both internal and logical freedom are related to the principle of alternative possibilities condition.

God and creatures.[23] Had Morriston been right in his assumption, the objections he has raised would have been plausible. However, we have good reasons to reject his assumption.

First, we need to clarify what Plantinga himself means by significant freedom. When asked if there will be free will in heaven, Plantinga's response entails that it is instrumentally valuable though significant freedom is a great good. For instance, he claims that it is not necessary that the inhabitants of heaven have significant freedom. It might be the case that God provided significant freedom to His creatures only on the earthly stage but not on the heavenly stage. This suggests that significant freedom is instrumentally valuable in the earthly stage because it is a necessary condition for the formation of a moral character for that stage.[24] The moral goodness in the earthly stage, thus, is produced by a kind of freedom (i.e., significant freedom) that is not necessarily realized in the heavenly stage, where we do not need to start from the most basic steps in order to form a moral character. Then, we might argue that the FWD requires external, internal, and logical freedom for an agent with respect to morally right or wrong actions because these three kinds of freedom are necessary for "the formation of a free moral character for any created agent."[25] The libertarian theist, thus, holds that since human beings have intrinsically developmental characteristics (including moral character), significant freedom is required for creatures. We can then claim that Plantinga's account of significant freedom is meant to show that human beings need to have external, internal, and logical freedom in order to be considered free in their actions and thus in forming their moral character.

Second, it must be obvious that if one wants to hold a unified account of freedom that can be applicable to two beings in every aspect, he cannot succeed unless he also considers the nature of those beings. He will have to assume that the natures of those beings share

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[23] Edward Wierenga briefly refers to this confusion. In this paper, I will try to extend this point further. Please see Edward Wierenga, *The Nature of God* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press,1989), 209-211.

[24] For a part of an interview with Plantinga on whether there will be free will in heaven, please see: Alvin Plantinga, "Will There Be Free Will in Heaven?" (Interviewer: Bart Ehrman, Video Recording, Accessed on March 21, 2023).

[25] Kevin Timpe, "God's Freedom, God's Character", in *Free Will and Theism: Connections, Contingencies, and Concerns*, ed. Kevin Timpe - Daniel Speak (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 286.

some basic features that make them ready to enjoy this kind of freedom. This means that if, let's say, Plantinga has meant to hold significant freedom not only as creaturely freedom but also as divine freedom, he is assuming that both God and creatures share some basic features with respect to having their moral character. However, as a proponent of both (27) and (28), Plantinga's position is obvious: unlike us, it is impossible for God to lack His essential attributes (such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence) in any possible world. He does not have those attributes accidentally, so they are not something that He achieves. This means that His freedom and moral character are not achieved either. Though we achieve our freedom and character over time, divine freedom and moral character are eternally complete. This leads us to the idea that since God's freedom, which is perfectly compatible with his goodness, is essentially valuable, it is essentially different from significant freedom that is instrumentally valuable.[26] So, even if Plantinga does not provide an account of God's freedom in particular, we have good reasons to believe that he does not hold a unified account of freedom that can be applicable to both God and human beings without considering any difference.

But why not to have a unified account of freedom for both God and human beings? Are not we invited by the theist to believe that God has created human beings in His image? Does not this idea provide a good reason to hold that both God and human beings are significantly free? Even though I think the theistic view that God has created us in His image provides a good reason to hold a unified account of freedom that can be applicable to both God and human beings, it does not necessarily entail that the given account should be applicable in every sense. As noted in the previous section, significant freedom requires the sourcehood condition and the principle of alternative possibilities condition in the sense that the agent chooses between morally right and wrong actions. I will argue that reflection on the difference between divine nature and human nature indicates that we need to hold only a weaker version of the principle of alternative possibilities condition for divine freedom though we should hold a strong version of the sourcehood condition in the divine case. The weaker version of

[26] Ferhat Taskin, *The Problem of Divine Creative Freedom* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2023), 122.

the latter condition requires the agent to have alternative possibilities, but those possibilities cannot be immoral or irrational.

So, why not to have a unified account of freedom in every sense? Human beings are considered to be rational, powerful, and knowledgeable beings, but there is no doubt that we are far from having those attributes in a perfect sense. Our rationality does not prevent us from having conflicting desires or irrational motivations. We have power and knowledge, but they are limited in many aspects. Our imperfect nature, then, indicates that human freedom, as Timothy O'Connor has pointed out, "is always limited, fragile, and variable over time and across agents."[27] Our limited and imperfect nature and freedom also show that it is impossible for us to have a perfect moral character that is eternally complete. The moral character of a human agent, in general, is supposed to be formed by the agent's own free choices rather than being innate. The FWD, then, seems to entail that God gives significant freedom to His creatures so that those free beings can form and develop their characters in order to resemble God's character with respect to actions.[28]

Given God's nature, however, it is hard to claim that God must have significant freedom of choice in order to possess moral perfection and goodness. Since God is omnirational, He has no irrational motivations. Furthermore, because He is omnipotent and omniscient, there can be no external or practical constraints on Him.[29] Thus, since God has His attributes (such as omnipotence, omnibenevolence, and omniscience) essentially, He does not need to have significant freedom (the combination of external, internal, and logical freedom) in order to have moral perfection and moral goodness.[30] Unlike free creatures, He does

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27 O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face", 208.

28 See Taskin, *The Problem of Divine Creative Freedom*, 121. I think O'Connor is right in claiming that we should consider this as a form of rough analogy but not of a small-scale replica. Please see O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face", 226.

29 O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face", 212; Timpe, "God's Freedom, God's Character", 278.

30 It is worth noting that the moral goodness God has is fundamentally different from the moral goodness free creatures have. The former is true of a being that has perfect nature and freedom. Further, it does not need to have the freedom of choice between morally right and wrong actions. The latter, however, is supposed to be produced by a limited being that has imperfect nature, character, and freedom. Therefore, the latter requires significant freedom, the freedom to choose between morally right and wrong actions.

not need to have significant freedom to form or develop His moral character. If God has His attributes essentially, it seems that His moral character and freedom are perfectly compatible. This entails that God cannot have significant freedom that could threaten His moral perfection.

3. The Objection from the Freedom of Innocent Automata

It seems that if God is not significantly free, either the sourcehood condition (external freedom) or the principle of possible alternative possibilities condition (internal and logical freedom) is not satisfied in the divine case. God, thus, is unable to commit anything morally wrong. However, Morriston's objection regarding free human beings and innocent automata seems to arise again. As noted earlier, Morriston claims that if God is not significantly free, then innocent automata who are always performing non-moral good actions are much closer to the image of God than significantly free creatures, and if innocent automata who do not have significant freedom are closer to the image of God, then the FWD fails. For one of the most basic assumptions behind the FWD is that creating human beings with significant freedom is better than creating innocent automata with no freedom. I believe that Morriston is mistaken.

As stated previously, Plantinga contends that a person can be free and morally responsible with respect to a given action if and only if he has external, internal, and logical freedom. There is a consensus among the proponents of the libertarian account of freedom that one cannot be determined and free (and indeed morally responsible) at the same time with respect to an action. However, there is debate about whether one can be considered free and morally responsible with respect to an action if his character, as formed by his previous free choices, internally determines that he will perform the action or refrain from performing it. As a proponent of a libertarian account of freedom, Kevin Timpe, for instance, believes that significant freedom is a necessary condition for character formation. However, he also thinks that:

> What seems central to a rational agent doing something freely is that the agent is not causally necessitated to do it by anything outside the agent and that it is done for a reason; not that it is both logically and psychologically possible for the agent to have

> refrained from performing that action (holding everything constant).
>
> … moral freedom [significant freedom] is instrumentally necessary for created agents to be (that is, become) 'independent and morally virtuous.' But once these agents have freely formed such a character, it's no longer the case that they require the ability to do otherwise.[31]

So, according to Timpe, it seems that even if external, internal, and logical freedom (i.e., the sourcehood and the principle of alternative possibilities conditions) are necessary for a rational agent to form and develop his character, after having an independent and morally virtuous character, only external freedom (i.e., the sourcehood condition) is central to that agent. If he is not determined by any external condition with respect to an action, then he can be considered free and morally responsible for his action.

Timpe argues that this is especially true when we consider God's agency. Given that God cannot be determined by anything outside of Him, it is clear that God is externally free with respect to an action. He is, thus, the ultimate source of all of His actions. However, given God's perfect nature and moral character, God never needs to have internal or logical freedom.[32] His perfect nature and moral character determine His choices and actions, but this does not mean that He does not have perfect freedom. Timpe is right in asserting that external freedom holds greater importance than internal or logical freedom in the divine case. For it suggests that an agent who has freely formed and developed his character as morally virtuous is closer to the image of God than an innocent automaton who has never had significant freedom to form and develop such a character. Therefore, even if God and significantly free creatures are the ultimate source of their free actions, an innocent automaton cannot find the ultimate source of any action in himself. This shows that Morriston's objection suggesting that innocent automata, devoid of external, internal, and logical freedom, are closer to the image of God than significantly free creatures is unsuccessful.

If I am right so far, the assumption of the FWD that moral goodness requires significant freedom is true only for creatures but not for God. Since God, unlike creatures, does not need to form a moral character

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[31] Timpe, "God's Freedom, God's Character", 286.
[32] Timpe, "God's Freedom, God's Character", 286.

but has it essentially, moral goodness in the divine case does not require significant freedom. One might, however, still wonder whether God's freedom entails that He is internally and logically free and thus not morally perfect in at least one possible world. I noted above that Timpe is right in contending that external freedom holds greater importance than internal or logical freedom in the divine case. But I think he is wrong in his view that God is not internally or logically free at all. For if God is considered to have moral perfection and perfect freedom, it is then necessary for Him to choose and to act with regard to His perfect moral character that is absolutely compatible with His perfect freedom. However, the question remains as to how one might comprehend this concept of compatibility. Notice that even if God's moral nature limits some alternatives for His creative choices, He is still the ultimate source of His choices and actions. So, the sourcehood condition is satisfied even if divine nature limits God's internal or logical freedom. As O'Connor has pointed out, "most theologians acknowledge that God's perfect goodness entails that any number of scenarios contrary to His moral nature are not genuine possibilities for Him."[33] However, this does not necessarily imply that God is determined by His nature for every choice He makes. It is indeed true that given God's perfect moral nature, He can have neither internal nor logical freedom with respect to morally wrong actions. For if perfect freedom required being open to all possibilities, then the agent who has such freedom would lack a perfect nature. God's moral nature, however, does not require that He have only one option regarding whether to create or what to create, for example. Since any essentially just world is open to God's actualization and since such actualization is compatible with His perfect moral nature, a weaker version of the principle of alternative possibilities is still satisfied in the divine case. Unlike the strong version of the principle of alternative possibilities, the weaker version does not require God to be internally and logically free in the Smithian sense.

Notice that this weaker version might be worrisome for a theist who endorses a bare voluntarist account of divine freedom. For, according to him, God can act without having any reason for that action. The bare voluntarist position, thus, is open to the idea that God can be internally

[33] O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face", 212.

and logically free in the Smithian sense. I will presume that given God's omniscience, omnibenevolence, and omnirationality, the bare voluntarist position is implausible. Notice also that the theist who endorses the weaker version of the principle of alternative possibilities does not hold an unusual view regarding traditional theism. For many theists believe that God's omnipotence does not require that God can do logically impossible things (such as making square circles). Similarly, it is not unusual to hold that God's perfect freedom does not require that God can do morally wrong actions or to maintain that God's omnibenevolence does not require that God's freedom entirely disappear. Given the perfect compatibility between God's omnibenevolence and freedom, God cannot be internally and logically free in the Smithian sense. This means that there cannot be any possible world in which God chooses to perform a morally bad action. However, unlike Timpe's view, the principle of alternative possibilities condition containing both internal and logical freedom does not disappear in the divine case. Even if the strong version is not satisfied in the divine case, the weaker version is. This entails that God's moral perfection does not threaten His perfect freedom.

Timpe is also wrong in claiming that free creatures do not need to have internal and logical freedom once they have freely developed their moral character. I agree that we do not need to have internal and logical freedom in the heavenly stage because the good of continued moral development in the heavenly stage is not connected to significant freedom. The good of continued moral development in the heavenly stage might be considered a separate good that strongly motivates continued internal freedom as a necessary good for the heavenly stage. Thus, even if it is possible to have continued moral development in the heavenly stage, it is still impossible for us to perform any evil action in that stage. However, the good of continued moral development in the earthly stage is connected to significant freedom because, in that stage, free creatures who have a limited and imperfect nature and freedom are supposed to develop their characters by performing significantly free actions to be closer to the image of God. In order to be considered free and morally responsible, it should always be possible for these imperfect creatures to have external, internal, and logical freedom with respect to their actions on the earthly stage. But this indeed does not mean that their moral characters

formed by their previous free choices have no influence on their moral choices. Rather, the FWD (or at least, as I consider it, Plantinga's version of the FWD) entails that the main goal of character formation and development is to become sufficiently morally virtuous that making a morally wrong choice or action will be highly improbable or almost impossible (but not impossible). This suggests that human beings are logically free, but when they form a morally virtuous character, the principle of alternative possibilities with regard to morally wrong actions gets weaker. If that is right, then human beings with virtuous moral character get closer to the image of God even if they are internally and logically free.

Further, as Plantinga points out, human freedom should not be confused with unpredictability or chance. An agent might be able to predict that he will perform an action A or refrain from performing it under certain set of conditions, but this does not mean that he is not free with respect to A.[34] His moral and rational character can limit alternatives by influencing him to think that there are no good reasons to choose morally wrong alternatives to act. His character, thus, can make the probability of performing some morally wrong actions almost impossible (say, 0.0001). However, as a being with imperfect motivations, desires, and intentions, he cannot develop to the point where this probability becomes strictly zero.[35] If the agent's character makes an alternative choice impossible, then he is not significantly free with respect to that choice or action. Once we have freely formed an independent and morally virtuous character, our character will strongly form our motivations. It will strengthen our good motivations and weaken our bad ones. Since, as beings who do not have perfect nature and freedom, we cannot have only good motivations in the earthly stage, after having a morally virtuous character, it is still possible for us to have some weak and bad desires or external reasons

[34] Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, 29-30.

[35] Nevertheless, I do not claim that God cannot make this probability impossible for us. After deserving to be much closer to the image of God, He can prevent us from doing evil whenever we have a bad inclination or intention. I think we can have such a divine interference *in general* only in the heavenly stage but not in the earthly stage because if we are significantly free beings and if it is true that we have an imperfect nature and character, then it must be always possible for us to reject God's mercy and friendship until our death. This must be true even if we have independent and morally virtuous character. So, unlike God, the inability to choose or perform morally wrong actions is not intrinsic to our nature and character.

that influence our good motivations and thus our actions. Therefore, if I am right, the thing that makes significantly free beings (but not innocent automata) close to the image of God is not the lack of internal or logical freedom but instead their very presence.

4. Returning to Plantinga's Ontological Argument

I have argued that given God's perfect nature and our imperfect nature, it is implausible to hold a unified account that can be applied to both God and human beings in every sense. I have noted that though human beings need external, internal, and logical freedom in order to be considered free with respect to an action, God needs only external freedom in a strong sense and internal and logical freedom in a weak sense. And I have also claimed that, given our imperfect nature and psychological states, it would not be possible for us to freely develop our moral character without external, internal, and logical freedom. After considering these arguments, let's now turn to Plantinga's ontological argument (the OA). As we can recall, Morriston argues that a theist cannot consistently give the OA if he accepts the FWD, and *vice versa*. So, he believes that given the combination of the OA and the FWD: (i) God cannot be significantly free because it is impossible for Him to commit a morally wrong action in any possible world, and (ii) God is not morally good and perfect because moral goodness presupposes significant freedom. Therefore, he suggests that the theist should revise either the FWD or the OA.

Given my arguments on the difference between God's freedom and creaturely freedom, I believe the theist does not need to revise either. He only needs to show that God does not need to have significant freedom to possess moral perfection in every possible world. Morriston is right that the theistic God cannot be significantly free, but he is wrong that moral goodness in the divine case requires significant freedom. What moral goodness in the divine case requires is that (a) God is the ultimate source of His intentions and actions, and (b) God is internally and logically free in the sense that only morally good options (we can add *rationally* and *aesthetically* good ones as well) are open to Him. If that is right, the theistic God is perfectly good and free. Plantinga's (27) and (28) are then safeguarded.

Conclusion

I argued that Morriston's objection that Plantinga's ontological argument and defense of free will raise a divine moral perfection problem is incorrect. I showed that there are good reasons to believe that Plantinga provides his conception of significant freedom -the freedom to choose between morally right and wrong actions- only for creatures but not for God. I also emphasized that since we cannot treat God's freedom in the same way that we treat creaturely freedom, it is not plausible to suppose that God's moral perfection needs significant freedom. Therefore, I conclude that a theist can rightly hold both Plantinga's ontological argument and free will defense.[36]

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OBJECTIONS TO SAM HARRIS' CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

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Abstract

Some thinkers of the modern period have reached the general opinion that the social appearance and social dynamics of religion have increased, and therefore, religion is on the rise. However, the historical and theological tensions between religions that sometimes lead to conflicts and the increase in disagreements between various sects of the same religion have led to an increase in criticism of religion as a whole in certain circles. Sam Harris is one of the important representatives of the new atheism, which is among the schools of thought that make these criticisms. In this study, I will discuss Harris' criticism of religion in which he argues that religious belief has many harmful and negative aspects. Therefore, he defends the view that it is necessary to fight against religion and to completely remove the

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phenomenon of religion from people's lives. This and other of Harris' basic claims, grounds, evidence, and views on the subject will be discussed, the persuasiveness and philosophical value of his basic approach will be examined through comparisons with rational and philosophical evaluations, and prominent dilemmas, if any, will be identified. The consistency of Harris' criticism of religious beliefs and the accuracy of these criticisms constitute the problematic of the study. The aim of this study is to examine the author's views through criticism, consider comparisons of this subject, and create a synthesis based on different approaches to the subject. To present this synthesis, the basic framework of this study is an examination of his *The End of Faith: The Separation of Religion and Reason*, *Morality without God: A Guide for Spirituality without Religion*, and *The Harms of Religion: Conflicting Truth Claims of Religions*.

Keywords: Philosophy of religion, religion, God, new atheism, Sam Harris

Introduction

An atheist school called the new atheism (scientific atheism/militant atheism),[1] which is against God, religion, and all values of religion, has emerged in the 21st century. This school was shaped by the claims of Richard Dawkins' (b.1941) thesis of "The God Delusion",[2] Sam Harriss' (b. 1967) idea that "believing without proof is worthless and dangerous", Daniel C. Dennett's (b. 1942) "understanding of the need to break the magic of taboos", Christopher Hitchens' (d. 2011) argument that "religion is dangerous and harmful", and Victor J. Stenger's (d. 2014) suggestion that "science has proven the non-existence of God".[3] The new atheism is based on approaches that defend atheism as a way of life, wage war against the belief in God, generalize anti-religion, or reduce religious feelings and tendencies to psychological, sociological, and anthropological phenomena that are

1 Barbara Bradley Hagerty, "A Bitter Rift Divides Atheists", *NPR* (October 19, 2009).

2 Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press, 2006).

3 Victor J. Stenger, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009), 41; Kemal Batak, *Naturalizm Çıkmazı: Dennett'ten Dawkins'e Yeni Ateizm'in Felsefi Temelleri ve Teistik Eleştirisi* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011), 16; Mehmet Şükrü Özkan, *Rasyonel Teoloji Yeni Ateizm ve Tanrı: Tanrı'nın Varlığı veya Yokluğu Kanıtlanabilir mi?* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2019), 15.

fed by approaches that deny the existence of God and mock believers, metaphysical elements, religious-based morality, and moral values. The new atheism is explained as a belief system that claims that reason and science are the only reference sources.[4] According to this argument, believing anything that cannot be proven is absurd, the existence of any God is a complete fallacy, religion and religious people are enemies that must be destroyed, and belief in God, religion, and religious people is the source of evil on earth. The reason for these ideas is that all these harm human beings and cast a shadow on the illuminating power of science. Therefore, according to this belief, the only legitimate information we can trust is scientific information.[5]

The point emphasized in the new atheism is that it is necessary to rely on the power of scientific knowledge that is obtained objectively from the field of science and data and to stay away from all kinds of religious and metaphysical arguments by developing a belief in science. Therefore, it is stated within the framework of this approach that rational justification should be presented in relation to scientific methods rather than philosophical methods regarding God or a religious belief.[6] Therefore, the new atheism, which is based on scientific knowledge, assigns an ideological position to science and, in this case, claims that everything, including God and religion, should be examined scientifically.[7]

The new atheists are intensely critical of belief in God and religion, claiming that the only logical view of our time is atheism. Their approach, which constitutes the general framework of the new atheism, is as follows: According to Stenger, one of the leading advocates of the new atheism, science has proven that God does not

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4 Alan G. Nixon, *New Atheism as a Case of Competitive Postsecular Worldviews* (Sydney: The University of Western Sydney, School of Social Sciences and Psychology, Ph.D. Diss., 2014), 1-4; Fatma Aygün, "Ateizme Yol Açan Faktörlerden Biri Olarak Fanatizm ve Dışlayıcılık", *İslâm Düşüncesinde Ateizm Eleştirisi*, ed. Cemalettin Erdemci et al. (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2019), 67-95, 72-73.

5 Stenger, *The New Atheism*, 16-19; Andrew Johnson, "An Apology for the New Atheism", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1/73 (2013), 5-28; Mehmet Şükrü Özkan, "Yeni Ateizmde Din", *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 7/89 (March 2019), 130-131.

6 Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2008), 18; Özkan, "Yeni Ateizmde Din Eleştirisi", 131.

7 Alper Bilgili, *Bilim Ne Değildir? Yeni-Ateist Bilim Anlayışının Felsefi ve Sosyolojik Analizi* (İstanbul: Doğu Kitabevi, 2018), 19.

exist. According to Hitchens, religion harms everything. Dennett believes it is necessary to eliminate the magic of taboos. Dawkins says, "Belief in God is a mere delusion", and according to Harris, religion is the source of all evil.[8] In this study, in contrast to the aforementioned approaches, we will discuss Harris' criticisms and the views he proposes in discussions on the axis of religion.

Samuel Benjamin Harris,[9] the American author, thinker, neuroscientist, and podcast speaker, has produced studies on many subjects, such as religion, God, morality, reason, free will, philosophy of mind, psychedelics,[10] politics, terrorism, artificial intelligence, and politics, but his views on religion have come to the fore.[11] Known for his radical criticisms of Islam in particular, the following statements by Harris in his study titled "Getting Stuck in a Religious War", published in The Washington Times, summarize his views on the subject:

> It is time to admit that we are not fighting terrorism. We are at war with Islam. This does not mean that we are at war with all Muslims, but we are definitely at war with the way of life commanded in the Qurʾān to all Muslims. Muslim fundamentalism is a threat only because the origins of Islam are a threat to us. Every American should see the Qurʾān ruthlessly defame and marginalize non-Muslims. The idea that Islam is a peaceful religion taken over by extremists is a dangerous fantasy.[12]

In this study, I will investigate how the new atheists base their claims on belief in God and religion in the context of Harris' approach, which draws attention to the inevitable imperative to fight against religion in general and Islam in particular, and critically interpret the opposing arguments they propose in the relationship between religion

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8 Stenger, *The New Atheism*, 41.

9 *Dbpedia*, "About: Sam Harris" (January 25, 2022).

10 Psychedelics are powerful psychoactive substances that directly affect perception, mood, and cognitive processing. Substances such as MDMA and LSD are examples of psychedelic substances. See David E. Nichols, "Psychedelics", *Pharmacological Reviews* 68/2 (February 2016), 264-356.

11 Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004); id., *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality without Religion* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2014); id., *Islam and the Future of Tolerance - A Dialogue Sam Harris Maajid Nawaz* (London: Harvard University Press, 2015); id., *Lying*, ed. Annaka Harris (London: Four Elephants Press, 2013).

12 Phil Torres, "Sam Harris and Donald Trump: They're Completely Different… Yet Very Much Alike", *Salon* (26 January 2022); Sam Harris, "Mired in a Religious War", *The Washington Times* (26 January 2022); id., "Bombing Our Illusions", *Huffpost* (26 January 2022).

and morality. I will also investigate the logical consistency of the proposed arguments to reveal the philosophical and theological value of the arguments referenced in their criticism of religion and to determine how the new atheism school perceives religion through Harris' views and whether its criticisms are justified and appropriate. In this context, it has been concluded that religion and science are incompatible, religion is harmful and dangerous, religion and religious beliefs are worthless, and a moral theory independent of religion and God can be developed, and these have been evaluated in relevant places.

1. The End of Faith: The Separation of Religion and Reason

The new school of atheism is one of the schools that works against religion. The new atheists start their studies with the claim that belief in God, which is the fundamental basis of religion, is dangerous and harmful. They state that religious belief is a poison and that this poison causes evil to people,[13] and they express the views that "This world could be the best of all possible worlds, if there was no religion in it"[14] and "Religion is bad! We can live in peace when religion is expelled from the world."[15] On the other hand are Harris' equation of the religion of Islam with terrorism, Dawkins' statement that even the moderate side of religion cannot be tolerated, and his view of Islam as the root of evil and identification of it with violence despite never having read the Qur'ān. Dennett likens religion to a lion, and his idea that "religion should also be caged" constitutes the basic logic of new atheists' view of religion.[16] In this context, after 2004, a number of related books that complemented each other were discussed. The common point of these books is to equate God and religious belief, moral values, and human sensitivity with nonreligious, anti-human, and immoral behaviors arising from apparently religious individuals or communities. The first of the books that holds an important place in the birth of this understanding and the new atheism is Harris' *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason.* In this work, Harris

[13] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 67.
[14] Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 43.
[15] Alister E. McGrath - Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (Illinois: IVP Books, 2007), 91-92.
[16] Bilgili, *Bilim Ne Değildir?*, 39-40.

emphasizes that all religions in the world produce all evil and destruction, such as religious wars, child abuse, rape, torture, murder, and genocide. According to him, religion and religious belief do not give or add anything to humans.[17]

After Harris, Dawkins wrote *The God Delusion* in 2006. In this work, Dawkins conveyed his thoughts in a way that reflects the basic features of the new atheism, such as the origin of religion, its negative effects, religions' perception of God, belief in any divine being, and all kinds of supernatural explanations. He expressed his thoughts in a wide range, from evidence in favor of the existence of God to evidence of his absence.[18]

After Dawkins, Dennett wrote *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* in 2006. In this work, a proposal is presented to break the magic of religion, which is a spell that impresses people. At the heart of this proposal lies the idea of breaking the magic by virtually declaring war on religion that influences all believers.[19]

Immediately after Dennett, C. Hitchens wrote *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* in 2007. In this work, Hitchens takes an aggressive attitude toward God and religion, sees God as a mistake, and states that religion causes all evils and is responsible for the ongoing wars, massacres, genocides, and tortures throughout human history.[20]

We can clearly see that in the new atheism, religion is identified with evil, torture, terror, violence, immorality, and war. The origin of this understanding is the effort to show religion as a discriminating feature that may cause belief problems or gaps. In Harris' view, belief is expressed as an understanding that is "not justified in any way in terms of propositions that promise the existence of a functional system that protects human life from the destructive influence of time and death".[21] In addition, religion involves "believe[ing] in certain historical

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17 Harris, *The End of Faith*; See Amir D. Aczel, *Why Science Does Not Disprove God* (New York: Harper Collins, 2014), 10-30; Metin Yasa, *Varoluşsal İnanç Sorunları* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2018), 84.

18 Dawkins, *The God Delusion*.

19 Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking The Spell: Religion as a Naturel Phenomenon* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

20 Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Toronto: Warner Books, 2007).

21 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 65.

and supernatural propositions and living accordingly".[22] Belief is expressed as the act of knowing without evidence. It is pointed out that religion is not rational, that the claims of religion are incompatible with science, and that religions are dangerous and harmful to humanity. Furthermore, it is emphasized that belief in God and all religious belief propositions have no basis. It is unreasonable to believe in something, i.e., religion, that cannot be proved in everyday life or by scientific observations. As beliefs about the world, religious beliefs need to be as evidence-based like any other belief. Insofar as religious propositions claim to provide information about the real state of the world, they must be linked to the world and other beliefs about it. For example, propositions such as "God hears prayers" and "bad consequences occur when God's name is used in bad deeds" influence the thinking and behavior that follow them. As long as a person accepts that his or her beliefs represent the true state of the world, that person must also believe that his or her beliefs are a result of the state of the world. In this case, the person in question becomes open to new evidence. If there were no rational changes in the world that would cause a person to question his or her religious beliefs, it would be proof that that person formed those beliefs without considering any situation in the world.[23]

According to Harris, areas that cannot be examined by observation and experimentation cannot be considered a value. Harris suggests that religious beliefs and values cannot be considered within the field of value because they cannot be justified. He believes that the understanding of strict rationality comes into play at this point. That is, for a religious belief to be considered rational, the correctness of the belief system can be accepted. According to him, religious belief systems cannot achieve this because there is no region in the human brain devoted to religious belief.[24]

There are wars or conflicts between Jews and Muslims in Palestine, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats or Orthodox Serbs and Bosnians and Albanian Muslims in the Balkans, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, Orthodox Russians and Chechen Muslims in the

[22] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 65.
[23] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 63-65
[24] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 65.

Caucasus and Muslim Azeris and Catholic and Orthodox Armenians. In these places, religion has been the direct cause of death for millions of people in recent years. If people are presented with different, incompatible, and untestable concepts of what happens after death and then forced to live with limited resources, the situation described here arises. In other words, an endless cycle of massacres, wars, and ceasefires occurs. If, according to Harris, there is any truth that history has revealed, it is that when we ignore what the evidence says, we become worse people than we normally are. When weapons of mass destruction are added to this systemic setup, it is a recipe for the destruction of civilization. One of the best examples of this is the death of more than a million people in the religious wars that took place during the separation of India and Pakistan. The main disagreement between the two countries is the adoption of illogical myths. In other words, the basic mentality in these countries, which are trying to destroy each other with nuclear weapons, is that they are so agitated that they can put their lives on the line without any evidence. The basis of this agitation is differences in belief. Islam and Hindu beliefs cannot coexist peacefully. On the other hand, the most motivating thing for the people who follow these religions is their thoughts about the afterlife or their vision of Paradise. These thoughts obscure the murder of mothers in front of their children during the war, the robbery, rape and burning of women, the cutting of the belly of a pregnant woman and lifting of her baby into the air on the tip of a sword because these thoughts are not based on any evidence.[25]

Harris draws attention to the link between belief and action and considers this very dangerous because of the effect of religious belief that motivates believers. According to him, religious beliefs make believers obsessive, so they are not open to criticism and peaceful negotiations. Harris is right both in this approach and in his determination that the wars that have broken out due to differences in belief and the destruction they caused should be criticized. However, the link between belief and behavior adds significantly to the seriousness of the matter. He believes that some propositions can be so dangerous that they even kill people who believe them because they believe them to be ethically correct. In fact, there is no way to talk

[25] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 25-29.

to some people. Again, according to Harris, such people should be detained; otherwise, their killing in self-defense by people who are perfectly tolerant under normal circumstances may be justified. Although Harris' thoughts are not consistent within themselves, they are much more dangerous than the religious beliefs that he contends are dangerous. He justifies the military and political approaches of the United States and some European states toward the Middle East and Afghanistan on the grounds in question. According to him, these states are kind, tolerant, and respectful of all countries in the world, so they have to enter countries they deem dangerous in the name of global peace, even if it comes at a heavy cost to both their own citizens and the citizens of those countries.[26] This approach is a kind of explanation of Harris' war against religion. If he had studied religions in detail, as befits a philosopher and a scientist, he would not see religion itself as harmful or dangerous because of those who commit crimes in the name of any religion. However, even if it is possible to agree with the criticism that there are setbacks in the historical process within the changing theological structure in some religions,[27] we can say that the problem is not in the religion itself. However, Harris' comment shows that he is not objective in his approach to religion and tries to produce ideas with generalized judgments.

Among the main drawbacks of religion, for Harris, are absolutism and bigotry. According to him, nothing a Christian or a Muslim might say to one another makes their faith open to mutual discussion because the basic principles of their faith prevent them from converting. Therefore, they have turned their backs on rationality by believing without proof. It is the nature of religions to forbid believers from questioning.[28]

According to Harris, as Dawkins points out,[29] another main drawback of religion is discrimination based on gender and the backlash against differences in sexual orientation. The view of women in Islam is an example of this. For example, more than two hundred people died in an incident in Nigeria at the 2002 Miss World Pageant

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26 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 25-29, 52.

27 In this regard, see Aynur Çınar, "Tarihte Kaybolmuş Bir Medeniyet: Etrüskler ve Etrüsk Dini", *Belleten* 84/299 (April 2020), 51-61.

28 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 44.

29 Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 286-291.

due to women's clothing. In the same year, adolescent girls trapped in a burning building in Mecca were not saved in time because of their clothing; fifteen girls were killed, and fifty girls were injured.[30] Harris points out the drawbacks of religions: they cause wars; absolutism and bigotry dominate in religion; and religions create gender differences and cause the mental, physical, and sexual abuse of children. These comments suggest that religion is an objectionable structure in many ways, including sociological, philosophical, moral, and environmental aspects. However, there are also claims that the wars that have been experienced in almost every period since the existence of humanity arise only from religions and that all religious people act according to the principles ordered by religion throughout their lives. The fiction that is proposed by expressing it as a religious phenomenon and basing the abuse of children and women, which is seen even in the most civilized societies, on religion can be described as a simple anecdote rather than a philosophical and convincing basis. Of course, the influence of religion on society cannot be denied. It would not be an objective assessment to make a prediction or reach a decision without a detailed examination of how this effect is shaped in society. For example, while it is possible to abuse part of society through the abuse of religion, the beneficial effect of religion can be manifested in social integrity, togetherness, and ethical consistency. Therefore, Harris and the new atheists, who struggle to see religion as a system shaped by certain stereotypical behaviors or negative attitudes in human actions, have such a shallow perspective that they cannot explain their beliefs and belief states philosophically. Therefore, regarding religions and religious people, Harris says, "People who use their logic do not agree on everything, of course, but people who do not use their logic will definitely split up according to their dogma."[31] Even if he is right in these criticisms, his thoughts, which consist of biased and incomplete information about religion that is not based on the principles of logic and philosophical grounds, are neither philosophically consistent, sociologically convincing, nor scientifically provable since sociological research has not been conducted in the context of the subject and lacks scientific data and bases. Therefore, his determinations about religion will not serve to obtain an accurate and

[30] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 44-45.
[31] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 48.

precise result, because of their position they cannot be told that the idea of faith can only be explained scientifically as they try to understand it.[32] Based on the belief-faith issue, Harris states that belief in God and all religious belief propositions are not justified and that faith, which essentially includes the feeling of trust, is the next step of belief that is free from the factors of plausibility, internal consistency, kindness, and impartiality.[33] The point he emphasizes is that believing something that cannot be proved in daily life or by scientific findings is equivalent to ignorance. However, believing or not believing is a matter of choice, and after making this choice, the stage of rational inquiry begins. In fact, as Harris points out, it is not entirely up to the individual to believe or to determine which belief he or she will hold. However, it is possible to escape the current state of belief or disbelief with certain investigations. It is possible to realize this situation, but the objectivity of the justification of belief is a utopian discourse. Therefore, Harris emphasizes that a rational attitude toward belief is important and valuable. In his view, the moral system that should be defended together with the value and role of reason is also extremely important.

2. Morality without God: A Guide to Religionless Spirituality

Religion has been an important source of morality for centuries.[34] Christians, Muslims, and members of other religions have taken religious sources as the basis, although they are inspired by philosophical tradition to create a moral system for the individual, family, society, and the whole universe. However, during the Enlightenment, when empirical science based on the human mind began to dominate instead of metaphysical elements, the idea that science was the determinant of the moral values of religion became widespread. In the following centuries, the necessity of religion for human morality was questioned. Naturalist and evolutionary moral theories emerged because of this inquiry. Most of these theories typically adopted moral relativism, which denies the existence of

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[32] Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism*, 20; Aliye Çınar, *Tanrı Yanılgısı Üzerine: İnanmak ya da İnanmamak* (İstanbul: Profil Yayıncılık, 2009), 174; Özkan, "Criticism of Religion in the New Atheism", 139.

[33] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 65.

[34] Recep Kılıç, *Ahlakın Dinî Temeli* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2016), 81-114.

objective moral values and responsibilities.[35] In this respect, Harris also takes a moral view. Harris' moral understanding, which he calls a moral landscape, is based on the fact that science is the basis of morality and objective moral values; therefore, morality does not need religion.[36] He makes the following basic claims in this regard: "Meaning, values, morality, and the good life must be related to facts about the well-being of conscious beings and must be legally bound up with events in the world and states of the human brain. Rational, genuine inquiry has always been a source of genuine insight into such processes. If belief is true about anything, it is true by chance."[37]

Harris emphasizes that science cannot be in the background of moral issues. It challenges the understanding that moral truths cannot be found in the realities of the natural world and suggests a way forward. The way he proposes is to see what science can do. According to him, science, in principle, helps humans determine what they should and should not do. For example, just as questions have right and wrong answers in physics, moral questions also have right and wrong answers. In this respect, there should be a science of ethics.[38] Harris claims that moral questions have objective answers and that sciences such as neurology can help answer them while criticizing those who adhere to moral relativism or who think that religion should answer moral questions. According to Harris, morality is about maximizing the happiness of conscious beings. There are natural facts involving brain states in conscious experience that maximize well-being. These facts can be determined by science. Therefore, the determinant of morality itself is science. In this case, religion becomes redundant, and the traditional distinction between fact (what is) and value (what should be) is just an illusion. Based on the functional neuroimaging system, Harris argues that beliefs about facts (e.g., the sun is a star) and beliefs about values (e.g., persecution is false)

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35 Enoch Charles, "Sam Harris's Science of Morality: A Philosophical, Historiographical, and Theological Critique", *Researchgate* (February 2, 2022).

36 For detailed information, see Sam Harris, *The Moral Landscape How Science Can Determine Human Values* (New York, Free Press, 2010); Nathan W. Johnson, *Conveying Controversial Science: Sam Harris's* The Moral Landscape *and Popular Science Communication* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, Ph.D. Diss., 2013), 1-44.

37 Harris, *The Moral Landscape*, 6.

38 Harris, *The Moral Landscape,* 28.

originate from similar brain processes. The Christian philosopher William Lane Craig (b. 1949) argued that they are not the same. According to him, the origin of a belief should not be confused with the content of the belief. The emergence of two different beliefs from similar brain processes does not mean they have the same meaning or information content. Whatever their origins, beliefs about what the situation is and what should (or should not) be are not the same. One belief may be true, and another may be false. For this reason, Harris' view lacks the basis for objective moral responsibility. In fact, Harris' observations on the brain "do not identify facts and values any more than a brain scan that lights up the same way during addition and multiplication."[39]

At this point, some questions come to mind that should be directed to Harris. For example, can morality be interpreted as maximizing happiness? Is it ethical to aim for pure happiness at the highest level? Is a world where happiness/well-being is maximized a good world? What should be said about the basic values such as justice, kindness, compassion, human dignity, honor, and dignity, which should be observed and protected even if sometimes at the expense of maximizing the level in question? To answer these questions, reference can be made to Aristotle's (d. 322 BC) thoughts on happiness. According to him, happiness is the most valuable and basic goal of humans.[40] Aristotle believed that being virtuous requires exhibiting behaviors in accordance with virtue; happiness is virtue itself, and therefore, it is the most valuable goal for humans. All behaviors should aim to be in the middle between excess and understatement. This opens the door to happiness. For this reason, a person should find the middle way and strive to reach the goal in question.[41]

In fact, societies pay a great price to preserve and rebuild these values at the expense of human happiness or well-being. For this reason, Harris' comment on morality contains a nature devoid of philosophical and sociological foundations and explanations. In this regard, the philosophers Russell Blackford (b. 1954) and Craig criticize Harris' morality. According to them, the impact of science on human

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39 Charles, "Sam Harris's Science of Morality", 1-6.

40 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 12.

41 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 20.

development is not new. For this reason, Harris' claims are characterized as wordplay and juggling.[42] In addition, with regard to Harris' morality, the objective distinction between the good life and the bad life, guided by science and asserted at the highest level of goodness, is also criticized.[43] Craig says, "Harris' distinction is not morally equivalent to a good life and a bad life". For him, Harris' concept of a good and a bad life is rather a distinction between a happy (pleasure) life and a painful (misery) life. Harris did not make an explicit connection between moral worth (right/wrong) and moods (stimulation/misery). This critique shows that natural facts and brain states alone cannot help to distinguish the moral quality of a good life and a bad life. Harris' understanding of the good and bad life differs mainly at the level of suffering but not necessarily on the basis of moral value or quality.[44]

Harris also opens the door to an evolutionary view of morality. He says that the common notion that religion is the source of our deepest moral intuitions is absurd. For example, vices such as cruelty are not learned only from the Bible. Anyone who does not have the simple idea that cruelty is wrong is unlikely to learn it by reading. Therefore, the precursors of moral actions must be found in the natural world. According to him, the fact that the origin of moral actions is biological reveals that the effort to base morality on religious concepts such as moral duty is wrong. For example, saving a drowning child is no more a moral task than understanding comparison is a logical task. In this respect, it can be said that religious ideas do not need to lead people to live moral lives because religion is a constraint of moral identity. In addition, religions cannot produce more satisfying answers to morality than science. Biological realities are not suitable for a designer God and for the explanation of moral principles proposed because of God. In this respect, explanations of evolution are more logical than moral principles presented within the framework of belief in God. According to Harris, the negativities in the world brought about by a just, benevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent God are more complex than

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42 Craig Hovey, *What Makes Us Moral? Science, Religion and the Shaping of the Moral Landscape: A Christian Response to Sam Harris* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 43; Charles, "Sam Harris's Science of Morality", 6.

43 Harris, *The Moral Landscape*, 8.

44 Charles, "Sam Harris's Science of Morality", 6-7.

the explanations in evolutionary theory.[45] He explains this in his own words:

> The grumpy miracle of evolution is this: "those mechanisms that create the incredible beauty and diversity of the living world guarantee brutality and death". Children born without limbs, blind flies, endangered species, all this is the product of Mother Nature's way of kneading the soil. No perfect God can sustain such inconsistencies. If God created the world and everything in it, it is helpful to remember that he also created smallpox, plague, and worms. Any man who deliberately instilled such fears into the earth would be rotting in prison for his crimes.[46]

Harris says that religion is winged ignorance.[47] According to him, religion produces moral principles based on the selfish wishes and desires of people. For example, a person desires to be more loving and compassionate for selfish reasons.[48] Religion takes it upon itself. However, with reference to Dawkins, Harris points out that this is not so. For example, societies that carry related genes must cooperate to maintain the existence of their own genes. In other words, it can be said that every individual is selfish, that there is no such thing as goodness, and that selfish thoughts underlie behaviors that are qualified as good. According to Dawkins, there are four basic Darwinian reasons why individuals are generous and moral toward each other. The first of these is kinship relationships. The second is to do good with the expectation of return. The third is the fame that will result from good deeds done. The fourth is the benefits that will be brought to the individual by the state of superior courage revealed in the field of morality.[49] These views open the door to the evolutionary moral view.

Harris' evolutionary view of morality is shaped around the theory of morality without God. His godless moral theory states that the existence of a just, all-creating, and omnipotent God is incompatible

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45 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 170-171.
46 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 170.
47 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 175.
48 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 191.
49 Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 220-221; Saim Gündoğan, "Richard Dawkins'in Tanrı'nın Varlığına Yönelik Eleştirisinin Çıkmazları (The Deadlocks of Richard Dawkins's Critique of God's Existence)", *İhya Uluslararası İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi (İhya International Journal of Islamic Studies)*, 8/2 (Autumn 2022): 840.

with the evils in the universe. The existence of an absolute, eternally transcendent God is not in question; therefore, it is not possible for him to intervene in the events that take place in the universe over time. This is based on arguments that morality is not accepted as based on religion. Although Harris' approach is similar to Walter Sinnott Armstrong's (b. 1955) godless moral theory,[50] there is great substance and value in reinterpreting concepts such as spirituality in grounding these ideas.

Harris received a negative reaction from the atheist community for using the concept of spirituality but continued to use this concept. What Harris means by spirituality is continuously breaking through the illusion of self with the deepening of understanding that allows for a clearer understanding of the way things are from both a scientific and a philosophical point of view.[51] In this respect, according to him, the deepest aim of spirituality is to be free from the illusion of the self, and to seek freedom as a future state that must be achieved through effort is to strengthen the chains of one's ever-present apparent bondage.[52] Discussing classical spiritual phenomena, concepts, and practices in the context of the modern understanding of the human mind, Harris states unequivocally that nothing needs to be affirmed by faith because its core arguments are observable and scientific in a way that can be experienced by all followers.[53] His main arguments about spirituality can be expressed as follows: spirituality should be strictly separated from religion. Spirituality, like morality, is based on science. Religion is not obligatory for spirituality. Traditional self-perception is an illusion. The most useful thing for spirituality is meditation. Harris proposed these theses about spirituality as a result of the narcotic substance use he experienced in his youth. According to him, St. Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, scholars and mystics in history all experienced a kind of spiritual depth as he did. Therefore, they were not epileptic, schizophrenic, or dishonest because of their spiritual experiences. Even if the religious beliefs or religions they advocated are intellectual

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50 Walter Sinnott Armstrong, *Morality Without God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Mehmet Evkuran, "Yeni Ateist Akımın Din Eleştirisi Üzerine", *Dini Araştırmalar ve Küresel Bakış* (Konya: Türkiye İmam Hatipliler Vakfı Yayınları, 2016), 1/311-329.

51 Harris, *Waking Up*, 9.

52 Harris, *Waking Up*, 123-124.

53 Harris, *Waking Up*, 6-8.

ruins, the spiritual depths they experienced are psychological realities. Therefore, according to him, since the secular world and science cannot explain this deep spiritual state that people experience, it is necessary to warn people about this issue.[54] For this, one must discover the facts oneself without accepting the contemplative understandings[55] and metaphysical ideas created by the people of the past.[56]

Harris believes that the most plausible method for the aforementioned discovery is meditation, which he defines as follows: "Meditation is the practice of finding this freedom directly, by ending self-identification with thoughts, and allowing the duration of pleasant and unpleasant experience to be as it is."[57] With this definition, Harris states that he took meditation and its techniques, which he refers to as a method of developing scientific spirituality, from Buddhism. According to him, Buddhism is scientific because it is essentially an empirical religion that does not depend on creeds and contains logical discourses about the nature of mind. In this respect, Buddhism, which is in a more advantageous position compared to other religions, is instrumental in that the meditation technique is a scientific situation. Meditation is a healthy focusing and awakening method that can be applied without losing any of its functions, even if it is cleansed of religious elements. The point that Harris tries to emphasize by *awakening* is that it takes place at the conscious level by getting rid of the self that corresponds to the name of Buddha, which means the awakened one.[58] The goal of meditation is "to reach a state of well-being that is not impaired or is easily regained even if it is broken"[59], i.e., to reveal a kind of well-being that is inherent in the mind from the very beginning. That is why temporary experiences must be accessible in the context of ordinary sights, sounds, sensations, and even thoughts. According to Harris, peak experiences are beautiful, but true freedom must coincide with the normal life in which we are awake.[60]

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54 Harris, *Waking Up*, 5-9.

55 Contemplation (inner gaze) is a term used in the sense of focusing on one's own self, completely isolating oneself from the outside world and diving into deep contemplation. Namık Çankı, *Büyük Felsefe Lügatı* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1954), 1/166.

56 Harris, *Waking Up*, 33.

57 Harris, *Waking Up*, 140.

58 Harris, *Waking Up*, 29-32.

59 Harris, *Waking Up*, 44-45.

60 Harris, *Waking Up*, 123-124.

Based on Harris' meditation, he is justified in his approach in the context of spiritual seekers' failure to fully accept their present situation and that all efforts are destined to fail because the urge to seek the experience of transcending oneself or any other mystical experience is rejected. Meditation, which is free from metaphysical elements, will open the door to a scientific spirituality and continued searching.

Up to this point, I have briefly mentioned Harris' views on morality. I have attempted to question the accuracy and the philosophical and theological justification of the claims put forward in the context of these views within the scope of the study. The views in question consist of the rejection of relative moral theories, taking a stand against all kinds of beliefs and religious beliefs, science as the basis of morality, and the necessity of understanding and internalizing spirituality and meditation in their modern sense. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on a science of ethics. This depends on removing religion from the field of morality by making science the ultimate arbiter of moral values. The moral theory that emerges as an outcome of these and other of Harris' claims is philosophically and theologically unsuccessful. A philosophy-based moral system that focuses on a moral formation or the moral vision of a divinely sourced religion seems more reasonable than the purely scientific-based moral value advocated by Harris. It is more systematic in itself, and it clearly protects objective moral values and responsibilities. This casts doubt on the persuasiveness of a godless moral understanding. For example, it seems possible to develop an interdisciplinary Islamic moral theology in light of contemporary developments in neurology, evolutionary biology, psychology, anthropology, phenomenology, and philosophy as well as the history of Islamic moral thought. On the other hand, the basic arguments and boundaries of a godless, religion-defying, and purely science-based morality remain too limited to be universal.

3. The Harms of Religion: Conflicting Claims of Truth by Religions

As clearly seen above, Harris stresses the need to destroy religions. In fact, since religion is a fabricated phenomenon, he believes that there must be a constant war against religion because religion is a harmful, destructive phenomenon for humanity. In this respect, Harris sees the problem of religious diversity as a fundamental problem and

claims that intolerance is dominant in the nature of religion. According to him, religion contains dogmatism, intolerance, absurdity, absoluteness, monism, and truth claims. Harris suggests that these qualities are barriers to any consultation that will curb religious conflict.[61]

Harris reinforces this approach with social examples and considers it taboo to criticize the religious approach in society. He states that believers engage in negative behaviors as required by their religion and that attitudes toward people who belong to other religions contain elements that threaten human life. He argues that all of these are caused by both extreme and moderate religious people because moderate religious people also have religious dogmas and have the potential to drag humankind into the abyss.[62] From this perspective, we can say that Harris is correct that there are some expressions that suggest an exclusivist attitude in the nature of every religion, but it would be unfair to ignore the fact that religions also include religious tolerance. Harris is biased here and puts religious exclusion and tolerance on the same level. In fact, according to Harris, the evils committed in the name of religion are not in the nature of religion but arise from human nature. So, it is not a logical explanation that the most effective way to restrain them is through religion.[63] However, it is difficult to say that the exclusivist understanding proposed in theory is realized in practice, as Harris understands it.

Harris believes that the most moderate religionists are committed to the requirements of pluralistic understanding. They argue that all beliefs are equally valid, but in doing so, they ignore each religion's incurable demand to monopolize truth. For example, it is not possible for a Christian to respect the beliefs of others as long as he or she thinks that only his or her baptized brothers and sisters are saved on the Day of Judgment. After all, the Christian knows that the fire of Hell itself is fueled by these ideas and that even now, it awaits its defenders. Jews and Muslims generally adopt the same approach to their own religions

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61 Thomas Zenk, *New Atheism*, ed. S. Bullivant - M. Ruse (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 773-774.

62 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 13-14.

63 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 14-15.

and have emphasized the mistakes of other religions for thousands of years.[64]

The moderate religion approach presented by Harris is not rooted in religion itself but rather is a result of the postmodern era. Based on the strictly exclusivist expressions in the holy books, he claims that people in contemporary societies gave up reading these books because of their skeptical attitudes toward religion. Harris says that moderate religious people ignore the attitudes of fundamentalists and act with logic. According to Harris, moderates say that fundamentalists are individuals who betray both their faith and reason. The problem here lies in the meaning that Harris ascribes to the notion of moderate. What Harris wants to understand as a moderate religious person is "a person who has become alienated from his faith, who questions religious truths or who completely breaks away from religion." However, the existence of religious people who seem strict and who think that violence and all kinds of actions that harm human life are not the solution proves that the strict-moderate distinction is not applicable.[65]

Harris states that the positive aspects of religions should not indicate that religions are beneficial. He also argues that practices beneficial to humanity should be considered positive effects of people within the religious tradition. For example, while European Christians were enjoying an endlessly dark period, Islamic scholars found algebra, translated Ancient Greek works, and made important contributions to various sciences that were still new. All this was instrumental in planting the seeds of the Renaissance in Western Europe. According to Harris, in every religion, there have been activities that have positively affected human history, and some valuable things in the world have even been discovered by people of religious belief, but this does not mean that religious belief is good or beneficial. In other words, religion does not have a beneficial effect on the development of humanity, and the scientific and philosophical achievements of a person in a religious tradition originate from the person himself or herself. In addition, the contribution to the progress of humanity of a person who belongs to any religion and, therefore, the appearance that religious belief leaves a positive mark on civilization should be evaluated as an argument

[64] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 14-15.
[65] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 21-22.

against religious belief.[66] Harris faces a paradox here. On the one hand, he argues that negative actions and practices that do not provide any benefit to humanity are the product of religious belief rather than individuals. On the other hand, he states that even if every element that contributes to the development of humanity emerges under the influence of a religious person who has assimilated the religious tradition, it is necessary to make inferences against religion. This understanding, which Harris sees as the harms of religion, is nothing but a prejudice because in the ideas in question, *everything useful is the work of humans, and everything harmful is the work of religion.*

One of the useful qualities of religion is that it socializes people, and Harris accepts this as a historical fact. However, in the modern world, the integration of people from different societies due to economic, environmental, political, and medical needs is why there is no need for this characteristic of religion. Therefore, religion, like many things that were considered sacred in the past, does not need to carry the sacredness of the past to the present because Harris believes that the effects of religion on the new world are dangerous. Such dangers cannot be eliminated with the abovementioned factors in the contemporary world.[67] According to him, millions of people have lost their lives because of religion in recent years, which we can easily see in large and small wars waged in the name of religion. According to Harris, the main and real reason is irrational religious beliefs, even if the cause of conflicts and wars between societies of different religious beliefs is understood in political and economic contexts. In this respect, the harmfulness of religion is not a coincidence but a necessity due to its origins in faith.[68] For example, the conflict between India and Pakistan stems from the diplomatic incompetence of the two countries according to advocates of religious pluralism. In reality, however, the cause of conflict is irrational religious beliefs. Because of religious differences, millions of people died during the separation of India and Pakistan, and both countries had nuclear weapons. The only reason why India and Pakistan are different countries is that the Islamic and Hindu faiths cannot coexist peacefully.[69] We can say that Harris'

66 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 108-109.
67 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 23-25.
68 Zenk, *New Atheism*, 773.
69 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 25-29.

statements mentioned here bear some truth. For example, in the Islamic world, there are different groups that adhere to the same belief. There is constant conflict between these groups, which act as if they are the sole proprietors of religion and have the sole right to speak on behalf of God. Harris interprets this as the understanding between strict and moderate religious people who are not different from each other. Despite all of this, we cannot say that religion is harmful; therefore, it is necessary to take a stand against it. Instead, we can imagine that the problem is not in religion but in the understanding of religion, and we can try to solve the problem. In other words, for Harris, it is necessary to express that those who speak and act in the name of religion do not make real explanations of religion and are not the sole proprietors of religion. Although Harris researched all the evaluations, he did not give up his view that the main culprit was belief itself. The inability to see religion as a source of peace, unity, and solutions to existential problems indicates that Harris ignores the facts and is prejudiced.[70]

Harris says that there is no serious difference between those who carried out the 9/11 event and those who turned the White House into a monastery with prayer groups and Bible study groups that roamed from room to room in the US White House. He believes that because of what these two opposing groups propose in theory and practice, humankind has embarked on a worrisome path. In fact, these groups, which think that they have been involved in a holy war since the Middle Ages, have also prepared the foundations that will bring the end of humanity in the future. Harris thinks that the main reason for this is that religion is superior to rational thought. The solution to this situation is for people to eliminate the dogmas of religions and othering structures such as bigotry and exclusion produced by religion.[71] The strange thing is that Harris includes paradoxical expressions in his thoughts. While talking about the relationship between belief and action, as stated previously, he argues that some people who cannot be persuaded by any peaceful method can be killed in self-defense. Harris exemplifies the military and political attack or understanding of the United States and some European states

[70] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 85-86.
[71] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 46-49.

against the Middle East and Afghanistan.[72] What Harris argues here is the positioning of the West against the East and justifications for the West in every case. First, if the new atheists have enough power, they can try to eliminate religion or religious people by organizing acts such as people harming each other by forming religious or political groups. Second, wherever there are sociologically different masses of people, there may be polarization, although the cause is not the same. As a result, an act or discourse that one group sees as terrorism may be seen by the other group as defensive. For example, Harris states that there will not be any transformations such as the reforms in Christianity in the Islamic world; for this reason, he characterizes Islam as terroristic and pro-violence, while he characterizes Christianity as moderate and pro-peace. However, just as all Christians did not approve of the Inquisition in the Christian world, the acts of violence committed by some groups in the Islamic world are not approved by all Muslims. This demonstrates that a Muslim can be peace-loving rather than intolerant. On the other hand, according to Harris, Muslims can build a better future if they abandon a large part of their religious beliefs and traditions as Christians did previously. Although his statements are subjective, they provide the opportunity to express that although the Christian world is far from real religious and spiritual values, it cannot propose more positive actions and discourses than all other religious societies in today's world. However, in today's world, it would be more understandable to investigate the political and religious reasons for global problems with objective and philosophical evaluations. This approach does not prevent us from realizing that ignorant and incorrect perceptions of religion that have no relation to the essential elements of the Islamic religion do great harm to some groups in the Islamic world. However, we can characterize this situation as an internal problem that the religious tradition must consider. It is essential that Harris and other new atheists abandon the mythicization of the Christian world with the discourses of democracy and freedom and the identification of the Islamic world with the concepts of jihad and radical Islam because we cannot deny that some religious foundations are a reality for global prosperity. The readings and determinations made by Harris about religious people that ignore this

[72] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 25-29, 52.

reality are biased, prejudiced, and subjective. In fact, even if Harris sees the fundamental problem in belief based on the thesis of *The Clash of Civilizations*[73] of Samuel P. Huntington (d. 2008), he says that if there is a conflict in which religion is involved, the West must win the conflict.[74] Harris argues that even though Islam has survived periods that enlightened humanity in the past, Islam poses a great danger for the present and the future. His rhetoric and approach here almost resemble an evangelical attitude. He maintains this attitude by saying that Western societies are superior to Eastern societies in many respects. He adds that the seemingly negative result of every action performed by the superior is better than the dangerous situation that would be caused if it did not perform that action.[75]

At this stage, Harris' main problem can be expressed as his approach to believing or not believing as well as not acting as a human being and acting with the psychology of superiority because his critique of religion and understanding of an atheist society led by science means that he is the messiah of an evangelical Christian. Let us say that there is a possibility that inhuman acts of power and those who have power will be carried out in the future in a similar way by different groups. In this case, as Harris says, it can be claimed that the actions taken by the United States in the Middle East were carried out by radical religious people.[76] Therefore, Harris believes that he has deepened his comments on the new atheism, which started with philosophical arguments and grounds, from a sociological perspective and concludes that the primary problem is religious life in Islamic geography. From this perspective, the greatest danger that must be addressed and destroyed is the religion of Islam, and then it is necessary to confront other beliefs. As a result of his statements, although he is progressively hostile to religion, Harris does not act impartially while revealing this stance. By referring to the fact that the violent activities that he criticizes are necessary in some cases for the peaceful society he wants in the future, he opens the door to inconsistency and contradiction of the ideas, grounds, and arguments

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73 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs* 72/3 (Summer 1993), 3-28.

74 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 130-131.

75 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 142-147.

76 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 153.

of the new atheism. When we refer to the criticisms of Quentin Smith (d. 2020), an atheist thinker, regarding these determinations and criticisms of Harris, Smith's reason for these criticisms is that he tries to defend atheism by caricaturing only a certain religion or a group of religious people without giving serious attention to the claims made by Harris.[77] Therefore, while trying to reveal the foundations of the new atheism, Harris refers to the negative historical and social reflections of religion. In other words, Harris tries to justify atheism through his criticism of religion and religious people without discussing the philosophical basis, arguments, and explanations of concepts such as theism, deism, and atheism in detail.

Conclusion

Harris claims that religion or religious belief is not based on evidence, is not rational, and does not comply with science; therefore, he equates religion with problems such as war, terror, violence, and evil and states that religion is harmful and dangerous. His happy rejection of the lack of a rational basis in religion and his discourses in this direction may be due to his efforts to show religion as unsuccessful in every area, but Harris envisions religions as far from the natural development of philosophy. For this reason, what Harris needs to do is to identify and reveal the practical or theoretical parts of religion that can be criticized rather than interpreting the religious historical process with his own naturalistic approach according to his disbelief. On the other hand, Harris puts his objective point of view aside and acts with prejudice in regard to religion. According to him, religion or religious beliefs are not considered valuable because they do not fall into the field of experimentation and observation on their own because religion is an absolutist, bigoted structure that creates gender differences and does not accept differences in people's free choices. It is quite understandable for an atheist to claim that religion conflicts with science and philosophy with these discourses on religion. However, Harris, who does not objectively reveal the true nature, purpose, aim, and effects of religion, claims that the working mechanisms of religion and science are not different, which clearly shows that he has prejudices about religion. In other words, this

[77] Feser, *A Refutation of the New Atheism*, 22.

functioning mechanism of religion is characterized as functioning on the axis of happiness together with the activity of making sense of all existence beyond the universe. Science is expressed as a field that operates according to the principle of causality and has an act of knowing at its source. In this case, how can the argument that religion conflicts with science be put forward without being involved in religious life? If religion is seen as limited only to its external qualities, that is, to traditions that have emerged as a result of a certain process, then it can be claimed that religions or beliefs conflict with science. However, this does not constitute evidence that adopting and defending the basic values of a religion and scientific knowledge conflict. Therefore, claiming that religion lacks all rational elements, that religion is harmful and dangerous, and that belief conflicts with science can only be the product of a biased, prejudiced, or ideological view.

Harris attempts to develop a moral theory independent of religion and God based on grounds such as the conflict between science and religion and the harmful and dangerous nature of religion. Furthermore, he aims to contribute to the radical change in moral theory that has been emptied of its metaphysical essence. For this reason, he proposes morality as a social system that comprehends the individual deeply, helps to keep the social structure alive, and contributes to the functioning of other social institutions rather than being a structure that meets the metaphysical needs of individuals. Thus, he concentrates on the fact that it is easier, simpler, and more comfortable to live a life without religion and God. As a result, he tries to develop an atheist moral theory with the slogan of morality without God, pointing to the concept of human common sense. This effort by Harris is meant to serve the thought that wants to remove the concept of morality from religion along with the philosophy, sociology, psychology, literature, art, and education that religion has embraced. This outcome can be expressed as a contribution to the effort to maintain the existence of ideas similar to his ideas of the West, on the one hand, and to rebuild himself, on the other.

The theoretical approach and the practical reflections that Harris proposes on the criticism of religion are far from objective evaluations. Based on the social conflicts, events, and separations in today's world, Harris tries to ground the new atheism and criticize religion, starting

from a scientific view that accepts only natural sciences as the only criterion. This attitude, which is far from a philosophical basis, sociological studies, and scientific data, is shallow and not convincing because it consists of limited evaluations.

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FAITH AND REASON: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ABŪ L-MUʿĪN AL-NASAFĪ AND THOMAS AQUINAS ON INTELLECT, ASSENT, AND FREE WILL

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the complex relationship between intellect, knowledge, and free will in the context of religious faith, *īmān* or *fides*. The paper focuses on the perspectives of two prominent theologians, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), from the Middle Ages. The study begins its investigation by looking into the aforementioned theologians' ideas and interpretations related to the nature of religious faith. It then explores the specific roles assigned by al-Nasafī and Aquinas to intellect, assent, and free will in the act of faith. The article's final section presents a comparative analysis of their perspectives, highlighting the similarities, differences, and potential tensions between their positions. The findings of this

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study suggest that Aquinas' argument, which asserts that grounding faith in knowledge or evidence undermines human free will, may have certain problematic aspects. According to him, one necessarily assents to the proposition at hand if there is conclusive evidence. However, as for al-Nasafī, it appears that one can rely on evidence and exercise his/her free will in the act of faith if religious assent, *taṣdīq* or *agnitio*, is understood in a dual sense.

Keywords: Intellect, assent, free will, knowledge, evidence, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, Thomas Aquinas

Introduction*

The interplay among intellect, assent, and free will within the context of religious faith has been a subject of perennial debate, captivating the minds of both philosophers and theologians alike. The evidentialist methodology emphatically emphasizes the idea that claims associated with a specific religious faith can only be justified if there is conclusive evidence supporting those claims or if the claims themselves are inherently self-evident. Unless the specified criteria are met, there can be no philosophical and moral justification for wholeheartedly embracing (i.e., with full confidence or complete certainty) religious claims as true. The words of William Clifford that follow have been transformed into a maxim, serving as a classic representation of this attitude: "It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence".[1] On the other

* Some of the research findings regarding Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī presented in this article are part of the author's ongoing doctoral research at the University of Birmingham, which is dedicated to the study of Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's core theological sentiments.

1 William K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief", *An Anthology of Atheism and Rationalism*, ed. Gordon Stein (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1980), 282. Plantinga calls into question this particular stance by asserting that evidentialism itself, in the first place, falls short of meeting these rigorous criteria, as it lacks self-evident or conclusive evidence to validate its premises. For more details, see Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga - Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 60-63. For a defence of evidentialist thesis see Richard Feldman, "The Ethics of Belief", *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology*, ed. Earl Conee - Richard Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166-196. See also Richard Feldman - Earl Conee, "Evidentialism", *Evidentialism: Essays in*

hand, reformed epistemology, which is categorized as a particular variant of foundationalism and advocated by scholars like Alvin Plantinga, asserts that religious faith can be justified or regarded as meritorious, both rationally and morally, independently of evidence. They suggest that religious convictions can be seen as properly basic. In other words, religious beliefs are inherently justified or warranted, similar to our other basic beliefs, such as the belief in the presence of the external world and other minds.[2] In addition, some theories in religious epistemology focus on the practical benefits or value of adopting religious beliefs. Supporters of these theories maintain that religious beliefs are justified by the pragmatic outcomes they have on a person's life, ethical decisions, or overall well-being.[3] Lastly, there is fideism, a doctrine that firmly asserts the supreme power of faith in the domain of religious epistemology. According to this perspective, religious beliefs are devoid of evidence or rational arguments, relying solely on faith as their foundation. Fideism has been associated with figures like Tertullian (d. 220 AD), a Christian theologian in the early Church, and Blaise Pascal, a 17th-century French mathematician and philosopher. Tertullian famously asked, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?". This phrase reflects his view that there should be a strict separation between faith and reason, with faith being the superior path to religious truth. And, of course, there is the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855), who is perhaps the most famous thinker

Epistemology, ed. Earl Conee - Richard Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 83-108.

2 See Alvin Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Properly Basic?", *Noûs* 15/1 (March 1981), 41-51. The coherence theory of belief, which draws inspiration from the coherence theory of truth in epistemology, should also be mentioned here. According to this approach, a particular belief can be justified only if it is grounded on its coherence with one's other beliefs. In other words, if a person's beliefs form a coherent system in which each belief aligns with others, and each belief mutually supports and reinforces the overall structure and interconnected web of the person's beliefs, then they are rationally and morally justified. See for more information, James O. Young, "The Coherence Theory of Truth", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Accessed June 7, 2023).

3 The writings of John S. Mill and William James are noteworthy examples of the aforementioned attitude. In short, they argue that, under specific circumstances, it is both rational and morally acceptable to hold a belief in a proposition because of the benefits it entails. See William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy and Human Immortality* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 46-75; John Stuart Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1874), 248-249.

associated with fideism. Kierkegaard stressed the necessity of a "leap of faith" to attain authentic religious belief, as he believed that religious truth could not be arrived at through rational means alone.[4]

This study examines two influential medieval thinkers, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) and Aquinas (d. 1274),[5] who predominantly espouse the principles of evidentialism in their theological systems. However, it is essential to note that Aquinas adopts a more lenient or flexible perspective when dealing with the concept of sufficient reason or conclusive evidence, in contrast to the more rigid stance of al-Nasafī. The relationship established between intellect and religious assent appears to ultimately determine the rational and moral permissibility or praiseworthiness of religious faith. This inevitably raises the question of what sort of relationship exists between intellect and religious assent in the act of faith. The discussion is also closely related to the concept of knowledge or conclusive evidence and one's freedom of will.

For now, we can conclude that, in Aquinas' view, faith is praiseworthy rationally and morally only when it arises from one's own

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[4] According to the fideist perspective, religious truths cannot be proven or grounded in reason alone but rather require a "leap of faith", which cannot be regarded as an irrational and unethical attitude since reason itself commands us to do so. For more details, see Richard Amesbury, "Fideism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Accessed June 7, 2023).

[5] There are scholarly works in Turkish academia that involve comparative analyses of Aquinas and Muslim thinkers such as Avicenna (d. 428/1037), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), and Averroes (d. 595/1198). See, for instance, A. Gülnihâl Küken, *Doğu - Batı Felsefi Etkileşiminde İbn Rüşd ve St. Thomas Aquinas Felsefelerinin Karşılaştırılması* (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 1996); Yaşar Türkben, *İbn Sînâ ve Thomas Aquinas'ta Kötülük Problemi* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2012); Özcan Akdağ, *Tanrı ve Özgürlük: Gazâlî ve Thomas Aquinas Ekseninde Bir İnceleme* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2016); Süleyman Dönmez, "İbn Rüşd ve Thomas Aquinas Bağlamında Hıristiyanlığın Rasyonel Yorumuna İslam Felsefesinin Etkisi", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/2 (June 2007), 21-38. In these studies, a common theme emerges: All scholars emphasise the profound influence of Islamic philosophy and theology on certain philosophical attitudes of Aquinas. This influence was transmitted through the teachings of the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (d. 601/1204), who, in turn, drew from the rich insights of Muslim philosophers and theologians such as al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Bājjah (d. 533/1139), and Averroes on a wide array of philosophical topics, which suggests a chain of intellectual influence on Aquinas. See Küken, *Doğu - Batı Felsefi Etkileşiminde İbn Rüşd ve St. Thomas Aquinas Felsefelerinin Karşılaştırılması*, 34-46; Akdağ, *Tanrı ve Özgürlük*, 85; Dönmez, "İbn Rüşd ve Thomas Aquinas Bağlamında Hıristiyanlığın Rasyonel Yorumuna İslam Felsefesinin Etkisi", 21-38.

volition. Faith cannot find its foundation in knowledge, as the presence of knowledge, by its nature, necessarily leads one to assent to the proposition in question. The strength or compelling nature of the evidence leaves the subject with no choice but to accept it. It follows that for faith to be deserving of praise, the act of faith ought to lack conclusive evidence. Consequently, Aquinas unequivocally declares that faith and knowledge represent a strict dichotomy or mutually exclusive domains and, therefore, cannot coexist in the act of believing. However, it seems that al-Nasafī's dual interpretation of religious assent presents an intriguing and compelling counterargument to the position adopted by Aquinas. Al-Nasafī's statements on religious assent imply that the assent originating from knowledge and the one arising from faith possess distinct natures. Al-Nasafī emphatically argues against accepting anything other than knowledge as the foundation of faith, as it would inevitably result in an unacceptable scenario: the simultaneous acceptance of conflicting truth claims. According to him, the truth or falsehood of religions can only be determined by knowledge. Therefore, faith should be grounded in knowledge; however, this does not mean that one cannot exercise his/her free will in the act of faith. In other words, faith can be founded upon knowledge, and it can remain an act of free will.

I have articulated this preliminary conclusion in a cautious manner because, as the paper progresses, certain reasons may appear that could prompt a reassessment of the stated position. Yet, even in light of such a reassessment, one truth endures in Aquinas' thought: due to the absence of conclusive evidence comparable to scientific inquiry, individuals must possess a strong will to embrace faith. The will of humankind is destined to fall into sin, and without the grace of God, faith remains an elusive pursuit. Only God possesses the power or authority to bestow the will to believe. Nonetheless, individuals bear moral responsibility for the transgressions, including unbelief, they commit. God cannot be blamed for punishing those who lack faith despite their inherent incapability to believe.

Following this preliminary introduction, let us now initiate our analyses by examining the perspectives of the aforementioned scholars on the nature of religious faith and its intrinsic characteristics.

1. The Nature of Religious Faith and Its Place in the Spectrum of Human Cognition

Aquinas[6] defines faith as "... the intellect assenting [*agnitio*][7] to the Divine truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God ...".[8] In simpler terms, Aquinas believes that faith involves the mind believing in certain truths about God and the world, but it is also a matter of the will or the desire to accept and trust in those truths. He

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6 A potential point of confusion must be clarified before proceeding further. One might rightfully wonder and ask why, even though Aquinas lived later, the study begins by presenting Aquinas' ideas before those of al-Nasafī. In other words, the order of presentation in the article seems to be different from what one might expect based on the historical timeline. Introducing Aquinas' ideas first could lead some readers to assume that Aquinas lived in an earlier time compared to al-Nasafī. The rationale behind the adopted presentation order in this study can be summarised as follows: While chronological presentation is the conventional method in academic discourse, in this context, a thematic approach better serves the study's purpose. Al-Nasafī's perspective on faith essentially goes against Aquinas' stance. Aquinas perceives the presence of knowledge within the act of faith as an impediment to free will, leading to the exclusion of knowledge or evidence from the act of faith. In contrast, al-Nasafī argues that free will and evidence can coexist within the act of faith. Consequently, for Aquinas, the inclusion of conclusive evidence or proof in the act of faith might undermine the voluntary and uncoerced nature of faith. In essence, genuine faith involves a deliberate and unpressured choice to believe in something without relying on conclusive evidence. If conclusive evidence were readily accessible, it could potentially reduce the act of faith from a personal choice to a matter of compulsion, which, Aquinas argues, makes faith no worthy of praise. Conversely, al-Nasafī posits that it is possible to maintain free will even while incorporating knowledge or evidence within the act of faith, representing an antithesis to Aquinas' standpoint. So, this thematic approach was adopted with the understanding that presenting contrasting ideas before those they contrast with can be a more effective strategy. Nonetheless, in order to avoid the impression that Aquinas (d. 1274) may have lived before al-Nasafi (d. 508/1115), the death dates of these thinkers are often provided in brackets throughout the article. This ensures that readers maintain a correct understanding of the historical context, even when the article employs a thematic organisation for presenting their ideas.

7 *Agnitio* refers to an individual's inward acknowledgement of the propositions proclaimed within the creeds, as well as the outward affirmation through verbal declaration. This concept is a standard for describing religious assent in Aquinas' theology and was later adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. It largely coincides with the Muslim Kalām tradition's concept of *taṣdīq,* which is commonly used to define faith *(īmān).* We will further explore this concept when discussing al-Nasafī's views.

8 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Epub: The Thomistic Institute, 1947), II-II, q.2, a.9, sed contra. Hereafter, it will be referred to as *ST*.

emphasizes the role of God's grace in enabling individuals to have faith, as he believed that faith cannot be achieved through human effort alone but requires the assistance of divine grace. This is because Aquinas considers faith to be a "theological virtue" along with "hope" and "charity", which are all given to the faithful without any effort on their part.[9]

Aquinas further asserts that faith can be understood as having two dimensions. The first dimension is internal, which involves an individual's acceptance and adherence to the articles of faith that are revealed within the creeds. This dimension is essentially a cognitive process wherein an individual recognizes the validity of certain propositions. The second dimension, on the other hand, is external and involves the expression of one's beliefs through speech.[10] Although Aquinas stresses the significance of the internal act of faith, as it leads to the external act, he regards both dimensions as crucial to a comprehensive understanding of religious faith.[11]

According to Aquinas, faith also has three distinct aspects: *credere deum* means "to believe in God". This aspect of faith is concerned with the belief in the existence and attributes of God. It involves accepting God as a reality and as the creator and sustainer of the universe. *Credere deo* means "to believe God". This aspect of faith involves trusting in the teachings and promises of God as they are revealed in Scripture or through divine inspiration. It involves believing that God is trustworthy and that what He says is true. *Credere in deum* means "to believe into God". This aspect of faith represents its existential nature and entails a personal commitment to God. It symbolizes the

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[9] Aquinas categorises virtues into two main groups: "theological virtues" and "acquired virtues". Theological virtues, such as faith, hope, and charity, are infused in individuals as divine gifts from God, without any participation on their part. They are often referred to as "instilled" or "infused" virtues since God is the source and efficient cause of these virtues. In contrast, acquired virtues, such as prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, are developed through an individual's own effort and practice. These virtues are attained through consistent practice and habituation. Unlike theological virtues, they require personal discipline and effort to acquire. See Aquinas, *ST*, I-II. q.55, q.4.

[10] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II. q.3, a.1.

[11] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II. q.3, a.1, and ad.3.

act of submitting oneself to God's will, accepting His commands as the guiding principle in one's life.[12]

Aquinas argues that faith is a kind of cognition that falls between scientific knowledge and mere opinion.[13] Faith and scientific knowledge are distinct because the latter relies on conclusive evidence, which inherently excludes belief in the unseen or the unknown. On the other hand, mere opinion is based on subjective beliefs and lacks the certainty of knowledge. Faith, according to Aquinas, involves an element of uncertainty or doubt because it involves belief in things that cannot be directly observed or proven. However, this uncertainty is not the same as mere opinion because faith is grounded in a certain level of evidence, such as the testimony of trustworthy witnesses or the authority of sacred texts. In other words, faith involves a degree of reasoned belief that is not based solely on empirical evidence but that is still supported by evidence and logical reasoning. This middle ground between scientific knowledge and opinion is what Aquinas refers to as the "mean" of faith.

Furthermore, the intellect cannot provide a firm assent when "opinion" is the case, for there is no conclusive evidence to support the proposition in question. Similarly, in the act of faith, the intellect cannot reach certainty due to the lack of conclusive evidence supporting the proposition. However, what sets faith apart from mere opinion is that one can arrive at a firm assent through the exercise of free will. Thus, according to Aquinas, a strong will is required to attain faith, as he states:

the intellect assents to something, not through being sufficiently moved to this assent by its proper object, but through an act of choice, whereby it turns voluntarily to one side rather than to the other: and if this be accompanied by doubt or fear of the opposite side, there will be opinion, while, if there be certainty and no fear of the other side, there will be faith.[14]

As the passage suggests, faith is unique among other cognitive processes in that it depends on the exercise of free will. However,

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[12] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.2 a.2; Bruno Niederbacher, "The Relation of Reason to Faith", *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies - Eleonore Stump (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 339-340.

[13] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *The Pocket Aquinas: Selections from the Writings of St. Thomas*, ed. Vernon J. Bourke (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), 287.

[14] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.1, a.4.

according to Aquinas, faith is still a cognitive act of the human mind because faith cannot reside in the irrational part of the soul, as the mind is its proper subject.[15]

As for al-Nasafī, in his renowned work on Islamic theology, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, he begins his discussion of faith by noting the ongoing debate among Islamic scholars on its nature. Some scholars posited that faith consists of three parts: knowledge or awareness through the heart (*al-maʿrifah bi-l-qalb*), confession or verbal declaration through the tongue (*al-iqrār bi-l-lisān*), and practices or deeds which are in line with the core tenets and beliefs of Islam (*al-ʿamal bi-l-arkān*). This position is attributed to notable scholars such as al-Mālik (d. 179/795), al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820), and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 241/855).[16] On the other hand, some scholars believe that faith is limited only to *al-maʿrifah bi-l-qalb* and *al-iqrār bi-l-lisān*.[17] Al-Nasafī notes several variations of these three and how each school or individual adopted one of these variations as their definition of faith. In short, some accepted one alone, others combined two, and some took all three as their definition of faith.[18]

One particular school within this group deserves special attention as their assertion is directly relevant to the topic being discussed by al-Nasafī. The followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 128/745-46), known as the Jahmiyyah sect, argued that faith is merely knowledge by the heart (*al-maʿrifah bi-l-qalb*).[19] They seem to have excluded all other aspects of faith, inward or outward, such as submission (*taslīm*) and verbal declaration.

Al-Nasafī disagrees with the view of the Jahmiyyah and emphasizes the significance of voluntary internal conviction in the act of faith. In

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15 Aquinas, *ST*, I-II. q.55, a.4, ad.3.

16 Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hüseyin Atay - Şaban Ali Düzgün (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2003), 2/404.

17 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/404.

18 For further information about the adherents of each view and their interpretations of religious faith, see al-Nasafī's *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/404-415.

19 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/405-406: Cf. Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl Ibn Abī Bishr al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), 132-133. Izutsu notes that this group may have been among the earliest to seriously investigate the internal structure of faith. See Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology: A Semantic Analysis of Îmân and Islâm* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1965), 82.

line with this, he declares that faith can be defined only as assent by the heart (*al-taṣdīq bi-l-qalb*).[20] He states that Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) were the pioneers of this view. In his extensive work, *al-Tabṣirah*, he devotes a whole chapter to supporting the idea that faith is assent by the heart. In the aforementioned chapter, al-Nasafī ultimately asserts that faith (*īmān*) is the antonym of unbelief (*kufr*), which refers to the rejection of something as false or untrue (*takdhīb*).[21] He goes on to state that upon examining the antonyms of *kufr* and *takdhīb*, we find the notion of assent (*taṣdīq*) rather than knowledge (*maʿrifah*). Therefore, he concludes that faith is equivalent to assent and cannot be reduced to knowledge alone. To put it concisely, he maintains that assigning any other meaning to *īmān* would strip it of its intended significance (*maʿnâ*).[22]

Al-Nasafī critiques the idea that actions (*aʿmāl* or *afʿāl*) are an integral part of faith. He disapproves of this view, stating that if we associate *īmān* only with the religious obligations of Islam (*sharāʾiʿ al-Islām*), such as daily prayers and fasting in Ramadan, we would be extending its meaning beyond its intended scope. According to him, adherence to Islam is not determined by one's actions, but by the sincere belief (*iʿtiqād* or *ʿaqīdah*) in the Islamic creed one embraces within his/her heart.[23] This is because a person, in fact, can perform the Islamic rituals without having genuine loyalty or adherence to the creed of Islam. The Qurʾān refers to those who have not fully internalized the principles of Islam as hypocrites[24] and contains several verses that illustrate the motives and psychological states of those who perform Islamic rituals in a similar manner, highlighting their pursuit of materialistic gains rather than a genuine love for God.[25]

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[20] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/406; Id., *al-Tambīd fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Qābil (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1987), 99. For a study that examines the views of al-Nasafī and his teacher, al-Māturīdī, regarding the concept of faith, see Ahmet Altıntaş, "Ebû Mansur Muhammed el-Mâturîdî ile Ebu'l-Muîn en-Nesefî'nin İman Görüşü", *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16/32 (December 2018), 311-355.

[21] al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/406.

[22] al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/406-408.

[23] al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/406.

[24] al-Nisāʾ 4/142-143.

[25] al-Baqara 2/8-9; al-Nisāʾ 4/142; al-Māʾida 5/41; Āl ʿImrān 3/167; al-Tawba 9/42; al-Munāfiqūn 63/1-8.

In the discussion so far, both thinkers seem to have acknowledged faith as an inner assent. However, they also recognize that the outward expression of faith through language and its impact on human action cannot be disregarded. These external dimensions are seen as supplementary components of faith. The internal assent, or the inner acceptance and belief, is considered the fundamental and indispensable aspect of the act of faith. It is the core component that gives meaning and value to the other two elements. In other words, without the internal assent, the external manifestation of faith and its consequence on deeds would lose their significance and purpose. Let us now proceed with examining the roles that thinkers ascribe to reason, knowledge, and free will in the act of faith.

2. The Relation of Intellect to Religious Assent in the Act of Faith

According to Aquinas, there exist two distinct cases in which an individual grants his/her assent to a proposition. The first instance occurs when the proposition in question is either inherently true (i.e., self-evident) or when it is supported by conclusive evidence or demonstrative reasoning. In such situations, it is natural and necessary for one to assent firmly to the proposition in question.[26] This type of assent is commonly associated with "scientific knowledge".[27] On the other hand, in the second case, the proposition is neither a self-evident truth nor is it supported by conclusive evidence or demonstrative reasoning. Here, assent to the proposition is subject to one's own command and volition, and it is not a firm assent – except "to believe (*credere*)",[28] which will be explained later. In simpler terms, individuals may choose to either accept or reject the proposition at hand, and this choice is not a result of a precise epistemic state of the intellect.

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[26] Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.16, a.1, a.2, and a.8; Also see Frederick R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 1/301.

[27] In this context, the term 'science' (*scientia*) should not be conflated with its contemporary connotations. In the Middle Ages, theology and science were not clearly distinguished and were both considered sources of knowledge. The primary distinction between them was in their respective principles for generating knowledge. While science relied on self-evident principles, theology depended on principles originating from God, considered the ultimate source of all principles during that era.

[28] Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.16, a.1, a.2, and a.8.

Faith is not relevant to the first scenario. Therefore, Aquinas focuses on the latter and defines four cases in which the intellect can voluntarily grant its assent to a proposition. The first three cases are related to situations where the intellect leans toward one of the two sides, even though it cannot arrive at firm assent. First, the intellect may remain neutral and leave its assent suspended, as is the case with someone who "doubts". Second, it may lean toward one side due to "some slight motive", as in the case of someone who "suspects". Third, it may lean toward one side with some degree of certainty but still fear that the other option might be true, as with someone who "opines".[29] In addition to these three cognitive states, Aquinas identifies a fourth one, where one accepts one of the two parties with complete certainty. Aquinas refers to this as the state of "believing (*credere*)". Faith is just as certain as *science* and *understanding*, or even more so, in certainty. Nevertheless, due to the absence of conclusive evidence, belief shares some similarities with "doubt", "suspicion", and "opinion".[30] In other words, belief involves a strong conviction, comparable to that of *science* and *understanding*, but its epistemic value is equivalent to "doubt", "suspicion", and "opinion" due to the lack of conclusive evidence. Therefore, according to Aquinas, faith lies somewhere between "science" and "opinion".[31]

It seems, in Aquinas, the certainty of one's faith or conviction is not necessarily rooted in the epistemic capabilities of the intellect but rather in the will itself. In certain instances, an individual may choose between two options based on a motive or cause that is powerful enough to move the will but not the intellect. This is the position of the faithful, as there cannot be conclusive reasons or evidence enough to persuade and move the intellect towards faith. However, in the act of faith, there can be a sufficient and persuasive motive enough to move the will toward faith. The promise of eternal life offered by religion is what leads one's will towards having faith, according to Aquinas.[32]

Aquinas maintains that if a proposition has a conclusive reason or evidence, it becomes necessary for a person to accept it, leaving no

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[29] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.2, a.1.
[30] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II. q.4, a.8.
[31] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.1, a.2 and q.2, a.1.
[32] Thomas Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan et al. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952-1954), q.14, a.1.

room for exercising discretion in the decision-making process. In simpler terms, if there is evidence, one necessarily assents to the proposition at hand. However, faith lies beyond the realm of natural reason, where propositions are verified through evidence. Therefore, as the act of faith is not based on conclusive evidence but rather on the exercise of one's free will, while knowledge, on the other hand, is based on conclusive evidence and objective verification, Aquinas concludes that faith and knowledge are mutually exclusive concepts.[33] It seems, according to Aquinas, that the merit of an act of faith lies in its freedom from conclusive evidence because it is only in such cases that one can freely give assent to the proposition in question.

Up to this point, Aquinas has argued that if faith is based on conclusive evidence, it cannot be considered meritorious, as it would limit one's freedom of choice. However, this idea raises another issue: if the will has such great authority over the intellect, it could potentially move the intellect to accept a different religion instead of Christianity. In other words, what motivates one to embrace Christian faith over others? Aquinas also recognizes that faith without sufficient rationale is blind and unreasonable. Therefore, a Christian believer should possess sufficient reasons for his/her faith.

He argues that the miracles in the Church's history, the fulfillment of prophecies, and the world's conversion to Christianity are sufficient motives that lead people to accept the Christian faith.[34] In addition, ordinary and simple people have convinced the world "... to believe things so arduous, to accomplish things so difficult, and to hope for things so sublime", all without any marvelous signs or proofs that the intellect can comprehend.[35] This is, according to Aquinas, one of the most persuasive motives regarding the authenticity of the Christian faith.

According to Aquinas, accepting divine revelation as a sufficient motive for embracing the Christian faith is both reasonable and

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[33] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.2, a.1, ad.1.

[34] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.2, a.1, ad.1; Id., *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. Laurence Shapcote, OP (Green Bay, Wisconsin: Aquinas Institute, Inc., 2018), bk. 1, ch. 6. The text has been further edited and revised by the Aquinas Institute, and the e-text version is available with parallel English and Latin on their website (Accessed November 27, 2023). See the bibliography for the link. Hereafter, it will be abbreviated as *SCG*.

[35] Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 6.

necessary. This is because all human beings require the grace of God to attain salvation, and divine revelation is the only way of knowing this very fundamental truth.[36] Aquinas further argues that once believers accept God as the ultimate authority, they can trust what they hear from the scriptures, given that God cannot lie or be deceived.[37] In many areas of life, people often rely on the authority and testimony of others when making important decisions. Similarly, in matters of faith, it is reasonable to rely on the authority of God, just as we trust doctors for our health or historians for our understanding of the past. Since God is the most trustworthy of all authorities, it is reasonable to trust mostly or even only Him when it comes to matters of faith.[38]

Although Aquinas considers these motives to be sufficient reasons for accepting the Christian faith, he admits that certain aspects of divine truths are destined to remain beyond human understanding. For, according to Aquinas, by its very nature, the mind is weak, and therefore, certain aspects of divine truth, which are intrinsic to faith, are beyond the limits of human cognition. One such example is the doctrine of the Trinity, which suggests that God is three in one. The human mind is limited in its capacity to fully comprehend or understand this concept, as it goes beyond the boundaries of human cognition.[39] Consequently, one might wonder whether it is fair for God to expect humans to believe in matters that surpass their intellectual capacity. After all, this raises questions about whether it reflects God's wisdom and justice.

Aquinas suggests that it is not unreasonable for God to require belief in such concepts, as they are crucial to attaining salvation. Moreover, while human intellect is limited, it is not entirely incapable of grasping such concepts, as God has revealed them to us through divine revelation. No one desires or makes an effort to attain something of which they are unaware or lack prior knowledge. Thus, humanity has been driven towards a higher good that surpasses its limited capacity and weak nature in this life by divine grace and the

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36 Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.1, a1.

37 Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.2, a.4 and q.4, a.8, ad.2.

38 Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.1, a2c and II-II, q.9, a2, ad.3. For a detailed discussion of testimonial knowledge in Aquinas, see Matthew Kent Siebert, "Aquinas on Testimonial Justification: Faith and Opinion", *The Review of Metaphysics* 69/3 (March 2016), 555-582.

39 Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 3.

scriptures. Aquinas argues that exposing frail minds to things that exceed human cognition is necessary for humans to learn to desire and strive for eternal happiness, which itself transcends the human mind.[40] According to Aquinas, it appears that the mind and its reasoning power must be tested and strengthened through exposure to the transcendent articles of faith in this world. This process is regarded by him as a necessary preparation for eternal happiness.

If the truths of faith, according to Aquinas, were left to natural reason alone, most people would not know them. Acquiring knowledge in this field requires both the ability to learn and a willingness to do so, but many people do not possess one or both of those qualities. Further, some people may be too busy acquiring the necessities for the continuation of human life, or some may simply be too lazy to seek the truth. In addition, the intellect may not be mature enough in youth to comprehend profound truths, given the heightened nature of bodily desires. Excelling in theology and philosophy also demands a vast amount of specialized knowledge on many subjects and experience; thus, it takes years of rigorous practice to develop a comprehensive understanding of God through natural reason. Consequently, if God had not revealed the truths of faith, most people would remain ignorant of Him: God's divine grace ensures that all truths, including those accessible through natural reason, are revealed to humanity.[41]

Furthermore, according to Aquinas, although the intellect alone is insufficient to attain faith and understand some divine truths, it is also not entirely irrelevant to the process. He recognizes the intellect's demonstrative power in establishing the existence and oneness of God.[42] We know that he praised the philosophers for their attempts to establish conclusive proofs regarding the existence of God through

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[40] Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 5.

[41] Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 4.

[42] Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Following Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84. Aquinas regarded these arguments as highly compelling, to the point where he criticised those who rejected them using the following words: "... he who lacks the aforesaid knowledge of God seems very much to be blamed, since it is a very clear sign of a man's stupidity if he fails to perceive such evident signs of God's existence -even as a man would be deemed dull who, seeing man, did not understood that he has a soul". See Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 3, ch. 38.

natural reason.[43] Aquinas also utilized *The Five Ways,* his well-known attempts to demonstrate God's existence through rational arguments.[44] However, Aquinas also acknowledges that such arguments may not be accessible to everyone, especially those who lack the time, education, or intellectual capacity to engage with them. He also notes that while reason can help individuals understand some truths about God, such knowledge should not be seen as the "articles of faith". Rather, they should be regarded as the "preambles to faith", which prepare individuals for a mature Christian faith.[45] In other words, natural reason can provide a framework for understanding and exploring God's existence and nature, but it cannot fully reveal God's plan for humanity or the means of attaining salvation. To achieve these aims, one must turn to divine revelation and the teachings of the Church. A mere intellectual understanding of God based on natural reason, devoid of charity, is referred to as "formless faith", which is regarded as lifeless and cannot be considered a virtue in the Christian sense.[46] In contrast, a believer is expected to possess a "formed faith", which is not only considered a virtue but also an active and dynamic expression of faith. To have a fully formed faith, one should accept even the preambles of faith through the authority of God rather than through rational arguments. In Aquinas' philosophy, a true believer does not give assent to anything unless it has been revealed by God in the Scriptures.[47]

Despite the limitations of natural reason in comprehending divine truths, it has various functions in the realm of religion. For instance, it plays an essential role in defending divine teachings against heretics and demonstrating that the articles of faith do not go against our natural knowledge. Even though reason cannot prove the articles of faith, it

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[43] Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 3. For a comprehensive analysis of Aquinas' perspective on what natural reason can reveal about God, refer to Brian Davies, "Thomas Aquinas", *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia - Timothy B. Noone (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2003), 644-652.

[44] For an examination of Aquinas' justifications for the existence of God, see Timothy Pawl, "The Five Ways", *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies - Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116-126. For an analysis of the differences between Aquinas and Anselm on demonstrative reasoning concerning the existence of God, see Eric L. Mascall, "Faith and Reason: Anselm and Aquinas", *The Journal of Theological Studies* 14/1 (April 1963), 67-90.

[45] Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.2, a.2, ad.1; Id., *SCG*, bk. 3, ch. 38.

[46] Aquinas, The Disputed Questions on Truth, q.14, a.6.

[47] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q.1, a.1. See also, *ST*, I, q.1, a.1.

also cannot contradict them.[48] Any arguments that go against the core principles of faith or seem to contradict them are either based on faulty reasoning or groundless assumptions. Therefore, as per Aquinas, the primary duty of natural reason in this respect is to identify and resolve any so-called conflicts between faith and reason.[49]

It appears that the previous investigation of Aquinas conducted thus far has sufficiently revealed the roles played by intellect, knowledge, and will in the act of faith. Now, let us move on to al-Nasafī's views on the matter.

According to al-Nasafī, men have the capacity to attain knowledge (*ʿilm*) of both the physical and metaphysical realms.[50] Although it is possible to acquire knowledge of God, comprehending His complete reality or essence is beyond human capacity. To express this in accordance with al-Nasafī's own terminology, one can know (*yaʿlam*) God but cannot comprehend (*yudrik*) His divine essence. In other words, the verb "to know" (*yaʿlam*) should be used exclusively when referring to God, rather than the verb "to comprehend" (*yudrik*). This is because *idrāk* implies a complete understanding of something to the extent of knowing all its boundaries or limits (*ḥudūd*) and its ultimate end (*nihāyah*).[51] Therefore, the terms *idrāk* and *iḥāṭah* are inappropriate for discussing the infinite and all-powerful nature of God. Finite human intellects are unable to fully comprehend the immeasurable nature of the omnipotent God.

Following this brief discussion on knowledge and its limitations, al-Nasafī asserts that faith can only be justified by knowledge or conclusive evidence. This is because, according to him, the authenticity or falsehood of religions can only be discerned through

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[48] Aquinas explains the impetus behind his use of defensive reasoning as follows: "... some of them, like the Mohammedans and pagans, do not agree with us as to the authority of any Scripture by which they may be convinced in the same way as we are able to dispute with the Jews by means of the Old Testament, and with heretics by means of the New. But the former accept neither. Thus we need to have recourse to natural reason, to which all are compelled to assent. And yet this is deficient in the things of God". See Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 2.

[49] Aquinas, *ST*, I, q.1, a.8; Id., *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 7.

[50] For a study that examines al-Nasafī's assessments regarding various definitions of knowledge (*ʿilm*), see Adnan Bülent Baloğlu, "Doğru Bilgi Tanımına Ulaşma Çabası: Ebu'l-Mu'in en-Nesefi Örneği", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 18 (2003), 3-20.

[51] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/15.

evidence (*dalīl*) and demonstrative reasoning. Consequently, the most persuasive rationale for an individual to choose one religion over another can only be justified by knowledge.[52] In various parts of *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, he emphasizes the significance of mental practices such as contemplation (*ta'ammul*) and profound thinking (*tafakkur*) in distinguishing between true and false religions. These practices entail engaging in deep reflection, introspection, and meditation on a specific subject, leading to a greater understanding and insight. Al-Nasafī deems these practices crucial for cultivating a deeper comprehension of one's faith and for discerning between genuine and spurious beliefs.[53]

Similar to Aquinas, al-Nasafī places significant emphasis on and holds deep reverence for human reason (*'aql*). He states that when making decisions, humans have a natural inclination towards choosing the appropriate option. Al-Nasafī regards the faculty of reasoning as the most trustworthy instrument to do so in such situations. Reason is the capacity that sets humans apart from other beings. In fact, according to him, by contemplating the subtleties and mysteries of the human mind, one can recognize that it is God who instilled the faculty of reasoning within human nature.[54]

Al-Nasafī argues that everything that exists in the universe (*mawjūdāt*) serves as evidence for the existence of its Creator (*Ṣāni'*).[55] Through reason and contemplation, one can not only recognize the existence of the Creator but also know many of His divine attributes.[56] He maintains that it is unthinkable to assume that the universe, with its complex and intricate design, stunning aesthetics, and sturdy and flawless foundation, could have been fashioned by an inert, ignorant, or impotent entity. Anyone proposing that an embroidered silk fabric, a majestic palace, or a splendid painting could originate randomly from a stone or an unintelligent, inanimate entity would promptly be deemed foolish (*safīh*) and stubborn by those possessing sound reasoning.[57] For al-Nasafī, transforming the signs present in the universe into knowledge through human reason is the

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52 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/35 and 1/34-38.
53 See, for instance, al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/40.
54 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/29; Id., *al-Tamhīd*, 4.
55 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/62.
56 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/62.
57 Al-Nasafī, *al-Tamhīd*, 21; Id., *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/246-255.

ultimate means of knowing the Creator and discerning the right religion or path that leads to Him.

Al-Nasafī further argues that reason is the only way to discern the authenticity of a religion from superstitious beliefs because, as mentioned earlier, the truth or falsehood of something can only be known through reason. However, he reports that during his era, some individuals argued that it is right to adhere to a particular religion if one holds a feeling or thought regarding its virtuousness or goodness in his/her heart (*mā yaqaʿ fī l-qalb ḥusnuhū*).[58] Again, according to his narrative, certain groups frequently used intuition or inspiration (*ilhām*) as evidence to justify their religions during his time.[59] Al-Nasafī argues that none of these methods can serve as a valid way to determine the truth of a given religion, as adherents of different religious traditions can use the very same methods to assert the validity of their respective religions. This would result in accepting contradictory truth claims as valid concurrently, which is unacceptable to rational minds.[60] Last but not least, al-Nasafī firmly maintains that the imitator (*muqallid*) cannot rely on blind imitation or uncritical faith (*taqlīd*) to distinguish the truth of religions. He consistently critiques imitators who accept the doctrines of others, including a teacher (*ʿālim*) or spiritual master (*shaykh*), without objectively verifying the truthfulness of their teachings.[61]

While it is true that al-Nasafī places great emphasis on providing evidence to justify religious beliefs, it is important to state that he uses the concept of evidence in a broad sense.[62] First of all, he maintains

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58 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/34.

59 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/34-35.

60 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/27, 34.

61 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/35-36. The notion of sufficient evidence at the heart of al-Nasafī's interpretation of religious faith brings to mind Clifford's renowned essay *The Ethics of Belief* in modern philosophy of religion. According to Clifford, it is morally unacceptable for an individual to adhere to a belief more strongly than the evidence supports. He contends that accepting a belief without sufficient evidence is not legitimate. See Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief", 282. For a study dedicated to faith through *taqlīd* in al-Nasafī, see Süleyman Akkuş, "Ebû'l-Muîn en-Nesefî'ye Göre Taklidin İnanç Boyutu", *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10/18 (December 2008), 99-128.

62 Al-Nasafī's works are characterised by a sophisticated vocabulary that reflects his rigorous approach to understanding and evaluating the concept of "evidence". His use of key concepts such as *ḥujjah*, *istidlāl*, *burhān*, *taʾammul*, and *tafakkur* demonstrates the depth of his engagement with the problem. However, when al-

that the evidence should be strong enough to persuade the listener of the truth of religion. Further, the evidence might possess a sophisticated and complicated framework obtained by means of intricate reasoning about the universe, the essential nature of things, the Creator's unity, His divine attributes, and so on. Alternatively, it could have a more straightforward structure, such as contemplation of the lives of esteemed prophets and the miraculous events that they had performed by the will of God. This might seem simpler than the former, however, according to al-Nasafī, both methods can lead one to the conclusion. Therefore, the key aspect is that the evidence should be accurate and compelling enough to lead the listener to the truth. Consequently, al-Nasafī regards both methods as equally meritorious. According to him, those who embrace faith through either method deserve to be rewarded by God.[63]

Al-Nasafī uses the narrative of Prophet Abraham from the Qurʾān to exemplify how reasoning and evidence can be efficiently and accurately utilized. By meticulously observing celestial objects such as stars, the moon, and the sun, Prophet Abraham inferred that a supreme power –God– governs their movements according to His divine plan. According to al-Nasafī, this serves as a remarkable example of utilizing reasoning and inference (*istidlāl*) to obtain solid evidence in matters of faith.[64] He asserts that any intellectually mature individual who has reached the age of responsibility (*taklīf*) should emulate Prophet Abraham's example and use their intellect to acknowledge the existence of a creator in the universe.[65]

Nasafī specifically wants to discuss evidence or justification in matters of faith, he consistently employs the term *dalīl*. This Arabic term can be translated into English as "sign", "guide", "proof" or "evidence". See Hans Wehr, *The Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, "دليل" (Accessed November 9, 2023). Al-Nasafī highlights the importance of providing clear and compelling reasons to support one's claims. This emphasis on rigorous argumentation is a hallmark of al-Nasafī's works and reflects his commitment to precision and clarity in philosophical discourse. For a thorough examination of the concept of evidence in Islamic theology, see Josef van Ess, "The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology", *Kleine Schriften by Josef van Ess*, ed. Hinrich Biesterfeldt (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1/238-271.

63 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/39-40.

64 Al-Anʿām 6/75-79.

65 Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, ed. Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Farfūr (Damascus: Maktabat Dār al-Farfūr, 2000), 64-65. Al-Nasafī refers to the story of *Ahl al-kahf* (the Companions of the Cave) in the Qurʾān to highlight the idea that evidence can lead to knowledge of God. This demonstrates his broad

According to al-Nasafī, based on the available evidence –whether it pertains to the first sort or the second– two issues need to be clarified: the credibility (*ṣidq*) of the claimant and the veracity of the message being conveyed. As previously established, according to al-Nasafī, the soundness (*ṣiḥḥah*) or falsity (*fasād*) of religious beliefs can only be determined through evidence.[66] Al-Nasafī systematically applies these two principles when examining the Islamic Prophet's assertion of his prophethood. In a meticulous effort to demonstrate that his prophethood has solid rational and historical foundations, al-Nasafī provides an extensive explanation of the reasons for accepting the truthfulness of the Prophet's claim in a dedicated and lengthy chapter of his magnum opus.[67]

Al-Nasafī justifies the necessity of providing evidence in matters of faith through the concept of adversity or hardship (*mashaqqah*). Accordingly, the wise person, before embracing any religion, engages in contemplation (*taʾammul* and *tafakkur*), conducts research, employs sound thinking (*baḥth*) and reasoning (*naẓar*), and seeks refuge in God during times of adversity or hardship. On the other hand, those who indulge in worldly pleasures and disregard these practices often blindly follow the beliefs of others without questioning them.[68] The term *mashaqqah* refers to the importance of persisting and making efforts to eliminate doubts by using evidence and rational arguments, even when faced with challenges, to achieve genuine faith. Al-Nasafī argues that the level of effort one exerts to acquire knowledge and understanding directly correlates with the intellectual and moral merit of one's faith.[69] In other words, individuals who make an effort to gain knowledge and understanding in matters of faith are more deserving of praise and recognition for their faith compared to

interpretation of the concept of evidence. See al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 82-83. Al-Nasafī reports that, according to Muʿtazilah, the intellect (*ʿaql*) inherently possesses knowledge of God, and therefore reasoning is not necessary to know God. "*lā yajib ʿalayhi an yastadill bi-l-ʿaql wa-lākinna l-ʿaql yūjib ʿalayhi an yaʿrifa'llāh taʿālá*". See al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 83. An interesting subject for an independent study could be exploring whether the Muʿtazilīs put forth a concept akin to Alvin Plantinga's idea that "belief in God is properly basic". See Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Properly Basic?", 42; Id., "Reason and Belief in God", 28.

66 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/34.

67 See al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/45-106.

68 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/39-40.

69 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/40.

those who do not prioritize such pursuits. Conversely, those who cannot bear the challenges and troubles in the path of faith may not acquire the rewards and benefits commonly associated with faith.[70]

Another condition for religious faith to be considered praiseworthy or meritorious, according to Islamic and ethical principles, is that one must demonstrate unwavering devotion to the objective of drawing closer (*taqarrub*) to God.[71] In other words, the core intention behind the act of faith and the actions (*aʿmāl*) that stem from it should be to develop a closer relationship with God and bring oneself nearer to Him. Further, what matters most is that the decision to embrace the Islamic faith is made freely and willingly, without any form of external force or compulsion (*iḍṭirār*).[72] It becomes clear at this point that al-Nasafī does not perceive evidence as an external force that compels free will in the act of faith. We will come back to this point later and explore it in more detail.

Al-Nasafī notes that faith adopted by an individual on the brink of death also holds no merit in accordance with Islamic teachings. As a person approaches the end of his/her life, certain realities and truths become more apparent, such as his/her ultimate destination in the afterlife, paradise or hellfire. Consequently, the divine test that God has set for humanity becomes void, as the veil is lifted, and the truth is no longer hidden.[73]

Despite the noteworthy emphasis on proof, al-Nasafī aligns with the views of Abū Ḥanīfah and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and reluctantly acknowledges that, ultimately, the faith of the imitator (*muqallid*) may be genuine and benefit them in growing closer to God, as long as the last two conditions are met. However, these individuals are considered sinful because they fail to make use of their intellect to comprehend the fundamental principles of their faith.[74]

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70 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/40.

71 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/39.

72 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/39.

73 The Qurʾānic narrative of the Pharaoh demonstrates that even the most mighty and dreaded rulers can comprehend their own mortality and embrace faith based on the truths they witness during their last moments. However, according to Islamic teachings, at the moment of death or in the throes of dying, faith is considered null and void because God shows all men the truth before they die in a way they cannot refuse. See Yūnus 10/90-91.

74 Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/41.

It is crucial to clarify that al-Nasafī's emphasis on the significance of knowledge in matters of faith does not suggest that faith can be entirely reduced to knowledge. Despite acknowledging the weighty role of knowledge in developing and strengthening faith, al-Nasafī contends that faith encompasses more than mere intellectual understanding of God. As previously mentioned, al-Nasafī views faith as the assent (*taṣdīq*) of the heart, that is, the inward movement of the heart. He censures those who conflate faith with knowledge and conducts a detailed linguistic analysis of the related concepts to support his argument. As a result of this analyses, al-Nasafī posits that knowledge (*maʿrifah*) cannot be equated with faith (*īmān*).[75] Faith and knowledge are distinct concepts that cannot be used interchangeably.

Al-Nasafī's second argument in support of this idea is that the lack of knowledge regarding a proposition does not always result in rejecting its truth, and again, possessing knowledge does not necessarily lead to accepting the truth of a proposition. He cites a Qurʾānic example to illustrate this point: "*Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]*".[76] He emphasizes that faith cannot be spoken of here because they lack assent in the heart despite possessing knowledge.[77] In other words, this group of people mentioned in the verse cannot be considered believers as they do not truly believe in their hearts, even though they hold knowledge. According to al-Nasafī, there is a difference between not knowing about something (*jahālah*) and deliberately rejecting (*takdhīb*) its truth content. Not all ignorance results in disbelief (*kufr*), and not all knowledge leads to assent. In other words, the presence of knowledge does not preclude disbelief, nor does it always mandate faith.[78]

According to al-Nasafī, knowledge does not eradicate one's free will in choosing to believe. Knowledge serves merely as a cause (*sabab*)

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[75] It is a lengthy analysis that cannot be included here due to the limitations of this paper. See, for the analysis, al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/406.

[76] *The Quranic Arabic Corpus - Sahih International* (Accessed February 23, 2023), al-Baqara 2/146.

[77] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/415; Cf. Id., *Baḥr al-kalām*, 166.

[78] See al-Baqarah 2/146; al-Anʿām 6/20; al-Tawbah 9/74; al-Kahf 18/29; al-Naml 27/:14.

that may lead to belief, just as ignorance can lead to disbelief.[79] Therefore, knowledge (or evidence) in the act of faith is only a cause, drive, or motive, not something that necessarily leads one to have faith. To put it another way, the role of knowledge is that of a trigger, an incentive, or an inducement rather than a guarantee of belief. Faith requires assent by the heart, rendering knowledge alone insufficient for its attainment. The act of faith involves a volitional, emotional, and spiritual dimension that cannot be replaced by knowledge alone. This is because, as al-Nasafī contends, the essence of faith lies in the heart's motion towards embracing the truth: *al-īmān huwa l-taṣdīq* (faith is assent), *bi-l-qalb yakūn al-tasdīq* (and assent is actualized through the heart); *al-īmān yakūn bi-l-qalb* (thus, faith is actualized through the heart).[80]

As a result, al-Nasafī regards *taṣdīq* as a movement of the heart and rejects the notion that *maʿrifah* inevitably leads to *īmān*. This implies that he ascribes a dual meaning to *taṣdīq*. The first meaning of *taṣdīq* refers to the cognitive recognition of something, where free will is not involved, as knowledge necessarily leads to *taṣdīq*. As for the second meaning of *taṣdīq*, it relates to volition, that is, the power or faculty of making choices or decisions by one's own will. According to al-Nasafī, upon acquiring knowledge in the pursuit of faith, individuals are still at liberty to adopt or reject the moral principles and teachings of that faith as the guiding force in their lives. This second *taṣdīq*, which is mainly associated with one's faculty of choice, is thought of by al-Nasafī as the thing that is most deserving of being called *īmān*, as it functions as a controlling, commanding, and guiding force.[81] Al-Taftāzānī's remarks in *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid* support the idea that Māturīdī theologians commonly held the belief in the dual interpretation of assent:

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[79] The Arabic term *sabab* denotes "cause", "occasion", or "motive". Al-Nasafī argues that this term can also be used in a non-causal sense. For further details, see al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 67.

[80] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/415.

[81] It has been observed numerous times that al-Nasafī was a dedicated disciple of al-Māturīdī, and his comprehension of *taṣdīq* is in harmony with that of his teacher. *Taṣdīq* is understood by both scholars as having a dual sense. Meric Pessagno's study of the idea of *taṣdīq* in al-Māturīdī has been instrumental in shaping the analysis presented here, for which I am thankful, see Jerome Meric Pessagno, "Intellect and Religious Assent: *The View of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī*", *The Muslim World* 69/1 (1979), 18-27.

> ... there is a distinct difference between the cognition of the judgments and deciding that they are true on the one hand, and the assent to them and conviction about them on the other. So[,] it is sound to call the second kind Belief [*īmān*] in distinction from the first. ... Some of the Early Theologians mention the suggestion that assent is an expression for binding the heart to that which is known of the narratives given by the Narrator; and it is something acquired (*kasbī*), established by the choice of the one who assents. Therefore[,] it is to be rewarded and considered the chief of religious duties (*al-ʿibādāt*) rather than cognition which sometimes occurs without any acquisition, as when one's glance falls on some body and there results to him knowledge that it is a wall or a stone. ... assent means that by your choice you ascribe veracity to the Narrator. Thus, if it were to occur in the heart without choice, it would not be assent, even though it were cognition.[82]

This passage implies that in the first *taṣdīq*, the term *qalb* pertains to man's cognitive faculty, as it is exclusively through this faculty that one can differentiate between truth and falsehood. On the other hand, in the second *taṣdīq*, the term *qalb* denotes man's faculty of choice.[83] In the latter context, man's cognitive faculty holds no importance as this *taṣdīq* is solely a matter of the heart.[84] Put differently, the *taṣdīq* concerning knowledge does not necessarily lead to the second *taṣdīq* concerning free will. The latter *taṣdīq* involves going beyond the mere intellectual understanding obtained from the former *taṣdīq* and wholeheartedly committing oneself to the veracity of the former *taṣdīq*. Al-Nasafī's interpretation of faith as "a light in the heart" (*nūr fi l-qalb*) emphasizes the voluntaristic character of the second *taṣdīq*.[85] According to this view, individuals voluntarily embrace this light as their primary principle for grappling with their existential inquiries,

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[82] Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Tāftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Tāftāzānī on the Creed of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī*, trans. Earl Edgar Elder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 123.

[83] When distinguishing between the mind and the heart, al-Nasafī employs the term *bāl* to refer specifically to the former, as evidenced by his use of the phrase *khaṭara bi-bālihī* to describe mental thoughts. See al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 164-165.

[84] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 2/415.

[85] Al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 67.

including the purpose of life and the meaning of existence in the world.

Lastly, although it is essential to have a strong commitment to the form of *taṣdīq* known as faith, which pertains to free will, there is no obligation to be committed to the *taṣdīq* related to knowledge. Faith transcends mere acknowledgment of truth through cognition and logical reasoning, but it should also rely on conclusive evidence, as unfounded faith is blind. Al-Nasafī upholds a close relation between knowledge and religious faith, portraying faith as the light of knowledge in the heart (*nūr al-maʿrifah*).[86] Concepts that evoke knowledge and lead to it, such as evidence, reasoning, and sign, occupy a central place in al-Nasafī's interpretation of religious faith. Upon careful examination of his works, one can observe that al-Nasafī repeatedly stresses the importance of refraining from blindly accepting the beliefs of others without a foundation in knowledge. Faith that lacks rational justification is not praiseworthy. Considering that both reason and free will are divine gifts, they should not be in conflict. Therefore, reason should illuminate the path that leads to faith and make it easier for individuals to assent to its truth content.

3. Examining Two Sides of the Coin: A Comparative Analysis

The first section of the discussion revealed that both scholars are in agreement regarding the concept of faith as an inward assent, referred to as *agnitio* or *taṣdīq*.[87] However, they also recognize the significance

[86] Al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, 67.

[87] One might rightfully ask why the comparison of the scholars' ideas was conducted under a separate heading rather than being integrated throughout the study. One who thinks that the latter is a better option than the former may even assume that the study has structural flaws. However, first and foremost, I believe it is crucial to ensure that readers have a complete understanding of the positions and perspectives held by the thinkers under discussion before proceeding to assess their views. This is because the viewpoints of each thinker regarding a particular matter are strongly connected and interrelated with their viewpoints on other topics. If assessments or comparisons were made without first presenting these interconnected perspectives and the general picture, it might lead to confusion among the readers. Therefore, introducing this interconnection at the outset will make the subsequent comparison more effective and easier for the readers to follow. This approach also provides dedicated space for detailed assessment. I also believe that in this way, each scholar's ideas can be explored in-depth within their respective sections. Then, by bringing these separate threads together in the

of the outward expression of faith through speech and its influence on human deeds. While these last two aspects of faith are not inherent to its nature, they serve as complementary factors. Inner assent is required and indispensable for faith because outward declaration and deeds have no meaning in the absence of inner assent. Therefore, the expression "faith is assent by the heart" does not exclude the external declaration and deeds from faith; rather, it emphasizes that without inner assent, the other two become futile.

Furthermore, it is evident from the writings of both authors that they each attribute profound value to human reason. For instance, according to Aquinas, human reason plays an essential role in defending divine teachings against infidels and in demonstrating that the articles of faith align with our natural knowledge. Similarly, al-Nasafī constantly employs human reason to safeguard the teachings of his school and refute heretical views held by certain groups. Human reason can also unveil numerous truths concerning the existence of God, although it has limitations in comprehending certain divine realities, such as the concept of the Trinity, as emphasized by Aquinas. Al-Nasafī, too, affirms the value of reason in acquiring knowledge about God but admits that fully grasping His reality or essence surpasses human capacity. As previously mentioned, according to him, one can know (*yaʿlam*) God but cannot fully comprehend (*yudrik*) His divine essence.

There is a remarkable difference, however, even a complete contrast, in the positions of these two scholars regarding the relationship between religious assent and conclusive evidence. According to Aquinas, faith stands somewhere between scientific knowledge and mere opinion, serving as a distinct form of cognition. Its distinction from mere opinion lies in the profound certainty that can be attained through the voluntary exercise of free will, while its difference from scientific knowledge lies in the absence of conclusive evidence. Therefore, faith resembles scientific knowledge regarding complete certainty but shares similarities with opinion due to the lack of conclusive evidence. The merit of an act of faith seems to stem from

comparative section, the study can highlight the divergences and convergences more effectively. Thus, while I appreciate this concern, I believe our approach was methodically chosen to yield the most reliable and insightful outcomes for the purpose of the study.

its independence from conclusive evidence. In other words, faith is meaningful when it is not based on conclusive proof because truly voluntary assent (*agnitio*) to a proposition may occur only when there is freedom to choose without being forced by evidence. This means that faith, according to Aquinas, cannot be forced or coerced even by reason or knowledge itself; it must be a voluntary and sincere act of the will. If there were unambiguous and undeniable proofs of God's existence and the truths of faith, then faith itself would become unnecessary, as assent would become a necessity in such circumstances. Nevertheless, the capacity of the will to choose in favor of faith can only be achieved through the assistance of God. In other words, Aquinas believes that the ability to have a will inclined towards faith depends on divine aid or intervention, for, as his predecessor Augustine once claimed, the human will, if not guided by God, is destined to sin, let alone attain faith.[88] This implies that faith is not solely a result of rational thinking or human effort but rather a theological virtue and, ultimately, a gift from God. It is a quality that is cultivated through an intimate relationship with God. Aquinas believes that for individuals to truly understand and fully embrace the truths of faith, they require divine intervention from God. It is through this guidance that they can attain a deep and unwavering conviction in their beliefs. Therefore, the ability to have faith and make virtuous choices is viewed as a manifestation of God's grace.

Al-Nasafī, on the other hand, distinguishes between assent (*taṣdīq*) originating from knowledge and that arising from faith. He acknowledges that when it comes to knowing, the act of assenting to a proposition becomes an ineluctable reality. Faith, however, does not represent the initial involuntary assent; instead, it is a subsequent assent that entails freely embracing the truth imparted by the earlier assent and incorporating it as a guiding principle in one's life. In other words, simply knowing of something does not necessarily make its content the guiding principle by which one lives. Knowledge, the former assent, merely serves as a motive that encourages one toward

[88] For further information regarding the relationship between human free will and divine intervention within the context of Christian faith as interpreted by Augustine and Aquinas, see Muhammet Saygı, "The Predominant Christian Interpretation of Religious Faith in the Middle Ages: Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas", *Darulfunun İlahiyat* 34/1 (June 2023), 211-242.

the latter assent, which is what faith (*īmān*) is, according to al-Nasafī. He maintains that despite possessing knowledge, individuals can deceive themselves and lead a life that contradicts the content of the truth revealed in the initial assent. Consequently, he argues against the idea that knowledge inherently and inevitably eradicates free will in believing, thereby negating its rational and ethical merit.

Some philosophers and theologians have questioned the idea that faith is exclusively a theological virtue given by God, without any involvement or contribution from the believer. For instance, Paul J. Griffiths draws attention to the devastating repercussions and undesirable outcomes that would arise if the rational defence of faith were abandoned. If the use of knowledge and demonstrative reasoning in favour of religious beliefs is discarded, religious traditions, according to Griffiths, would be reduced to the level of mere personal opinions. In other words, without a rational apologetic enterprise, religious beliefs would lose their intellectual grounding and become subjective views devoid of objective legitimacy or significance. Furthermore, if religious beliefs that guide the lives of religious individuals lack rational justification, it will undermine their credibility in public discourse. As a consequence, their perspectives and contributions may be marginalised or disregarded, restricting their opportunity to actively participate in shaping public policies and decisions.[89] Eventually, it appears that if the fundamental beliefs of a particular religion cannot be adequately defended and protected against opposing arguments, that religious tradition is unlikely to survive in the long run.

Anthony Kenny argues against the claim of some theologians, including Aquinas, that faith is a theological virtue. According to Kenny, certain criteria need to be fulfilled for faith to be considered praiseworthy or meritorious. The first criterion is that the rational justifications or arguments supporting the existence of God should be established without depending on faith. In other words, arguments supporting God's existence should be based on demonstrative reasoning rather than solely relying on faith or revelation. The second criterion is that the historical events claimed by believers to be divine

[89] Paul J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007).

revelations must be verified or, at the very least, shown to be rationally possible by historians using the methods of historical science.[90]

Terence Penelhum argues that Aquinas' theory, which states that religious faith can only be considered praiseworthy if the evidence supporting it is not conclusive, is misguided. According to Penelhum, this perspective implies a dichotomy between faith and knowledge, suggesting that they cannot coexist or be reconciled. In the words of Penelhum:

> ... Aquinas, and a great many other thinkers who follow him, are mistaken in holding that the voluntariness, and hence the merit, of faith depends upon the inconclusiveness of the grounds for it. Perhaps acceptance can be given voluntarily even though the grounds are conclusive. If this seems absurd, let us reflect first that there are two ways in which one can accept what is proved to one: one can be reluctant to accept it, as Thomas's devils are, or one can be glad to accept it. Perhaps the man of faith has merit because he is glad to accept the truths of faith when the devil is not. Perhaps what makes faith voluntary is not that its grounds are inconclusive, but that even if they are conclusive, men are free to deceive themselves and refuse to admit that they are. Faith would be the outcome of a willingness to admit this, and faith and knowledge need not then be exclusive at all. ... Faith might be, or include, supposed knowledge.[91]

It is true also for al-Nasafī that faith must be freely chosen to be deserving of praise. Nevertheless, al-Nasafī differs in that he does not see a need to discard knowledge in favour of free will. One can still exercise his/her freedom of choice by either accepting or rejecting the truth content that arises from his/her initial assent as the fundamental criterion to guide his/her life. In other words, the praiseworthiness of faith can also be attributed to voluntarily adopting such a criterion or willingly and gladly embracing it as the guiding force in one's life, as Penelhum argues. It is worth noting that, according to many religious traditions, even demons or evil spirits possess knowledge about God. However, their faith is not deemed praiseworthy because it is coerced

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[90] Anthony Kenny, *What Is Faith?: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 57.

[91] Terence Penelhum, "The Analysis of Faith in St Thomas Aquinas", *Religious Studies* 13/2 (June 1977), 152-153.

or forced upon them due to the immediate presence of God. To put it another way, their faith is not based on their free will since they have direct knowledge of God's existence. Therefore, their faith is not meritorious because they do not willingly or voluntarily accept God's authority over them.

It might be said that al-Nasafī, due to the simplicity of Islamic beliefs he encountered, adopted a strictly rational approach to the subject being discussed. In contrast to his Christian colleague, al-Nasafī did not has to grapple with complex issues such as the Incarnation and Trinity that are elusive to explain by natural reason. This distinction likely had a notable influence on their adoption of different perspectives. It is worth noting that even Aquinas himself, in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, acknowledges the straightforward nature of Islamic teachings, although his comments seem to be directed towards diminishing their significance by emphasising their simplicity. Aquinas' words are as follows:

> ... the lessons of truth which he [the Prophet of Islam] inculcated were only such as can be easily known to any man of average wisdom by his natural powers—in fact, he mingled the truths which he taught with many fables and most false doctrines.[92]

In the passages immediately preceding these statements, Aquinas addresses several elusive doctrines of Christianity, which he refers to as the "mysteries" of faith. For instance, according to Aquinas, the Incarnation –the belief that Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine– is extremely difficult for human understanding to wholly grasp. Despite the elusive nature of these doctrines, Aquinas interprets the worldwide spread of Christianity as compelling evidence of its truth and divinely ordained status. In other words, he regards the embrace and spread of Christianity across diverse cultures and regions as a manifestation of its authenticity and divine nature. In Aquinas' words:

> Now, such a wondrous conversion of the world to the Christian faith is a most indubitable proof that such signs did take place ... For it would be the most wondrous sign of all if, without any wondrous signs, the world were [was] persuaded by simple and lowly men to believe things so arduous, to accomplish things so difficult, and to hope for things so sublime.[93]

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92 Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 6.
93 Aquinas, *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 6.

If, based on our discussion so far, one concludes that Aquinas holds or advocates a fideist attitude, this would be a misinterpretation. It must be clarified that within Aquinas' theological framework, when we say knowledge and faith are mutually exclusive, we refer to a specific process in which one gives "intellectual assent" to the propositions of Christian faith, or, as Aquinas calls it, to the articles of "formed faith". This should not be understood as Aquinas suggesting a fundamental contradiction between intellect (knowledge) and faith in a general sense. Aquinas does not advocate the idea of making a significant "leap of faith", nor does he assert that faith and reason are in constant and irreconcilable conflict. The conclusion of this study, that "knowledge and faith are mutually exclusive in Aquinas", as mentioned earlier, primarily pertains to a specific context: the process of forming one of the three theological virtues, faith.[94] Here, Aquinas still maintains that faith and reason do not contradict each other. However, he admits that there are some articles of faith, such as the Trinity and Incarnation, that transcend or surpass the limits of human intellect. Therefore, excluding knowledge from the act of having faith within this context does not imply that faith and reason are fundamentally incompatible in Aquinas' thought.

Otherwise, at all stages of his theological framework, Aquinas employs reason just as intensively as al-Nasafī does. Specifically, this role of reason in Aquinas is more prominent during the stage of "formless faith", which serves as a preparatory phase leading to the actual destination known as "formed faith". Yet, in the stage of "formed faith", Aquinas continues to rely on reason, but he does so with more moderation compared to the earlier stage, where reason plays a more assertive role. In the latter stage, Aquinas attempts to demonstrate through the intellect the reasons why an act of Christian faith should be grounded in free will rather than intellect. In other words, reason still plays a role in this stage but in a less dominant or assertive manner. He seeks to show that faith is not solely a product of intellectual

[94] In Aquinas' philosophy, "faith", as explained earlier, is considered one of the three theological virtues, alongside "hope" and "charity". And all these virtues are bestowed upon the servant as a free gift from God, without any effort on the part of the individual. For more information regarding how Augustine influenced Aquinas on the matter of human will in the act of faith, see Saygı, "The Predominant Christian Interpretation of Religious Faith in the Middle Ages", 211-242.

processes. It should be acknowledged that even in this latter stage, Aquinas does not abandon reason. He continues to use intellectual means to explain the rationale behind grounding faith in free will. As a result, Aquinas believes that faith and reason can coexist and complement each other, even though faith, according to him, becomes more about one's free choice and less about intellectual persuasion.

Even after these reconsiderations, one aspect of Aquinas' philosophy remains unchanged: the will plays a significant role in the acquisition of Christian faith. Aquinas' writings on this matter are so clear and unambiguous that there is no room for different interpretations. This privileged position of the will in his theology is evident in contemporary studies, including those that defend Aquinas' account of faith.[95] When one believes (*credere*), his/her act of intellectual assent is not caused by the "evidentness" of the object itself or by the inherent clarity or obviousness of the thing being believed but by his/her willpower.[96] To elaborate, when the intellect evaluates the proposition, it deems the proposition to be highly probable or likely to be true. However, the available evidence is not strong enough to fully convince the intellect to accept the proposition at hand as true.[97] This is what we mean when we say that the will plays a significant role and knowledge and faith are mutually exclusive in Aquinas' account of faith. Aquinas argues that the will naturally tends towards what is good.[98] When the evidence or information presented to the intellect is not strong enough to make it fully accept, the will can step in to bridge this gap.[99] In other words, the will can influence the

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95 See, for instance, John A. West, "Aquinas on Intellect, Will, and Faith", *Aporia* 13/1 (Spring 2003), 1, 8.

96 West, "Aquinas on Intellect, Will, and Faith", 4, 8.

97 West, "Aquinas on Intellect, Will, and Faith", 6.

98 In Aquinas' philosophy, the will, which is a faculty of the human soul, is inherently inclined toward the good. However, it is important to note that "good" in this context does not refer to any specific or particular good thing; rather, it signifies goodness in a general or universal sense, namely, the First Truth, God himself. As a result of this inherent disposition, the will can, in certain situations, influence or direct the other powers of the soul, leading them to act in accordance with the pursuit of the universal good rather than individual or specific goods. See West, "Aquinas on Intellect, Will, and Faith", 2-3, 6.

99 Because of this prominent role of the will in the act of faith, Aquinas is characterised as an "indirect and descriptive volitionalist". See West, "Aquinas on Intellect, Will, and Faith", 8. However, as Kenny points out, it should be noted that the process in which the will influences the intellect also begins with the intellect itself, which is

intellect to choose to assent to the proposition because it recognises that doing so is a way to attain the universal or absolute good, namely, God himself.

Conclusion

The relation of intellect to religious assent remains an elusive and complex issue, with various approaches and interpretations. This study examined two alternative approaches, specifically those of al-Nasafī and Aquinas, and analysed their perspectives on religious faith. In conclusion, according to Aquinas, the object of faith cannot sufficiently move the intellect to give assent to the propositions of faith. In other words, there cannot be conclusive evidence in the acquisition of faith strong enough to fully convince the intellect to accept the proposition at hand as true. However, the will can, in certain situations, such as in the act of faith, influence or command the intellect to give assent because of its inherent disposition towards goodness. Yet, grounding faith in knowledge introduces a challenge to human free will, as knowledge compels the intellect to assent, leaving no room for free will. According to Aquinas, faith is worthy of praise only when it emerges as an authentic expression of the will, unencumbered by conclusive evidence or knowledge. To put it simply, in the presence of knowledge, assent arises from the intellect necessarily, but faith should be a genuine act of the will. This is Aquinas' stance that leads us to the conclusion that, within Aquinas's account of faith, religious assent and knowledge are mutually exclusive entities. Otherwise, it should be explicitly stated that he does not advocate for a fideist attitude. In fact, he skilfully rationalises why he adopts this position, as demonstrated in the discussions throughout the current study. He does utilise reason and rational explanations to support his theory of faith, and he certainly distinguishes his approach from fideistic discourses.

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responsible for comprehending and assessing the qualities or characteristics that make a particular thing good. Once the intellect recognises these qualities, it informs the will, which is the faculty associated with desire and decision-making. The will, informed by the intellect's evaluation, then generates the desire to pursue the perceived "good". In essence, the intellect first comprehends what is good, and the will subsequently responds by fostering the desire to attain or pursue that perceived good. See Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 59.

Al-Nasafī, on the other hand, offers an alternative way of addressing the relation of intellect to religious assent. He argues that faith consists of holding two assents. The first assent (*taṣdīq*) is related to knowledge (*maʿrifah*), and free will does not play a role in this assent because knowledge necessarily leads to assent. In other words, once the intellect engages with the object, free will no longer plays a role, as cognition is inevitably realised by the human mind after such engagement. Therefore, faith cannot be reduced to *maʿrifah*, or *maʿrifah* cannot be called faith because faith is not an intrinsically inevitable conclusion that emerges from reasoning or an intellectual argument. Faith arises only when the truth content of the first assent is voluntarily adopted as a guiding criterion for one's life through a second assent. Faith (*īmān*), occasionally defined as *iʿtiqād*, can be seen as the conscious act of binding or tethering (*ʿaqd*) one's innermost being, referred to as *qalb* by al-Nasafī, to the Divine. Faith represents a sincere and deliberate commitment to living a virtuous life grounded in knowledge and an unwavering love for God. This act of binding (*ʿaqd*) or establishing a genuine connection with the Divine necessitates a prior state of knowledge, understanding, or consciousness of the Divine. For human beings bind their hearts only to what they are conscious of or have knowledge about. As a result, according to al-Nasafī, faith is not an arbitrary or irrational leap but rather a moral attitude that emerges when individuals consciously turn towards God. Although it is true that faith cannot be reduced to *maʿrifah*, there is also no mutual conflict between intellect and religious assent in al-Nasafī's perspective. The intellect prepares a person for faith and eases the transition from the first assent (in the sense of cognition) to the second (in the sense of voluntary commitment). For al-Nasafī, religious faith can only be justified by knowledge or conclusive evidence (*dalīl*). Imitating the beliefs of forefathers (*taqlīd*), relying on intuition (*ilhām*), or trusting in the goodness of those beliefs cannot be a means of acquiring true knowledge of religions. Holding a religious faith that is not based on *dalīl* is problematic both from epistemological and moral perspectives. Knowledge, evidence, or reason (*ʿaql*) is the only ground that al-Nasafī deems sufficient for an individual to accept a religious faith, as it is the only means by which the truth or falsity of any claims can be known.

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