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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome back to the new issue of *Ilahiyat Studies*. First, we would like to express our gratitude and extend a warm welcome to Asst. Prof. Zeynep Yücedođru, Asst. Prof. Kevser Demir Bektař, and Res. Asst. Merve Yavuz. They have joined us as associate editors in this issue, and their contributions will strengthen our journal even further.

This issue of *IS* features six research articles and a book review. In the first article, “Surplus of Meaning or Suspending Philology?: Some Reflections on Philological Ramification in Classical Qur’ān Commentary”, Merve Palanci argues that understanding a phrase in the linguistic structure of the Qur’ān goes beyond simply studying it conceptually using linguistic tools. To prove her case, Palanci specifically focuses on the philological implications of the commentary on the *dhālika l-kitāb* pattern in Q 2:2. By examining this particular instance, the author concludes that a thorough comprehension of the Qur’ān can be achieved only by a philological analysis that considers historical information and intratextual references.

In the second article, “Raëlism: An Unconventional Religious Pathway into Transhumanism”, Būřra Yeřilyurt and Muhammet Yeřilyurt present a detailed analysis of Raëlism, a new religious movement, in the context of transhumanism. The central argument involves the distinctive fusion of spirituality and technology in the movement. According to this comprehensive approach, technology can also support human spiritual development and help us better understand our place in the universe in addition to improving our physical and mental capacities. The authors conclude that the convergence of Raëlism and transhumanism is a noteworthy intellectual phenomenon that questions established

frameworks of human progress and redefines the role of religion in our rapidly evolving society.

“The Role of Religious and Spiritual Factors in Coping with Psychosocial Problems in Refugee Adolescents”, by Nur Pamuk Kuru and Fatma Baynal, presents a study that aims to determine how refugee adolescents affected by war and migration coped with difficulties and what support they received. Research has shown that receiving support from religious and spiritual experiences during challenging periods can enhance individuals’ psychological resilience and effectively safeguard their spiritual well-being.

In the article “Testing the Mediating and Moderating Factors of the Link Between Religiosity and Vaccine Hesitancy: A Quantitative Study of Turkish Muslims”, Ali Ayten, Muhammet Numan Sağırılı, Derya Eren Cengiz, Ömer Faruk Cengiz, and Muhammed Turan Çalışkan provide an analysis of the correlation between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity among Turkish Muslims and compare their findings to the relevant literature. This study also investigates the moderating effect of age and the mediating role of trust in science and scientists in this correlation. The results suggest a strong positive relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

Hakime Reyyan Yaşar’s article, “Confronting Modernity and the Transformation of the Muslim Family in Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen’s Writings in the 20th Century Ottoman State”, evaluates the responses of Bilmen, a highly influential Muslim intellectual and Islamic jurist in the late Ottoman Empire and the early years of Republican Turkey, to social changes and the effects of modernization. Given Bilmen’s writings on subjects such as marriage, divorce, polygamy, and population planning, the author argues that Bilmen’s criticism of these changes extended beyond a Westernization bias. According to the author, Bilmen inquires about the origins of the transformation process and suggests that Islam is a dynamic religion that can be harmonized with change.

In the last article of this issue, “Caputo’s Postmodern Understanding of Religion”, Bilal Bekalp invites us to explore the concepts of “weak theology” and “religion without religion”. He critically analyzes the positioning of religion and theology within postmodern thought, focusing on Caputo’s perspective. The author concludes that Caputo provides flexible theology, affirms faith without absolute or certain

knowledge, and values religious tradition while maintaining his distance from actual historical faith communities.

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 *Ilabiyat Studies*.

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ARTICLES

*Surplus of Meaning or Suspending Philology?: Some Reflections on
Philological Ramification in Classical Qur'ān Commentary*

Merve Palanci



Raëlism: An Unconventional Religious Pathway to Transhumanism

Büşra Yeşilyurt & Muhammet Yeşilyurt



*The Role of Religious and Spiritual Factors in Coping with
Psychosocial Problems in Refugee Adolescents*

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*Testing the Mediating and Moderating Factors of the Link Between
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Ali Ayten, Muhammet Numan Sağırılı, Derya Eren Cengiz, Ömer Faruk
Cengiz & Muhammed Turan Çalışkan



*Confronting Modernity and the Transformation of the Muslim Family
in Ömer Nasubi Bilmen's Writings in the 20th Century Ottoman State*

Hakime Reyyan Yaşar



Caputo's Postmodern Understanding of Religion

Bilal Bekalp



**SURPLUS OF MEANING OR SUSPENDING PHILOLOGY?:
SOME REFLECTIONS ON PHILOLOGICAL RAMIFICATION IN
CLASSICAL QUR'ĀN COMMENTARY**

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Abstract

This study examines the philological data criteria used for exploring the genuine meanings and denominators of Arabic verbatim of the Qur'ān by Muslim exegetes of the classical period, with a special focus on the philological ramification of the commentary of *dhālika l-kitāb* pattern in Q 2:2.

Having attained the status of a corpus (*kitāb*) in the aftermath of a very long-phased oral tradition, the Qur'ān's textus receptus reflects both portrayals of verbality and scriptural traits embedded in its Arabic verbatim yielded by the compilation process. The Qur'ān, representing a junction spot for oral and written traditions in Arab culture, is known to be molded according to the Arabic language register and also formalized the language's post facto grammar. In this vein, the Qur'ānic text bears a reflexive affiliation with its pertinent language. This article

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This work is licensed under *Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International*.

argues that the lingual reciprocity between the Qurʾānic text and its language underwent a critical suspension through commentaries when the case was Qurʾān's *al-kitāb*. In this article, the first layer of the data reflects the historical background of the term *kitāb*. Then, it construes the word within Qurʾān's cross-references. It exemplifies commentaries on the *dhālika l-kitāb* pattern, circumventing philological evidence. After elucidating different grounds leading to philological ramification, I argue that a philological inference from the Qurʾān nests in its fullest sense only when the commentator credits historical data and cross-references within the Qurʾānic content.

Keywords: Qurʾān, exegesis, philological exegesis, *dhālika l-kitāb*, surplus of meaning

Introduction*

Religion has played a crucial role in the spiritual life of Muslim society from the very outset, influencing almost every sphere of cultural activity. Quotations from the Qurʾān and the sayings of the Prophet are prevalent in all branches of Arabic literature. Given this background, it is reasonable to assume that religious influences also played a role in Arabic philology. This is particularly evident as the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, especially the former, were prominent sources of Arabic grammar and lexicography.¹ In a manner analogous to the influence of the Vedas on Indian grammar, Homer on Greek grammar, the books of Confucius on Chinese grammar, and the Biblical Canon on Hebrew grammar, the impetus for the commencement of Arabic philological studies emanated from the meticulous examination of the Muslim Holy Book.

* While penning this article, I have benefited from my PhD dissertation that is achieved at Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhammed Coşkun.

¹ Whereas linguistic evidence extracted from the texts of ḥadīth genre was deemed improper for serving the grammatology of the Arabic language in the first century of Islam, lexicographical works of early period drew on it extensively from the very outset. L. Kopf, "Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology", *Studia Islamica* 5 (1956), 3; For a comprehensive early history of lexicographical tradition of Arabic language see Soner Gündüzöz, "Arap Sözlük Bilimi ve Sözlük Çalışmaları", *İslam Medeniyetinde Dil İlimleri: Tarih ve Problemler*, ed. İsmail Güler (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2017), 23-64.

The Arabic scholarly tradition has indeed transmitted certain information indicating that even some of the earliest philologists were influenced in their professional pursuits by religious considerations. Notably, figures such as Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ (d. 154/771) and Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī (d. 213/828) expressed reservations about the compatibility of collecting ancient poetry and Bedouin sayings with the obligation imposed on every educated Muslim to engage in the study of religious literature. Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, as recounted, fervently burned his extensive collection of philological notes in a display of piety, with the explicit intent of dedicating himself wholly to the study of the Qur’ān. Upon resuming his philological endeavors, he had to rely entirely on his memory. Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī, on the other hand, was primarily occupied by compiling the *dīwāns* of various Arab tribes. He transcribed the Qur’ān and placed the manuscript in the mosque of Kūfah upon completing the *dīwān* of any given tribe. This account evidently suggests that he undertook this practice as a means of atonement for having engaged in worldly pursuits.²

In fact, linguistic studies are known to have embarked upon the transition of the Qur’ānic text from oral to written form. Arabic linguistics made significant progress in the 2nd-4th centuries AH due to the challenges faced in transcribing the language. The development of Arabic linguistics was primarily driven by the need to overcome these challenges. Although there were no written texts other than the *mu‘allaqāt* before the Qur’ān became a codex, the emergence of Sībawayhi’s (d. 180/796) *al-Kitāb*³ is remarkable. Sībawayhi discussed

² Kopf, “Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology”, 4.

³ Baalbaki scrutinizes the methodological principles and techniques inherent in Sībawayhi’s examination of the Arabic language and traces the evolution of these methodologies as shaped by subsequent grammarians. By situating the *al-Kitāb* within the milieu of early Arabic philological endeavors, he dissects numerous passages to elucidate the coherence of the author’s grammatical analytical system and the interconnectedness of his analytical instruments and concern. The text notably emphasizes Sībawayhi’s profound impact on the broader tradition of Arabic grammar throughout its entirety. Ramzi Baalbaki, *The Legacy of the Kitāb: Sībawayhi’s Analytical Methods Within the Context of the Arabic Grammatical Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Although the main content of Sībawayhi’s book is based on the ideas of Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, it is important to note that the opinions of linguists, grammarians, and qirā’ah scholars, such as Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb, Akhfash al-Akbar, Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, ‘Īsā ibn ‘Umar al-Thaqafī, Ibn Abī Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī, and Hārūn al-A‘war al-Qārī, also made significant contributions to the book.

issues related to Arabic grammatology depth in the 2nd century AH, showing the path of Arabic philology after the Qurʾān.⁴

As a tentative hypothesis, Goldziher (d. 1921) proposed that the categorization of the three parts of speech of Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* did not originate in Ḥijāz. There is no conclusive evidence supporting the notion that this theory, which implies the influence of Greek logic, had its inception there. He alludes to preliminary remarks in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*, who introduced this division at the beginning of his book. As Sībawayhi's lifespan coincided with a period under 'Abbāsīd rule when Greek philosophy exerted a considerable influence on Arab intellectuals, Goldziher raises the question of a probable external influence, namely, Greek, albeit being hesitant in this argument.⁵

However, regarding the inception of Arab linguistic inquiry and its dependency on the Qurʾānic text,⁶ there is a broad consensus among scholars. Those who critically assess the data from the Arab tradition, as compiled by Flügel (d. 1870), generally concur that Abū l-Aswad al-Duʿalī (d. 69/688) can be acknowledged as the progenitor of Arabic grammar.⁷ However, tradition, unsatisfied with this attribution, credits 'Alī (d. 40/661), the caliph, as the individual who provided the initial impetus to the development of grammar as a science. Flügel, while earnestly presenting the pertinent details of this tradition, incorporates them into his scholarly reflections, ultimately concluding that Abū l-Aswad (d. 69/688) was the first to compose a grammatical work based on the information supposedly conveyed to him by 'Alī. Among 'Alī's contributions to Abū l-Aswad, significant emphasis is placed on his

Mehmet Reşit Özbalkıç, "Sıbeveyhi", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2009).

⁴ Mehmet Şirin Çıkar, "İlk Dönem Arap Dilbilimi", *Kur'an ve Dil: Dilbilim ve Hermenötik Sempozyumu (17-18 Mayıs 2001)* (Erzurum: Bakanlar Matbaası, 2002), 256.

⁵ Ignaz Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar Among the Arabs: An Essay in Literary History*, trans. Kinga Dévényi - Tamás Iványi (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 3-6.

⁶ Early studies on Arabic syntax and morphology in the post-Qurʾānic period can be exemplified in this respect. Classical treatises on Arabic rhetoric are the other denominator proving the normative role of Qurʾānic text over Arabic philology. Halim Öznurhan, "Kur'an'ın Arap Diline Tesiri", *İslâm Öncesi Araplarda Dil ve Edebiyat*, ed. Mustafa Çağrıncı (İstanbul: KURAMER, 2019), 119-126.

⁷ Gustav Flügel, *Die Grammatischen Schulen der Araber. Erste Abtheilung. Die Schulen von Basra und Kufa und die Gemischte Schule* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1862), 18-26.

observations regarding the categorization of speech into three parts: *ism* (name, i.e., noun), *fiʿl* (action, i.e., verb), and *ḥarf* (letter, i.e., particle).⁸

In a scholarly investigation exploring the impact of Greek abstraction on Arabic linguistic cognition, Versteegh asserted that certain facets of the discourse surrounding the *tawqīf*⁹ matter exhibited parallels with linguistic deliberations originating in Greek linguistic thought, revealing an external linkage with a special focus on the correspondingly equated *tawqīf* term. Furthermore, Versteegh proposed that the terminology employed in Arabic grammar was constructed upon a presumed Greek model.¹⁰ However, his recent scrutiny of several early Qurʾān commentaries has led him to reject his previous conjecture concerning external influences within the realm of grammar,¹¹ and Versteegh's reaffirmation underscores the pivotal role played by the linguistic structure of the Qurʾān in shaping the foundational rules of the Arabic language by dismissing the possibility of an external influence.

In summary, it is widely accepted that the formulation of grammatical rules and the linguistic principles of morphology and syntax in the interpretation of the Qurʾān, particularly in early linguistic commentaries, find their basis within the Qurʾānic text, which is the compiled form and *textus receptus*. This underscores a reciprocal relationship between the Arabic language, serving as the linguistic medium of the Qurʾān, and the Qurʾān itself, elucidating a nuanced interrelationship.

Contrary to the professed commitment of Qurʾānic exegetes to a disciplined philological approach, this article argues that their

⁸ Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs*, 3.

⁹ *Tawqīf* is the central term in Islamic theology, connotating the argument that the origins of language depend on divine interference. For theological approaches to the origins of language see Hulusi Arslan - Numan Karagöz, "Dilin Kökeni ve Teolojik Bağlamı", *Mesned İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12/2 (Autumn 2021), 431-451.

¹⁰ C. H. M. Versteegh, *Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 128-148.

¹¹ Mustafa Shah, "The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-i-ṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy — Part I", *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 1/1 (1999), 29; Kees Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qurʾānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 19.

engagement was not always consistent with philological principles. Saleh posits that scholars, relying on philological deductions in Qurʾānic exegesis, often assume that commentaries faithfully represent the state of philological knowledge at their time of writing. However, this perspective overlooks the complex motivations that drove exegetes, as their work frequently aimed to navigate through philology while adhering to its rules. He suggested that scholars' reliance on classical dictionaries with the expectation of finding unbiased philological discussions of Qurʾānic roots is misleading. Lexicography and Qurʾānic studies are often intertwined, and dictionaries seldom challenge the interpretations of commentators. Instead, they tended to reinforce and complement the findings of these studies. He emphasizes the need to reconsider the assumptions about the relationship between philology, commentaries, and lexicons in understanding the meanings of Qurʾānic terms.¹²

Inspired by Saleh's remarks, this paper calls into question the reciprocity in relation through the following query: In formulating a philological understanding and interpretation of the Qurʾān as a linguistic corpus, does the Arabic grammatical framework developed subsequent to the Qurʾān possess standalone sufficiency in revealing the meanings of concepts and expressions in the Qurʾān's discourse? Alternatively, what are the ways of suspending philological evidence in commentaries that result in a surplus of meaning?

In this context, the *al-kitāb* in the Qurʾān has been chosen as an illustrative example to ground the argument of this paper. First, it is important to explore the manifestation of the concept of *al-kitāb* in the historical context of the Ḥijāz region during the 1st/7th century. The concept is a distinguishing link between oral and written traditions. This historical background provides the meta-textual context of the Qurʾān, helping to reveal the semantic domain of *al-kitāb* in Arab oral culture before the Qurʾān was codified. Next, the meanings assigned to *al-kitāb* within the intratextual context of the Qurʾān are addressed. Finally, this text manifests the philological deductions that lead to a

¹² Waled Saleh, "The Etymological Fallacy and Qurʾānic Studies: Muhammad, Paradise, and Late Antiquity", *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 651-652.

surplus in the meaning of a specified, referred to as “ramification”, by citing classical exegeses within the framework of Q 2:2.

1. From Nonliterate to Literate Culture: *Kitāb* as a Junction Spot in a Revelatory Epoch

Oral tradition, the primary and still widely prevalent method of human communication, goes beyond simple conversation. It encompasses a dynamic and highly diverse auditory medium for the evolution, storage, and transmission of knowledge, art, and ideas. It is often contrasted with literacy, with which it interacts in numerous ways, and with literature, where it interacts in terms of size, diversity, and societal impact. For thousands of years before the advent of writing, a relatively recent development in human history, oral tradition, as the exclusive mode of communication, played a crucial role in establishing and sustaining societies and their institutions. Furthermore, various studies conducted across six continents have demonstrated that even in the 21st century, with increasing literacy rates, oral tradition continues to be the predominant form of communication. Our current understanding of oral tradition relies not on documents, which are essentially written interpretations of oral traditions, but on insights gained through direct study of societies heavily reliant on oral tradition as a primary form of communication.¹³

The sacred texts of Judaism¹⁴ and Christianity, as well as the Qur’ān, originated within the cultural contexts of their respective societies, succeeding in a long-phased oral tradition.¹⁵ Writing has been a

¹³ For psychodynamics of orality and basic proponents of orally based thought and expression see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2012), 31-74; For orality of literacy in hermeneutical sense refer to Recep Alpyağıl, *Kimin Tarihi Hangi Hermenötik?: Kur’ân’ı Anlama Yolunda Felsefî Denemeler I* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2018), 87-91.

¹⁴ The classical Rabbinic tradition, encompassing legal, discursive, and exegetical aspects, asserts its identity as Oral Torah, transmitted orally in an uninterrupted chain, tracing its authority back to divine revelation given to Moses at Sinai. Despite this claim, since the third century C.E., the tradition has been codified in written text. Martin Jaffee, through careful examination and analysis of evidence, demonstrates that the Rabbinic tradition, as it exists today, evolved through a reciprocal interpretation of both oral and written modes. Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ For the oral tradition in Semitic religions in pre-Islamic period see Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*; Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Oral

common aspect of daily life for many centuries in Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. In contrast, the western region of Arabian peninsula, where the Qurʾān was revealed, did not have a tradition of extensive literary production. Nevertheless, the Qurʾān was revealed through a significant literary genre embedded in Arabic verbatim in this context. Although archaeological evidence for this region, particularly during the sixth century, is limited, there are indications of a modest spread of literacy even in this area.¹⁶

In contrast with the scarcity of writing acts and the tradition of compiling books, poetry, and oratories were widely accepted during the era of the Qurʾān's revelation, and sources reported that literacy was limited in Arab society, where oral culture dominated. Even in Mecca, the most important religious and commercial center of the Arab Peninsula in the 1st century AH, few people could write. Al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) stated that only seventeen people were literate.¹⁷ Therefore, it is fair to say that the society in which the Qurʾān was revealed was a nonliterate society that can also be termed "preliterate". This means that not only were the majority of people nonliterate, but they also lacked the habits and concepts that come with literacy. Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) noted in his *al-Ṭabaqāt* that writing was not well known among the Arabs and that, among the companions, only Rāfiʿ ibn Mālik (d. 3/625) knew how to write.¹⁸

As the literacy rate was limited, only a small number of individuals were capable of writing down the revealed Qurʾānic verses. The narratives transmitted from the Prophet forbidding the act of writing Prophetic sayings may well be taken as one of the fundamental features of oral culture in Arab society that is characterized by the

narrative techniques in Rabbinic Judaism and Islamic tradition bear an apparent kindred features as analyzed by Toprak in detail. See Mehmet Sait Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadīs: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2012), 58-130.

¹⁶ Peter Stein, "Literacy in Pre-Islamic Arabia: An Analysis of the Epigraphic Evidence", *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 255-256.

¹⁷ Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Jābir ibn Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1988), 454.

¹⁸ Dücane Cündioğlu, *Sözlü Kültür'den Yazılı Kültür'e Anlam'ın Taribi* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1997), 107.

authority of speech and narrative chain,¹⁹ and pejorative connotations regarding writing in the first generation of Islam indicate a hesitant attitude toward the act of writing in the first epoch of Islam.²⁰ Additionally, the scarcity of writing materials resulted in the prevalent absence of the concept of a “book” in the cultural atmosphere of the region. Nevertheless, it is inaccurate to claim that Arabs were entirely unfamiliar with books and writing materials. They were familiar with the Jews and Christians who possessed religious texts and were aware of the books they held in high regard. When the term “book” was used, they associated it with the books belonging to these religious groups, which the Qurʾān refers to as *abl al-kitāb*.²¹ Therefore, it is possible to consider the Qurʾānic text as a distinguishing link between the oral and written periods in Arab culture. The attribution of the name *kitāb* to the Qurʾān holds another significant meaning related to the religious atmosphere on the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. In this period, the epithet *abl al-kitāb* (People of the Book) was the opposite and counterpart of the epithet *ummī* (unlettered). While the former referred to Jews and Christians, the latter referred to pagan Arabs.²² In this vein, Türkan meticulously manifests the fact that the presence of the two subject segments in the society of pre-Islamic Ḥijāz and its environs leads us to identify two distinct identity groups, albeit portraying similarities at the same time. The defining characteristic of the People of the Book is their identification with sacred scriptural knowledge. Conversely, illiterate Arabs find common ground in Kaʿbah. The *sharīʿah*, which is based on scriptural knowledge, consists mainly of explicit injunctions and was transmitted by the prophets. In contrast, the *sharīʿah* to which the illiterate Arabs adhered was primarily concerned with observing the sacred symbols, rituals, and prohibitions associated with the pilgrimage. The descendants of

¹⁹ For the phenomenological nature of oral narratives, see Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadīs*, 64-65.

²⁰ According to Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/729), the generation of the Companions believed that the Israelites deviated from the right path due to the books they inherited. As a result, they were not in favor of written documentation of knowledge. To understand the Companions’ attitude towards writing, see Cündioğlu, *Sözlü Kültür’den Yazılı Kültür’e Anlam’ın Tarihi*, 111-115.

²¹ Hidayet Aydar, “Kur’an’da Kitap Kavramı ve Bir Kitap Olarak Levh-i Mahfuz”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (2000), 65.

²² Naşr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥbūm al-naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī ‘ulūm al-Qurʾān* (al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-‘Arabī, 2013), 53-54.

Ishmael had no prophetic experience prior to Islam. Nevertheless, both segments reflected the practical applications of the Prophet Abraham in their way of life. There are differences and similarities between religious and social behavior, and their consequences are shaped by these two identity substrates. Theoretically, we are faced with two different cultural developments: one formed by fixed information consolidated in a text and the other by the physical possibilities offered by a form of worship. The authority of the former is directly proportional to the mediation between the adherents and the text, while in the latter, it depends on the ability to mediate between the rules of worship and the custodianship of the places of worship.²³

The mere mention of numerous book- and writing-related concepts in the Qurʾān, during a time when oral culture was dominant, suggests that the verses aimed at social transformation through revelation. This social transformation serves as a foundation for mental transformation through concepts related to the book and writing.²⁴

On the other hand, the first generation of Muslims did not view the Qurʾānic text as a scripture to be studied directly in textual form due to the lack of widespread written culture. It is important to consider these factors when analyzing their perceptions of the Qurʾānic text.²⁵ The Qurʾān, being a “parole”²⁶ at the very outset, was transmitted into a corpus recorded in Arabic “language” in a scriptural form after its compilation.

The main objective of writing down the Qurʾān was to preserve it from any alteration or distortion.²⁷ Neuwirth highlights the fact that the

²³ Selim Türcan, *İlk Dönem Kurʾan Tasavvuru ve Dönüşümü -Kimlik ve Kitâb İlişkisi Bağlamında-* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2007), 69-70.

²⁴ Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadîs*, 39.

²⁵ Muhammed Coşkun, *Modern Dünyada Kurʾan Yorumu* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2018), 18.

²⁶ The Qurʾān reflects a wide range of oratory characteristics embedded its verbatim. Oral expression codes, such as reiterations of the narratives, oaths, and catechetic expressions, together with context-based remarks are the main hallmarks in the Qurʾānic discourse. For a comprehensive analysis of oral expression types in the Qurʾān, see Süleyman Gezer, *Sözlü Kültürden Yazılı Kültüre Kurʾan* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2015), 162-249.

²⁷ Emphasizing the steps taken to ensure the preservation of oral narratives, oral tradition exemplifies the meticulous efforts of religious communities in safeguarding assembled parchments and scrolls with reverence. This process

authority of writing is attributed to the divine origin of the Qurʾān. This recognition of “writing” as the principal means of conveying authority brought about a profound transformation in the Arab worldview, particularly in the communities directly influenced by the Qurʾān’s proclamation. The transition was from a mainly tribal culture that focused on collective rituals and oral traditions to a new universal culture characterized by textuality and discourse. This transformation aligns with what Guy Stroumsa, an Oxford historian of religions, called a significant “religious mutation of late antiquity”.²⁸

However, this significant development has led to a continuous need for literacy activities and the increasing use of writing in Arabic from the perspective of Arab cultural history. The establishment and advancement of Arabic linguistics was facilitated by this, which also ensured the preservation of oral heritage, including that inherited from the pre-Islamic era, by transforming it into a written, permanent form.²⁹ However, the transition of the Qurʾān from the spoken word to a written text presented the challenge of interpretation.

Before the compilation process in relation, the Qurʾān had not been a written text meant to be read by its addressees at its core. In essence, this text did not originate from a single instance but rather developed over approximately twenty years, arising dialectically from independent events and occurrences. As such, it constitutes a speech

marks the transition of scriptures from oral tradition to written documents, highlighting their reception and development; see Siobhán Dowling Long - Fiachra Long, *Reading the Sacred Scriptures: From Oral Tradition to Written Documents and Their Reception* (London, New York: Routledge, 2017).

²⁸ Angelika Neuwirth, “The ‘Discovery of Writing’ in the Qurʾan: Tracing an Epistemic Revolution in Late Antiquity”, *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 2/1 (2016), 31.

²⁹ Ali Bulut, “Sözlü Gelenekten Yazılı Geleneğe Geçiş ve Bunda Kurʾan’ın Etkisi”, *İslam Öncesi Araplarda Dil ve Edebiyat*, ed. Mustafa Çağrıncı (İstanbul: KURAMER, 2019), 108.

act³⁰ that involves a speaker, an addressee, and an extratextual context.³¹

According to Dindi, the Qurʾān underwent a two-facet alienation to itself, and the compilation process constituted the second and most crucial process. First, the divine discourse and its connotations, beyond its inherent transcendent metaphysical essence, underwent a transformation within a distinct milieu – specifically, the 1st/7th-century Hijāz region. It assumed form within the intellectual and imaginative framework of the Arab intellect, alienating into its linguistic and cognitive paradigms within this cultural context. As a consequence of this alienation, it can be posited that the divine discourse fundamentally became estranged from its inherent nature and essence.³² To elaborate, the initial divergence of the discourse from its divine origin, subsequent descent onto the human plane in the 1st/7th-century Hijāz region, and the articulation of its universal message within the contours of their beliefs and cognitive patterns engendered the initial form of estrangement. This inaugural estrangement need not necessarily be construed pejoratively; instead, it might be viewed as an organic process. The crux lies in the conveyance of the God’s message

³⁰ Austin and Searle proposed the Speech Act Theory, which posits that every speech act is also an action. This means that some acts can only be carried out through speech. Every speech is an act or at least leads to an act. Austin used the term “Illocutionary Act” to describe the speech act. The term “Perlocutionary Act” is used to express the situation of speech leading an act. Scriptures perform some kinds of acts through utterances or provide some acts occur on the acceptors as well. For types of speech acts, see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 94-101.

³¹ Ömer Özsoy, “‘Çeviri Kuramı’ Açısından Kur’an Çevirisi Sorunu”, *2. Kur’an Sempozyumu Tebliğler - Müzakereler 4-5 Kasım 1995* (Ankara: Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 264; Austin and Searle proposed the Speech Act Theory, which posits that every speech act is also an action. This means that some acts can only be carried out through speech. Every speech is an act or at least leads to an act. Austin used the term “Illocutionary Act” to describe the speech act. The term “Perlocutionary Act” is used to express the situation of the speech leading an act. Scriptures perform some kinds of acts through utterances or provide some acts occur on the acceptors as well. Therefore, Speech Act Theory is crucial to understanding verses of the Qurʾān. For a detailed analysis of the Qurʾān from the perspective of speech act theory, see Hasan Er, *Dinî Sözcelerinin Edimselliği* (Bursa: Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2019).

³² Alienation of a word within a speech is a Ricoeurian theory. For details see Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Dennis B. Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 37-59.

and its incitement of the recipient toward specific actions. Consequently, the actual pernicious estrangement arises from the second form, the metamorphosis of a vibrant, dynamic discourse,³³ i.e., oral communication/speech, which supplements the meaning, envelops, and essentially embodies the meaning and message, into a textual form through detachment from the contextual elements of space and time, the historical-cultural milieu inherent in this spatial and temporal framework.³⁴

Thus, starting from the era of the *Tābi‘ūn* (second generation/successors), the Qur’ān ceased to be a spoken discourse³⁵ within the dynamic flow of life and historical challenges as it had been in the first generation. It had transformed into a codified book, and the dynamic interaction with the first generation had transitioned into a paradigm dominated by narratives and *its own* language. It was now a *kitāb*, a book with a start and end. Its being a scripture seems to have led Qur’ān commentators of the classical period to equate *al-kitāb* with the Qur’ān itself in its complete form, creating an apparent ramification in philological deductions from corresponding verses hosting this. To unveil the wide-range semantics of *al-kitāb* in the Qur’ān, the application of intratextual references is crucial. This approach is expected to unveil an intratextual basis. Then, explanations of the exegetes will be provided.

³³ The dynamic nature of the Qur’ān towards its addressees is clearly evident in “say-statements”. Say-statements are not simply one of the rhetorical devices used in the Qur’ān; they demonstrate its fundamental sense of itself. The Qur’ān is a record of God’s centuries-long address to doubting, questioning, searching, and straying humanity. It is the place where the Arabs are finally brought into the conversation directly, through divine revelation. Divine revelation is an authoritative response to what people are saying, as Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/787) described it as *jawāb^m li-qawlibim*. So, it naturally awaits its opportunity. Daniel A. Madigan, *The Qur’ān’s Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam’s Scripture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 64.

³⁴ Emrah Dindi, *İlâhî Kelâmın Kendine Yabancılaşması: Hermeneutik Bir Soruşturma* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2021), 29.

³⁵ The main discursive property of Qur’ān’s rhetoric makes itself evident in implied speaker and addressee pronouns like “I”, “You”, “We”. Application of personal pronouns in question is a hallmark for indicating Qur’ān’s oral nature succeeding its compilation. For analysis of this property of the Qur’ān, see Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur’an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 224-255.

1.1. *Al-Kitāb* as the Source of Divine Prescription

The concept of *kitāb*, frequently mentioned in the Qurʾān, is closely related to revelatory events. However, considering God’s intervention in history through both creation and revelation, the proposition that the foundation of communication between God and humans, which is revelation, is both existential and intellectual appears to be justified. Divine will, in this sense, manifests itself not only through revelation, opening itself to humanity but also through the act of creation, demonstrating its will. It should be noted that within the scope of revelation and the book, the sovereignty of the Supreme Creator over the laws of creation is also considered. Therefore, the concept of the “book” is one of the fundamental concepts that elucidates God’s relationship with existence and humanity.³⁶

The concept in question has various meanings. It refers to the oral revelation conveyed by Prophet Muḥammad, which had not yet been compiled into a written manuscript, the Torah given to Moses, the revelation sent by God to previous communities and prophets, the transcendent source where God inscribed all His knowledge, decisions, decrees, and guidance based on the revelation possessed by the monotheistic believers referred to as the People of the Book, and any written document such as letters and records. After the Qurʾān was transcribed and standardized into a codex in the mid-1st century of the Hijrah, the terms “book” and “the book of Allah” have been commonly used to refer to all the verses compiled in the manuscript.³⁷

Although various aspects of the meanings of the word *kitāb* in the Qurʾān have been discussed, making a definitive distinction among these meanings³⁸ is challenging. For example, it is difficult to separate the meaning of God’s having knowledge of the death of everything on earth, such as the knowledge of everything else, and that nothing will happen without His permission, as stated in Q 3:145, from the divine decrees that are binding on the believers, also referred to as *kitāb*

³⁶ Mücteba Altındaş, *Kurʾan’da Kitap Kavramı* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2012), 5.

³⁷ William A. Graham, “The Earliest Meaning of ‘Qurʾān’”, *Die Welt des Islams* 23/24 (1984), 361-362.

³⁸ For such a classification, see Abū l-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Jawzī al-Baghdādī, *Nuzbat al-a‘yun al-nawāzīr fī ‘ilm al-wujūh wa-l-nazā’ir*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm Kāzīm al-Rādī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1984), 525.

Allāh, as mentioned in Q 4:24. Similarly, it is challenging to separate the context of Q 6:165, which mentions God's writing His mercy upon Himself, from verses stating that all the deeds of His servants are recorded by God (Q 3:181) or by angels (Q 10:21). Grouping them based on their contexts is challenging, as each group can be inclusive of the others.³⁹

In the self-references of the Qur'ān, the concept of the *kitāb* (book) is frequently encountered.⁴⁰ While researchers have mostly examined the similarities between the concepts in the language structure of the Qur'ān related to revelation and the book and those in the beliefs of the Near East in the context of the late ancient era, the Qur'ān itself does not claim uniqueness when presenting its own bookish quality. In fact, words derived from the root k-t-b, which are related to the concept of writing, are often used in the tradition of divine revelations, of which the Qur'ān is also a part, or within the framework of God's relationship with the created beings.

Andani points out that Qur'ānic verbatim embodies a hierarchy of *kitāb*. Transcending *kitāb*, as the source of divine prescriptions, differs from Arabic Qur'ān(s)/recitations. According to the Qur'ān, there is one celestial divine writing that is transcendent in nature and variously called *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz* (Q 85:21-22), *kitāb makhnūn* (Q 56:77-80), *kitāb mubīn* (Q 6:59, 10:61, 11:6, 12:1-3, 26:1-3, 27:1, 27:75, 28:1-2, 34:3, etc.), *kitāb ḥakīm* (Q 10:1), *umm al-kitāb* (Q 13:39, 43:4), and often just *kitāb* (Q 6:38, 18:49, 20:52, 22:70, etc.). He refers to transcendent *kitāb* as the "revelatory principle", which denotes the archetypal and ontological source of Qur'ānic revelation.⁴¹ The transcendent *kitāb* of God's knowledge, records, and deeds remains "carefully distinguished from the Arabic Qur'āns uttered by Muḥammad within the discourse of the Qur'ān".⁴²

³⁹ Madigan, *The Qur'ān's Self-Image*, 4-5.

⁴⁰ The Qur'ānic verses qualifying Arabic Qur'ān revealed to the Prophet as *kitāb* are as follows: : 2:87, 2:89, 2:176, 3:3, 3:7, 4:105, 4:127, 4:136, 4:140, 5:48, 6:114, 6:155, 7:196, 16:64, 16:89, 18:27, 21:10, 28:86, 29:45, 29:47, 29:48, 29:51, 35:31, 38:29, 39:23, 39:41, 42:15, 56:30. However, there exist other verses presenting *kitāb* distinct from Arabic Qur'ān, such as 10:37, 12:1-2, 15:1, 27:1, 41:3, 43:2-4, 56:77-80.

⁴¹ Khalil Andani, *Revelation in Islam: Qur'ānic, Sunni, and Shi'i Ismaili Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Studies, PhD Dissertation, 2019), 55.

⁴² Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 56.

Similarly, Madigan observes that the Qurʾān consistently maintains a clear distinction from the concept of *kitāb* by consistently referring to it in the third person. It extensively focuses on activities such as observing, proclaiming, defending, and defining the *kitāb*, emphasizing that they are not interchangeable entities. However, the Qurʾān does not treat the *kitāb* as a static entity detached from itself. Instead, it highlights the dynamic process of “reciting” as the means through which the *kitāb* is revealed and engages with humanity. Thus, the frequent use of the term *kitāb* in connection with the revelations to the Prophet signifies a concern about their source, composition, and, consequently, their authority and truthfulness rather than the manner of display or eventual storage.⁴³

One of the commonly used terms for God’s all-encompassing book that includes virtually everything is *kitāb mubīn* (Q 6:59, 10:61, 11:6, 34:3, 27:75). This particular *kitāb mubīn* is prominently featured in the introductions of Meccan sūrahs, which present Muḥammad’s Arabic recitations. Numerous Middle Meccan sūrahs contain announcements of revelations that revolve around the terms *kitāb mubīn* and Qurʾān. Many of these sūrah openings allude to the signs of a physically absent *kitāb mubīn*:⁴⁴

Alif Lām Rāʾ. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurʾān; happily, you will understand. (Q 12:1-3)

Alif Lām Rāʾ. These are the signs of the *kitāb* and a clear Qurʾān (*Qurʾān mubīn*). (Q 15:1)

Ṭāʾ Sīn Mīm. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). (Q 26:1-2)

Ṭāʾ Sīn. These are the signs of the Qurʾān and a clear *kitāb* (*kitāb mubīn*). (Q 27:1)

Ṭāʾ Sīn Mīm. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). (Q 28:1-2)

Ḥāʾ Mīm. A clear *kitāb* (*wa-l-kitāb al-mubīn*) was used. Behold We have made it an Arabic Qurʾān; happily, you will understand. In addition, behold it is in the *umm al-kitāb* with Us, sublime indeed, wise. (Q 43:1-4)

⁴³ Madigan, *The Qurʾān’s Self-Image*, 181-182.

⁴⁴ Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 53.

Ḥā' Mīm. A clear *kitāb* (*wa-l-kitāb al-mubīn*) was used. We sent it down in a blessed night. We are ever-warned. (Q 44:1-3)

The announcements of the Qur'ānic sūrahs (Q 12, 15, 26, 27, 28) refer to the “signs of the clear *kitāb*” using the remote demonstrative pronoun *tilka*, in contrast to the proximate *bādhībī*. This language choice implies that this *kitāb* and its signs are absent and not immediately present to the audience of the Arabic Qur'āns. These instances bear resemblance to the phrase *dhālika l-kitāb* (that is the *kitāb*) found in Q 2:2. This has led to confusion among Qur'ān commentators regarding the true reference of “that *kitāb*” as opposed to “this *kitāb*”. The introductions of sūrahs 12, 43, and 44 assert that this very same *kitāb mubīn* has been “sent down” in the form of Qur'āns. The Qur'ānic phrasing in the aforementioned sūrah proclamations, particularly the “signs (*āyāt*)” referred to in these proclamations (e.g., “*tilka āyāt al-kitāb al-mubīn*”), does not pertain to the actual verses of the Arabic Qur'āns. Instead, they allude to God's signs and decrees in the cosmos and history. The Prophet's recitations of the Qur'ān effectively describe “those signs” of the *kitāb* in the Arabic language for his community. In addition, if the *kitāb mubīn* is the realm of God's knowledge, records, and deeds, then “those signs of the *kitāb mubīn*” must be something absent from the audience hearing the Qur'ān. Therefore, it is fair to say that the pronoun *tilka/ dhālika*, instead of *bādhībī/ bādhā*, demonstrates this “distance” between the revelatory principle of the Qur'ān, namely, *al-kitāb*, and its product, the Qur'ān.⁴⁵

1.2. Surplus in the Meaning of *al-Kitāb*

When we examine the exegesis works, it can be observed that commentators sometimes display conflicting interpretations regarding the distinction between the divine address revealed to Prophet Muḥammad and the transcendent *Kitāb*, in other words, the Qur'ān's self-references as the product of this address and the transcendent *Kitāb*, which is the source of the divine speech. As far as I detected, there are four main grounds leading to philological ramifications within the interpretations found in classical exegesis works regarding the meaning of the phrase “the book of which there is no doubt (*al-*

⁴⁵ Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 54.

kitāb lā rayb fīhī)” in verses 1-2 of al-Baqarah, which mentions the unquestionable Book, revealing this dilemma.

Sample 1: Philology Through Narratives

Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767) claimed that Q 2:2 was revealed when Prophet Muḥammad invited two Jews to Islam, and they objected, stating that “no book had been revealed after the time of Prophet Moses. According to him, the *dhālika l-kitāb* in the verse refers to the Qurʾān they denied, and the function of the pronoun in the verse is similar to *hādhā*.⁴⁶

Similarly, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) interprets the pronoun *dhālika* in the verse as referring to the Qurʾān itself. Based on narratives from Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687-688), Ibn Jurayj, and Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 103/721), he argues that it is linguistically appropriate to refer to something distant as if it were close, concerning the pronoun’s reference, because anything related to a ruling and its news is understandable to the addressee, even if it implies something other than what is now and nearby. It can be used instead of “this” in the same way a person conveys a conversation to another, replacing “that” with “this”.⁴⁷ However, he also records the other interpretation stating that the phrase probably refers to the Torah and the Gospel. Accordingly, when this interpretation is directed toward this perspective, there is no objection to it because, in that case, it signifies an informative reference to something absent, and it is valid in philological terms.⁴⁸ Similarly, Abū Ishāq al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) mentioned that the term *al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the book promised and sent to Moses and Jesus in their own languages.⁴⁹

Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), relying on the same narration from Ibn ʿAbbās, said that *al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the Qurʾān.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Abū l-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shihātah (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2010), 1/81.

⁴⁷ Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Giza: Dār Hijr, 2001), 1/228-229.

⁴⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1/230.

⁴⁹ Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sarī ibn Sahl al-Zajjāj, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān wa-i-rābubū*, ed. ʿAbd al-Jalīl ʿAbduh Shalabī (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1988), 1/66.

⁵⁰ Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, ed. Asʿad Muḥammad Ṭayyib (Riyadh: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997), 1/34.

On the other hand, Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) highlights another narration from Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 136/754) that we do not encounter in the abovementioned exegetical works: *Al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the preserved tablet, implying that in the preserved book, there is no doubt.⁵¹

The sample philological deductions given herein reveal how commentators interpret the same pronoun in the verse based on different narrations. Each commentary, which relies on specific narrations to reveal meaning, ended in various philological interpretations. Despite the variations in the narrations, the texts suggest there is a selective process in choosing which narrations to use in the commentary, which leads to overlooking philological evidence. Al-Ṭabarī and Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī, drawing on different narrations, assign significantly different meanings to the same expression in the verse, resulting in a kind of surplus of meaning.

Sample 2: Philology Through Theological Premises

Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) stated that the synonymous use of *dbālika* and *bādbā* has a linguistic background. He emphasized that *dbālika* should refer to something distant, stating that it points to the parts revealed before Sūrat al-Baqarah in the Qurʾān.⁵²

When we look at al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) exegetical work, the background of this deduction comes to the forefront as a Muʿtazilī opinion that is probably affiliated with the doctrine of createdness of the Qurʾān.⁵³ Al-Rāzī points out that this inference was first initiated by

⁵¹ Abū l-Layth Imām al-Hudā Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwiḍ et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1993), 1/88-89.

⁵² Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt Abl al-sunnab: Tafṣīr al-Māturīdī*, ed. Majdī Bāsallūm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2005), 1/372.

⁵³ For the extensions of the theological doctrine of createdness of Qurʾān within exegetical works, see Huzeyfe Yalçın, *Tefsirlere Yansıyan Mezhebî Yorumların Kriğiği: Halku'l-Kurʾân Örneği* (Mardin: Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2021), 28-78. For the influence of theological doctrine of Qurʾān's createdness over the notions of revelation, see Harun Ögmüş, "Halku'l-Kurʾân Tartışmalarının Vahyin Allah'tan İnsana İntikaliyle İlgili Telakkiler Üzerindeki Etkisi", *Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 28/28 (2009), 19-46.

Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 200/816),⁵⁴ who was one of the prominent figures of the Basran Mu‘tazilah.⁵⁵

Sample 3: Philology Through Hermeneutics

Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) argued that the pronoun refers to the articulated and finished letters “Alif, lām, mīm” in the verse context. According to him, something articulated and completed is now distant in its ruling, and it is pointed to as *dbālika*, similar to its counterpart in Q 12:37 (*dbālikumā mim mā ‘allamanī Rabbi*).⁵⁶ Actually, what the exegete does corresponds to philosophical hermeneutics in modern terms. He questions the distance of the parole between the source of it and the addressee, revealing some kind of comprehension act that is kindred to the “fusion of horizons” theory.⁵⁷

Sample 4: Philology Through Discourse Analysis

Al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) summarized the ramifications of the interpretations of the term *al-kitāb* in the verse, stating that those who believe it refers to the Torah and the Bible differ regarding the addressee of the verse. According to them, those who argue that the addressee is Prophet Muḥammad say that it means there is no doubt in this Qur’ān mentioned in the Torah and the Bible. However, those who claim that the addressee is the Jews and Christians say that the promised book that will come to them is the Qur’ān revealed to Prophet Muḥammad.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the statement in the verse that there is no doubt about *al-kitāb* complicates the understanding of the word as the

⁵⁴ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1420), 2/259.

⁵⁵ Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Esam, Ebū Bekir”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995).

⁵⁶ Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūb al-ta’wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1407), 1/32-33.

⁵⁷ The fusion of horizons is a crucial concept in hermeneutics, a philosophical and interpretive approach to comprehending texts and communication. This idea was developed by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in his influential work, *Truth and Method*, published in 1960. For the English translation of the work: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer - Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum Publishing Group, 2006).

⁵⁸ Abū l-Hasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-‘uyūn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Maḥsūd ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 1/67.

Qurʾān. It is well established in various verses that the opponents of Prophet Muḥammad always question the source and scriptural quality of revelation. Indeed, in Q 2:23, there is a challenge to those doubts. While al-Zamakhsharī states that “the verse does not deny the ability of anyone to doubt the Qurʾān, rather it declares that the Qurʾān is not a place of doubt and carries clear evidence”, this commentary seems to overlook the hierarchy between *al-kitāb* as the source of Qurʾān and the Qurʾān itself.

Moreover, when we compare all the verses where the expression “there is no doubt in it (*lā raybʿ fīh*)” لا is used in the Qurʾān, we see that this phrase is always used to qualify aspects related to the unseen that is away from human reach, implying a distance. For example, at Q 3:9, 3:25, 4:87, 6:12, 22:7, 40:59, 42:7, 26:32, and 45:32, the phrase “there is no doubt” qualifies the judgment day. Additionally, in such verses as Q 15:1, 10:37, 27:1, and 32:2, *al-kitāb* and the Qurʾān are mentioned separately, indicating that interpreting *al-kitāb* as the Qurʾān is presumptive.

However, whereas the Qurʾān and *al-kitāb* are both separate in verses, exegetes did not hesitate to equate the terms with the scriptures preceding the Qurʾān or the Qurʾānic corpus itself. For example, al-Ṭabarī, relying on a narration from Mujāhid, stated that the *al-kitāb* in Q 15:1 refers to the divine books before the Qurʾān, namely, the Torah and the Gospel.⁵⁹ However, al-Māturīdī mentioned that the “clear book” in the verse could refer to either the Qurʾān being recited to them or the books of previous nations that existed before the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶⁰ Al-Zamakhsharī, claiming that the demonstrative pronoun at the beginning of the verse refers to the entirety of the sūrah’s verses, implied that the Qurʾān and the term *al-kitāb* in the verse are synonymous.⁶¹

Similarly, in Q 27:1, *al-kitāb* and the Qurʾān are presented as distinct entities, and commentators’ preferences regarding the content of *al-kitāb* are generally similar to those in Q 15:1. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, asserted that the term *kitāb mubīn* refers to the Qurʾān.⁶² Muqātil explained the definition of *kitāb mubīn* as the manifestation

⁵⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 14/5.

⁶⁰ Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt Abl al-sunnah*, 6/419.

⁶¹ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2/569.

⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 18/5-7.

of its commands and prohibitions, indicating that he also understood *al-kitāb* as the Qurʾān.⁶³ Al-Zamakhsharī suggested that the term *kitāb mubīn* could be attributed to the preserved tablet or understood as referring to the Qurʾān itself. He argued that the ambiguity in the term aimed to highlight its grandeur, comparing it to attributing one synonymous attribute to another, similar to saying both are manifest.⁶⁴

In summary, the interpretation of the term *al-kitāb* in various Qurʾānic verses is subject to different perspectives among classical commentators. While some identify it with the Qurʾān itself, others associate it with the divine Scriptures preceding the Qurʾān, such as the Torah and the Gospel. The differences in interpretation highlight the complexity of understanding certain Qurʾānic terms and the diversity of perspectives among commentators, as well as the inadequacy of philological deductions when they are not accompanied by intratextual references.

Conclusion

Understanding a phrase or the equivalent of a word in the linguistic structure of the Qurʾān is not merely confined to conceptually analyzing through linguistic-based methods or making direct inferences through analytical propositions. To comprehend a language, a discourse inevitably entails understanding the speaker of the discourse, the language encompassed by the discourse, the society inherent in this language, the culture of this society,⁶⁵ and the instruments of this culture related to time and space – essentially, understanding both linguistic and nonlinguistic elements in depth within a holistic framework. This unity inevitably requires transcending the confines of language, delving into what lies beyond language – into the initially unseen and imperceptible phenomena left

⁶³ Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil*, 3/296.

⁶⁴ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3/346.

⁶⁵ The relationship between language and society has led to its characterization as a “social institution”. Sociologists have examined the inseparable connections and relationships between language and society from various perspectives, while linguists and anthropologists have conducted extensive research in this field. For a comprehensive literature review on the connections between language, society, and culture, please refer to the following work: Doğan Aksan, *Her Yönüyle Dil: Ana Çizgileriyle Dilbilim* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 64-68; Also see Christine Jourdan - Kevin Tuite, *Language, Culture, and Society: Key Topics in Linguistic Anthropology* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

behind by language. The structure of sentences in the Qurʾān, which is distinct from analytical propositions, always carries the character of an oral address alongside it.⁶⁶

Considering the Qurʾān's relationship with the oral tradition and its possession of a spoken discourse genre before being compiled into a corpus, it is possible to answer the question posed in this article. The language and stylistic attributes of the Qurʾān contain distinctive expression codes that reflect the oral culture of the time when it was revealed. The meanings conveyed by the words of the Qurʾān go beyond the text itself. Consequently, the meanings of the Qurʾānic discourse are not limited to the text alone. They exist predominantly within the historical and cultural context in which the discourse is situated, namely, within history.

From the time of the Tābiʿūn onward, the Qurʾān underwent a transformation. It evolved from being a spoken discourse integrated into the dynamic fabric of life and historical challenges, as it was during the first generation, to becoming a codified book. Dynamic engagement with the initial generation gave way to a paradigm dominated by narratives and the inherent language of the Qurʾān itself. It transitioned from a living discourse to a fixed book, with a defined beginning and end. The term *kitāb* (book) became synonymous with the Qurʾān in its complete form, leading commentators from the classical period to associate the term *al-kitāb* directly with the Qurʾān. While the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika*, in contrast to the proximate *bādhībī*, denotes a remote object, implying that *dhālika l-kitāb* and its signs are absent and not immediately present to the audience of the Arabic Qurʾān, the exegetes bypassed philology, leading to a surplus of meaning in the verse.

Exegetes performing deductions from Q 2:2 occasionally suspended the philological data in various ways. They applied to narratives that may well lead to contradictory deductions when the exegete does not apply to intratextual references within the Qurʾānic text or the historical background. Theological premises are the other agencies leading the exegete to bypass philological evidence; thus, the act of exegesis reveals a surplus in the meaning of corresponding verses or vocables. Applying hermeneutics is another way of obtaining

⁶⁶ Dücane Cündioğlu, *Anlamın Bubarlaşması ve Kurʾan -Hermeneutik Bir Deneyim II-* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2013), 34.

a surplus of meaning. Philology through hermeneutics encompasses analytical reasoning, overlooking the fact that Qur'ānic discourse is intertwined with its *sui generis* rhetorical properties and its historical background, which defuses analytical reasoning.

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RAËLISM: AN UNCONVENTIONAL RELIGIOUS PATHWAY TO TRANSHUMANISM

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Abstract

Raëlism is a controversial new religious movement that originated in France in the 1970s and has since spread around the world. The movement's core tenets are rooted in science, technology, and freedom and can be summarized as a blend of science and spirituality, millenarianism, revelation, story, pseudoscience, and reinterpretation. Raélians believe in the extraterrestrial origin of humanity and promote the pursuit of higher consciousness, inner peace, individual empowerment, and peace-building. To this end, the movement offers a series of seminars that aim to provide a transformative experience for

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participants and leads various social initiatives and projects at a global level. Although Raëlism has gained popularity among some individuals, it has also been the subject of substantial criticism and controversy, particularly because of its unconventional views on sexuality and its alleged support for human cloning and genetic engineering. Nonetheless, the movement continues to be a subject of interest and scrutiny for scholars, journalists, and the curious. This article provides an overview of the history, ideology, and practices of the Raëlian Movement and its relationship with transhumanism.

Keywords: History of religions, new religious movements, Raëlism, transhumanism, extraterrestrial creation

Introduction

The Raëlian Movement is named after its founder Raël, who was born Claude Maurice Marcel Vorilhon in 1946. He was formerly a French sports car journalist and a test driver (Palmer, 2004) for a car racing magazine, *Autopop*. Having been claiming contact with extraterrestrials (ETs) since 1961, Vorilhon stated that he had received messages about humanity's future during an encounter aboard an extraterrestrial spacecraft (Rael, 2005a). While it is normal that extraordinary details are present in an alien story, Vorilhon's memoir of his initial contact with ETs features very intriguing details. Vorilhon later identified the ETs that visited him as members of the advanced alien species "Elohim", whose name means "those who came from the skies" (Battal, 2023) in Hebrew (Rael, 2005b). Vorilhon contended that the Elohim, who, according to Vorilhon's definition, are responsible for the creation of life on earth (Battal, 2023), gave him straightforward instruction to return at the same time other days, equipped with the Bible and a means to record information or take notes (Rael, 2005b). After a week of intense Bible study, Vorilhon assigned himself a new identity as the messianic prophet "Raël" and a new purpose as the earthly ambassador of the Elohim, claiming to have the same common father with Jesus, the Elohim Yahweh (Bigliardi, 2023; Shamir, 2020). He then announced a new doctrine that would form the intellectual basis of the religious movement that he would establish and lead

(Gallagher, 2010). In 1974, he founded the Raëlian Movement, naming it after himself, as allegedly bestowed by the ETs (Vorilhon, 1974).

The Raëlian Movement's unorthodox religious exegesis manifests in its interpretation of the Bible and the role that the Bible played in the establishment and evolution of the movement (Gallagher, 2010). Raëlist belief is rooted in an extraterrestrial foundation and centers on extraterrestrial creation, sexual identity, and spiritual awareness. The movement asserts that ETs created humanity and will return to guide humans toward transhumanism, surpassing physical limitations. The idea that life on earth was created by ETs hence requires rejection of traditional theistic beliefs. Raëlism also argues that human spirituality was shaped by the Elohim (Palmer - Sentes, 2012; Rael, 2005b; Gregg, 2014). Furthermore, the movement has distinct philosophical and psychological viewpoints that engage with the concept of trauma to further reinforce its religious conviction and control, which is evident in the movement's Happiness Academy initiative (Bauduin, 2015).

Raëlism regards individual and communal sexual identity as the means of spiritual enlightenment and personal fulfillment (Gregg, 2014) and, therefore, assigns particular importance to feminine and sexual issues in its ideology, tenets, social and religious activities, etc. Among new religious movements (NRMs), the Raëlian Movement is notable for its progressive and exploitative behavior, given its prophetic message and interpretive methods, which set it apart from other religious movements (Bigliardi, 2015). Specifically, Raëlism distinguishes itself through its emphasis on sexual identity, its focus on science and technology, its fierce advocacy for cloning, and its challenging stance against the beliefs and practices of the world's established religions.

The particular importance that Raëlism attaches to science and technology lies in its claim that technology is the main means used to create life on Earth by the Elohim and that it will once again be the sole tool that humans use to achieve eternal life (Sinani, 2013; Houtman - Aupers, 2010). This pronounced emphasis on science and technology embodies the movement's main relation to transhumanism and differentiates it from other NRMs, not to mention traditional religions (Bigliardi, 2023).

Transhumanism questions traditional notions of human nature and individuality, promoting the adoption of technology that significantly

enhances human capabilities (Sorgner, 2021; Szabados, 2020). This focus on technical advancement invites contemplation of the shifting essence of human spirituality. This intersection stimulates debates over the essence of spirituality in the context of technological development, as individuals navigate their spiritual identities in light of technological advancements and enhancements. Furthermore, transhumanism embraces and even sparks discussions on the use of advanced technology, such as artificial intelligence, genetic technologies, and nanotechnology, for life extension and other potential human enhancements (Sorgner, 2021). Pursuing technological enhancement to overcome fundamental human limitations and achieve superintelligence, superlongevity, and super well-being (Lima - Belk, 2022; Simon, 2018) and eventually immortality is central in transhumanist thought. Although harshly criticized, transhumanism's vision of transcending human limitations through technological means has significant implications for various fields, sparking debates in education, ethics, medicine, sports (Eriksen, 2021), and, of course, religion.

The relation between transhumanism and religion fundamentally concerns the intersection of scientific progress and spiritual beliefs. Transhumanism is a philosophical and cultural movement that advocates the utilization of science and technology as a tool to enhance the intellectual, physical, and psychological capabilities of humans, but remarkably, it lacks a spiritual basis. Nevertheless, it gradually maintained ties with religious affairs and later led to the emergence of religious movements that are now called religious transhumanism because the established religious teachings are based on the ideas of a creator, God, and the afterlife. As all such transhumanist ideals are considered to defy the central position of God, transhumanism raises ethical and philosophical questions about the implications of human enhancement technologies for making profound modifications in human capacities (Szabados, 2020).

As highlighted above, the Raëlian Movement's integration with transhumanism is notable in that both transhumanism and Raëlism regard technology as a force that can either create life on a dead planet or enable existing life to survive infinitely. Raëlians hold the deep conviction that ETs, i.e., Elohim, will eventually guide humanity toward transhumanism. Aligning with transhumanist ideals, Raëlians

believe that technological advancements, including genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence, can lead to the achievement of transhumanism, which, within the framework of Raëlism, involves genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence to improve human health, intelligence, and lifespan (Vorilhon, 1974).

Raëlism's core tenets are deeply influenced by transhumanist philosophy. It has also inspired and influenced transhumanist thought over time and fostered advances in the field of transhumanist research. While Raëlism has been criticized for its influence on transhumanism, contending that its unconventional beliefs are potentially detrimental and can lead to the development of dangerous and unethical technologies, the Raëlian vision of transhumanism is highly optimistic and utopic in contrast to more cautious and realistic views on the potential dangers of transhumanism (Vorilhon, 1974).

In fact, the Raëlian Movement promotes an unconventional discourse significantly influenced and shaped by transhumanism and human enhancement technologies. Thus, a unique fusion of transhumanism and Raëlism is reflected in the movement's distinctive approach to spiritual and technological advancement, aiming to achieve human transcendence through both technological and spiritual means (Lewis - Tøllefsen, 2016). The pronounced place of Elohim in the Raëlian narrative adds a spiritual dimension to transhumanist discourse, presenting a vision where technological progress and spiritual evolution converge.

As an NRM that questions and challenges conventional religious ideas and practices, the Raëlian Movement has often faced criticism but nonetheless has managed to receive acclaim for its advocacy of peace and harmony. Currently, Raëlism is the world's largest UFO-inspired NRM (Gregg, 2014).

This study aims to address in detail the Raëlian Movement from different aspects and perspectives and with reference to transhumanism.

1. Religious Framework

The very foundation of the Raëlian Movement is intricately tied to the prophetic figure of Raël and to an enigmatic event reminiscent of God's first revelation to the prophets, as relayed in mainstream

religions, such as Islam. However, its religious discourse is distinguished by a series of unique features, such as the claim that the messenger in the encounter, which is the cornerstone of its belief system (Bigliardi, 2015), is defined not as an angel of God but as a member of an advanced alien species, Elohim, who have allegedly created life on earth by technological means.

Philosophical examinations of NRMs have shed light on Raëlism's distinctive philosophical foundations, which advance a unique set of religious beliefs and practices (Sakellariou, 2013). The cosmology of the Raëlian Church, aligned with modern science, further contributes to its departure from traditional religious cosmologies (Chryssides, 2000). The emphasis on the extraterrestrial touch in creation and on science and technology as tools for human advancement and transhumanism make Raëlism stand out as a UFO religion. The movement's optimistic outlook, rejecting traditional concepts of sin and guilt, underscores its unique approach to spirituality, highlighting personal development, scientific progress, and the pursuit of immortality. This rejection of traditional concepts frees Raëlians from feelings of shame and allows them to focus on personal growth and self-improvement. Instead of dwelling on past mistakes, Raëlism encourages its followers to embrace their potential and strive for a fulfilling life. The Elohim are regarded not only as the creators who mark the origins of humans but also as guides who will shape their destiny. The Elohim are also responsible for the transmission of advanced knowledge to humanity. Since the time of the early humans, the Elohim, as benevolent creators and teachers, have been guiding humanity toward its full potential through knowledge transmission (Vorilhon, 1974). Vorilhon asserts that prophets or founders of former religions, such as Buddha, Moses, and Muḥammad, are transhumans who were contacted by the Elohim earlier and who were given the advanced knowledge and holy messages to pass on to humans on Earth. As such, Vorilhon argues that he was the modern-day prophet, last contacted by the Elohim, and that he was taken by them to their planet, where he was given the chance to meet Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad (Rael, 1978).

1. 1. Exotheology

The term “exotheology” was coined in the 1960s or 1970s, contemporaneous with the introduction or announcement of Raëlism,

transhumanism, UFOs, etc., to refer to the study of theological matters in relation to alien intelligence, potential theological ideas that ETs may hold, or how humans' theological beliefs may be affected by proof of and/or engagement with ETs. Exotheology studies the implications of discovering life beyond Earth on religious beliefs and connects with astrobiology (Parkyn, 2023), examining the potential for life in the universe.

For Raëlism, the significance of exotheology is that it addresses existential questions arising from potential contact with extraterrestrial life and encourages interdisciplinary dialog. It also explores theological implications for human spirituality and understanding. In general, exotheology offers a framework to address ethical and existential considerations and to reevaluate traditional theological ideas and hypotheses. Within Raëlism, exotheology manifests as a synthesis of UFOlogy and religion. Specifically, this framework captures the impacts of discovering extraterrestrial life on the movement's beliefs about human origins and the Elohim's role in the alleged scientific creation of life on Earth. It presents a distinctive view of the potential influence of extraterrestrial life on religious narratives and beliefs, which is an important aspect of its uniqueness among NRMs. The movement's practices, such as sensual meditation, and beliefs influence its exotheological perspective (Gregg, 2014).

1. 2. Intelligent Design and ET Creation

The concept of intelligent design, as hypothesized by Raëlism, asserts that the creation of life and humanity was neither an evolutionary process nor a consequence of random coincidences. Instead, it was an outcome of advanced scientific genetic engineering processes that were planned, implemented, and controlled by an advanced extraterrestrial species known as the Elohim.

In this respect, the concept of intelligent design is a fundamental belief that is common in nearly all mainstream religions, which suggests that the complexity of life and the universe is best explained by the existence of an intelligent creator or designer. What distinguishes Raëlism is that this concept is intertwined with the idea that the Elohim possess advanced scientific knowledge and capabilities that enable them to design and create life on Earth (Sentes - Palmer, 2000). This perspective differs from traditional religious creationism in that it attributes the origins of life to an extraterrestrial

intelligence rather than a divine deity and the might needed for creation not to godly powers unique to God but to mere science that can moreover be achieved by anyone through research and experimentation.

The Raëlian concept of intelligent design also involves the belief that humanity was not set loose or left unwatched. The Elohim's creation is an ongoing and interactive process, and they maintain a vested interest in the development and progress of humanity. In this respect, Raëlians believe that the Elohim will eventually return to the Earth (Zeller, 2011) to guide humanity toward transhumanism when humanity has reached a sufficient level of scientific and ethical advancement. This belief indicates that Elohim are motivated by scientific progress, personal development, and the pursuit of a harmonious future for humanity. In Raël's view, harmony refers to being free of money, sickness, and war (Rael, 2005b).

1. 3. Becoming Creator

The founder and alleged prophet of Raëlism asserts that humanity may also have the capacity to create or contribute to the creation of life on other planets with the advancement of human scientific knowledge and technology, similar to the Elohim who possess advanced scientific knowledge and capabilities, which enabled them to design and create life on Earth.

In line with this view, endeavors toward spreading or expanding life beyond Earth are based on factual claims, and humanity is now attempting to terraform Mars or Venus. The latter does not truly entail creating life from scratch but rather trying to transform other planets similar to Earth and to transfer the existing life forms from Earth to these planets. Nonetheless, such projects and related research still reflect humanity's reliance on and conviction in science and technology in becoming a creator or cocreator by achieving such great targets, as espoused by several religious transhumanist movements. In this regard, the Raëlian emphasis on the role of science and rationality in shaping humanity's future and its potential to contribute to the development of life in the cosmos is arguably grounded in the scientific community at the governmental and international levels.

1. 4. The Spiritual Discourse of Transcendence

Raëlism's spiritual discourse is a mosaic composed of complex elements of millenarianism, revelation, story, pseudoscience, and

reinterpretation that sets it apart from other traditional theological frameworks. This unique blend contributes to Raëlism's distinct religious characteristics and differentiates it from other emerging religious movements (Bigliardi, 2015).

The spiritual discourse of Raëlism is based mainly on intertwining elements of science and spirituality and comprises a synthesis of transcendence, divinity, and the pursuit of higher consciousness, which are central themes in its belief system (Lewis - Tøllefsen, 2016). Raëlism's emphasis on humanity's transcendence is manifest in the belief in extraterrestrial contact and humanity's creation by advanced beings known as the Elohim. This narrative highlights the aspiration to overcome traditional human limitations and acknowledges the Elohim as divine entities with advanced capabilities.

The pursuit of higher consciousness is another crucial theme in Raëlism's spiritual discourse. The movement advocates for shedding cultural norms and embarking on a journey toward higher awareness through the body and senses. Rejecting traditional notions of possession and relational belonging, Raëlism encourages followers to pursue higher consciousness by liberating themselves from cultural baggage.

Raëlism's spiritual narrative also involves a reinterpretation of divinity that challenges traditional religious constructs. Raëlism presents the Elohim as advanced beings who have played a pivotal role in the spiritual evolution of humanity. The transmission of advanced knowledge from the Elohim to humanity redefines traditional notions of divinity.

Furthermore, aligning with a quest for scientific and spiritual advancement within a millennial context (Sentes - Palmer, 2000), the movement views technology not only as a material tool but also as an indispensable means for achieving spiritual goals (Grünschloß, 2016). Unlike mainstream religions and traditional religious movements, which may view technology with skepticism, Raëlism recognizes the potential of technology to enhance human consciousness and spiritual growth (Botz-Bornstein, 2017). For instance, the implementation of human enhancement technologies is a shared concern across Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, stemming from ethical, moral, and theological considerations, which revolve around issues of playing God, altering the inherently perfect creation of Allah/God, and the

potential consequences of such interventions for future generations. Raëliism, in contrast, regards these technologies as conduits for transcending human limitations and achieving a higher state of being through the responsible and ethical use of technology (Kiran et al., 2015) to make advancements in genetic engineering, nanotechnology, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies and accelerate human evolution, eventually realizing the transhuman future. In this future, such technological advancements will contribute to enhanced intelligence, extended lifespan, and freedom from disease and death and will create immersive experiences fostering self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and spiritual exploration.

1. 5. Symbolism

The promotion of Patriarch Hassoun as a cardinal was one of the important developments for Eastern Christians. Since Basilios Bessarion.

1. 5. 1. Swastika of Enlightenment

The swastika, which is also known as the armed cross, is an ancient and widespread symbol that can be found in nearly every part of the world, especially in ancient sites (Flaherty, 2021; Chryssides, 2000; Urban, 2015). Although there is no consensus as to what the symbol actually represents, Raëlians argue that the swastika represents all-positive concepts, such as good luck, prosperity, and harmony. Despite being controversial, the choice of a swastika as the movement's symbol is grounded in Raëliism's reinterpretation of ancient symbolism, reclaiming the swastika's original meaning and repurposing the symbol to represent the Raëlian vision of a future where humanity transcends its current limitations and achieves a state of transhumanism. This symbolism is also tied to the cyclic nature of all processes in the universe, where the swastika in the center is claimed to mean that everything is cyclic, with the top becoming the bottom and the bottom, in turn, becoming the top (Rael, 2005b).

Another symbol, as ancient and widespread as the swastika and even controversial to some extent, is the six-pointed star, which is currently mostly associated with Jews and the state of Israel. The Raëlian symbol combines the two symbols, a six-pointed star featuring a stylized swastika in the center (Urban, 2015; Hanson, 2005), and is called the "Swastika of Enlightenment".

The six-pointed star is known as the Star of David (or Shield of David), the Seal of Solomon (Wells, 2006), or simply the hexagram. However, the difference is that the hexagram does not have to be equilateral, and the parallel sides do not have to be horizontal. The seal of Solomon is three-dimensional and interlaced, while the star of David is two-dimensional and overlapped. Therefore, the Raëlian symbol consists of a stylized combination of the seal of Solomon and the swastika.

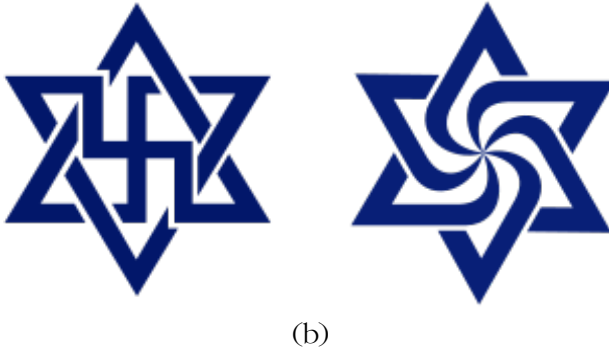


Figure 1. Symbols used by Raëlism: (a) Swastika of Enlightenment, the universal symbol; (b) Raëlian symbol with the swirling shape substituted for the swastika that was used in Europe and America between 1991 and 2007.

The symbol aims to represent the harmonious integration of science, technology, and spirituality and plays a crucial role in conveying the synthesis of Raëlism and transhumanism. The four arms of the swastika, intertwined with the seal of Solomon, symbolize the four pillars of Raëlism: scientific progress, personal development, sensual love, and collective harmony. These pillars signify the interconnected aspects of human existence that must be nurtured in balance to achieve transhuman goals. The spiral form within the swastika further symbolizes the continuous process of evolution and transformation, representing the Raëlian belief in humanity's ongoing advancement toward the transhuman condition with enhanced intelligence, extended lifespan, and the ability to manipulate matter and energy. However, the stylized swastika in the center of the six-pointed star has often been criticized due to its resemblance to the Nazi swastika, and Raëlians have been accused of fascism and racism and

of not respecting victims of the Holocaust. Raël then decided to form an alternative logo to be used in America and Europe, where the swastika was replaced with a swirl (*The Washington Post*, 16.11.2023; Chryssides, 2000). In 2007, the alternative symbol was discarded, and the original swastika symbol was restored. Since then, the original symbol has been the only Raëlian symbol used worldwide (Urban, 2015).

2. Festivals, Rites, and Rituals

2. 1. Festivals

Raëlians adopted their own calendar that began with the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. This first day of the Raëlian calendar is commemorated as a festival by the Raëlians. The New Year festival also functions to remind members of the destructiveness of humankind and that the Age of Apocalypse is underway (Hippert, 16 Nov 2023).

In addition, Raëlians celebrate three other festivals each year on the anniversaries of Raël's claimed encounters with the Elohim on October 7th (the second encounter in 1974, during which Raël claimed to have met prophets such as Jesus, Muḥammad and the Buddha on board the spacecraft (Hippert, 16 Nov 2023) and December 13th (the first encounter in 1973 in which Raël was anointed as the chosen prophet) and the first Sunday in April, on which day Raëlians believe the Elohim created the first humans, Adam and Eve (Palmer, 2004).

2. 2. Transmission Rite

Like many other religious movements, Raëlism has rites and rituals. The most important and essential rite performed in Raëlism involves the admission and initiation of individuals to become Raëlians. A novice to Raëlism must be baptized in an initial rite called "transmission" or "transmission of the cellular plan" (Bigliardi, 2015). The baptism ritual itself is very similar to Christian baptism in that one guide member sprinkles water onto the forehead of the new member (Hippert, 16 Nov 2023). The initial transmission rite is a significant and sacred ceremony that marks the formal acceptance of an individual into the Raëlian community and represents the beginning of their journey within the movement.

This initiation rite is performed by upper-level members, such as priests or bishop guides. The transmission rites are performed four times a year on the days of Raëlian religious festivals (Hippert, 16 Nov

2023). While the Raëlian calendar begins on August 6th, and the festival commemorating the first creation celebrated on the first Sunday in April is the fourth of the festivals in a Raëlian calendar year, it is regarded as the first performance of the rite, commemorating the first ritual performed by Raël to baptize 40 novices in 1976 (Palmer, 2004).

The rite emphasizes the sacred nature of newcomers' commitment and likely holds deep cultural and spiritual significance within the movement, transmitting the values, beliefs, and cultural and spiritual heritage of Raëlism to new members (Marinescu, 2021; Pérez, 2013). A key ritual involves purported telepathic communication with ETs, during which the guides form a human chain of participants by interlocking their hands with one another to improve connectivity. Raëlians believe that this practice facilitates the transmission of the genetic code of every new member to the Elohim, who meticulously documents their genetic information. This information will help the members be recognized by Elohim on the day of judgment when the Elohim return. The Elohim possess the capability to guarantee the eternity of Raëlian believers by potentially replicating the bodies of each member through cloning. For this purpose, new members are required to sign a contract granting morticians permission to cut out a section of bone from the forehead, also referred to as the "third eye", after their death. This piece of bone, which is the source of the genetic code to be used in cloning the individual, is then carefully packaged in ice and sent to Raël, who will personally deliver it to the Elohim (Hippert, 16 Nov 2023). Nevertheless, there are no records as to whether this procedure has ever been carried out.

The transmission ritual may also involve embodied practices that symbolize the commitment and sacrifice of the individual as they align themselves with the teachings and principles of the movement (Gregg, 2014).

2. 3. Sensual Meditation

One of the central rituals in Raëlism is a guided meditation called "sensual meditation", which is outlined by Raël in his book *La méditation sensuelle* (Palmer - Sentés, 2012; Rael, 2002). This practice focuses on enhancing the five senses, promoting heightened awareness of the physical world and the beauty of the universe as well as transmitting love and telepathic links to the Elohim and achieving harmony with infinity (Palmer, 1995). Raëlians believe that this sensory

awareness is not only essential for spiritual growth but also serves as preparation for the technological advancements that will lead to transhumanism. The ritual creates a connection between immediate sensory experience and the broader goal of evolving toward a transhuman state. All Raëlians are, therefore, encouraged to participate in sensual meditations where they are often guided by streamed instructions, audio, or visualization (Palmer, 2004; Rael, 2002).

2. 4. Collective Meditation

Collective meditation is a significant ritual where Raëlians gather to meditate together, focusing on the Elohim and the principles of Raëlism. This collective meditation is believed to create a powerful energy field that promotes individual transformation and contributes to the collective evolution of humanity toward transhumanism. The ritual emphasizes the communal aspect of the Raëlian experience, reinforcing a shared commitment to spiritual and technological advancement (Rael, 2002).

2. 5. Awakening Seminars

The Raëlian Church arranges summer gatherings that are allegedly intended to serve as educational platforms guiding individuals through transformative self-discovery and personal development. The activities are known as awakening seminars and involve a variety of activity stages, including daily lectures given by Raël, sensual meditation sessions, periods of fasting and feasting, testimonials, and a range of alternative therapies, as well as a controversial cross-dressing activity to explore the fluidity of gender expression and self-observation of one's own genitals and masturbation.

Raëlians use these seminars as platforms to build friendships or engage in sexual affairs or intercourse. Participants wear white togas with name tags, and they employ colored bracelets to indicate their engagement preference in the seminars, i.e., whether they want solitude, social interaction, or companionship.

Stage Name	Activity
Introduction to Raëlian Philosophy	Overview of the movement's core principles, teachings concerning the Elohim, rejection of traditional religious doctrines, and emphasis on individual and communal sexual identity
Self-Exploration and Identity	Activities and discussions related to personal experiences, beliefs, and values, with a focus on individual and communal sexual identity
Mindfulness and Meditation	Incorporation of mindfulness and meditation practices, cultivation of deeper connection with inner selves, engagement in guided sessions aimed at enhancing awareness, relaxation, and inner peace
Consciousness Expansion	Exploration of topics related to consciousness expansion, the nature of the mind, perception, and the interconnectedness of living beings. Introduction of concepts from neuroscience, psychology, and metaphysics to broaden participants' understanding of consciousness
Exploration of Extraterrestrial Connection	Belief in extraterrestrial creators (the Elohim), discussions of humanity's potential connection with extraterrestrial civilizations, the implications for human evolution, and messages conveyed through Raëlian teachings.
Scientific and Spiritual Synthesis	Bridging the gap between science and spirituality, the harmonious coexistence of scientific knowledge and spiritual insights, and the role of scientific understanding in shaping a positive future
Promotion of Peace and Tolerance	Emphasis on a culture of peace and understanding and principles for positive personal change
Community and Networking	Building connections with like-minded individuals, fostering a sense of community and mutual support aligned with Raëlian philosophy and seminar topics

Table 1. Stages of Awakening Seminars

While the specifics of the seminars may vary based on the participants' evolving needs and interests, a typical awakening seminar generally includes the stages listed in Table 1. However, the main goal is to provide a transformative experience in line with Raëlism's principles of individual empowerment, scientific understanding, and the pursuit of peace.

3. Ideology, Social Movements, Activities, and Projects

The Raëlian Movement encompasses a notable ideology and global social movements. The foundation of Raëlism is an ideology rooted in the principles of science, technology, and freedom. Raëlians actively organize and spearhead many social events and projects on a global scale. In line with the fundamental tenets of Raëlism, their social movements, activities, and projects involve the scientific-oriented initiatives of high-tech topics such as human cloning and genetic engineering, global peace, and the protection of human rights, particularly women, sexual identity, and freedom. They organize activities aimed at promoting social change and boosting awareness in many communities and initiatives worldwide.

3. 1. The Happiness Academy

In pursuit of promoting personal growth, well-being, and happiness, a significant initiative named The Happiness Academy was established by the movement to reinforce and promote the rejection of traditional religious constructs and to further highlight personal development, self-fulfillment through self-awareness and emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and the pursuit of a fulfilling and harmonious life. The academy offers a range of workshops, seminars, and educational programs designed to provide participants with tools for enhancing their emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being and for empowering them to cultivate happiness, resilience, and a positive outlook on life (Bauduin, 2013; Id., 2015).

The academy itself can be viewed as a manifestation of Raëlism's commitment to fostering a more harmonious and compassionate society and its advocacy for a more empathetic and interconnected world (Bauduin, 2015).

3. 2. Clonaid Organization

The Raëlian Movement views cloning as a natural progression of human technology and a tool for achieving a higher state of being; it,

therefore, advocates for cloning as a means of achieving immortality and transcending human limitations (Machado, 2010). In line with this view, the Clonaid organization was founded in 1997 and is registered in the Bahamas as a nonprofit organization (Clonaid.com, 13 Nov 2023).

The establishment of Clonaid reflects the Raëlian focus on the integration of advanced knowledge and advanced technology in genetic engineering, regenerative medicine, and nanotechnology for achieving biological immortality, cognitive enhancement, and life extension (Vorilhon, 1974). With Clonaid, Raëlians aim to develop cloning technology, which they believe holds the key to immortality (*The Washington Post*, 16 Nov 2023; Sinani, 2013). As such, the contract for the collection and conservation of a frontal bone portion, which was addressed under the Transmission rite in the Rites and Rituals section, is (to be) processed by Clonaid for cloning purposes (Bigliardi, 2015). Nevertheless, the biotechnology company Clonaid is often perceived as a cult (Simon, 2018).

Clonaid was the first company to publicly announce its intention to offer human cloning services. The declared goal was to provide couples with the option of cloning their deceased children (Palmer, 2001), emphasizing that cloning was a form of assisted reproduction rather than human engineering (Alcibar, 2008). The organization's public statements and activities sparked debates about the ethical implications of human cloning, the potential benefits and risks of advanced technologies, and the role of religion in shaping societal attitudes toward technological progress. Despite this controversy, Clonaid continued to assert its commitment to providing human cloning services. The movement garnered notable attention upon the announcement of the successful cloning of a baby girl called Eve (Battal, 2023) by the director, senior Raëlian Brigitte Boisselier (Alcibar, 2008; Machado, 2010), but no definitive evidence of successful human cloning has been produced. The organization's claims were met with skepticism by the scientific community, yet many experts have raised concerns about the ethical implications of human cloning, including the potential for psychological harm to the cloned child and unknown long-term health effects.

The movement's advocacy for cloning technologies and Raël's lobbying efforts before the U.S. Senate to remove restrictions and

prohibitions on cloning reflect Raëlism's contentious stance with regard to human cloning (Heyking, 2005). However, its plans to establish a cloning facility in the United States have met with legal challenges (Szabados, 2020; Clonaid.com, 13 Nov 2023).

In 2002, citing ethical concerns surrounding human cloning, Clonaid announced its intention to focus on animal cloning research and development. Currently, Clonaid remains an active organization, but its human cloning ambitions have largely been abandoned due to scientific and legal challenges. It pursued to continue human cloning activities in other countries where such research is legal (Clonaid.com, 13 Nov 2023). However, the organization continues to promote Raëlism and its beliefs about technology's potential to enhance human well-being and to advocate for cloning as a potential tool for medical advancements and environmental conservation.

Overall, Clonaid's activities have significantly contributed to broader discussions about the responsible development and application of technology, the potential impact on human society, and the role of ethical considerations in shaping the future of transhumanism.

3. 3. Geniocracy

Religions and religious movements often establish their own community and moral norms to regulate and shape societal, legal, and even economic systems. In this respect, the Raëlian Movement has a governance system that prioritizes decision-making based on demonstrated intelligence and competence rather than traditional democratic processes. This system, aligning with the Raëlian emphasis on rationality, science, and knowledge as drivers of societal progress, was termed "geniocracy" by the movement's founder, Claude Vorilhon.

Geniocracy intersects with Raëlian theology and its commitment to individual and communal empowerment through knowledge to challenge established norms in favor of progressive approaches to societal organization, and it highlights the potential for scientific advancements to shape an equitable and harmonious society.

Feature	Justification/Argument
Intellectual Meritocracy	Geniocracy upholds intellectual meritocracy over traditional markers such hereditary status or popularity and advocates that individuals with outstanding intellectual capabilities should guide and lead society.
Scientific Decision-Making	Raëlian geniocracy envisions decision-making based on scientific knowledge and rational thinking. Leaders should rely on evidence-based reasoning and scientific principles when formulating policies and making critical decisions.
Emphasis on Education	Education should develop and nurture intellectual capabilities. Educational systems should be designed to identify and cultivate potential genius in individuals from a young age.
Technologically Advanced Society	Scientific advancements should be utilized for the betterment of humanity. The application of cutting-edge technologies should be used to address societal challenges and enhance the overall well-being of individuals.
Ethical Considerations	Ethical considerations should be incorporated into decision-making. These principles should be prioritized by the governments together with human rights and the well-being of all individuals.
Peaceful and Harmonious Coexistence	The ultimate goal is to create a society characterized by peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and collaboration. Therefore, conflicts should be resolved through reason, understanding, and the application of scientific principles.

Table 2. Key Features of Geniocracy within the Raëlian Movement

As listed in Table 2, key features of the geniocentric system include intellectual meritocracy, advocacy for scientific decision-making, a strong emphasis on education to nurture genius, envisioning a technologically advanced society, incorporating ethical considerations into governance, and aspiring to a peaceful coexistence.

Geniocracy serves as a cornerstone for the Raëlian vision of a utopian society where intellectual excellence and scientific progress

guide governance and societal structures, reflecting the movement's unique theological beliefs and its emphasis on rationality, scientific understanding, and the potential for societal progress through intellectual empowerment.

4. Intersection, Interaction, and Integration with Transhumanism

As an intellectual and cultural movement, transhumanism advocates for the use of science and technology to enhance human capabilities (Campbell et al., 2008), thus challenging traditional notions of human nature and the boundaries of personhood (Foith, 2013). It envisions a future where applied reason, coupled with technology, can eliminate aging and greatly enhance humans' intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities (Urgan, 2019) in the pursuit of morphological freedom and longevity while considering the precautionary principle and personhood (Szabados, 2020).

Transhumanists believe that human enhancement technologies should be widely available, with individuals having discretion over their use. Parents are also seen as having the right to choose enhancements for their children-to-be (Bostrom, 2005). This perspective reflects a commitment to individual autonomy and a positive view of technological progress in shaping the future of humanity.

Raëlism, on the other hand, focuses on the utilization of advanced technology and knowledge by extraterrestrial beings in shaping human existence and spirituality. It advocates for the integration of technology to overcome traditional limitations and transcend human conditions. In this respect, its emphasis on the transcendence of human limitations aligns with transhumanism's core principles, particularly in the pursuit of superintelligence, superlongevity, and super well-being (Lima - Belk, 2022).

The potential intersection between Raëlism and transhumanism lies in their shared emphasis on transcending traditional human limitations through advanced knowledge and technology. Both movements share an interest in advancing human capabilities and redefining traditional notions of divinity and personhood and envision a future where humanity evolves beyond its current state, effectively challenging conventional notions of personhood and human nature. Raëlism's

belief in extraterrestrial contact and the transmission of advanced knowledge resonates with transhumanism's focus on using technology to overcome human limitations. The core principles of transhumanism, including morphological freedom, human enhancement, and longevity, may resonate within Raëlism's philosophy of integrating scientific and spiritual elements for human evolution.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that while there may be conceptual overlaps, the distinct philosophical and spiritual foundations of Raëlism and transhumanism may present challenges to fully integrating their ideologies. Both Raëlism and transhumanism have distinct discourses, belief systems, and cultural contexts that may influence the extent to which they intersect and collaborate in shaping future visions of human potential and evolution.

Raëlism's approach to transhumanism is unconventional, combining religious beliefs with a strong emphasis on scientific progress and technological advancement. While the conceptual intersection with transhumanism is evident, the movement's integration of spirituality and technology is distinct. Namely, Raëlism blends scientific progress with personal transformation and seeks transhumanism not only through technological advancements but also through spiritual enlightenment. Raëlism moreover highlights that the Elohim's return to guide humanity and realize transhumanism will also take place once humanity reaches a certain ethical and moral level and establishes a social climate where peace, tolerance, and understanding are present among diverse cultures and belief systems. Raëlism's fusion of spirituality and technology offers a fresh perspective on the future of humanity, attracting individuals seeking a new paradigm for human evolution and advancement (Lewis - Tøllefsen, 2016).

4. 1. Becoming Divine through Technology

Raëlism blends pseudoscience, revelation, and the reinterpretation of traditional religious concepts (Gregg, 2012) to envision a future where humanity transcends its current limitations through the application of advanced knowledge and technology. The pronounced importance and value of technology as a conduit for spiritual enlightenment and transcendence is central to the movement's belief in extraterrestrial contact and the transmission of advanced knowledge. The movement's vision presents a radical departure from other religious movements by placing the power of transformation

exactly in the hands of humanity. In this respect, the ideas of Raëlism align with those of some religious transhumanist movements, such as Terasem, which asserts that God is technological (Yeşilyurt - Yeşilyurt, 2022).

Likewise, it is exactly technology and advanced knowledge that enabled the Elohim to reach a state of transhumanism characterized by enhanced intelligence, immortality, and mastery of matter and energy (Vorilhon, 1974) and to become the creators of life on Earth. The concept of technological deification is central in Raëlism; it maintains that humanity can achieve a state of divinity through the transmission and integration of advanced technology and spiritual principles under the guidance of the Elohim. In this respect, Raëlism views technology not as a threat to humanity but as an indispensable tool for realizing its full potential, including the attainment of divinity. Therefore, Raëlism and Raélians advocate for the development and application of technologies such as genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence to overcome biological limitations, extend lifespans, and expand human consciousness (Lewis - Tøllefsen, 2016), thus reinforcing and reaffirming their pioneering position in transhumanist thought.

This embrace of transhumanist concepts reflects Raëlism's modern, science-oriented worldview and its belief in the potential of technology to transform humanity positively.

4. 2. Impact on Transhumanist Discourse

Raëlism's impact on the broader context of transhumanism is somewhat difficult to outline. Raëlism introduces a unique perspective that blends spirituality and technological advancement. This impact can be assessed through both the contributions Raëlism has made to transhumanist discourse and the challenges it presents to the broader transhumanist community.

4. 2. 1. Contributions to Transhumanist Discourse

The contribution of Raëlism to transhumanist discourse can be assessed in terms of four main aspects: a spiritual dimension, personal development, and sensual love, a positive outlook on technology, and a sense of community and shared purpose.

Raëlism injects a spiritual dimension into transhumanism by emphasizing self-awareness, consciousness expansion, and ethical considerations as integral components in the pursuit of transhuman

potential. This infusion challenges the prevailing notion of transhumanism as a purely scientific or technological endeavor, broadening its scope to include a more holistic approach to human enhancement. The Raëlian movement expands transhumanist discourse beyond technological advancement to encompass a more comprehensive view of human flourishing by passionately advocating for personal well-being and the appreciation of sensory experiences. This focus highlights the interconnectedness of physical and emotional aspects in the pursuit of transhuman goals.

Raëlism also contributes to a more balanced discourse on the role of technology in human progress through its positive stance toward technology, thereby refuting concerns about its potential negative impacts and encouraging responsible development and application for the benefit of humanity. Moreover, Raëlism fosters a sense of community and shared purpose among individuals who seek to redefine the paradigm of human evolution and encourages collaboration and mutual support in transhumanist pursuits. The cultivation of a shared sense of belonging strengthens the transhumanist movement and facilitates collective action toward common objectives.

4. 2. 2. Challenges to Transhumanist Discourse

Raëlism has undeniably influenced the transhumanist discourse by introducing unique perspectives, broadening the scope of discussion, and challenging traditional notions of human enhancement. However, the movement faces challenges related to the acceptance of its unconventional beliefs, practices, and ethical considerations and the scientific feasibility of the technologies it proposes.

First and foremost, Raëlism's core tenets involving extraterrestrial contact and guidance raise concerns about its credibility within the broader transhumanist community. Even as deemed mirth by some serious scientists and thinkers, the unconventional beliefs advanced by Raëlism make it challenging for some transhumanists to fully embrace its ideas. On the other hand, practices such as sensual meditation and the controversial use of the swastika symbol have drawn criticism and raised concerns about potential exploitation and manipulation. As addressed in a later section, this criticism has led to an update of the movement's symbol.

Another challenge against Raëlism is its passionate advocacy for technologies such as genetic engineering and cloning, which has sparked debates about the ethical implications of human enhancement. Furthermore, the strong emphasis placed on individual freedom by Raëlism raises concerns about the potential misuse of technology, which must indeed follow strict and clear ethical guidelines. Finally, several aspects of Raëlism's vision, such as digital immortality and achieving immortality through cloning (Machado, 2010), are viewed by many scientists as beyond the current scientific reality. The perceived lack of scientific feasibility challenges the movement's credibility and raises questions about its long-term viability.

Conclusion

By merging elements of spirituality and technology, Raëlism has had a substantial impact on the discussion of transhumanism. Its fundamental principles, which include the belief in extraterrestrial guidance and the pursuit of technological deification, distinguish this movement in the transhumanist landscape. The ideology of Raëlism advocates for the adoption of digital immortality and cloning, envisioning a future in which technology surpasses biological constraints. Raëlian rituals, such as sensual and collective meditations, serve as conduits connecting the spiritual and technological domains, equipping followers for progress and innovation.

The distinctive fusion of spirituality and technology in Raëlism has significant ramifications for both religious and technological discussions. It challenges conventional concepts of a deity, suggesting a reevaluation through technological advancement. This view attributes distinctive significance to spirituality in a rapidly progressing modern society. The emphasis on human development in Raëlism implies a possible transition toward religious engagement that is more individualized and based on direct experience. Raëlism's focus on ethical issues in the use of technology is in line with a more responsible attitude toward technology, which could result in the development of ethical rules and safeguards.

The convergence of Raëlism with transhumanism is a remarkable intellectual phenomenon that challenges existing frameworks of

human advancement and reimagines the influence of religion in our swiftly expanding society. The movement's notable capacity to integrate spirituality and technology highlights its pioneering approach to transhumanism, as demonstrated by its focus on individual growth, spiritual advancement, and intimate affection, combined with passionate support for scientific progress and technological development. This comprehensive viewpoint contradicts the common belief that technology is used only to enhance our physical and mental abilities. Instead, it suggests that technology can also support spiritual growth and help us obtain a deep understanding of our place in the cosmos.

Nevertheless, the unorthodox methodology of Raëlism may engender doubts in certain transhumanist circles regarding its trustworthiness, given its assertions of extraterrestrial encounters and direction from the Elohim. Furthermore, the prioritization of individual autonomy and support for advancements such as genetic engineering and cloning require meticulous ethical deliberation to avoid any abuse and promote responsible technological progress.

Ultimately, the convergence of Raëlism and transhumanism offers an intriguing subject for analysis, stimulating reflection on the simultaneous existence of spirituality and technology in relation to human capabilities. Although its unorthodox character has raised concerns, Raëlism presents novel viewpoints on the function of religion in our ever-changing society and the transformational potential of technology. This perspective extends beyond the realms of physical and cognitive abilities, encompassing spirituality and ethical considerations as well. As we explore the frontiers of transhumanism, the impact of Raëlism is expected to persist, shaping discourse and sparking creative opportunities for human evolution toward transhuman and post-human conditions.

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**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL FACTORS
IN COPING WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS
IN REFUGEE ADOLESCENTS**

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Abstract

Adolescence is a challenging time when individuals experience rapid physical, emotional, and spiritual changes. This period may bring both opportunities and challenges. The situation may become more difficult when adolescents live in difficult circumstances, such as migration. Spending adolescence in refugee circumstances can lead to negative and traumatic situations for adolescents. The purpose of this study is to

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examine the psychosocial adjustment of refugee adolescents and to determine how they deal with trauma and negative experiences and how they cope with negative situations. This study aimed to understand the extent to which adolescent refugees who struggle with psychosocial problems resort to religious and spiritual methods and what coping styles they implement. Therefore, qualitative research was conducted through semistructured interviews with 50 adolescent refugees aged 11-19 years from different neighborhoods of Istanbul. To ensure the homogeneity of the study, attention was given to the age of the participants and to include both male and female participants. According to the results of the study, the most common psychosocial problems to which refugee adolescents are exposed are witnessing war, death, the loss of loved ones, and being forced to migrate. The participants had issues related to security, basic human needs, health, education, and housing. However, refugee adolescents were likely to use positive coping styles, including praying, reading the Qurʾān, gratitude, patience, and attributing good. The findings show that religious and spiritual factors are important for refugee adolescents' attempts to cope with psychosocial problems. In addition, positive religious coping styles are significant for posttraumatic growth and development.

Keywords: Refugees, adolescence, migration, religious coping, psychosocial problems, psychology of religion

Introduction*

During adolescence, which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood, numerous changes and developments occur. Biology and psychology are the main areas in which this change has been studied. According to psychologists, adolescence extends from the early teens to the late twenties.¹ Toward the end of this turbulent and difficult period, individuals become more balanced psychologically and

* This article is based on Nur Pamuk Kuru's M.A. thesis titled "Türkiye'deki Mülteci Ergenlerin Psiko-Sosyal Sorunlarla Başa Çıkmalarında Dini Ve Manevi Etkenlerin Rolü (The Role of Religious and Spiritual Factors in Coping with Psycho-Social Problems of Refugee Adolescents in Turkey)" (Yalova: Yalova University, Institute of Graduate Education, Master's Thesis, 2022).

¹ Mary J. Gander - Harry W. Gardiner - George M. Bass, *Child and Adolescent Development* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981); Bekir Onur, *Gelişim Psikolojisi: Yetişkinlik, Yaşlılık, Ölüm* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 1997).

socially.² The specific responsibilities of this period include attempting to complete the developmental tasks of adolescence, acquiring an identity, forming a self, gaining independence, and setting goals and plans.³

Adolescents sometimes have religious issues during this period when feelings and knowledge about spiritual and religious aspects acquired in childhood come to the surface.⁴ Consequently, they make a greater effort to investigate and learn about the accuracy of the information they have acquired. Thus, religious vacillation and apostasy can sometimes be observed during adolescence. This is why conversions are most common during this time.⁵

The characteristic features of adolescence are anxiety about the future, acquiring a profession, exhibiting independent behavior, setting goals, and planning.⁶ Accordingly, adolescence is a multifaceted period that is evaluated in terms of biological, psychological, sexual, religious, and moral development. Changes and developments during adolescence affect an individual's quality of life. When the period of adolescence is evaluated in relation to refugees, we can understand the situations and dimensions that must be

² Adnan Kulaksızoğlu, *Ergenlik Psikolojisi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2005).

³ Alice Ann Crandall et al., "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Framework for Understanding Adolescent Depressive Symptoms Over Time", *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 29 (2020), 273-281; Esen Dinçel, *Ergenlik Dönemi Gelişimsel Ödeveleri ve Psikolojik Problemler* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2006); Daniel Hart - Gustavo Carlo, "Moral Development in Adolescence", *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 15/3 (2005), 223-233; Ayşe Haşimoğlu - Alp Aslandoğan, "Lise Öğrencilerinin Ergenlik Dönemi Sorunları ve Duygu Düzenleme Stratejileri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi", *Academic Review of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1/2 (2018), 13; Kulaksızoğlu, *Ergenlik Psikolojisi*; Filiz Orhan - Abdullah Dağcı, "Ergenlikte Dini Kimliğin İnşası: Sosyal Öğrenme Kuramı Açısından Bir Değerlendirme", *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4/7 (June 2015), 115-132.

⁴ Turgay Gündüz, "Ergenlik Dönemi Din Eğitimi", *Etkili Din Öğretimi*, ed. Şaban Karaköse (İstanbul: TİDEF Yayınları, 2010), 73-102.

⁵ Özlem Güler, "Dini İnanç ve Psikolojik Sağlık İlişkinine Dair Bir Değerlendirme", *Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi* 4/8 (December 2010), 95-105; Faruk Karaca, *Dinî Gelişim Psikolojisi* (Trabzon: Eser Ofset Matbaacılık Yayınları, 2016), 252.

⁶ Şükriye Şahin - Çağrı Çövenler Özçelik, "Ergenlik Dönemi ve Sosyalleşme", *Cumburiyet Hemşirelik Dergisi* 5/1 (2016), 42-49; Turan Set et al., "Ergenlerde Cinsellik", *Genel Tıp Dergisi* 16/3 (2016), 137-141; Merve Türkmen, *İlk Dönem Çocuk Ergenlerin (11-14 yaş arası) Alışveriş Davranışlarında Rol Model Etkisinin İncelenmesi* (Sakarya: Sakarya University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2014).

addressed. Experiencing difficult times such as war and migration further complicates the turmoil of adolescence.

Migration is a phenomenon that radically changes a person's life and has social, cultural, economic, legal, and psychological dimensions.⁷ It is possible to distinguish between voluntary and forced migration. Forced migration, which is the subject of this study, is the result of a situation that threatens the life of the individual. However, individuals or entire populations also migrate forcibly for reasons such as hunger, war, coercion, and religious and ethnic discrimination.⁸

Difficult situations may arise after forced migration. Usually, negative situations such as traumatic events, negative effects on personality development, and self-perception are at the forefront.⁹ These profound changes in childhood and adolescence can have devastating effects. Experiencing major changes due to war and migration during adolescence, a time when the individual is trying to learn about him- or herself and discover his or her identity as well as trying to adapt to new circumstances, such as learning a new language,

⁷ Emrah Akbaş, "Göç ve Sosyal Politikalar", *Göç ve Uyum Sempozyumu KADEM Gözlem Raporu* (Ankara: KADEM, 2017), 11-12; Handan Karakaya, "Türkiye'de Göç Süreci ve Suriye Göçünün Etkileri", *Fırat Üniversitesi İİBF Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 4/2 (2020), 93-130; Mehmet A. Kirman - İlbey Dölek (ed.), *Göç ve Din: Disiplinlerarası Bir Yaklaşım* (Ankara: Astana Yayınları, 2020); Mustafa Koç, "Diasporik Yaşamın Psiko-Anatomisi – IV: Müslüman-Türk Göçmenlerin Kimlik-Anomi-Sosyal Dışlanma Biçimlenmeleri Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma", *Balıkesir Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 3/2 (2017), 295-348; Mehmet Tamer - Ali Bırvural, "Zorunlu Göçlerin Toplumlarda Oluşturduğu Problemler", *Zorunlu Göçler ve Doğurduğu Sosyal Travmalar*, ed. Vahap Özpolat (Ankara: Hegem Yayınları, 2018), 1-10.

⁸ İbrahim Sirkeci - Filiz Göktuna Yaylacı, "Küresel Hareketlilik Çağında Göç Kuramları ve Temel Kavramlar", *Kuramsal ve Uygulama Boyutları ile Türkiye'de Sığınmacı, Mülteci ve Göçmenlerle Sosyal Hizmetler*, ed. Filiz Göktuna Yaylacı (London: Transnational Press, 2019), 15-39.

⁹ Esra Ş. Demirkapı, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Duygu Düzenleme ve Kimlik Gelişimine Etkisi ve Bunların Psikopatolojiler ile İlişkisi* (Aydın: Adnan Menderes University, Graduate School of Health Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2013); Şuheda Karakaya Aydın, *Arap Zorunlu Göçmenlerde Travmatik Yaşantılar, Göç Sonrası Yaşam Zorlukları ve Manevi Başa Çıkma ve Sosyal Destek Bağlamında Psikolojik Dayanıklılık* (İstanbul: Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Graduate School of Education, Master's Thesis, 2019); Nazan Sulhan, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Yaşam Kalitesi ile İlişkisinde Üstbilişlerin Aracı Rolü* (İstanbul: Işık University, Graduate School of Education, Master's Thesis, 2021); Özge Yavuz, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Psikolojik Belirtiler ile Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu Belirtileri Arasındaki İlişkide Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Özyeterliliğin Aracı Rolü* (İstanbul: İstanbul Arel University, Graduate School of Education, Master's Thesis, 2021).

adjusting to education, and creating a social environment in the country of migration, can cause the individual to flounder psychologically and emotionally.

Syrian refugees have undergone this experience after leaving their country and immigrating to Turkey. People who come to Turkey as refugees may have economic, social, psychological, and spiritual problems. In addition, the situations they have experienced or witnessed during the war cause various traumas, which can affect individuals' self-integrity and cause psychological problems. Therefore, mental health issues in the general migrating population and in adolescents in particular¹⁰ require coping skills, including religious coping methods.

In difficult or traumatic situations, positive psychological thoughts and positive religious coping styles contribute to mental and spiritual balance.¹¹ However, some people turn to negative coping styles, which

¹⁰ Emine Taşçı Yıldırım - Armağan Atar, "İslam Ahlak Filozof ve Düşünürlerinde Üzüntüyle Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri", *Bilimname* 49 (2023), 87.

¹¹ Ali Ayten - Zeynep Sağır, "Dindarlık, Dinî Başa Çıkma ve Depresyon İlişkisi: Suriyeli Sığınmacılar Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 47 (2014); Karakaya Aydın, *Arap Zorunlu Göçmenlerde Travmatik Yaşantılar; Göç Sonrası Yaşam Zorlukları ve Manevi Başa Çıkma ve Sosyal Destek Bağlamında Psikolojik Dayanıklık*; Ali Ayten et al., "Dini Başa Çıkma, Şükür ve Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisi: Hastalar, Hasta Yakınları ve Hastane Çalışanları Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Din Bilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 12/2 (2012), 45-79; S. Nazlı Batan - Ali Ayten, "Dinî Başa Çıkma, Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Yaşam Doyumu İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Din Bilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 15/3 (2015), 67-92; Neslihan Can, *Başa Çıkma Davranışına Kaynak Oluşturan Dini İnanç ve Değerler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme* (Bursa: Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2019); Firdevs Canşı, "Psikoterapi Sürecinde Manevi Temelli Müdahaleler", *Türk Manevi Danışmanlık ve Reberlik Dergisi* 4 (December 2021), 97-111; K. Jacky Chan - Marta Y. Young - Noor Sharif, "Well-Being After Trauma: A Review of Posttraumatic Growth Among Refugees", *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne* 57/4 (2016), 291-299; Halil Eksi, *Başaçıkma, Dini Başaçıkma ve Ruh Sağlığı Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Araştırma: Eğitim, İlahiyat ve Mühendislik Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Karşılaştırılması* (Bursa: Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2001); Sevasti Foka et al., "Promoting Well-Being in Refugee Children: An Exploratory Controlled Trial of a Positive Psychology Intervention Delivered in Greek Refugee Camps", *Development and Psychopathology* 33/1 (2021), 87-95; S. Gill Carman et al., "Spirituality and Religiosity: Factors Affecting Wellness Among Low-Income, Rural Women", *Journal of Counseling & Development* 88/3 (2010), 293-302; Zeynep Sağır, "Kültürleşme, Dini Başa Çıkma ve Yaşam Memnuniyeti: Türkiye'de Yaşayan Yabancı Öğrenciler Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma", *Kilitbahir* 17 (2020), 5-37; H. F. Unterrainer et al., "Religious/Spiritual Well-Being, Personality and Mental Health:

may disrupt the process and worsen rather than improve the situation. Negative coping styles, including negative religious coping styles, negatively impact individuals psychologically, mentally, cognitively, and socially and worsen their overall health.¹²

“Positive religious coping” refers to taking refuge in the Creator during difficult times and receiving support from religion and spiritual phenomena.¹³ Adopting a positive religious coping style provides individuals with inner strength and motivation and promotes posttraumatic growth.¹⁴

According to Batan’s “Effects of Psychological Resilience and Religious Coping on Life Satisfaction in Adults”, religious coping activities increase people’s psychological resilience. Psychological resilience has been found to contribute significantly to people’s life satisfaction.¹⁵ A study by Kesen Kurçak entitled “The Role of Religiosity

A Review of Results and Conceptual Issues”, *Journal of Religion and Health* 53/2 (2014), 382-392.

- ¹² Ali Ayten - Refik Yıldız, “Dindarlık, Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisinde Dinî Başa Çıkmanın Rolü Nedir? Emekliler Üzerine Bir Araştırma”, *Din Bilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 16/1 (2016), 281-308; Ali Eryılmaz, “Ergenlik Döneminde Stres ve Başa Çıkma”, *Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 6/2 (2009), 20-37; Sema Eryücel, *Yaşam Olayları ve Dini Başa Çıkma* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2013); Büşra Kara, “Kur’an’da Olumsuz Duyguların Kontrolü”, *Journal of Analytic Divinity* 5/1 (2021), 150-176; Ahmet Canan Karakaş - Mustafa Koç, “Stresle Başa Çıkma ve Dini Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri Arasındaki İlişki: Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi”, *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3/3 (2014), 610-631; Sezai Korkmaz, “Olumlu ve Olumsuz Dini Başa Çıkma, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Yalnızlık İlişkisi”, *Tasavvur/Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi* 7/1 (2021), 237-271; Talip Torun, “Krizle İlişkin Olumsuz Algılamaların Finans Sorumlularının Ruhsal ve Fiziksel Sağlıkları Üzerindeki Etkisi: Algılanan Sosyal Desteğin Rolü”, *Erciyes Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 33 (2015), 295-314.
- ¹³ Ayten et al., “Dini Başa Çıkma, Şükür ve Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisi: Hastalar, Hasta Yakınları ve Hastane Çalışanları Üzerine Bir Araştırma”.
- ¹⁴ Esra Altınışık, *Suriyeli Ergenlerde Trauma Sonrası Büyüme ve Psikolojik Problemler ile İlişkili Faktörler* (İstanbul: İbn Haldun University, Graduate School of Education, Master’s Thesis, 2020); Özlem Aydın Güler, “Depresyon Belirtileri ve Stresle Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri ile Dindarlıkla İlgili Bazı Değişkenler Arasındaki İlişki”, *Tıbbi Sosyal Hizmet Dergisi* 8 (2016), 6-18; Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Naci Kula, “Deprem ve Dini Başa Çıkma”, *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/1 (2002), 234-255; Sulhan, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Yaşam Kalitesi İle İlişkisinde Üstbilişlerin Aracı Rolü*.
- ¹⁵ Nazlı Sabriye Batan, *Yetişkinlerde Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Dini Başa Çıkmanın Yaşam Doyumuna Etkileri* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2016).

in Accepting and Integration Syrian Immigrants in Turkish Society (The Case of Gaziantep)” discussed the coping methods of Syrian migrants. The study emphasized factors such as acceptance and adaptation, which are important for migrants. Furthermore, the study noted that religiosity, faith, social influence, and moral values facilitated migrants’ acceptance and adaptation.¹⁶ Göçmez’s study, titled “Identity Construction and Religion in the Process of Migration and Adaptation: The Case of Zeytinburnu Afghanistan Uzbeks”, examined the relationship between identity change and religion that emerged because of migration. It was revealed that the religious authority of migrant individuals weakened after their migration, and their religious identity was replaced with ethnic identity.¹⁷

Studies that address the adolescence period generally emphasize the self or self-related traits. The samples in studies of immigrants include mostly adults. In this study, the terms “adolescence”, “migration”, “adaptation”, and “religious coping” are discussed together. About religious coping, individuals who witnessed war during adolescence and were exposed to migration were confronted with many psychosocial situations in the country to which they went. However, few studies in the field of religious coping have examined the concepts of adolescence, trauma, and migration together. This study aims to fill this gap.

1. Method

1.1. Participants

The qualitative research sample (n=50) consisted of Syrian adolescents from different regions of Istanbul who were identified via the snowballing method. The age ranged between 11 and 19 years; 32 participants were female, and 18 were male. The participants were Syrian adolescents who had witnessed the war. They were subjected to oppression and coercion during the war and had lost their first-degree relatives.

¹⁶ Ayşe Kesen Kurçak, *Türk Toplumunda Suriyeli Göçmenleri Kabul ve Uyumda Dindarlığın Rolü* (Adana: Çukurova University Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2022).

¹⁷ Ensar Göçmez, *Göç ve Kente Uyum Sürecinde Kimlik İnşası ve Din: Zeytinburnu Afganistan Özbekleri Örneği* (Kayseri: Erciyes University Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2022).

1.2. Procedure

Participation in the research and interviews was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. Parental consent was obtained for participants under the age of eighteen. Ethics committee approval was obtained for the research dated 27.10.2021 (protocol number 2021/110).

The interviews were conducted by determining an acceptable date and time with the participants. Syrian adolescents from different regions of Istanbul (Arnavutköy, Başakşehir, Pendik, Sancaktepe, Sultanbeyli, and Zeytinburnu) were included in the study. The participants were reached using the snowball technique. First, a trusted person was approached, and then adolescent migrants mentioned by these people were reached. The inclusion criterion was that the participants were Syrian migrant adolescents. Non-Syrians who had migrated before the war and who were not adolescents were excluded from the study.

During the interviews, the participants were informed that audio recordings would be used, and permission was obtained. In cases where consent was not obtained, the interview was completed by taking notes. The data obtained were divided into main themes during secondary reading, and the most frequently emphasized facts were identified. Some of the data were recorded in Arabic and translated into Turkish by the researcher. The translations were confirmed by academics.

1.3. Data Collection Tool

The results were synthesized through a second reading and the 2020 Maxquda program. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, observations were conducted for one year in the regions where the refugees lived. Contact was made with teachers and authorities in the facilities. An attempt was made to create an environment of trust between the researcher and the participants, and the duration of the interviews was maintained at 60 to 120 minutes. The semi-structured interview technique was used. This technique allowed the researcher to remove or add interview questions when necessary and to perform an in-depth analysis. In this way, the efficiency of the interviews was increased because sufficient information about the issues related to the research was obtained. In the interviews, the participants were asked to explain what happened to them during the war and how they coped

with these situations. In addition, their experiences during and after migration and the difficulties they faced were analyzed. The data obtained were coded and thematized. Thus, the psychosocial problems faced by adolescents, which formed the basis of this research, and the coping styles to which they turned were revealed. Expert opinions were obtained at the stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The content analysis method was used. During the process of content analysis, the participants were contacted, and their opinions on the transcriptions were recorded. During coding, it was noted if a participant had more than one experience in the same category. For example, the same participant was exposed to an explosion and had lost a loved one. Therefore, the same participant could provide content for more than one code.

2. Results

The findings were evaluated under three themes: psychosocial problems, coping, and religious coping. The results of the first topic are presented separately under the heading “social and psychological problems”. For the second theme, coping is presented as “positive and negative coping”, while for the third theme, religious coping is presented as “positive and negative religious coping”.

2.1. Psychosocial Problems

Psycho-social difficulties, which are categorized by the researcher as sociological and psychological factors, are discussed separately according to the stage of the migration process in which the traumatic events were experienced. A schema of the factors identified by the researcher is shown in Figure 1.

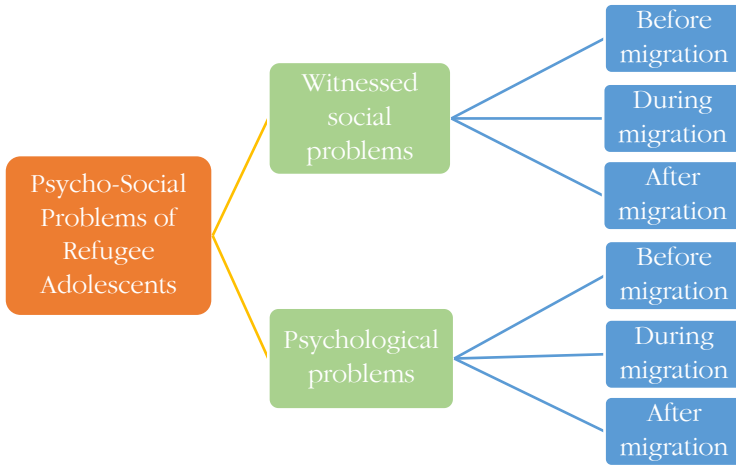


Figure 1. Scheme of Psychosocial Problems

2.1.1. Witnessed Social Problems

To analyze the experiences of Syrian refugees in detail, the participants were asked, “Can you tell us about your experiences from the beginning of the war to your migration to Turkey?”. The participants talked about their difficult experiences as a result of the war. The most important of these were threats to their life and security, witnessing mass deaths, and prolonged power and water outages. Participants who had to migrate internally due to these experiences stated that they did not feel a sense of belonging in the places they went.

The problems addressed in this study can be divided into the following categories: before migration, during migration, and after migration. The social situations experienced by the participants are listed in Table 1.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Inaccessibility of food and basic necessities	32	18	50
2. Persistent interruptions in electricity and water supplies	25	9	34
3. Loss of loved ones	17	9	26
4. Internal migration	17	11	28
5. Unavailability of health services when needed	12	7	19
6. Experiencing or witnessing imprisonment	5	7	12
7. Injury with a firearm	2	2	4

Table 1. Witnessed in the Pre-Migration Period

Lack of access to food and basic needs, the loss of a loved one, prolonged power and water outages, and incarceration were the major sociological problems that the refugees faced in the premigration period. Some of the participants commented on this issue as follows:

P2 (Female, 17/Code 4): “My parents always thought we did not understand anything because we were young. However, I could not adopt any of the houses we visited. It felt like it was not my home. I could not feel comfortable at all.”

P3 (Female, 17/Code 3): “Even if we had everything at home, we couldn’t do anything without water.”

The participants were asked how they migrated to understand the difficulties encountered during migration. The answers given by the participants are shown in Table 2.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Risk of encounter with soldiers	14	12	26
2. Separation of family members	10	15	25
3. Illegal crossing of the border	9	13	22
4. Long duration of the migration process	12	10	22
5. Long time on foot	9	11	20
6. People smugglers	5	9	14
7. Immigration to more than one country	4	3	7
8. Problems with immigration authorities		2	2

Table 2. Witnessed During Migration

The participants were asked about the difficulties they experienced during the migration process. The most common situations during migration were the risk of encounters with soldiers, leaving family members behind, the long procedures at the migration office, and illegal border crossing. In addition, some participants stated that instead of coming to Turkey directly, they first visited different countries and then decided to come to Turkey. The reason for this, according to them, was that most of their relatives were in Turkey or that Islamic values were more easily practiced in Turkey.

P5 (Male, 17/Codes 5 and 7): “We came to Turkey under great difficulties. We had no money, nothing. Our house was destroyed. Everything was destroyed... We walked for three hours at night. There were soldiers at the border. There was a soldier who told us to pass. He spoke Turkish. He gave us chocolate and food. Then we went to Malatya. Then we came to my uncle’s house in Istanbul.”

To understand the problems faced by individuals after migration, the participants were asked, “What kind of life did you lead after migrating to Turkey?” The answers were subjected to content analysis,

and codes were determined. The codes were categorized as shown in Table 3, and the difficult situations faced by the participants after the war were identified.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. The problem of housing	20	13	33
2. Language problems	19	13	32
3. Disruption of education	20	11	31
4. Economic problems	14	12	26
5. Unemployment	13	9	22
6. Living with several families	9	11	20
7. Being exposed to negative discourses	9	4	13
8. Internal migration in Turkey	4	3	7
9. COVID pandemic	4	1	5

Table 3. Difficult Situations Witnessed After Migration

The participants were asked what difficulties they experienced after migration. The most common issues were economic and social. The restriction of private life, inability to adapt, interruption of education, and unfamiliarity with the language were the greatest difficulties. Some participants had to migrate more than once within the borders of Turkey. This can be explained in the context of socioeconomic conditions.

P6 (Female, 12/Code 2): "... Here it is very different. I see people speaking in a different language... I was afraid when someone approached me because I did not know how to answer."

P5 (Male, 17/Code 3): "When we came to Turkey, we needed money. I was working, and my siblings were studying. That's why I interrupted school for a year. Then I was able to continue going to school."

P7 (Female, 17/Code 6): “When we first came to Turkey, twenty-one of us lived in a three-room house...”

P8 (Female, 17/Code 9): “I participated in the university exam this year, but I did not get enough points. Firstly, because my Turkish was not good, and secondly, because the courses were online...”

As can be understood from the statements of the participants, some social problems emerged.

P9 (Female, 18/Code 7): “I’ve got a feeling that they don’t like us. They don’t say it openly, but I feel it.”

P7 (Female, 17/Code 7): “When we first came to Istanbul, we were people who had just come from the war. They asked, ‘Do you plan to return, or when will you return?’”

The participants indicated that they migrated for compelling reasons. During the interviews, it became clear that some social factors were the most challenging for the participants. The participants indicated that they did not know the language, had difficulties expressing themselves, and were not understood by the local community because they were often asked questions about the process they had gone through.

2.1.2. Psychological Problems

The participants faced many difficulties during the migration process. As shown in Table 4, psychological factors were the most challenging. These consisted mainly of fear, desperation, and sadness.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Fear	32	18	50
2. Sadness	32	18	50
3. Desperation	32	18	50
4. Avoidance of public places	22	13	35
5. Anxiety	3	3	6
6. Shock	2	4	6
7. Nightmares		2	2

Table 4. Psychological Effects during Migration

According to Table 4, feelings of fear, sadness, and desperation came to the fore. However, some of the participants stated that their experiences had strengthened them. Through this conviction, they said they were able to overcome difficult situations more easily.

P11 (Female, 18/Code 1): “We were always scared, crying. Even the elders were crying.”

P2 (Female 17/Codes 1 and 3): “I couldn’t speak at all that day. I was just hugging my mother. My little brother, who was five years old, was hugging my brother and my father and saying, ‘I don’t want to die. I want to live.’ We were very scared at that moment. I thought, God willing, if we die, let us all die because the one left behind cannot live alone.”

P16 (Male, 15/Code 5): “I don’t want to experience the same things in the future.”

P10 (Male, 19/Code 7): “The road to Raqqa... When I fled by bus from Homs to Raqqa... That road haunts my dreams every day.”

Emotional state refers to individuals’ inner experience and can directly affect people. It is also associated with socialization and the development of positive behaviors.¹⁸ The participants were asked about the emotions they felt. When they recalled the difficult times, they had experienced, the most common emotions they expressed were sadness, fear, fortitude, and longing.

¹⁸ E. Tuna Ulaşan Özgüle - Nebi Sümer, “Ergenlikte Duygu Düzenleme ve Psikolojik Uyum: Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeğinin Türkçe Uyarlaması”, *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları* 20/40 (2017), 1-18.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Longing	14	15	29
2. Feeling resilient	5	4	9
3. Complex feelings	7	2	9
4. Incomprehensible feelings	7	2	9
5. Anxiety	3	3	6
6. Sadness	2	4	6
7. Reluctance	2		2
8. Loneliness	2		2
9. Feeling strange	2		2

Table 5. Psychological Effects after Migration

As shown in Table 5, feelings of longing for the old life and feeling resilient were emphasized.

P7 (Female, 17/Code.2-3): “It was tough. No matter how I describe it, you will not understand.”

P5 (Male, 17/Code.6): “When I think about that time, I feel very sad about the people who died. My uncle also died in the war.”

P13 (Female, 19/Code 8): “The feeling I had when we first came to Turkey was ‘foreigner!’ ... I mean, there is no language ... I felt very foreign... Language was the most difficult thing for us.”

2.2. Coping Styles for Psychosocial Problems

Individuals may take the initiative to feel better during difficult times.¹⁹ When people feel anxious and stressed, they resort to coping strategies to feel better. These include relaxation, cognitive flexibility, seeking alternatives, peer support, going for walks, and social support, which are positive coping methods.²⁰ This study asked the participants how they overcame the traumatic situations they experienced to

¹⁹ Rita L. Atkinson et al., *Introduction to Psychology* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

²⁰ Mebrure Doğan, *Sabır Psikolojisi: Pozitif Psikoloji Bağlamında Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2016); Gülüşan Göcen, *Şükür: Pozitif Psikolojiden Din Psikolojisine Köprü* (İstanbul: DEM Yayınları, 2014).

understand what kind of support they received. The results are classified and schematized in Figure 2.

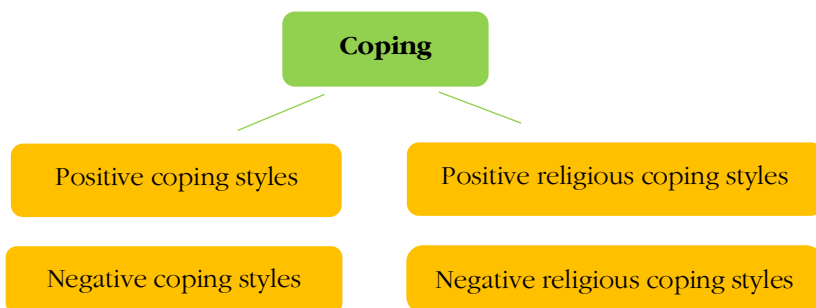


Figure 2. Findings Related to Coping Styles

2.2.1. Results Related to Positive Coping Styles

During adolescence, individuals' attempts to regain equilibrium and adapt to new situations are referred to as "coping."²¹ An individual's cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral efforts to manage stress are defined as "coping."²² In difficult situations such as wars, migrations, or epidemics, individuals apply different coping styles.²³ Data on the positive coping of participants who experienced the difficulties of adolescence and the difficulties of immigration simultaneously are shown in Table 6.

²¹ Ebru Basut, "Stres, Başa Çıkma ve Ergenlik", *Çocuk ve Gençlik Ruh Sağlığı Dergisi* 13/1 (2006), 31-36; Ali Eryılmaz, "Ergenlik Döneminde Stres ve Başa Çıkma".

²² Basut, "Stres, Başa Çıkma ve Ergenlik"; Atkinson et al., *Introduction to Psychology* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

²³ Mustafa Ulu - Harun Çelik, "Suriyeli Mültecilerin Kullandıkları Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri ile Dindarlıkları Arasındaki İlişki", *Bilimname* 40 (2019), 273-311.

Codes	Coping Styles	Female	Male	N
Feelings				
1.	Dreaming of better days in the future	14	9	23
2.	Appreciating what you have	9	3	12
3.	Giving yourself positive affirmations	7	7	14
Thoughts				
4.	Thinking about the memories in the previous country	10	15	25
5.	Thinking about learning a new language	8	8	16
6.	Normalizing experiences	10	14	24
7.	Setting the right goals	8	3	11
8.	Thinking positively	15	13	28
Behaviors				
9.	Seeking social support	10	14	24
10.	Providing social support	12	9	21
11.	Making new friends	9	7	16
12.	Focusing on children	5	3	8
13.	Gamifying situations	3	3	6
14.	Helping people		5	5

Table 6. Coping Styles with Psychosocial Problems

Table 6 shows that among the coping styles, methods such as positive thinking, giving oneself positive suggestions, and thinking about a new life and new opportunities in the country of migration were at the forefront. Families also stated that they gamified the war to reduce their children's fear and anxiety.

P2 (Female, 19/Code 8): "... I don't think about the past anymore. I don't focus on the past; I focus on what I have. I say, 'We are together.' I won't say, 'I wish we were in Syria.' There is no need to upset yourself because there is nothing you can do. We didn't leave our home willingly. So we don't think about these things too much."

P7 (Female, 17/ Code 3): "... I don't cry. I say, 'I am strong.' They will surely see when I succeed."

P15 (Male, 16/Code 11): "... When I didn't understand something in class, the teacher would say, 'You will understand slowly.' He was comforting me."

P10 (Male, 19/Code 12): "... We work on our feet. Normally, I get tired, but it feels good in this process. I stay for eight hours, sometimes even 24 hours. It's better this way. I don't want to stay at home."

2.2.2. Results Related to Negative Coping Styles

The participants were asked what they did during difficult times. Some of them resorted to negative coping styles.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Suppressing emotions	25	13	38
2. Contradicting oneself	11	7	18
3. Being closed to new friendships	5	3	8
4. Attempting suicide		3	3
5. Disidentification	1		1

Table 7. Negative Coping Styles

Negative coping styles do not benefit the individual in the current situation; they cause the individual to deteriorate psychologically, mentally, and spiritually.²⁴ Table 7 shows that the negative coping styles used by adolescent refugees in difficult situations consisted mainly of suppressing their feelings. Those who did not want to talk about what they had experienced and ignored it stated that they continued to think about it. This situation caused them to contradict themselves from time to time. All individuals who attempted suicide were male and in their late teens. As part of the coping process, some individuals may turn to negative coping methods.

P11 (Female, 18/Code 1): "I had not talked about these issues for a long time. We assume that we have forgotten. We look to the future, so we don't talk about these issues with our friends and people around us."

²⁴ Karakaş - Koç, "Stresle Başa Çıkma ve Dini Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri Arasındaki İlişki".

P2 (Female, 17/Code 3): “I don’t plan to make friends. I don’t want to open my heart to anyone.”

Some of the participants (3 persons stated that they had attempted suicide due to traumatic events they had experienced. In addition, during the interviews, some of the participants mentioned that they had thought about attempting suicide at least once.

2.3. Results on the Effects of Religious Factors on Coping

About the subject of religious and spiritual factors in difficult times, which is the basis of the research, this section considers religious coping styles. Some religious experiences provide a positive psychological contribution. Therefore, they are categorized as positive religious coping styles.

2.3.1. Results Related to Positive Religious Coping Styles

Individuals who use religion frequently in their daily lives can improve their situation by seeking support from religious and spiritual phenomena during difficult times.²⁵ The support provided by religious resources and faith in the coping process is referred to as “religious coping”.²⁶ The participants were asked about the support they received from their religion during difficult times. Among the coping styles, the percentage of participants who used positive religious coping styles was high. The data are shown in Table 8.

²⁵ Göcen, *Şükür*; Korkmaz, “Olumlu ve Olumsuz Dini Başa Çıkma, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Yalnızlık İlişkisi”; Filiz Yağcı - Esin Sezgin, “Ergenlerin Manevi Zekaları ile Psikolojik Dayanıklılıkları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi”, *Akademik Platform İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 5/2 (2021), 232-252.

²⁶ Kenneth I. Pargament, “God Help Me: Toward a Theoretical Framework of Coping for the Psychology of Religion”, *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 2 (1990).

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Prayers	32	15	47
2. Gratitude	28	18	46
3. Reading/listening to the Qur'ān	25	18	38
4. Patience	13	18	31
5. Interpreting favorably	18	11	29
6. Referring to God	9	13	22
7. Contemplation	8	13	21
8. Praying (<i>ṣalāh</i>)	14	7	21
9. Trust in God (<i>tawakkul</i>)	7	5	12

Table 8. Positive Religious Coping Styles

According to the data in Table 8, the majority of the participants used positive religious coping methods. Among these methods were gratitude, praying, reading/listening to the Qur'ān, and patience.

P7 (Female, 17, Code 1): “We all went into the house together and started praying. We thought it might be our last hours...”

P18 (Female, 18/Code 1): “I pray when I am scared, when I am sad, when I am happy, at every moment. When I pray to God, I feel that He is always with me and that even if everyone else leaves me, He will not leave me. No matter how bad something is, there is God. He will help us.”

P9 (Female, 18/Code 4): “... I feel peaceful when I read the Qur'ān.”

P19 (Female, 16/Code 9): “Prayer gives you confidence and peace of mind.”

P11 (Female, 18/ Code 9): “If we're close to God, our life will be good, and bad things will pass. Sometimes it's easy. Even when it's hard, you can say that God is with us, and we don't have to be afraid. I always believe in that. When I experience something bad, I say that God is with us, so I get through it easier; I believe in that.”

P3 (Female, 17/Code 9): “... We left it to God.”

2.3.2. Results Related to Negative Religious Coping Styles

Some of the participants adopted negative religious coping styles. They believed that the difficult processes they experienced were punishments or warnings from God. Some of them stated that these experiences were tests. Some stated this as the reason for moving away from prayers.

Codes	Female	Male	N
1. Living insensitively	20	13	33
2. God's trial	18	11	29
3. Staying away from religion	11	9	20
4. Punishment	9	4	13

Table 9. Negative Religious Coping Styles

Considering earthquakes, diseases, disasters, war, and migration as punishments and trials in the context of religious phenomena is an example of a negative religious coping style. Tarhan explained that negative experiences and difficult situations during adolescence can create a negative attitude toward worship and religious rituals. It is normal for individuals who go through adolescence and difficult processes simultaneously to adopt a cold and distant attitude toward religion and to experience emotional and mental shock during this period.²⁷

The participants experienced an intense and difficult process. To cope with their overwhelming feelings, some of them resorted to negative religious coping methods. Some of the participants felt guilty because they were not as grateful for their blessings as they should have been and commented on these situations:

P5 (Male, 17/Code.1): "We had been living very comfortably... This is a warning from God."

P18 (Female, 18/Code.3): "War and corona happened because we were far from God."

²⁷ Nevzat Tarhan, *İnanç Psikolojisi ve Bilim: Ruh, Beyin ve Akıl Üçgeninde İnsanoğlu* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2019).

Comments such as these suggested that the participants predominantly used positive religious coping methods. However, as evidenced by the participants' statements, this did not mean that they had turned away from religion. Rather, they attempted to explain negative situations with religious references.

Discussions and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine how refugee adolescents affected by war and migration coped with difficulties and what support they received. The research sample consisted of 50 participants recruited from different regions of Istanbul. The study was limited to Syrian refugees between the ages of 11 and 19. The difficult and stressful processes experienced by the participants who migrated were analyzed separately at three different times, before migration/war, during migration, and after migration, depending mainly on psychological and social factors. The results showed that the greatest challenge for participants in the postmigration period was the lack of knowledge of the language in their new country. Participants who reported starting their lives over faced economic challenges and indicated that they were not able to adopt socially. Other studies conducted in this area support these data.²⁸

The results show that emotions such as fear, sadness, and helplessness were most common during the pressure and violence before migration. In the process of migration, emotions such as longing, complex feelings, loneliness, and anxiety come to the forefront. The negative situations experienced during this period had a negative impact on personality development and individuals'

²⁸ Ayşegül Akdemir, "Syrians in Turkey: A Review of Literature", *Uluslararası Kültürel ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi (UKSAD)* 5/1 (2019), 323-336; Ramazan Akkur, "Din, Sosyalleşme ve Toplumsal Uyum: Suriyeli Mülteciler Örneği", *e-Şarkiyat İlmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 11/2 (2019), 953-971; İbrahim Arslan et al., "Göçün Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Yansımaları: Gaziantep'teki Suriyeli Göçmenler Örneği", *İlahiyat Akademi* 4 (2016), 129-148; Erdi Cengiz, *Suriyeli Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Psikososyal Uyum Sorunları ile Demografik Özellikler Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi* (Mersin: Çağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2018); Cory L. Cobb et al., "Toward a Positive Psychology of Immigrants", *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 14/4 (2019), 619-632; American Psychological Association (APA), *Crossroads: The Psychology of Immigration in the New Century: Report of the Presidential Task Force on Immigration* (Washington: APA, 2012).

religious and moral development.²⁹ In this sense, psychological, religious, spiritual, and moral factors in adolescence, such as personality development, are highly influenced by environmental factors. According to Erikson, certain tasks must be mastered during this period; if an individual cannot develop these qualities, negative characteristics will emerge.³⁰

The postmigration period in Turkey was economically, psychologically, and socially difficult for the participants. However, according to the data, the help of the Turkish population facilitated their adjustment. For the participants, having a similar culture and belonging to the same religion were among the important factors facilitating their migration and living in Turkey. This situation provided the participants with psychological relief and was a source of motivation for their social adaptation. Berry³¹ mentioned the influence of similar factors on socialization strategies.

The participants were asked about their experiences with challenging situations and how they coped with troubling processes. The relevant data can be found in Table 8. The data indicate that a high percentage of participants received religious and spiritual support in the coping process. Research has confirmed that positive religious coping styles help individuals protect their spiritual integrity and gain cognitive flexibility and self-regulation skills during difficult times. These coping styles also contribute positively to social cohesion, life satisfaction, and psychological relaxation.³² However, individuals who

²⁹ Hayati Hökelekli, *Psikolojiye Giriş* (Bursa: Emin Yayınları, 2015); James E. Marcia, "Identity in Adolescence", *Handbook of Adolescence Psychology*, ed. J. Aderson (New York: Wiley, 1980), 159-187; Melike Sayıl et al., "Erken Ergenlik Döneminde Duygusal Gereksinimler, Aileyle Çatışma Alanları ve Benlik Kavramı: Betimsel Bir İnceleme", *Çocuk ve Gençlik Ruh Sağlığı Dergisi* 9/3 (2002), 155-166.

³⁰ David Elkind, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man", *New York Times Magazine* 5 (1970), 1-27; İbrahim Gürses - M. Akif Kılavuz, "Erikson'un Psiko-Sosyal Gelişim Dönemleri Teorisi Açısından Kuşaklararası Din Eğitimi ve İletişiminin Önemi", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 20/2 (2011), 153-166.

³¹ J. W. Berry, "A Psychology of Immigration", *Journal of Social Issues* 57/3 (2001), 615-631.

³² Ayten - Sağır, "Dindarlık, Dinî Başa Çıkma ve Depresyon İlişkisi"; Ayten - Yıldız, "Dindarlık, Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisinde Dini Başa Çıkmanın Rolü Nedir?"; Batan - Ayten, "Dinî Başa Çıkma, Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Yaşam Doyumu İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma"; Carman et al., "Spirituality and Religiosity"; Erkan Kavas, "Dini Tutum, Stresle Başa Çıkma İlişkisi", *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 37 (June 2013), 143-168; H. G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: the Research and Clinical Implications", *International Scholarly Research Network*

were more inclined toward negative religious coping styles did not perform religious rituals in their daily lives. For this reason, these individuals turned to negative religious coping methods and did not receive spiritual support in difficult situations.

The participants were especially inclined toward actions such as gratitude, patience, reading/listening to the Qur'ān, and prayer. Studies of coping have shown that patience, gratitude, *tawakkul*³³ (trust in God), and submission to God are elements of positive religious coping.³⁴

Gratitude was predominant among the participants' discourses. Furthermore, the participants' positive attitudes increased their life satisfaction. Some studies conducted in Turkey³⁵ show that gratitude and acceptance are effective in improving coping.

Self-efficacy, developing friendships, communication skills, high self-esteem, enduring anxiety and frustration, adapting to new situations, and coping with stressful and traumatic situations are among the factors that increase individuals' resilience and coping skills.³⁶ Studies have revealed significant positive relationships among

(2012), 1-33; Korkmaz, "Olumlu ve Olumsuz Dini Başa Çıkma, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Yalnızlık İlişkisi"; J. R. Mann et al., "Religiosity, Spirituality and Antenatal Anxiety in Southern US Women", *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 11 (2008) 19-26; Wadith J. Naja et al. "Prevalence of Depression in Syrian Refugees and the Influence of Religiosity", *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 68 (July 2016), 78-85.; Zeynep Özcan, "Mülteci Öğrencilerin Kültürel Uyumları ile Dini Başa Çıkma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 23/1 (2019), 127-147; Isabelle Rieben et al., "Attachment and Spiritual Coping in Patients with Chronic Schizophrenia", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 17/8 (September 2014), 812-826; G. Stephens Spinks, *Psychology and Religion: An Introduction to Contemporary Views* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1963).

³³ "*Tawakkul* is when a person submits himself to the will and providence of Allah in every situation and consents to what comes from Him." Mustafa Çağrı, "Tevekkül", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 41/1-2.

³⁴ Hasan Bulut, "Kur'an Bağlamında Sabır ve Şükür İlişkisi", *Bingöl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16 (25 Aralık 2020), 338-355; Doğan, *Sabır Psikolojisi*; Kerim Yanur, *Günümüzde İnancın Psikolojisi* (Ankara: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 2013).

³⁵ Ayten, *Tavrı'ya Sığınmak*; Göcen, *Şükür*; Ayten et al., "Dini Başa Çıkma, Şükür ve Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisi".

³⁶ Altınışık, *Suriyeli Ergenlerde Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Psikolojik Problemler ile İlişkili Faktörler*; Hanife Büşra F. Doğrusanık, *Beş Oturumluk Bir Psikososyal Destek Programının Mülteci ve Türk Ortaokul Öğrencileri Üzerinde Etkisi: Sultanbeyli Örneği* (İstanbul: Üsküdar University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2020); Esra Güleçer, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Travma Sonrası Büyümenin Yordayıcıları Olarak Kendini Toparlama Gücü ve Dengeli Yaşam*

the use of positive religious coping styles, psychological resistance/resilience, and life satisfaction. Özcan³⁷ found a significant positive relationship between the use of positive religious coping styles and cultural adaptation. Similarly, Cesur³⁸ concluded that hemodialysis patients tend to have positive religious coping styles. Some studies in this area suggest that religious and spiritual factors related to stress and posttraumatic growth should be studied in more detail.

Experiencing difficult situations such as war and migration has implications for the biological, psychological, and personal development of adolescent refugees. Support from religious and spiritual phenomena during difficult times has been found to provide individuals with psychological resilience and to meaningfully contribute to protecting individuals' spiritual integrity. Support from religious and spiritual phenomena during times of difficulty increases individuals' satisfaction with their lives, ability to self-regulate, and cognitive flexibility. These factors have a positive effect on life satisfaction. It would be socially and individually beneficial to focus on the problems of refugee children and their spiritual well-being in future studies.

Individuals attempt to restore their spiritual balance through religious coping methods.³⁹ In this way, people can establish harmonious communication with themselves and their environment.⁴⁰

Algısı (Kocaeli: Kocaeli University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2021); Aydın, *Arap Zorunlu Göçmenlerde Travmatik Yaşantılar, Göç Sonrası Yaşam Zorlukları ve Manevi Başa Çıkma ve Sosyal Destek Bağlamında Psikolojik Dayanıklılık*, Sulhan, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Yaşam Kalitesi ile İlişkisinde Üstbilişlerin Aracı Rolü*; Özge Yavuz, *Çocukluk Çağı Travmalarının Psikolojik Belirtileri ile Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu Belirtileri Arasındaki İlişkide Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Özyeterliliğin Aracı Rolü*; Batan - Ayten, "Dinî Başa Çıkma, Psikolojik Dayanıklılık ve Yaşam Doyumu İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma".

³⁷ Zeynep Özcan, "Mülteci Öğrencilerin Kültürel Uyumları ile Dinî Başa Çıkmaları Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Araştırma".

³⁸ Nur Cesur, *Hemodiyaliz Hastalarında Travma Sonrası Büyüme, Din ve Maneviyat: Karşılıklı İlişki Üzerine Nitel Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2021).

³⁹ Basut, "Stres, Başa Çıkma ve Ergenlik"; Burcu Çelenk - Adem Peker, "Ergenlerde Benlik Saygısının, Stresle Başa Çıkma Tarzları ile Psikolojik İyi Oluş Arasındaki İlişkideki Aracılık Rolü", *Azarya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7/4 (April 2020), 147-162.

⁴⁰ Atalay Yörüköglü, *Çocuk ve Rub Sağlığı: Çocuğun Kişilik Gelişimi Yetiştirilmesi ve Rubsal Sorunları* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1978).

Jung states that it is important for individuals to receive religious and spiritual support in destructive and traumatic situations and that providing spiritual support is a meaningful contribution to individuals in difficult situations.⁴¹ Individuals who receive social and spiritual support achieve recovery and posttraumatic growth in a shorter time than individuals who do not receive this support, and they exhibit psychological resilience, cognitive flexibility, life satisfaction, and spiritual balance.⁴² However, no benefits were observed in individuals who adopted negative coping styles. Moreover, the frequency of the use of religious and spiritual phenomena in daily life and psychological resilience were directly proportional to the use of positive religious coping styles in the face of a difficult situation.

Consequently, the resources used to cope with difficult situations during adolescence can affect individuals socially, psychologically, cognitively, and emotionally. The protection of integrity through spiritual support, cognitive and spiritual relaxation, and a sense of security through spiritual support enable individuals to overcome difficulties more easily and contribute to strengthening their psychological resilience. According to the results, participants who received spiritual support from others exposed to the same conditions felt much more hopeful and secure, while those who sought less spiritual support experienced more stress and anxiety and had less life satisfaction, which has a direct impact on the ability to cope with difficulties and psychological resilience. In this context, religious and spiritual factors positively support the process of coping with difficult situations. Furthermore, having faith in the existence/source of religious rituals and teachings provides psychological relief by giving individuals a sense of security. As a result, psychological resilience positively impacts life satisfaction and optimism. In this study, the coping processes of adolescents facing difficult situations such as war

⁴¹ Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (United States of America: Oxford City Press, 2010).

⁴² Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery the Aftermath of Violence: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Cesur, *Hemodiyaliz Hastalarında Travma Sonrası Büyüme, Din ve Maneviyat*; Altınışık, *Suriyeli Ergenlerde Travma Sonrası Büyüme ve Psikolojik Problemler ile İlişkili Faktörler*; Jari. A. Salo, Samir Qouta, Raija-Leena Punamäki, "Adult Attachment, Posttraumatic Growth and Negative Emotions among Former Political Prisoners", *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 18/4 (2005), 361-378; K. Jacky Chan et al., "Well-Being After Trauma: A Review of Posttraumatic Growth Among Refugees".

and migration were examined in terms of the effects of religion and spirituality. Studies on this subject that expand the sample group will enrich the findings in the field.

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**TESTING THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING FACTORS OF
THE LINK BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND VACCINE HESITANCY:
A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH MUSLIMS**

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy and whether this relationship is mediated by trust in science and scientists. The sample consisted of 571 Turkish Muslims. The participants' average age was 38.09 years (SD=11.3). The participants were asked to provide their demographic information and complete measures of vaccine hesitancy, religiosity, and trust in science and scientists. The findings indicate that (a) there is a significant positive correlation between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy, (b) trust in science and scientists has a mediating role in the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy, and (c) age has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. The findings suggest that the role of religiosity in vaccine hesitancy functions through trust in science and scientists.

Keywords: Vaccine hesitancy, trust in science, trust in scientists, religiosity, Turkish Muslims

Introduction

Discussions about vaccine hesitancy go back as far as vaccine history. Following the development of new vaccines during the recent worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, these discussions became a main research topic in almost every society. In this context, numerous studies have been conducted to address vaccine hesitancy from different perspectives and to determine its predictors.¹ Religion and/or religiosity have also been studied in relation to vaccine hesitancy. The literature shows that religiosity might have a negative or a positive influence on individuals' attitudes toward vaccines. For example, a study conducted in Poland revealed that religiosity is a significant and

¹ For a systematic meta-analysis and review, see Jeanette J. Rainey et al., "Reasons Related to Non-Vaccination and under-Vaccination of Children in Low and Middle Income Countries: Findings from a Systematic Review of the Published Literature, 1999–2009", *Vaccine* 29/46 (2011), 8215–8221; Judy Truong et al., "What Factors Promote Vaccine Hesitancy or Acceptance During Pandemics? A Systematic Review and Thematic Analysis", *Health Promotion International* 37/1 (2022), 1-13.

negative predictor of vaccine hesitancy (or anti-vaccine attitudes).² Two studies conducted in the US that explored the relationship between vaccine hesitancy and Christian nationalism concluded that there is a significant and negative association between the aforementioned variables.³ However, some studies have shown that religiosity is a significant and positive predictor of vaccine confidence. According to a study conducted in the Philippines, clergymen can have a positive influence on people with regard to building vaccine trust.⁴ Another study that analyzed publicly available data from 147 countries found that religiosity is significantly and strongly positively correlated with vaccine confidence.⁵

Nevertheless, according to research, religiosity is not a consistent predictor of vaccine hesitancy. One study of university students in Venezuela examined the link between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity and revealed that although vaccine hesitancy is significantly correlated with the acceptance of scientific theories (that is, evolution theory) and vaccine conspiracy theories, there is no significant correlation between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity itself.⁶ These results also imply that trust in science (and scientists) and belief in conspiracy theories can be strong predictors of vaccine hesitancy.

Recent studies have revealed a correlation between vaccine hesitancy and trust in science or belief in conspiracy theories. According to these studies, vaccine hesitancy is significantly and negatively correlated with trust in science (and scientists), while it is significantly and positively correlated with belief in conspiracy theories.⁷ This raises the question of whether religiosity or trust in

² Waldemar Wojtasik et al., “Religiosity and New Populism”, *European Journal of Science and Theology* 17/5 (2021), 93–106.

³ Katie E. Corcoran et al., “Christian Nationalism and COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Uptake”, *Vaccine* 39/45 (2021), 6614-6621; Andrew L. Whitehead - Samuel L. Perry, “How Culture Wars Delay Herd Immunity: Christian Nationalism and Anti-Vaccine Attitudes”, *Socius* 6 (2020), 1-12.

⁴ Jose Ma W. Gopez, “Building Public Trust in COVID-19 Vaccines Through the Catholic Church in the Philippines”, *Journal of Public Health* 43/2 (2021), 1-2.

⁵ Kimmo Eriksson - Irina Vartanova, “Vaccine Confidence Is Higher in More Religious Countries”, *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* 18/1 (2022), 1-3.

⁶ Gabriel Andrade, “Vaccine Hesitancy and Religiosity in a Sample of University Students in Venezuela”, *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* 17/12 (2021), 5162-5167.

⁷ Chiara Cadeddu et al., “Vaccine Hesitancy and Trust in the Scientific Community in Italy: Comparative Analysis from Two Recent Surveys”, *Vaccines* 9 (2021), 1-12; J.

science and belief in conspiracy theories are the determining factors in vaccine hesitancy. Very few studies have addressed this question. The only study that has examined religiosity, trust in science, and vaccine hesitancy together was conducted in the US and found that religiosity increases individuals' vaccine intention and trust in science.⁸

Although a majority of these studies were conducted in Western or Judeo-Christian countries, some studies have explored the predictors of vaccine hesitancy or the relationship between vaccine hesitancy and certain variables, such as religiosity and conspiracy theories, in Muslim countries. Similarly, these studies have generally found a positive correlation between vaccine hesitancy and belief in conspiracy theories and a negative correlation between trust in science, religiosity, and vaccine hesitancy.⁹

Considering the literature review above, it is possible to examine the relationships among vaccine hesitancy, religiosity, and trust in science and scientists. According to the study conducted by Chu et al., trust in science and scientist can be proposed as a mediator of the relationship between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity, both theoretically and empirically.¹⁰ However, the literature review also revealed that only one study tested this proposition empirically. Furthermore, the study by Chu et al. was conducted with a Christian sample and proposed that religiosity mediated vaccine hesitancy and trust in science and scientists.

Milošević Đorđević et al., "Links Between Conspiracy Beliefs, Vaccine Knowledge, and Trust: Anti-Vaccine Behavior of Serbian Adults", *Social Science & Medicine* 277 (2021), 1-8; Daniel Seddig et al., "Correlates of COVID-19 Vaccination Intentions: Attitudes, Institutional Trust, Fear, Conspiracy Beliefs, and Vaccine Skepticism", *Social Science & Medicine* 302 (2022), 1-10.

⁸ James Chu et al., "Religious Identity Cues Increase Vaccination Intentions and Trust in Medical Experts Among American Christians", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118/49 (2021), 1-3.

⁹ Qamar Abbas et al., "Myths, Beliefs, and Conspiracies About COVID-19 Vaccines in Sindh, Pakistan: An Online Cross-Sectional Survey", *Auborea* (2021); Muhammad Subhan Arshad et al., "A National Survey to Assess the COVID-19 Vaccine-Related Conspiracy Beliefs, Acceptability, Preference, and Willingness to Pay among the General Population of Pakistan", *Vaccines* 9/7 (2021), 720; Veysel Bozkurt et al., "Factors Affecting Negative Attitudes towards COVID-19 Vaccines", *İnsan & Toplum* 13/1 (2023); Mohammad Bellal Hossain et al., "COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among the Adult Population in Bangladesh: A Nationwide Cross-Sectional Survey", *PLOS ONE* 16/12 (2021), 1-19.

¹⁰ Chu et al., "Religious Identity Cues Increase Vaccination Intentions and Trust in Medical Experts Among American Christians".

On a theoretical and empirical basis, we propose that trust in science and scientists is a mediating variable between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. Given the literature review above, it seems that compared to religiosity, trust in science and scientists might be a stronger predictor of vaccine hesitancy. Hence, it is likely that trust in science and scientists has a mediating role in the link between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity. However, another point needs to be stressed. The recent COVID-19 pandemic strongly affected people in all countries across the world. According to a report by UNICEF that covered 90 countries, the number of confirmed deaths from COVID-19 increased with age, and 78.6% of the deaths occurred among people over the age of 60.¹¹ Additionally, previous research has shown that older people tend to be confident in vaccines due to their anxiety about health. In other words, since older people are often highly vulnerable to diseases, they are also more concerned about their health, which leads them to get vaccinated.¹² In this context, it is expected that individuals' attitudes toward vaccines will change with age. On this basis, the current study proposes that age might be a moderator of the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

It would be helpful to briefly explain the unique understanding of health in Islam to better understand a Muslim sample. The Islamic understanding of health is built mainly upon the two pillars of the sacred texts of Islam, namely, the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, as well as philosophical writings and theological treaties. According to the Qur'ān and ḥadīths, human beings are created by Allah in the best possible form (*aḥsan taqwīm*) (Q 95/4), and the body is believed to be a trust (*amānah*) given by God. This belief is also linked to the belief that any illness and health is from God (Q 4/78). Thus, Muslim scholars have constructed a holistic understanding of health. In other words, since the body is a trust, Muslim scholars have treated physical,

¹¹ "COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths", UNICEF (2022).

¹² Alison Bish et al., "Factors Associated with Uptake of Vaccination against Pandemic Influenza: A Systematic Review", *Vaccine* 29/38 (2011), 6472–6484; Gustavo S. Mesch - Kent P. Schwirian, "Social and Political Determinants of Vaccine Hesitancy: Lessons Learned from the H1N1 Pandemic of 2009-2010", *American Journal of Infection Control* 43/11 (2015), 1161–1165; Lynn B. Myers - Robin Goodwin, "Determinants of Adults' Intention to Vaccinate Against Pandemic Swine Flu", *BMC Public Health* 11/1 (2011), 15; Björn Rönnerstrand, "Social Capital and Immunisation Against the 2009 A(H1N1) Pandemic in Sweden", *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 41/8 (2013), 853–859.

spiritual, and mental disorders/ailments as a whole and have not addressed them separately. In addition, since the body (that is, physical, spiritual, and mental health) is a trust given by God, it is believed that both treating ailments and preventing them is a religious duty.¹³

This study tested the links between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy and whether these links are mediated by trust in science and scientists and moderated by age. While assessing religiosity, we focused on both social effect and practical dimensions to provide a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the relationships among religiosity, trust in science and scientists, and vaccine hesitancy. For similar reasons, we measured the variable of trust with two different dimensions, namely, trust in science and trust in scientists. Previous researchers have also evaluated vaccine hesitancy attitudes, including beliefs in conspiracy theories about vaccines (for example, “vaccines cause autism” and “vaccines contain harmful substances, such as mercury”), because they believe that this will allow them to measure participants’ attitudes toward information about vaccines.

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are constructed:

H₁: There is a significant correlation between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

H₂: There is a significant correlation between religiosity and trust in science and scientists.

H₃: There is a significant correlation between trust in science and scientists and vaccine hesitancy.

H₄: Trust in science and scientists mediates the links between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

H₅: Age moderates the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

1. Method

1.1. Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 571 Turkish Muslim participants, of whom 299 (52.4%) were male and 272 (47.6%) were female. Their ages ranged from 18 to 78 years, with a mean age of 38.09

¹³ Ali Ayten - Amjad M. Hussain, *Psychology and Islam* (İstanbul: M.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2020), 100-103.

years (SD=11.384). In terms of educational level, 20% of the participants were not educated at a university (N=114), while 80% of the sample had an undergraduate degree or higher (N=457). Table 1 shows the participants' characteristics.

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	272	47.6
Male	299	52.4
Education Level		
High school and below	114	20
Undergraduate and higher	457	80
Has he/she ever gotten infected with COVID-19?		
Yes	308	53.9
No	263	46.1
Vaccinated for COVID-19		
Yes	440	77.1
No	131	22.9
Lost a close relative due to COVID-19?		
Yes	144	25.2
No	427	74.8
The mean age of the participants	38.89 ± 11.38 (SD = 11.3)	

n = frequency, % = column percentage, SD = standard deviation

Table 1. Demographic characteristics for all respondents (N=571)

1.2. Measures

Background information: The participants were asked to indicate their sex, age, and educational status. In addition, they were asked whether they were vaccinated for COVID-19 and whether they were ill with COVID-19. If they were ill, they were asked how severe the disease was. Data were also requested on whether they had lost a close relative due to COVID-19.

Vaccine Hesitancy. The first main variable in the present study was vaccine hesitancy. The respondents' attitudes toward the vaccine were assessed with a scale of anti-vaccine beliefs (anti-vaccination)

developed by Wojtasik et al.¹⁴ The participants responded to ten items (e.g., the system of universal and compulsory vaccinations is an instrument of control over society by the authorities). The score for each item ranged from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree). All items in the scale were subjected to factor analyses. The scale accounted for 56.507% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was .922, and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded $\chi^2=3413.792$ and $p=.000$. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of this scale was .905. These results show that the scale was acceptable and applicable. Table 2 shows the conformity analysis and more psychometric values.

Trust in Science and Scientists. Trust in science and scientists was measured with the "Instrument to Measure Trust in Science and Scientists".¹⁵ This scale has 21 items. However, for this study, we applied Esen's and Alkış-Küçükaydın's versions, in which the number of items was reduced to 10 (e.g., scientific theories are trustworthy).¹⁶ The scale consisted of a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha (α) value was found to be .785, which was suitable for the study.

Religiosity. One of the main variables of this study is religiosity. Since all participants were Muslim, we used Ayten's 9-item religiosity scale, which was developed to measure Muslim religiosity.¹⁷ The scale consists of two dimensions. In the first dimension, religious consequences have four items, including the effect of religion on decision-making, social life, and eating and clothing (e.g., My religious beliefs influence what I wear). The second dimension concerns faith and practice. It measures beliefs about the existence of God, the frequency of prayer, the reciting of the Qur'an, and so on (e.g., I pray five times a day). The KMO value was .914, and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded $\chi^2=3552.018$ and $p=.000$. The Cronbach's alpha (α) of the scale was .921 for this study.

¹⁴ Wojtasik et al., "Religiosity and New Populism".

¹⁵ Louis Nadelson et al., "I Just Don't Trust Them: The Development and Validation of an Assessment Instrument to Measure Trust in Science and Scientists", *School Science and Mathematics* 114/2 (2014), 76–86.

¹⁶ Seher Esen - Menşure Alkış-Küçükaydın, "Turkish Adaptation Study of the Trust in Science and Scientists Scale: Validity and Reliability Study", *Research on Education and Psychology* 6 (Special Issue) (2022), 57–68.

¹⁷ Ali Ayten, "Kimlik ve Din: İngiltere'deki Türk Gençleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (ÇÜİFD)* 12/2 (2012), 101–119.

1.3. Procedure

This study was conducted in Turkey. The data were gathered between the 23rd of May 2022 and the 30th of May 2022 using Google Forms. The snowball sampling method was used, and the participants were mostly recruited from the authors' family members, friends, and coworkers. They were asked to complete the survey and received the link via online messages and social media posts.

2. Results

2.1. Factor Analyses of Anti-Vaccination Scale

The translation into Turkish of a ten-item anti-vaccine scale developed by Wojtasik et al. was conducted by the researchers to measure the participants' attitudes toward vaccines.¹⁸ Following the data collection process, explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to determine the reliability and factorial validity of the scale. These ten items were subjected to principal component factor analysis and accounted for 56.507% of the variance. The KMO parameter and Bartlett's test of sphericity were suitable for factor analysis (KMO = .922; $\chi^2 = 3413.792$; $p = .000$). The Cronbach's alpha values (α) were found to be satisfactory (.905). As a result of these analyses, the scale was determined to be applicable.

AMOS software was used for the confirmatory factor analyses. As a result of the confirmatory factor analyses based on the structural equation model, which makes it possible to include latent and observed variables in the analysis, the model fit indices were found to be in the acceptable range and statistically significant.

¹⁸ Wojtasik et al., "Religiosity and New Populism".

Scale/Item	M	SD	Corrected Item-to Total R	α	Standardized Regression Weights
Vaccine Hesitancy	3.01	.760		.905	
Item 1	3.34	1.20	.584**		.424**
Item 2	4.00	1.06	.646**		.493**
Item 3	2.79	1.16	.749**		.616**
Item 4	3.15	1.10	.813**		.701**
Item 5	3.27	1.16	.800**		.703**
Item 6	2.60	.839	.789**		.842**
Item 7	2.61	.832	.774**		.802**
Item 8	2.88	.921	.766**		.815**
Item 9	2.59	.850	.777**		.824**
Item 10	2.84	1.11	.754**		.696**
Model Fit Statistics					
χ^2				135.396	
df				28	
χ^2/df				4.836	
GFI				.951	
AGFI				.903	
NFI				.961	
RFI				.937	
IFI				.969	
TLI				.949	
CFI				.968	
SRMR				.046	
RMSEA				.082	

Note: N: 571. ** Significant at .001 level.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Statistics, and Confirmatory Factor Analytic Findings for the Vaccine Hesitancy Scale (VHS)

The chi-square test results for the model fit indices were significant ($\chi^2 = 135.396$, $df = 28$, $p < .000$). Additionally, the value of the minimum discrepancy function divided by degrees of freedom (chi-square divided by degrees of freedom) was within an acceptable range (χ^2/df

= 4.836).¹⁹ The goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and incremental fit index (IFI) were found to be greater than .900 (GFI = .951; AGFI = .903; TLI = .949; CFI = .968; NFI = .961; IFI = .969). AGFI greater than .900 is an excellent fit according to Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller.²⁰

Moreover, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = .082) was within an acceptable range,²¹ and the standardized root mean residual was less than .05 (SRMR = .046). Consequently, confirmatory factor analyses based on the structural equation model showed that the model fit indices were in the acceptable range and significant.²²

2.2. Correlation Analyses for the Main Variables

Table 3 presents a correlation matrix of the study's three main variables. According to the findings, there was a significant positive correlation between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy ($r = .138$; $p < .01$). Furthermore, religiosity ($r = -.101$; $p < .05$) and vaccine hesitancy ($r = -.563$; $p < .01$) were negatively related to trust in science and scientists.

Variable	R	TS	VH
R (M=4.17; SD=.842; range=1-5)	1		
TS (M=3.18; SD=.573; range =1-5)	-.101*	1	
VH (M=3.01; SD=.760; range =1-5)	.138**	-.563**	1

Note: N= 571. R= Religiosity, TS= Trust in Science and Scientists, VH= Vaccine Hesitancy

** $p < 0.01$

* $p < 0.05$

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

¹⁹ H. W. Marsh - D. Hocevar, "Application of Confirmatory Factor Analysis to the Study of Self-Concept: First- and Higher Order Factor Models and Their Invariance across Groups", *Psychological Bulletin* 97/3 (1985), 562-582.

²⁰ K. Schermelleh-Engel et al., "Evaluating the Fit of Structural Equation Models: Tests of Significance and Descriptive Goodness-of-Fit Measures", *Methods of Psychological Research* 8/2 (2003), 23-74.

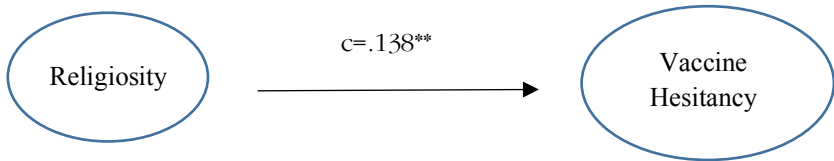
²¹ M. W. Browne - R. Cudeck, "Alternative Ways of Assessing Model Fit", *Sociological Methods & Research* 21/2 (1992), 230-258.

²² R. B. Kline, *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (New York: Guilford Press, 2011); Schermelleh-Engel et al., "Evaluating the Fit of Structural Equation Models: Tests of Significance and Descriptive Goodness-of-Fit Measures".

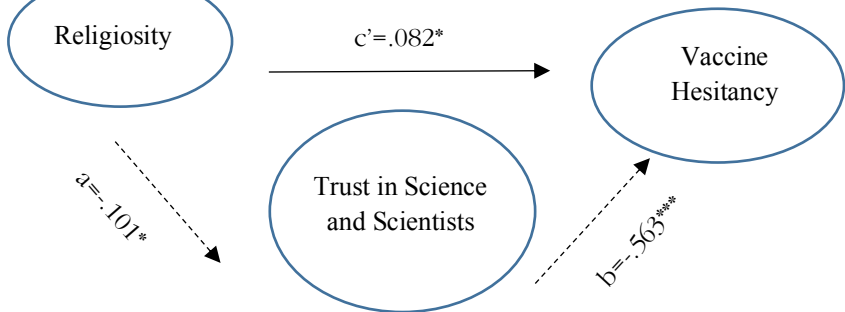
2.3. The Mediating Role of Trust in Science and Scientists

The present study examined the mediating role of trust in science and scientists in the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. All three conditions to establish the mediating role of trust in science and scientists in the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy were met, as Baron and Kenny suggested.²³ Graph 1 shows that religiosity had a significant positive effect on vaccine hesitancy ($c=.138^{**}$) and a negative effect on trust in science and scientists ($a=-.101^*$) and that trust in science and scientists had a negative effect on vaccine hesitancy ($b=-.563^{***}$). Graph 1 also shows that the effect of religiosity on vaccine hesitancy decreased to ($c'=.082^*$) from ($c=.138^{**}$) when trust in science and scientists was added as a mediator. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that trust in science and scientists partially mediates the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

I.



II.

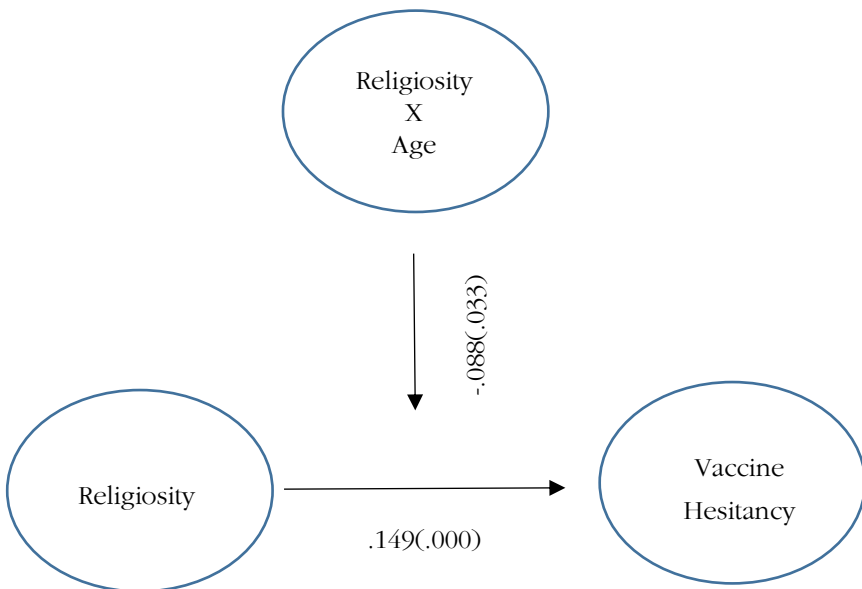


Graph 1. The mediating role of trust in science and scientists on the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. Model I illustrates the direct effect of religiosity on vaccine hesitancy. Model II illustrates the mediating effect of trust in science and scientists. Note: $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < .001$

²³ R. M. Baron - D. A. Kenny, "The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51/6 (1986), 1173-1182.

2.4. Moderation Test of Age between Religiosity and Vaccine Hesitancy

A moderation model was constructed to test the hypothesis of whether age moderates the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the model. The independent variables were centered, and an interaction term of age and religiosity was calculated.²⁴ As shown in Graph 2, age had a significant moderating effect ($p=.033$) on the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. When the interaction term was added to the equation (regression model), the direction of the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy changed to $(-.088)$ from $(.149)$. These findings reveal that while higher religiosity predicts greater vaccine hesitancy, the moderating role of age eliminates this relationship. As the participants' age increased, vaccine-hesitant attitudes decreased and vice versa.



Graph 2. Age as a moderator on the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

²⁴ Baron - Kenny, "The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations".

3. Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to ongoing debate and mistrust about vaccines. Studies on vaccine hesitancy and intention have revealed that there are a number of factors related to hesitant attitudes toward vaccines. For example, factors such as risk perceptions, ethnicity, gender, lack of information, and vaccine misinformation have been shown to affect vaccine hesitancy. According to the literature, it is safe to say that religiosity or belief in a higher power and trust have a noticeable and distinct place among these factors. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the link between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity and whether trust in science and scientists mediates the previously mentioned relationship among a sample of Turkish Muslims. Moreover, this study aimed to explore the moderating role of age in the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

Regarding the first research hypothesis (H_1), the findings indicate that there is a statistically significant and positive correlation between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy (see Table 3). These findings support the first research hypothesis. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the findings of other studies. For instance, some studies conducted in different countries using diverse samples have concluded that there is a negative correlation between religiosity and vaccination intentions; that is, the more religious people are, the less they accept being vaccinated.²⁵ However, there are also data from studies that conclude that religiosity promotes a positive tendency toward vaccination.²⁶

The findings of this study also support the second research hypothesis (H_2) concerning the link between religiosity and trust in science and scientists. The findings indicate that there is a statistically

²⁵ Abbas et al., "Myths, Beliefs, and Conspiracies About COVID-19 Vaccines in Sindh, Pakistan: An Online Cross-Sectional Survey"; Miguel Pugliese-Garcia et al., "Factors Influencing Vaccine Acceptance and Hesitancy in Three Informal Settlements in Lusaka, Zambia", *Vaccine* 36/37 (2018), 5617-5624; G. Troiano - A. Nardi, "Vaccine Hesitancy in the Era of COVID-19", *Public Health* 194 (2021), 245-251.

²⁶ E. T. Mupandawana - R. Cross, "Attitudes Towards Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Among African Parents in a City in the North of England: A Qualitative Study", *Reproductive Health* 13/1 (2016); Tami Thomas et al., "The Influence of Religiosity and Spirituality on Rural Parents' Health Decision Making and Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Choices", *Advances in Nursing Science* 38/4 (2015), 1-16.

significant and negative correlation between religiosity and trust in science and scientists (see Table 3). These findings are compatible with other studies in the literature. Numerous studies conclude that an increasing level of religiosity predicts negative attitudes toward science.²⁷ On the other hand, certain studies have derived notable findings. For instance, O'Brien and Noy²⁸ found that religiosity is a stronger negative predictor of trust in science than religion itself. In a slightly broader study that drew upon data from 52 countries, Chan found that although religiosity is, on average, negatively associated with science, the results differ by country, and religion sometimes has a positive association with science.²⁹ More interestingly, Chan concluded that religiosity is unswervingly negatively associated with science only in Western countries.

Research Hypothesis H₃ regarding the link between vaccine hesitancy and trust in science and scientists is supported by the findings of the study. That is, there is a statistically significant and negative correlation between vaccine hesitancy and trust in science and scientists (see Table 3). Many previous studies have also demonstrated that trust in science and scientific authorities decreases negative attitudes toward vaccines.³⁰

The findings of this study support the fourth research hypothesis, H₄, concerning the mediating role of trust in science and scientists on

²⁷ Jonathon McPhetres - Miron Zuckerman, "Religiosity Predicts Negative Attitudes Towards Science and Lower Levels of Science Literacy", *PLOS ONE* 13/11 (2018), 1-20; D. A. Scheufele et al., "Religious Beliefs and Public Attitudes toward Nanotechnology in Europe and the United States", *Nature Nanotechnology* 4/2 (2009), 91-94.

²⁸ "Cultural Authority in Comparative Context: A Multilevel Analysis of Trust in Science and Religion", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57/3 (2018), 495-513.

²⁹ Esther Chan, "Are the Religious Suspicious of Science? Investigating Religiosity, Religious Context, and Orientations Towards Science", *Public Understanding of Science* 27/8 (2018), 967-984.

³⁰ E. Dubé et al., "Vaccine Hesitancy: An Overview", *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* 9/8 (2013), 1763-1773; Matthew J. Hornsey et al., "Donald Trump and Vaccination: The Effect of Political Identity, Conspiracist Ideation and Presidential Tweets on Vaccine Hesitancy", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 88 (2020), 1-8; Laura Rozek et al., "Understanding Vaccine Hesitancy in the Context of COVID-19: The Role of Trust and Confidence in a Seventeen-Country Survey", *International Journal of Public Health* 66 (2021), 1-9; Patrick Sturgis et al., "Trust in Science, Social Consensus and Vaccine Confidence", *Nature Human Behaviour* 5/11 (2021), 1528-1534.

the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. As demonstrated in Graph 1, trust in science and scientists partially mediates the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. The findings for the above four hypotheses might indicate that the increasing effect of religiosity on vaccine hesitancy is partially related to the link between religiosity and trust in science and scientists. Religiosity, therefore, increases vaccine hesitancy because it decreases trust in science and scientists. This might explain why religiosity increases questioning and distrust of scientific thinking and methods, and this hesitation about scientific methods results in increasing vaccine hesitancy. However, these findings also raise the question of whether there are other mediating factors in the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy.

As explained in the literature review above, a great deal of research has examined the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy/intentions, but studies that explain the underlying mechanism of this relationship are lacking in the literature. We found only a limited number of studies that investigated a mediating factor in the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy. For example, a study conducted by Olagoke et al. revealed that health locus of control (HLOC) partially mediates the link between religiosity and COVID-19 vaccination intention.³¹ Furthermore, according to Ladini and Vezzoni, beliefs in COVID-19 conspiracy theories mediate the relationship between beliefs in divine immanence and vaccine hesitancy.³² Finally, Plohl and Musil concluded that trust in science fully mediates the effect of religious orthodoxy on compliance with COVID-19 prevention guidelines.³³

Finally, research Hypothesis H₅ concerning the moderating role of age on the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy is supported by the findings of the study. Age moderates the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy (see Graph 2). This means that as people age,

³¹ Ayokunle A. Olagoke et al., "Intention to Vaccinate Against the Novel 2019 Coronavirus Disease: The Role of Health Locus of Control and Religiosity", *Journal of Religion and Health* 60/1 (2021), 65-80.

³² Riccardo Ladini - Cristiano Vezzoni, "When Believing in Divine Immanence Explains Vaccine Hesitancy: A Matter of Conspiracy Beliefs?", *Politics and Governance* 10/4 (2022), 168-176.

³³ Nejc Plohl - Bojan Musil, "Modeling Compliance with COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines: The Critical Role of Trust in Science", *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 26/1 (2021), 1-12.

they appear to become less hesitant toward vaccines, although religiosity predicts greater vaccine hesitancy. That is, age both moderates and limits the role of religiosity in vaccine hesitancy. These findings are partially consistent with the findings of the current study. In other words, most previous studies have revealed a negative correlation between age and vaccine hesitancy; that is, older people are less vaccine-hesitant than young people.³⁴ However, other studies have shown a positive correlation between age and vaccine hesitancy.³⁵

In the literature, the latter findings are more limited than the former. This indicates that age is one of the main predictors of vaccine hesitancy. However, the findings of the current study concerning the moderating role of age on the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy are unique and supplement the gap in the literature. The decrease in vaccine hesitancy with increasing age can be explained by the relationship between age and health anxiety. Various studies in the literature have shown that there is a positive correlation between health anxiety and aging, which means that health anxiety increases with age.³⁶ On this basis, it can be inferred that older people are less

³⁴ D. Allington et al., "Coronavirus Conspiracy Suspicions, General Vaccine Attitudes, Trust and Coronavirus Information Source as Predictors of Vaccine Hesitancy among UK Residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic", *Psychological Medicine* 53/1 (2023), 236-247; Anja Repalust et al., "Childhood Vaccine Refusal and Hesitancy Intentions in Croatia: Insights from a Population-Based Study", *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 22/9 (2017), 1045-1055; Hannah A. Roberts et al., "To Vax or Not to Vax: Predictors of Anti-Vax Attitudes and COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Prior to Widespread Vaccine Availability", *PLOS ONE* 17/2 (2022), 1-19; Micah Skeens et al., "An Exploration of COVID-19 Impact and Vaccine Hesitancy in Parents of Pediatric Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HCT) Recipients", *Bone Marrow Transplantation* 57/4 (2022), 547-553.

³⁵ Nareman Aly Mohamed et al., "Moderating Effect of Psychological Antecedents and Conspiracy Mentality on COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in a Sample of Egyptians", *Egyptian Journal of Health Care* 12/3 (2021), 1873-1886; Alessandro Siani et al., "Investigating the Determinants of Vaccine Hesitancy Within Undergraduate Students' Social Sphere", *Journal of Public Health: From Theory to Practice* 30/12 (2022), 2791-2799.

³⁶ Ehud Bodner et al., "Attitudes to Aging Mediate the Reciprocal Effects of Health Anxiety and Physical Functioning", *Psychology & Health* 38/2(2023), 190-208; R. El-Gabalawy et al., "Health Anxiety Disorders in Older Adults: Conceptualizing Complex Conditions in Late Life", *Clinical Psychology Review* 33/8 (2013), 1096-1105; James Lindesay et al., "Worry Content Across the Lifespan: An Analysis of 16- to 74-Year-Old Participants in the British National Survey of Psychiatric Morbidity 2000", *Psychological Medicine* 36/11 (2006), 1625-1633.

hesitant toward vaccines since they are worried about their health. Finally, according to the results of this study, this sample of Muslims had similar tendencies in comparison to the different religious traditions mentioned in the literature above with regard to vaccine hesitancy and trust in science and scientists.

Conclusion

Religiosity plays an important and effective role in different aspects of human life. As such, this study predicted that religiosity would be a significant factor in vaccine hesitancy. The findings of this study revealed that religiosity has a significant relationship with vaccine hesitancy. In addition, trust in science and scientists has been identified as a mediator of the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy, while age has been identified as a moderator of this link. The findings of this study correspond with the relevant literature and suggest that the process underlying the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy remains to be explored.

Research Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The findings of the current study show that the relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy among Turkish Muslims is multifaceted and is mediated and moderated by many other variables. This study found that trust in science and scientists and age were mediating and moderating factors. In addition to these variables, variables such as personality, the type of religiosity (intrinsic, extrinsic, inquiry, etc.), and the style and place of religious education also affected the link between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy among Turkish Muslims. However, the mediating factor of trust in science and scientists in the current study seems to present a new dimension to explain how religiosity and vaccine hesitancy are related. It should be stressed that the mediating effect of trust in science and scientists in this study needs to be explored in further studies. In short, more comprehensive and nuanced analyses are needed to elucidate the links between the abovementioned variables.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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CONFRONTING MODERNITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MUSLIM FAMILY IN ÖMER NASUHI BİLMEN'S WRITINGS IN THE 20TH CENTURY OTTOMAN STATE

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Abstract

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the Ottoman State underwent a process of modernization driven by political, legal, and social reforms. This period was marked by a cautious approach to change by Ottoman scholars, including Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen. Bilmen was a highly influential Muslim intellectual and Islamic legal scholar during the late Ottoman era and the early years of secular Turkey. This article examines Bilmen's confrontation of modernity and his responses to

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societal changes through specific issues relevant to his time in the late Ottoman era. It discusses his role in addressing obstacles, his observations of ongoing transformations, and his critiques of European hegemony and modernization. The study focuses on Bilmen's articles written in Ottoman Turkish between 1920 and 1922, particularly on marriage, divorce, polygamy, and population growth policies.

Keywords: Islamic family law, Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, modernity, marriage, divorce

Introduction

The 1920s were the period during which the modernization of the Ottoman State became apparent through the implementation of political, legal, and social institutions. There was a vocal demand for change and the adoption of a modern lifestyle, as well as criticism of this demand. Ottoman intellectuals endeavored to comprehend and elucidate the social and political factors underpinning the demand for change. One of these intellectuals was Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (1883-1971).¹ Bilmen is arguably among the most influential legal scholars of the 20th century who lived during the late Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods. He is renowned for his extensive knowledge and experience of Islamic law, both in theory and practice. However, his unique position in Muslim intellectual history extends far beyond that of a distinguished legal scholar. Bilmen was, in fact, a citizen of two worlds: the Ottoman State and the new Turkish Republic. He was confronted by the Ottoman State's modernization of political and legal foundations, the sociolegal conflict that arose from this process, the later fall of the State, and finally, the legal policies of the new Turkish Republic.

Like many other Ottoman scholars, Bilmen witnessed the structural dynamics of radical legal change and secularization in the Republican era. He played a key role in transferring the Qur'ānic and Islamic intellectual heritage to the new Turkish Republican context. He promptly adopted the Latin script for the Turkish language and authored several books in the field of Islamic studies and Islamic law.

¹ I am deeply indebted to Alina Celebcigil, relative of Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, whose assistance has been invaluable throughout this work.

During the late Ottoman period, he was deeply interested in the sociopolitical tensions surrounding the compatibility of Islam with modernity, social issues, and the effects of modernization. Through several Ottoman periodicals, he shared a portion of his views, criticisms, and reflections on theology, understanding the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, and the practice of Islamic law. The debates concerning the efficiency of Islamic law, as well as the argument that Islam and its legal system are incompatible with modern society, were among the issues in which he was actively involved. As a Muslim intellectual, he also challenged the Western political and cultural hegemony over Muslim societies. Bilmen dedicated a considerable portion of his life to writing. In his writings, Bilmen sought to resolve the conflict between religious knowledge and modernization and to dispel misconceptions about Islam, the Qurʾān, and Islamic law.

This study will particularly examine Bilmen's writings from the 1920s, which mark a crucial transition from the "old Ottoman State" to the "new modern Turkish Republic".² This study aims to uncover the social and political agenda that dominated the intellectual and political arena in Bilmen's articles and to explain the impact of modernization on the Muslim community in the early 20th century. To present Bilmen's ideas in a systematic way, his thoughts on four topics are outlined: marriage among Muslims, divorce practices, polygamous marriage practices, and policies to control population growth. Unfortunately, in the contemporary academic literature, his contributions to these issues are largely neglected, if not avoided altogether. For example, there is a considerable similarity between the information presented by Alen Duben and Cem Behar in their work entitled *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility, 1880-1940* and Bilmen's articles. Starting from this gap in the recognition of Bilmen's intellectual world, this study concentrates on articles written by Bilmen in the late Ottoman period that were published in the journals *Bayān al-Ḥaqq*, *Şīrāt-i Mustaqīm*, and *Sabīl al-Rashād* between 1920 and 1922.

Finally, while this paper is not a biography of Bilmen or an examination of his entire body of work, it is a valuable goal to provide the English reader with an overview of Bilmen's intellectual background, the political context of his life, and his works. There is a

² Ayla Göl, *Turkey Facing East: Islam, Modernity and Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 23-25.

considerable lack of information about Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen in English; this paper contributes to the essential need to provide this information.

1. A Man of Letters: Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (1883-1971)

Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen was born on January 10, 1883, in Erzurum (a city located in eastern Anatolia), Turkey, into a prestigious *‘ulamā’* family with links to the Ottoman royal family. He passed away on October 12, 1971, in Istanbul. He was orphaned at a young age when his father, Sheikh Hājī Aḥmad Ḥamdī Efendī, passed away and was subsequently brought up by his mother, Muhibah Khanim, and his uncle, ‘Abd al-Razzāq ‘Ilmī Efendī. Bilmen received his primary education from his family. ‘Abd al-Razzāq ‘Ilmī Efendī, the *mudarris* of Erzurum Aḥmadiyyah Madrasah and deputy *naqīb al-asbrāf*, played an important role in Bilmen’s continued education. Eventually, after the deaths of his uncle and his another tutor Narmanlīzādah Ḥusayn Haqqī Efendī, Bilmen and his mother relocated to Istanbul in 1908.³

Bilmen pursued further education under Tūqādlī Shākīr Efendī, a *mudarris* at Fatih Madrasahs in Istanbul. After successfully attending Tūqādlī Shākīr Efendī’s lectures, Bilmen was awarded the teaching certificate and began working as a *Bāyazīd Dars-i ‘amm* (lecturer) in 1912. During this time, he also studied law at the *Madrasat al-Quḍāb* (a school of Islamic Law), from which he graduated on July 16, 1913. Although Bilmen wrote poetry in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish during his education in Istanbul, he also enjoyed reading French and writing in that language, as well as translating French into Turkish. Alongside his law studies, he developed an interest in philosophy and ethics, reading extensively and writing articles on Western approaches to ethics and morality.⁴

In July 1913, Bilmen was appointed as *mulāzīm* (rapporteur) to Fatwākhānah-i ‘Ālī (the house of *fatwā*⁵), and within a year, he was promoted to the head of *mulāzīms*. According to the regulations of Fatwākhānah (dated February 18, 1875), only those who had proven

³ Rahmi Yaran, “Bilmen, Ömer Nasuhi”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 6/ 162.

⁴ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Yüksek İslâm Ablakı* (İstanbul: Ravza Yayınları, 2020), 26, 46, 57.

⁵ The response of a qualified legal scholar (*faqīb*) to a question posed by an individual, judge, or government.

their competence in Islamic law could be assigned by the committee as the head of *mulâzims*, and Bilmen was accepted as a qualified candidate for this position. At the age of 30, he joined Hay'at-i Ta'lifiyyah⁶ (Research Committee for Fatwás) in 1915 and worked with leading Islamic law scholars, including 'Ali Hâyder Efendî.⁷ The Hay'at-i Ta'lifiyyah and Hay'at-i 'Ilmiyyah committees were responsible for issuing the Ottoman Family Law, endowing them with considerable importance. Here, Bilmen was charged with collecting *fatwás* in the field of family law and translating them into Turkish. Years later, when Bilmen published his first volume of *Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve Istilâhât-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu*, he referred to 'Ali Hâyder Efendî in his foreword to express his gratitude.

Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), Bilmen was appointed the Vice Muftî of Istanbul in 1926. In 1943, he was appointed to the position of Muftî of Istanbul. His profound expertise in Islamic law and Qur'anic exegesis, combined with years of experience in the House of Fatwâ and his esteemed reputation in the community, made him an outstanding candidate for the head of Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye). Despite declining to participate in the elections several times, on June 30, 1960, Bilmen was elected as the head of Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı by a landslide. While heading Diyanet, Bilmen was pressured to regulate the recitation of *adbân* (Islamic call to prayer) and prayers in the Turkish language and to take reformative actions toward Islamic law.⁸ Despite strongly opposing the idea that Islam required reform, Bilmen resisted the implementation of these demands for approximately ten months before ultimately resigning from the presidency.⁹ Following his resignation, he returned to teaching and

⁶ A branch of Fatwâ Room attached to Fatwâ House in the Office of Ottoman Shaykh al-Islâm. İslam Demirci, "Osmanlı Şeyhülislâmlık Kurumunun Bir Birimi: 'Te'lif-i Mesâil Şubesi'", *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi* 9 (2007), 144.

⁷ A well-known Ottoman scholar, judge, and commentator of *Majallah* and the author of *Nâfaqah Qânunnâmahsi*.

⁸ Mehmet Görmez, "Açılış Konuşması", *Müftü ve Müderris Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen Sempozyum Tebliğleri 8-9 Kasım 2014*, ed. Nail Okuyucu - Ayhan Işık - Kâmil Büyüker (İstanbul: Marmara Akademi Yayınları, 2017), 26, 28.

⁹ Ayhan Işık, "Ehl-i Halden İlmihal'e Bir Ömür: Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen", *Müftü ve Müderris Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen Sempozyum Tebliğleri 8-9 Kasım 2014*, ed. Nail Okuyucu - Ayhan Işık - Kâmil Büyüker (İstanbul: Marmara Akademi Yayınları, 2017), 40.

delivered lectures on ethics, Islamic legal theory, Islamic law, and theology at Darüşşafaka High School, İstanbul İmam Hatip High School, and the İstanbul High Islamic Institute at Istanbul University.

2. Bilmen's Intellectual Climate in the 20th Century

As previously noted, Bilmen was raised in a renowned 'ulamā' family, and his early intellectual development was influenced by his home education. However, Bilmen's move to Istanbul in 1908 and the intellectual climate that surrounded him substantially affected his writings.

For centuries, Istanbul has been the central hub for Muslim scholars and one of the prominent intellectual nerve centers in the Muslim and Ottoman worlds. Modernization in Istanbul began in the late 1700s, starting with political and military affairs. However, at the start of the 20th century, Istanbul encountered many challenges and transformations that brought about changes in its citizens, political and legal structure, and social lifestyle as a result of modernization.¹⁰ During the modernization process, European ideas and concepts were very influential in creating the demand to reform the institutions of the State.¹¹ After moving to Istanbul, Bilmen found himself in the middle of this modernization process. The impact of this process on Bilmen can be observed in his articles. Bilmen presented his observations and critiques on the modernization process and offered solutions. According to Bilmen, modernization, as a part of the Ottoman experience, is closely related to the process of Westernization and the adaptation of European values.¹² Therefore, he was highly critical of this process and did not hesitate to express his concerns about the

¹⁰ Olivier Bouquet, "From Decline to Transformation: Reflections on a New Paradigm in Ottoman History", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 60 (2022), 37-45.

¹¹ Şerif Mardin, "Tanzimat'tan Sonra Aşırı Batılılaşma", *Türk Modernleşmesi: Makaleler 4*, ed. Mümtaz'er Türköne - Tuncay Önder (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 21-79.

¹² Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", *Sabîl al-Rashād* 23/590 (28 Şubat 1340), 274-277; Bülent Arı, "The Politics of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century: Institutionalization, Change and Continuity", *The Relationship Between Art and Politics in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire: Institutionalization, Change and Continuity*, ed. Ayşegül Komsuoğlu - Hikmet Toker - Federica Nardella (İstanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2021), 1-18.

uncontrolled changes society was undergoing, as well as the Western hegemony over society, Ottoman institutions, and the legal system.¹³

On October 29, 1923, the establishment of the Turkish Republic was officially announced to the world. Like the rest of the country, Bilmen woke up to a completely new world. The institutions, the system, the foundations of the old state, and even the alphabet were radically changed over a few short years. The Ottoman legal system and the shari‘ah-based law were abolished. The law of the new state was based on secular values and concepts. To ensure a rapid transition, the Turkish State adopted an eclectic method for legal transplantation.¹⁴

On the basis of these two intertwined experiences, Bilmen continued to reflect on how to understand Islam and the objectives of Islamic law within a secular world. Despite the challenge of shifting to a completely new political context, the Republican period was Bilmen’s most productive period, during which he wrote his most important works.

3. Major Works of Bilmen

Bilmen was a traditional Muslim scholar in the sense that his works are highly systematic and portray the classics of Qur’ānic exegesis and Islamic law. At the same time, he was a man of time in the sense that he was well aware of the change that society had undergone and of the compulsion for legal change. In his writing, his objection is toward reform based on the idea that Islam is static and does not accommodate the modern lifestyle and on the pressure to adopt changing concepts to transform Muslim society. After the 1940s, he translated some of his major works into modern Turkish. These works progressed in two directions that tended to intersect and overlap with one another: Qur’ānic exegesis, Islamic law in daily practice, and theology and ethics.

Among his most widely read works, and of particular note, is *Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve Istulâhât-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu*, the compendium of Islamic law (hereafter referred to as *Kâmus*). *Kâmus* is the first

¹³ Omer Awass, *Fatwa and the Making and Renewal of Islamic Law: From the Classical Period to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 198-212.

¹⁴ Muhammet Derviş Mete, “Turkey’s Experience of Legal Transplantation and Turkish-Style Presidential System”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 30/3 (2021), 1159-1173.

encyclopedia work on Islamic law written in the modern Turkish language. Eventually, with the encouragement of Prof. Ebül'ulâ Mardin, Prof. Ord. Hüseyin Nail Kubalı (the dean of the Faculty of Law at Istanbul University), and Prof. Ord. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu (professor of civil law at Istanbul University), *Kâmus* was published twice by the Istanbul University Faculty of Law Publishing House (1949-1952). The chancellor of Istanbul University, Sıddık Sami Onar, wrote a foreword to justify the significance of *Kâmus* and Bilmen's achievement. In Onar's own words:

To deliver a comprehensive and taut piece of work to today's generation in a way they can understand about an advanced legal system –which is spread through centuries, across continents, and among nations and civilizations– is not a task that can be accomplished by anyone. Our dignified scholar and Muftî, Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, has completed this difficult task by producing this work with his advanced and excellent knowledge and tireless effort. Legal experts of today and tomorrow will find information on original comparisons of legal examinations and principles for future legislation. With this book, Turkish legal literature has attained a precious legal source.¹⁵

As Onar states, this work provides a systematic account of Islamic law, including legal theory, and discusses its philosophical underpinnings for legal experts in both civil and Islamic law. Moreover, it represents the first comprehensive work on Islamic law written in modern Turkish, and due to its substantive contributions, it remains unrivaled to this day. Bilmen predominantly based his work on the Ḥanafî school of law and acknowledged the nuances among the Ḥanafî, Shāfi'î, Mālikî, Ḥanbalî, and Zāhirî schools of law. Bilmen aimed to reveal the subjects of legal theory, the foundation of Islamic law, the history of Islamic law, and all subjects of Islamic law except the principles and rulings regarding worship and prayers. Later, the subjects of worship and prayers were gathered in a separate, well-known work, *Büyük İslâm İlmihali*.

¹⁵ Sıddık Sami Onar, "Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve Istilâhat-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu'nun Temin Edeceği Büyük Faydalar", *Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve Istilâbât-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi, 1955), 1/4.

Büyük İslâm İlmihali falls into a special book genre known as ‘*ilm-i hâl*. ‘*İlm-i hâl* is composed of concise guidebooks for Muslims that provide practical information about Islamic faiths, prayers, worship, and ethics. Among Bilmen’s collection of works, *Büyük İslâm İlmihali* stands out as one of the most extensively read books due to its robust language, comprehensive insights, and ability to provide solutions to modern-day questions and problems. In his writing, Bilmen explained his motivation behind creating this particular ‘*ilm-i hâl*.

Another important work is Bilmen’s translation and exegesis of the Qur’ân (*Kur’ân-ı Kerîm’in Türkçe Meâl-i Âlisi ve Tefsiri*, İstanbul 1963-1966). This exegesis consists of eight volumes. Other books by Bilmen related to Qur’ânic studies include the history of the Qur’ânic exegesis (*Büyük Tefsir Tarihi*, in two volumes, Ankara 1955-1961), *Kur’ân-ı Kerîm’den Dersler ve Öğütler* (İstanbul 1947), and the Turkish commentary of Sûrat al-Fatḥ (*Sûre-i Feth’in Türkçe Tefsîri İtilâ-yı İslâm ile İstanbul Taribçesi*, İstanbul 1953).

Before the Republican era, Bilmen’s publications primarily consisted of articles, some of which are examined below.

4. Bilmen’s Articles on Marriage, Divorce, and Changes in the Muslim Family

During the process of modernization, the concept of marriage in Ottoman society underwent unprecedented social, legal, and theological changes.¹⁶ At that time, being modern served as an organizing concept for understanding family, marriage, and marital relations. It also reflected the modern lifestyle and endorsed a progressive concept of marriage. In general terms, the modern family or modern marriage was characterized by the nuclear model family and monogamous marriage, administered by the state, excluding religious authorities, providing flexibility in marital norms, and prescribing equal rights and responsibilities for the partners.¹⁷ The

¹⁶ Mehmet Âkif Aydın, *Osmanlı Aile Hukuku* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2017), 137-141.

¹⁷ Nihal Altınbaş, “Marriage and Divorce in the Late Ottoman Empire: Social Upheaval, Women’s Rights, and the Need for New Family Law”, *Journal of Family History* 39/2 (2014), 7; Alan Duben - Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 194-197; 215-225; Julia Moses, “Introduction: Making Marriage ‘Modern’”,

genesis of this dramatic change lay in prolonged wars, close encounters with European culture and values, and changing economic circumstances. As a result, the functions of Ottoman family law, polygamous marriage, traditional marital norms, family dynamics, and access to divorce began to be questioned through the lens of the new concept of marriage, namely, modern marriage.¹⁸

The modern family became a dominant concept that left no room for traditional or alternative models of marriage and family. Therefore, during the initial two decades of the 20th century, increased demands arose for the amendment of the Ottoman family and family-related legislation to bridge the disparity between modern and traditional marriage. While the demand for the adaptation of the modern family model was vociferous, some Muslim scholars responded with caution. They emphasized the dynamic role of Islamic law in finding solutions to new problems and changing circumstances and explained the potential pitfalls of the modern family model. Bilmen was one of these scholars. His main criticisms were directed toward the disregard for the principles and values of Islamic law, the impact of the hegemony of European values over Muslim and family structures, and the failure to understand the underlying causes of change in the traditional Muslim family model.

In 20th century Ottoman Istanbul, the number of divorces increased. Bilmen acknowledged the high divorce rates in society and thus emphasized the importance of establishing a strong foundation for marriage to reduce these rates. Bilmen argued that to have a stable family, it is important to understand why Islam recommends marriage for Muslims, what kind of marital relationship is expected, and why marriage can become more fragile over time.

4.1. Marriage as a Social Institution and the Virtue of Marriage

Bilmen produced two articles entitled *İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi* (The Sociological Institution of Marriage), in which he assessed the concept of marriage. From a legal point of view, marriage is a contract that enables a man and woman to legitimize an intimate relationship and establish a family in terms of legal norms. However, the legal aspect of marriage alone does not provide a full picture of

Marriage, Law and Modernity: Global Histories, ed. Julia Moses (London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2018), 2-3.

¹⁸ Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 206-208.

what marriage means in Islam. The Qurʾān and Ḥadīth explain the kind of moral, religious, and solid grounds on which a marriage should be built and present the ethics of marriage and marital relations in greater detail than the legal dimension of marriage.¹⁹ According to Islam, marriage has social, biological, and religious benefits (*maṣlahah*) and is a source of mutual affection and cooperation, an essential aspect of providing a good life for spouses, protecting the lineage, and creating a stable society. With reference to both dimensions, Bilmen explains what marriage is from a legal point of view and then focuses on the positive aspects, the benefits of marriage, why it is advisable for people to marry, and why people should not be forced into marriage if they are not ready. In his articles, he aims to cover all aspects of life and all colors of human conditions to provide insight into how Islam views marriages from a holistic perspective.

Bilmen supports the idea that not everyone should be forced to get married. People are different, as are their life choices and conditions. One might have biological or physiological conditions that prevent him or her from getting married. In addition, one might be in a situation where she or he has no desire to marry or might have low sexual desire. Bilmen openly states that a person who lives in one of these conditions should not be forced to marry if he or she cannot take the responsibility of marriage.²⁰ Forced marriages (regardless of gender) do not help to achieve the religious, psychological, and social benefits that should be derived from the marital relationship in Islam.²¹ These articles clarify that Bilmen is aware of the nature of marriage and the deadlocks that can sometimes come with it and is trying to offer a perspective of what marriage and marital relations are.

For Bilmen, economic factors have a negative impact on the decision to marry. For example, he raises the issue of how the *mahr* (indirect dowry, the financial responsibility of marriage) and wedding expenses become a burden for the younger generation. He refers to complaints about rising wedding expenses and an increase in the amount of *mahr*:

¹⁹ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, “İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I”, *Sabîl al-Rashād* 23/594 (27 Mart 1340), 347.

²⁰ Bilmen, “İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I”, 347.

²¹ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, “İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II”, *Sabîl al-Rashād* 23/595 (3 Nisan 1340), 358.

Although there is a religious and legal desire to marry, unfortunately, there are many people among Muslims who are not yet married. This issue arises for various reasons. One of these reasons is the increase in the conventional amount of mahr and other wedding charges that are not necessary or required.²²

It seems that in late Ottoman society, the demand for excessive or insufficient *mahr* was an issue. In Islamic law, it is a right of women to ask for a *mahr*. Therefore, Bilmen does not approve of proposing a worthless or small amount of *mahr*, as this would contradict the right given by God. He reminds the reader that the *mahr* is one means by which women obtain financial security; therefore, it should be delivered fairly.²³ On the other hand, Bilmen also reminds us that excessive demand for *mahr* is not recommended for two reasons.²⁴ First, the deliverability of the *mahr* is highly important. This means that the more the amount of *mahr* increases, the more difficult it becomes to deliver. Second, the greater the demand for *mahr* is, the more difficult it becomes for a man to marry.²⁵ Bilmen expressed a similar concern about the wedding feast's costs. He advised that both the *mahr* payment and the cost of the wedding feast or other wedding costs should be in line with the groom's economic capabilities.²⁶

4.2. The Increase in Divorce Rates

The practice of divorce in 20th-century Ottoman society was another important topic for Bilmen to consider. He wrote two articles entitled *Müslümanlıkta İftirāk-ı Zevceyn* (Separation of the Spouses according to Islam). In both articles, Bilmen concentrates on the following topics: the permissibility and legitimacy of divorce according to Islam, the demand for reform of divorce laws, possible factors that could lead to divorce, and ethical and social precautions that could help to prevent an increase in divorce rates.²⁷

²² Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 357.

²³ Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 357.

²⁴ Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 358.

²⁵ Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 358.

²⁶ Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 358; Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 118 (fn. 68), 145-147.

²⁷ Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 130-131.

In line with the approach of his Muslim legal predecessors, Bilmen sees divorce as an option given by God, even if it is not strongly recommended. The primary goal of Islam is to maintain a healthy marital relationship to pursue a healthy family relationship. As mentioned earlier, marriage has many benefits for both husbands and wives. If one can find the beauties in his or her marital relationship, then that couple will find joy in marriage. However, not all couples can find harmony and ease in marriage. In particular, when the relationship between the husband and wife is built on physical or psychological suffering, divorce can become inevitable. In Bilmen's words:

Sometimes, the relationship between the spouses can be so damaged that there is no other solution but to file for divorce. A divorce decision can protect the family from major catastrophes. In this way, the divorce gives each of them a new chance in life.

... in fact, in these cases, nothing is more natural than to opt for divorce. How can a life be spoiled by soured by an inharmonious marriage, and how can one expect that continuing to such a marriage is a blessing?²⁸

It can be derived from his statements that abusive attitudes in marriage had become visible in twentieth-century Ottoman society, so divorce represented potential salvation for such couples. On the other hand, Bilmen still expresses his discomfort with the increase in the number of divorces; as the Prophet said, it is not recommended to decide on divorce with an arbitrary attitude. To avoid an undesirable decision regarding divorce, Bilmen gathers ethical and sociological findings that might help couples avoid making the decision to divorce. For example, both men and women should be cognitively capable of getting married and ready to take on the associated responsibilities. Marriage brings happiness and benefits as well as difficulties. When spouses encounter difficulties, they should support each other and treat each other with kindness. Bilmen reiterates the Ḥanafī legal school's view that a woman should marry someone who is compatible (*kufuw*) in her religion, social status, morality, piety, wealth, lineage,

²⁸ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirāk-ı Zevceyn I", *Sabīl al-Rashād* 23/579 (13 Kanun-i Evvel 1339), 101.

or custom.²⁹ This requirement is necessary to derive sociological benefits and to facilitate the protection of marriage and the welfare of women. Children in families, regardless of whether they are boys or girls, should be well brought up by their parents. If they are well brought up and educated, then a man will know the financial and emotional responsibilities that come with marriage. For example, he is responsible for giving his wife the *mabr* (dowry), providing for her well-being during the marriage, and showing her love. Another reminder Bilmen presents regards the responsibility of the husband. The husband should stay away from gambling and drinking to protect the tranquility of his home. Keeping these conditions in mind, there is a safe ground on which to develop a healthy marital relationship.³⁰ In fact, in Islam, a person's piety is more valued than anything else. The most valuable spouse is a pious one. Bilmen is aware of this ethical standard. However, he is also very conscious of the social understandings, norms, and psychological realities that exist in society and that this ethical standard does not apply to everyone. Therefore, Bilmen emphasizes considering the principle of compatibility, as it has many advantages for women and marriage.³¹

Furthermore, for Bilmen, parents and community support preserve a secure and stable family. In some cases, a relationship may reach a deadlock. The couple may have disputes that they cannot resolve between themselves, in which case friends, relatives, and respected members of the community should help the couple resolve their dispute.³² In some cases where the dispute cannot be resolved, and even if it is undesirable, divorce can be a solution to achieve the goal (*maqāşid*) if the couple is not fulfilling the expected benefits in their marriage.

Another subject Bilmen shares his thoughts on is the discussion regarding the demand for reform in Ottoman divorce law. In the twentieth century, one of the issues debated in the State was the reform of divorce and the enforcement of equal access to divorce for

²⁹ In his *Kâmus*, Bilmen again addresses the importance of compatibility (*kaḫā'ab*) between the couple, the reasons leading to divorce; Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve İstulâbât-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu* (İstanbul: Bilmen Yayınevi, 1967), 2/216-217.

³⁰ Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirâk-ı Zevceyn II", 116.

³¹ Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirâk-ı Zevceyn II", 116.

³² Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirâk-ı Zevceyn II", 116.

husbands and wives through jurisdiction. Traditionally, Islamic law allows a husband to unilaterally divorce his wife. Although the right to divorce is primarily vested in the husband, under certain conditions, the wife can apply for divorce, such as *kbul'* (a type of divorce based on the wife's taking off her dowry), judicial divorce, or *ṭalāq al-tafwīd* (delegated divorce, where the husband delegates one of his divorce rights to his wife). It is legitimate for a wife to obtain a divorce through any of these three divorce types.³³ However, these options were also discussed as inequalities in divorce laws during the 20th century. While the husband could divorce his wife by pronouncing the divorce without any further procedure, the wife had to follow a specific procedure or meet certain conditions to obtain a divorce. For the reformist Ottoman intellectuals, the traditional mechanism of divorce was seen as an obstacle for Muslim women to gain the power dynamic of divorce. To balance the power between husbands and wives in divorce, the idea of delegating divorce to a legal process was proposed.³⁴ Bilmen critiques this proposal, arguing that although it would not affect wives for whom a judicial divorce is already an option, delegating divorce to a judicial process curtails the rights of husbands as prescribed by the Qurʾān.³⁵

Bilmen contends that the traditional Islamic divorce process is often misunderstood and superficially depicted by reformists. He emphasizes that Islamic law provides women with several ways to seek a divorce, with the juridical process being merely one among them. On the other hand, Western family law, particularly Western canon law, had a specific legal framework regarding the termination of marriage, which indeed did not allow divorce as an option. Building on this, Bilmen briefly explains how Western family law evolved and contextualizes the implementation of divorce through the legal process in this legal framework. In Bilmen's words:

³³ Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Chicago, London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 141-142. Ahmet Yaman, *İslâm Aile Hukuku* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2011), 90-92.

³⁴ Aydın, *Osmanlı Aile Hukuku*, 167; Altınbaş, "Marriage and Divorce in the Late Ottoman Empire", 6-8.

³⁵ Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirāk-ı Zevceyn II", 116-127; Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirāk-ı Zevceyn I", 101-102.

Eventually, the Western Church had to accept the law of divorce, even though the Church used to be against any kind of divorce. To meet the demands of Christian society, the Eastern Church was convinced that a marriage could be dissolved in the same way as it had been contracted, i.e., by the clergy.³⁶

Although not explicitly stated, Bilmen's aim is to draw the reader's attention to the roots of the proposed legal reform and to understand why reducing divorce to court decisions does not fully cover Islamic law.³⁷ According to him, this regulation neither offered a new option to Islamic law nor would reduce the number of divorces in Ottoman society. Today, from the perspective of Muslim feminism, Bilmen's argument may not be considered sufficient to explain how to find the balance of power in divorce. In his articles, Bilmen's main point is not to offer an egalitarian perspective on Islamic divorce law. Rather, he analyzes the roots of this legal change from a broader perspective and aims to provide a context for it. Bilmen's argumentation should be discussed in detail in future studies to evaluate Bilmen's ideas fairly.

4.3. Understanding the Islamic Concept of Polygamy and Questioning the Hegemony of European Values on Polygamy

Bilmen's other two articles include an analysis of polygamy in Muslim society to explain the context of multiple marriages, and he seeks to clarify the function of polygamous marriage. Moreover, he devotes considerable space to responding to critics who describe the practice of polygamy as an inappropriate element in modern times, and he challenges the hegemony of European perspectives and values embodied in these critiques.³⁸

Before reviewing these critics, it is important to understand Bilmen's views on polygamy and explain why he chose to write about it. Bilmen articulates that theologically speaking, God is just and merciful, and his Prophet is also merciful to the believers; therefore, this marriage model must be meaningful and provide some benefits. God would not enforce upon people something that does not bear

³⁶ Bilmen, "Müslümanlıkta İftirâk-ı Zevceyn I", 101.

³⁷ Saffet Köse, *Genetiğiyle Oynanmış Kavramlar ve Aile Medeniyetinin Sonu* (Konya: Mehir Vakfı Yayınları, 2020), 33-36.

³⁸ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyesi I", 274.

fruit, and the Prophet Muḥammad would not do so either. Bilmen argues that it is the choice of the Muslim subject to determine these benefits or ignore them. For those who seek benefits, the wisest way is to look at the lifestyles of the Prophet and his family members, who are splendid examples for the Muslim community.³⁹

The practice of polygamy in Islamic law is based on a verse (Q 4:3) in the Qurʾān. In his approach to this verse, Bilmen reminds us that this verse emphasizes the protection of the rights of orphan girls.⁴⁰ Contrary to the view that polygamy is associated with lust and hedonistic practices, as depicted in exotic stories, Islamic law stipulates that polygamic marriage requires certain conditions to be fulfilled. This verse stipulates that a man should be fair to all his wives. For example, the husband is expected to take psychological and financial responsibility for his wife and his family members, whether he has one or more wives and whether he has children or not. Those who are unable to fulfill these conditions are not advised to initiate additional marriages.

In his articles, Bilmen does not romanticize polygamous marriages, nor does he seek to outlaw them. Instead, he wants to discuss this practice fairly.⁴¹ From Bilmen's perspective, it can be argued that the problems and shortcomings in his time or today regarding the practice of polygamy do not allow us to retrospectively embrace how this model of marriage has been practiced throughout Muslim social history and in all Muslim-majority regions. Bilmen criticizes the reductionist view that polygamous marriage is dominant in Islam and among Muslim families.⁴² To address the topic on a solid foundation, Bilmen begins by elucidating the historical background of multiple marriage models before Islam.

Bilmen begins by demonstrating polygamy throughout history by showcasing different cultures and religions that have been embedded

³⁹ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 274.

⁴⁰ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", *Sabîl al-Rashâd* 23/591 (6 Mart 1340), 296.

⁴¹ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 274. Later in his *Kâmus*, Bilmen again explains what polygamic marriage is in Islamic law and the reasons behind this marriage model. Here, we see that in the Republican period, Bilmen had not changed his views on multiple marriage model; Bilmen, *Hukûk-ı İslâmiyye ve İstûlâbât-ı Fıkhiyye Kâmusu*, 2/112-113.

⁴² Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 274.

in Middle Eastern society. He first references Judaism (Torah) and Christianity (Christians), as these were ancient religions that also allowed polygamous marriages.⁴³ One reference he describes is the Torah, as several stories describe polygamous marriages. To elaborate on his point, he mentions that the Jewish community in Ottoman Syria practiced polygamous marriage.⁴⁴ Likewise, he refers to Christians living in the Levant and the legalization of polygamous marriage types through the Roman Empire.⁴⁵ The objection of these societies toward this marriage model came much later.⁴⁶ Later, Bilmen shifts focus to Islam, emphasizing its juridical perspective on polygamy by contrasting it with pre-Islamic Arabic marriage customs. Islamic law stipulates specific circumstances and conditions for a man to marry more than one woman, emphasizing fair treatment and provision for each wife, including housing, health, hygiene, food, clothing, and affection.⁴⁷

Bilmen analytically evaluates each claim to address these criticisms comprehensively. These criticisms can be summarized succinctly: First, polygamy impedes the establishment of stable and harmonious families. Second, this family model fails to safeguard women's rights and is perceived as incompatible with gender equality, as women are limited to marrying one man, potentially subjecting them to insult and harm within polygamous unions. Additionally, concerns arise regarding population growth stemming from polygyny, which can exacerbate poverty and societal hardship. Last, the excessive division of inheritance poses challenges for family members within polygamous marriages.⁴⁸

⁴³ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 274.

⁴⁴ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 275.

⁴⁵ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 274.

⁴⁶ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 275; Today, various studies approve of the information given by Bilmen. See Heather Johnson, "There are Worse Things Than Being Alone: Polygamy in Islam, Past, Present, and Future", *William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law* 11/3 (2005), 565; Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, *Traditional Society in Transition: The Yemeni Jewish Experience* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014); Mordechai Akiva Friedman, "Polygyny in Jewish Tradition and Practice: New Sources from the Cairo Geniza", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 49 (1982), 33-68.

⁴⁷ İbrahim Yılmaz, "İslâm Hukukunda Çok Eşliliği Meşru Kılan Şartlar ve Buna Ruhsat Veren Özel Durumlar", *Bilimname* 37/1 (2019), 559-591.

⁴⁸ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 276.

Bilmen openly disagrees with the claim that this model of marriage leads to unstable families. One of his points is that there is no clear evidence or research to support this claim. Furthermore, there are unsteady communities consisting of monogamous marriages. Troubled families are not just polygamous families. There are many monogamous marriages where there is conflict, a lack of harmony, and struggle.⁴⁹ If the practice of polygamy is well-regulated and the parties choose to live in this model of marriage, then a stable family can be established.⁵⁰ Islamic law issued particular principles to create a stable family without focusing on monogamic or polygamic families. As such, the husband is responsible for building a stable family and providing a financial and psychological balance between the spouses. If the husband cannot ensure justice among his wives, the wives can legally raise this claim.⁵¹ Moreover, Bilmen claims that no research has been carried out to prove the relationship between polygamy and conflict in marriage.⁵² From Bilmen's point of view, it can be seen that he has a reasonable point. Since the negative aspect of polygamy in his time had not been justified by in-depth research, this assertion remained a reductive perception of Muslim families.⁵³

Bilmen's analysis of polygamy gains another dimension when he compares polygamous practices in other legal cultures and regions. He argues that the practice of polygamy, though not always in the form of marriage, can be found in different cultures, societies, and regions. Some legal systems regulate this practice, while others do not. In legal systems where polygamy is not legally accepted, the use of mistresses comes to the fore. Bilmen illustrates the European practice where polygamous marriage is unlawful, but taking a mistress is a common practice. Bilmen questions the paradox here. The paradox lies in the understanding that legally accepted polygamous marriage is criticized because it is a negative and oppressive experience for women while being a mistress can be considered a socially accepted reality. Using

⁴⁹ Duben and Behar state that there are no divorce records for polygamous families in court records from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 151-152.

⁵⁰ Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 276.

⁵¹ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 277.

⁵² Bilmen, "İzdivâc Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 276-277.

⁵³ Hester Donaldson Jenks, *Behind Turkish Lattices: The Story of a Turkish Woman's Life, 1911* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 70-75.

this example, Bilmen criticizes the view that polygamous marriages are ethically questionable and the poorly analyzed claim that a woman's rights cannot be protected in this type of marriage. In fact, as Bilmen points out, a marriage contract legitimizes and honors a woman's status in the family and society and makes her an object of law. The same is true for polygamy in Islam. Moreover, he reminds us that a woman can find herself in a negative and oppressive experience or that a man can treat a woman harshly in any model of marriage or intimate relationship. However, if the law recognizes a woman's status, then she will be able to claim her rights.⁵⁴

Another question arises with this model of marriage: how can the husband fairly share his love for his wives? Bilmen acknowledges that love cannot be justly shared, but he explains that this can happen in another scenario where the husband is still in love with his divorced or dead wife or with someone else. It is the affection, care, and attitude that can be justly shown. He adds that modern expectations of love and romance in marriage are synthetic. These synthetic expectations fail to reflect life and the possibilities hidden in life.⁵⁵

Another claim that polygamous marriages increase poverty and excessive division of inheritance is also not well founded, according to Bilmen. It is true that polygamy contributes to population growth, and population growth leads to poverty to some extent. However, population growth is an issue for cities or populations living in confined areas, not for rural and vast areas where labor is needed for agricultural production. Here, Bilmen does not accept the relationship between urban impoverishment and population growth.⁵⁶ To prove his point, Bilmen describes the difference in the gender population of important cities in the Ottoman State.⁵⁷ Regarding the concern about the share of inheritance, Bilmen argues that the more the family expands, the more the income, and therefore the inheritance, will increase. According to this reasoning, Bilmen focuses on extended families rather than nuclear families.

⁵⁴ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 277.

⁵⁵ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 292, 293, 294.

⁵⁶ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 293.

⁵⁷ According to this population census in 1335 AH, there are 5,466 women in Bursa; 37,622 in Konya; 30,009 in Ankara; and 27,655 in Diyarbakır more than men's population; Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 295.

Bilmen also explains that the call for family law reform is fueled by exported values and ideas rather than internal questioning or evaluation within the Muslim community.⁵⁸ Born in the crucible of the Reformation, the nuclear family model drew most of its strengths from European understandings. Bilmen posits that the rationale behind calls to prohibit multiple-marriage models is fundamentally shaped by Western perceptions of the ideal form of marriage. Therefore, these claims and critiques are out of touch with the social reality and cannot escape from being underdeveloped.⁵⁹ In these articles, Bilmen argues that the criticism of Muslims is not deeply analyzed or objectively considered. One claim of those who support outlawing this model of marriage is based on the idea that multiple marriages do not exist in European culture and values. For this reason, some Muslim intellectuals assumed that if this practice were abolished in Islamic law,⁶⁰ then the Muslim community would be able to take further steps toward the process of Westernization.⁶¹

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that Bilmen denies the shortcomings of polygamy in Ottoman society. His thoughts on polygamy should be read in conjunction with his thoughts on the formulation of marriage and Muslim families. Again, it is important to understand that Bilmen's main objective in this series of articles is to demonstrate how polygamy in Islam is misunderstood by Western thinkers and how the Muslim mind succumbs to these misunderstandings. As noted above, Bilmen does not prescribe polygamy as a compulsory model of marriage for Muslim society. As he explains theologically, there is no need to offer a new prescription because God and His Prophet have already declared that multiple marriages are only one of the marriage models that can be practiced

⁵⁸ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 296; Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 213.

⁵⁹ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 294; Joseph Chamie, "Polygamy Among Arabs", *Population Studies* 40/1 (1986), 55-56.

⁶⁰ Manşürizâdah Sa'îd, "İslam Kadını: Ta'addüd-i Zevcât İslâmiyyet'te Men Olunabilir", *İslâm Majmû'absi* 1/8 (1330), 233-238.

⁶¹ Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi I", 276. From the early 19th century to the fall of the Empire, polygyny in Islamic law was one of the most complex and most debated subjects among Muslim intellectuals. In addition to Bilmen, Manşürizâdah Sa'îd, Mustafa Sabri, Ahmed Hamdi Akseki, Babanzâde Ahmed Naim, Zakircan Alhan, and Hüsayn Qidwâ'î are among the intellectuals who contributed to this debate through their articles.

under certain conditions and should be built on legal grounds with the promise to follow ethical and financial stipulations.⁶²

4.4. Population Growth and Evaluation of the Malthusian Theory

Population change in the late Ottoman State and its effects also received much attention from Bilmen. For the last two decades, the State had been engaged in a census of the population. The results of this census led to the development of a policy to control population numbers and to predict the political influence of the assessed population.⁶³ Bilmen was engaged with policies aimed at controlling population growth. The focus of his attention was on the advantages of population growth and the reasons for population decrease.⁶⁴ In addition, Bilmen challenged the well-known population theory of Thomas Malthus and explained why he disagreed with Malthus' theory.

To start with the latter, briefly, Malthus' theory argues that population growth causes an increase in the food supply, which leads to massive food production and results in the overconsumption of resources. According to Malthusian theory, the population grows geometrically, which means that the population increases by multiple doublings (1, 2, 4, 8, and so on). If population growth is not controlled, the balance between people and food will change, leading to a shortage of food. To avoid this unfortunate situation, population density should be controlled and limited.⁶⁵ Bilmen criticizes the formalization by Malthus on the relationship between population growth and food supply and the idea of depopulation in a stable economy.

Bilmen questions the validity of this theory on many grounds, particularly on the direction of causality. Bilmen argues that the link

⁶² Bilmen, "Ta'addüd-i Zevcât Müessesesi-i İctimâiyyesi II", 295, 296.

⁶³ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 176-77, 210-211.

⁶⁴ As Duben and Behar state the decrease of the population in the 19th and 20th centuries in the Ottoman Empire, in particular in Istanbul, was striking. Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 15-16.

⁶⁵ Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1798), 21; David N. Weil - Joshua Wilde, "How Relevant Is Malthus for Economic Development Today?", *The American Economic Review* 99/2 (2009), 378-382.

between population growth and per capita income growth has not yet been sufficiently demonstrated. To explain an economic crisis, it is not enough to focus on population growth or to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the two.⁶⁶ This theory is based on data from the European context. Bilmen points out that the number of people per square meter in Europe is many times greater than the number of people per square meter in the Ottoman State. For this reason, Bilmen sees the increase in population as essential for the Ottoman State.⁶⁷

Bilmen also notes that the relationship between population and food supply does not have to end, as Malthus prescribed, in every country.⁶⁸ There is a complex relationship between population and economic outcomes. There may be some possible links, but the method used to interpret these links and the results may differ due to geographical factors. Bilmen provides an example from the agricultural sector. For him, this theory is applicable in cases where land is unavailable and agricultural activity is poor.⁶⁹ However, in countries with a large agricultural sector, a young working population is needed to provide food.⁷⁰ Interestingly, while discussing the relationship between population and food supply, Bilmen links this theory to a practice in the Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic period in Arabia), when pre-Islamic Arabs would kill their children out of fear of poverty and lack of food. Bilmen argues that Islam criticizes the fear of starvation or poverty by saying that God is the true Provider for human beings.

In addition to the shortcomings of the theory, Bilmen emphasizes the relationship between colonial activity and depopulation policies. He argues that there is an unspoken consequence of depopulation in Malthus' theory that paves the way for colonization. Bilmen also criticizes the assumption that the population will always increase if birth rates are not controlled. In reality, people are confronted with unexpected events such as wars, epidemics, and natural disasters. Under these conditions, the population inevitably decreases, and a

⁶⁶ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I: Nüfûsun Çoğalmasına Müslümanlığın Verdiği Büyük Ehemmiyet", *Sabîl al-Rasbâd* 23/592 (13 Mart 1340), 320.

⁶⁷ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II: Nüfûsun Çoğalmasına Müslümanlığın Verdiği Büyük Ehemmiyet", *Sabîl al-Rasbâd* 23/593 (20 Mart 1340), 325.

⁶⁸ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I", 320.

⁶⁹ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I", 320.

⁷⁰ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I", 320.

country's population growth becomes unpredictable and uncontrollable.⁷¹

To make his point, Bilmen briefly explains the conditions that lead to population growth and decline and the advantages of population growth. According to him, population growth is important because large families help to develop security and trust in the community. When an environment of trust is created in a community, trade will develop. Under these conditions, large families tend to experience increased economic prosperity. On the other hand, nuclear or childless families tend to protect their wealth by not taking risks. In addition, population density can create competition among community members to produce more and become wealthier. Another positive effect is that population growth promotes urbanization and institutionalization and strengthens the political power of the country.⁷² Despite the economic crises in the Ottoman State in the 20th century, Bilmen took a positive attitude toward population growth.⁷³ In his articles, Bilmen tries to contextualize the reasons that lead to lower fertility and those that help to increase fertility. From an economist's point of view, Bilmen lists the possible reasons for lower fertility as follows:

1. A lack of wealth also means a lack of living standards. However, living standards can reduce fertility.⁷⁴
2. Higher levels of education and long-term education reduce fertility. After a long period of education, the age of marriage increases. These marriages are less likely to result in multi-child families. Another problem is the negative image of marriage. Negative representations also prevent the younger generation from entering into the family institution.⁷⁵ By promoting marriage for the younger generation, Bilmen proposes an idea that contradicts the common understanding of marriage age in the Istanbul community. In contrast to that in rural areas, the marriage age in 20th century Istanbul was higher, and marrying after 25 years of age was recommended.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I", 320.

⁷² Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs I", 319-320.

⁷³ Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 161.

⁷⁴ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 324.

⁷⁵ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 324; Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 195-197.

⁷⁶ Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 137.

3. Another issue is the uncontrolled use of birth control or abortion. This means that an increase in the birth rate is hindered.⁷⁷
4. High tax rates also have a negative effect on fertility. In communities suffering from excessive taxes, fertility tends to decrease.⁷⁸
5. Ongoing wars and long-term military service lead to a decline in fertility and population.⁷⁹

After listing the reasons for the decline in fertility, Bilmen identifies the conditions that contribute to population growth:

1. Geographies with mild climates, arable lands, and fertile soils are the most suitable places for population growth.⁸⁰
2. The population of countries with high morals and industriousness tends to increase more. On the other hand, laziness and indolence lead to poverty, and poverty leads to a decline in fertility.⁸¹
3. Prudent and careful spending of the nation's personal and public wealth strengthens the economy, which in turn contributes to population growth.⁸²
4. Advances in arts and commerce and better health services also help to increase fertility.⁸³
5. Policies that support population growth, such as exempting multichild families from financial responsibilities and taxes and providing financial support or endowments for these families, are important.⁸⁴
6. Encouraging young people to marry and even paving the way for their marriages is another strategy for encouraging future generations.⁸⁵
7. The regulation of abortion rights is another issue to be considered.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 324.

⁷⁸ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 324-325.

⁷⁹ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 325; Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 242.

⁸⁰ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 325.

⁸¹ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 325.

⁸² Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 325.

⁸³ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 325.

⁸⁴ In March 1918, government employees are exempt from taxes. Duben - Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 44-45.

⁸⁵ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 326.

⁸⁶ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 326-327.

8. Occasional immigration can also support population growth.⁸⁷
9. Finally, attention should be given to the moral and psychological education of children during their upbringing. Children who grow up in happy and well-educated families will also produce prosperous families.⁸⁸

In the 20th-century Ottoman State, the population decline was alarming, especially in Istanbul; therefore, Bilmen argued that population policy should be taken seriously and be well considered. Especially after long wars and the loss of a considerable part of the population during these wars, population growth played a crucial role in the survival of the economy and the State. In this historical context, Bilmen's concerns about population growth coincide with the situation of the State.

Conclusion

During his youth, Bilmen questioned the strategies for modernization and the management of change. Bilmen's thoughts did not aim to promote a Western lifestyle, nor did they seek to discredit the idea of change entirely. What he desired was to analyze the underlying ideology that leads to change, assess its necessity, and anticipate the consequences that may arise from it. He questioned the reality and accuracy of the problems that were said to require change in understanding the Qur'ān and Sunnah and the practice of Islamic law. In his understanding, it is a misconception to directly relate the problems observed in the Muslim community to Islam. The challenges are instead deeply related to the neglect or incomplete application of the rules laid down by Islam, prolonged wars, and the economic weakness of the State.

To illustrate his ideas, Bilmen took up subjects such as marriage, divorce, polygamy, and population planning in his articles. These subjects stemmed from his desire to question the existence of a society that was transforming, changing, and evolving with its encounter with modernity. Bilmen was aware of the transformation of the marriage and family model in the Muslim community, and because of this awareness, he sought to share his thoughts and objections. One of his concerns revolved around adopting the modern family model without

⁸⁷ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 326.

⁸⁸ Bilmen, "Kesret-i Nüfûs II", 326.

fully considering its positive and negative outcomes and without questioning the extent to which this model would benefit Ottoman society.

Bilmen also discussed the misconceptions and misrepresentations of polygamous practices in Islam. He openly stated that his intention was not to promote or glorify polygamous marriages but to discuss this model of marriage fairly and without prejudice. Islamic law allows polygamy under certain conditions, with the requirement to follow ethical and financial rules. Decontextualized understanding or orientalist representations of polygamy would help to understand neither the pitfalls and shortcomings in communities practicing polygamous marriage nor what kind of responsibilities this model of marriage imposes. While discussing polygamy, Bilmen also questioned why Muslims were asked to advocate for the renewal of marriage models. Was it merely the existence of the marriage model or the shortcomings of its practice? Each question had its own answer.

During the 1920s, population growth rates were a notable concern in the Ottoman State. Therefore, Bilmen argued that population planning policies must be selected with great care. Among the policies considered, the Malthusian theory was deemed unsuitable for meeting the demands and needs of the Ottoman State. According to Bilmen, when developing a policy, it is important to consider colonization policies, the economic and agricultural characteristics of the state, and geographic advantages and disadvantages. Simply imitating a European data-based population planning policy may not meet the needs of the State.

In these discussions, Bilmen's writings demonstrated that Ottoman scholars in the 20th century closely followed and actively participated in the process and effects of modernization. The present study shows that Bilmen observed the transformation of society, made predictions, and issued warnings and recommendations based on these predictions. Bilmen's criticism of the change extended beyond a Westernization bias. He questioned the sources and patterns that accompanied the transformation and argued that Islam is dynamic and reconcilable with change.

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CAPUTO'S POSTMODERN UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION

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Abstract

The most important characteristic of the age in which we live is the prominence of pluralistic and local understandings. In modern thought, the importance of reaching universal, objective, and precise knowledge is known. In postmodern thought, on the other hand, almost the opposite situation is put forward, and religion finds its place among pluralistic and local understandings. Religion no longer has valid, inclusive, and generalizable claims for everyone. In the postmodern age, religion is referred to as something between things. John Caputo, who has a very important place in contemporary thought, develops his thoughts from a postmodern framework. However, Caputo develops a hermeneutic approach to avoid falling into relativism. In doing so, he is under the influence of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Derrida. In particular, he develops an "event" theology based on Derrida's concept of "religion without religion". Combining

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this idea with hermeneutics, Caputo believes that life is always interpreted differently but that life still has a religious aspect. From this point of view, he puts forward an understanding of “weak theology”. Caputo’s “weak” theology rethinks various theological tropes and themes through a lens that significantly reshapes our understanding of the role and purpose of theology. In this paper, we address the concepts of weak theology and religion without religion and critically examine how religion and theology are situated within postmodern thought.

Keywords: Weak theology, hermeneutics, postmetaphysical thought, postmodernism

Introduction

American philosopher and theologian John D. Caputo (1940-) is a prominent figure in postmodern theology. He employs a deconstructive approach that takes into account the insights of negative theology, reimagining the purpose of theology itself. This involves moving away from talking about God and toward talking to God and what God calls us to do. Working within the Christian tradition, John Caputo developed a strand of postmodern theology known as “weak theology” that challenges modern presuppositions within traditional or “strong” theology, particularly the sovereignty and omnipotence of God, with the aim of reawakening theology to its practical and ethical goals. Caputo largely avoids some questions by offering a view of religious experience that is relatively indifferent to the existence or nonexistence of God. Caputo’s work has had a significant impact on philosophical and theological discourse, and he is a key figure in bridging 20th- and 21st-century theology.¹

Caputo’s first major works, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought* (1978; reprinted 1986), *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (1982), and *Demythologizing Heidegger* (1993), demonstrate his concern for the interrelation between religious experience and philosophical thought. These works highlight the

¹ William E. Swart, *Religious Experience at the Limits of Language: Levinas, Marion and Caputo from a Post-Phenomenological Perspective* (Dallas: The University of Texas, PhD Dissertation, 2017), 20.

limits of systematic philosophical thinking through the use of mystical themes and tropes.

Caputo's writings reflect an experience of language resulting from the nonexistence of a divine Other. His philosophy and theology are founded upon an essentially Nietzschean view that there is no supreme being that corresponds to the definition of God found in Western religion. When discussing the relevance of deconstruction to religion, the author frequently quotes Derrida's statement in *Circumfession* that he could "rightly pass for an atheist".² Caputo does not make the same claim for himself, and such a claim may be an overstatement. Caputo has a passion for religion that differs from the views of most contemporary philosophers who deny the existence of God. Caputo describes God as an uncontainable and ineffable event, which contrasts with the name of God –an inadequate name– from our worldly perspective. In his book *The Weakness of God*, Caputo does not attempt to elevate the concept of God to a sovereign power beyond language but rather argues that theology is a "weak" enterprise pointing to a "weak" God.

Using Derridean deconstruction, Caputo provides an explanation of the human longing for the God of Western religion. By employing deconstruction, Caputo moves the discussion of the human perception of God to the realm of language through what he calls "radical" hermeneutics. According to Caputo, the experience of hoping for the presence of God is an experience of impossibility, a perplexing experience of language, but one that is still accompanied by meaning. Furthermore, the concept of "weak theology" developed by Caputo discusses how postmodernism can interact with theology and bring about a change in theological thought. This concept enables Caputo to address postmodernism from a theological perspective. Caputo's approach views postmodernism as a dynamic process of interpretation and considers it a perspective that needs to be constantly reinterpreted. This allows Caputo to treat postmodernism not as a fixed doctrine but as a perspective that is constantly changing and evolving.

John Caputo's concept of "weak theology" refers to an approach that questions and transforms traditional theological understandings. Caputo aims to reshape theology by deciphering the dogmas and

² John D. Caputo, *Against Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 35.

beliefs of the theological tradition. From his perspective, it is emphasized that God is not a sovereign being who rules over everything. In this context, Caputo argues that the name of God is an event and that theology is the interpretation of this event. He argues that God does not exist but continues to exist.³ Therefore, in this study, after mentioning the relationship between deconstruction and religion, we discuss Caputo's weak theology and how it differs from traditional theologies.

1. Postmodernism, Deconstruction, and Religion

Modern philosophy has been predominantly secular and humanistic, centering on the premise that human beings possess the unique capability to discover natural and social truths and subsequently construct their worlds in alignment with these truths. Modern theorists postulate the existence of a law and order in the cosmos and society, which govern nature and social conditions and can be discerned through the application of reason. Reason is conceived as a distinctive human faculty, the cognitive power enabling humans to subjugate nature and engender moral and just societies. This belief in rationality emerged during the Renaissance and the scientific revolutions of the 16th and 17th centuries, further solidified during the Enlightenment of the 18th century, and maintained its dominance, albeit contested, throughout the 19th century. However, influential 19th-century philosophers, notably Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, critically challenged the foundational assumptions of reason and modern theory, thereby paving the way for a postmodern approach to philosophy.⁴

Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche reduce egalitarian politics to herd envy of the strong or noble. However, Kierkegaard systematically champions passion over reason. According to Kierkegaard, there are three stages of existence: aesthetic, ethical, and religious. In each of these stages, passion and nonrational components are considered superior to rationality. In the aesthetic stage, sensual pleasures such as culinary taste, art, and eroticism provide the earthly delights of

³ Justin Sands, "Confessional Discourses, Radicalizing Traditions: On John Caputo and the Theological Turn", *Open Theology* 8 (2022), 43.

⁴ Steven Best - Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn: Critical Perspectives* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997), 2.

everyday life rather than the machinations of reason. In the ethical stage, Kierkegaard values the passions of resolve, choice, and commitment over universal principles and the faculty of moral judgment. According to Kierkegaard, the religious stage represents the highest mode of existence. He champions the infinite passion of choosing Christian belief, the absurd faith in Christian mysteries and paradoxes, and the subjective yearning for salvation and redemption as the heart and soul of religious life.⁵

Nietzsche agrees with Kierkegaard that contemporary thought, morality, and religion contribute to the leveling process. However, Nietzsche differs from Kierkegaard in that he views all existing forms of morality and religion, particularly Christianity, as repressive of vital life energies and hostile to individuality. Nietzsche radicalizes the Enlightenment critique of ideology. He advocates a relentlessly secular approach to values and theory. Nietzsche's philosophical critique mutated into modern existentialism and then postmodern theory. This makes him a master theorist of both traditions that links existentialism to the postmodern turn in philosophy. Nietzsche anticipated postmodern theory by critiquing the subject and reason, deconstructing modern notions of truth, representation, and objectivity, and presenting a highly aestheticized philosophy and mode of writing. His theory of perspectivism is also noteworthy.⁶

Nietzsche's legacy is complex and contradictory. He is one of the most important and enigmatic figures in the transition from modern to postmodern thought. His assault on Western rationalism profoundly influenced postmodern theorists such as Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and Lyotard, who broke with modern theory and sought alternative theories.⁷

According to Caputo, postmodernism is often viewed by religious believers as a continuation of Nietzsche's philosophy, as it promotes the idea that God is dead and that everything is permitted. However, it has been criticized by the Christian right as frivolous skepticism that undermines the possibility of absolutes such as God, truth, or morality, leaving us vulnerable to relativism. Jean-Francois Lyotard famously described postmodernism as exhibiting "incredulity toward grand

⁵ Best - Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*, 2-3.

⁶ John D. Caputo, *On Religion* (London, New York: Routledge Press, 2001), 49-60.

⁷ Best - Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*, 5.

narratives". In doing so, he contrasted it with the comforting notion of religious faith in divine providence – the belief in an omnipotent and omniscient God who oversees the world and works all things for good. Lyotard argues that such grand narratives are no longer believable.⁸

Caputo states that postmodernism creates much complexity and disturbs both theists and atheists. While postmodernism may challenge traditional beliefs, it also presents complications for modern atheism. Jacques Derrida cautions against "theological prejudices" not only in overtly theological contexts but also in "metaphysics in its entirety, even when it professes to be atheist". Therefore, Derrida warns us about the theologians of atheistic metaphysics. Theology extends beyond divinity schools, as it addresses the concept of a fixed center. Therefore, upon closer examination, postmodernism is not a welcoming environment for atheism, especially if it involves a metaphysical or definitive denial of God. Recently, a version of postmodern thinking has emerged that is unsettling to both the religious right and secularizing postmodernists. This version identifies "modernity" with "secularization" and sees in "postmodernity" an opportunity for "postsecular" and even "postmodern theology".⁹

Caputo reduces the concept of postmodernism to three philosophical items: "(1) the affirmation of radical and irreducible pluralism (of what Lyotard calls 'paganism'), (2) the rejection of an overarching, metaphysical, or foundational schema (of what Lyotard calls 'monotheism' and Derrida calls 'theology'), and (3) a suspicion of fixed binary categories that describe rigorously separable regions (typically characteristic of 'structuralism')".¹⁰

The concept of postmodernism in contemporary thought primarily includes the criticism of modern humanism and Enlightenment thought.¹¹ Therefore, it can be said that postmodernism is humanism, which makes humans, as the reference point of knowledge, morality, and value, the center of the universe. Postmodernism involves the criticism of Enlightenment thought, which claims that the only valid

⁸ John D. Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology, and the Postmodern Condition", *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 267.

⁹ Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology, and the Postmodern Condition", 267-268.

¹⁰ Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology, and the Postmodern Condition", 268.

¹¹ Luc Ferry, *Apprendre à Vivre - Traité de philosophie à l'usage des jeunes générations* (Paris: Club France Loisirs, 2006), 136.

way to reach the truth is through rational reasoning and that this reasoning is a liberating power. However, postmodern thought, which is positioned within contemporary philosophy, involves a radical deconstruction of the claims of humanism that defend the transcendence of ideals. The term postmodernism is also related to major cultural and intellectual movements such as feminism, pragmatism, existentialism, deconstruction, and postempiricist philosophy of science.¹²

As Charlesworth notes, postmodernism, though in a sense provoked by modernity, is a movement that subjects Enlightenment rationality to a radical critique and points us toward beliefs and values that modernity rejects.¹³ It refuses to view science as a supreme model or meta-narrative; it recognizes the diversity and pluralism of local knowledge and traditions that emerge from people's lived experiences; and it has developed a comprehensive critique of technology. For this reason, universal and definitive judgments are harshly criticized in postmodern thought. Similarly, claims about the existence of God are also criticized. Postmodern thought also includes the rejection of certain and final propositions about God. Classical proofs of God's existence depend on the assumption that we can take a totalizing view of the world as if creation were a systematic whole, where God plays the role of an ultimate or transcendent "foundation" or ground. However, no postmodernist can ground the religious order through a process of totalization and foundationalism. At this point, the influence of poststructuralists is especially evident.

"Poststructuralists" (who later adopted the title "Deconstructionists") reject the view that a fixed structure exists. According to this perspective, all literature depends on the reader's perspective. Meaning is derived from the text through a dialog with it. Therefore, there are as many readings of the text as there are readers. Deconstructionists provided postmodernists with a tool to advance their total rejection of the concept of objective truth. Jacques Derrida is credited as the "father of modern deconstruction". He is a philosopher who has had a major impact in the field of literary

¹² Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World Views* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 395.

¹³ M. Charlesworth, *Philosophy and Religion: From Plato to Postmodernism* (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2002), 156-157.

criticism.¹⁴ According to Derrida, deconstruction is not simply a critical and destructive practice but rather a specific reading approach to the philosophical or nonphilosophical tradition's inherited legacy. Based on this approach, we can say that metaphysical existence and truth claims have historically separated their subjects from individuality, relationality, contextuality, and temporality by resorting to rationality within a dualist epistemology. Due to this tendency, the relationship between metaphysical thought and the deconstructionist view is cautious. Deconstruction aims to expose the violence inherent in metaphysical modes of thinking and reveal that claims of universal truth are merely constructs that can be interpreted in different ways.¹⁵ Translation attempts related to deconstruction provide insight into possible interpretations. However, it should be noted that these translations may lead to misunderstandings and biases. The primary cause of these misunderstandings is that deconstruction is often viewed as playing a negative role. Deconstruction involves a radical critique of metaphysics, particularly the type of metaphysics found in Western philosophy. It calls into question the possibility of establishing a foundation for absolute knowledge, the reciprocity theory of truth, the notion of certainty, a center or starting point that ensures the authenticity of thought, and the apparentness of double opposition.¹⁶

Derrida's thought centers on the critique of metaphysics. He argues that Western philosophy, being Platonic/metaphysical, aims to eliminate time, history, difference, and contingency from the world.¹⁷ While Western philosophy aims to uncover the basis of truth and stable values, it endeavors to transcend into an imaginary realm of pure and timeless universals. Philosophical concepts such as "ideas", "clear and distinct ideas", "absolute knowledge", and "transcendental subject" attempt to limit the range of meaning within a closed system of "truth". This limitation of meaning often leads to paradoxes, contradictions, and inconsistencies that are ripe for deconstruction. From this perspective, as Hollinger points out, the search for pure being is

¹⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 113.

¹⁵ Kasım Küçükcalp, *Jacques Derrida: Felsefenin Dekonstrüksiyonu* (İstanbul: Ketebe, 2020), 14.

¹⁶ Recep Alpyağılı, *Derrida'dan Caputo'ya Dekonstrüksiyon ve Din* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 32.

¹⁷ Best - Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*, 11.

something that can never be realized, it finds itself constantly postponed, because the search for pure beginning, origin or pure being, the attempt to name or express it, the search for being, the search for naming or expressing it. This attempt is an impassable quagmire, because it results in the naming or denotation of other elements in the system of signs.¹⁸

Deconstruction is not negative. It is not destructive; it does not aim to separate or disrupt to reveal the inner eye. It asks questions about the essence, about being here now. It does not aim to destroy or disrupt but to open up new possibilities of discourse.¹⁹ Rather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how an "ensemble" was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end.²⁰ The main concern is the potential impact of deconstruction on religion and theology. According to Hart,

Deconstruction provides a critique not of theology but of the metaphysical element within Theology and any discourse for that matter. If we take the phrase 'God is dead' as a statement about the impossibility of finding a transcendent point that can serve as a basis for discussion, then deconstruction is truly a discourse on the death of God. But if we treat the phrase 'God is dead' as a formula for belief or disbelief, then there is no reason to associate it with deconstruction.²¹

It is also through some form of the process of deconstruction that we are able to speak, in a sense, of transcending our world and "going beyond being". There is a suggestion in Derrida that, in this way, we can make sense of the religious sphere or of "the divine". Deconstruction arose as a response to the structuralist theory of interpreting literary texts. According to this theory, cultures develop literature to give meaning to their existence and make sense of the meaninglessness of reality.²² Structuralists believe that all cultures use a common structure, and by analyzing this structure and reading texts

¹⁸ Robert Hollinger, *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: A Thematic Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 164.

¹⁹ Alpyağıl, *Dekonstrüksiyon ve Din*, 42.

²⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend", *Derrida and Différance*, ed. David Wood - Robert Bernasconi (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1985), 2.

²¹ Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 39.

²² Stanley J. Grenz, *Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 78.

with this understanding, one can make sense of experiences of reality. According to structuralism, a linguistic theory popular in the first half of the 20th century, the relationship between words or signs and their meanings is not intrinsic.²³ Instead, it is determined by the way people in linguistic communities use them. Jacques Derrida, a proponent of Deconstructionism, took structuralism to its logical conclusion: if there are no ultimate relationships, there is no ultimate reality. Therefore, words are the only existing reality. Words do not have an objective truth beyond their cultural and social context, and they merely point to other words.

Deconstruction is a form of radical reductionism that originated with Aristotle's metaphysical reduction of things to "first principles". It has become prominent in Western thought and is applied in the scientific validation of phenomena through data analysis and dissection, as well as in literary and art criticism and factual or Heideggerian thinking. Modern philosophy owes much to Descartes' idealist reduction of reality to the cogito, as well as to the twentieth-century reductionist methods of Husserl's idealist epoché and Wittgenstein's positivist reductionism. However, deconstruction takes this further by asserting that the constitution of something is accidental, arbitrary, or illusory, thereby undermining order and meaning. This marks the difference between modernist reductionism and postmodernist deconstruction. Deconstruction occurs automatically, as evidenced by the space between written words, time between spoken words, punctuation, voice inflections, and unhinged time and space. Language automatically deconstructs meaning. John Caputo observes that "nobody has to come along and deconstruct things."²⁴ According to Derrida, objects are deconstructed by their own inherent truths. He also argues that anything that is constructed can be deconstructed.²⁵

Deconstruction occurs –and must occur– because reality and being itself are undermined by arbitrariness and difference. Caputo says that

²³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Theology and the Condition of Postmodernity: A Report on Knowledge (of God)", *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17.

²⁴ John D. Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 30.

²⁵ Jim Hanson, "Surviving Postmodernism: A New Ontotheology", *American Journal of Sociological Research* 5(3A) (2015), 13.

différance “contains and transcends onto-theology” and combines onto-theology with negative theology, which is the dualistic counterpart of affirmation to negate onto-theology and is therefore full of “hyperousiology”. Caputo places différance in a kind of intermediate realm above being but below the divine, a kind of inexorable purgatory in line with Derrida’s definition of différance as “having neither existence nor essence”. Différance “is not derived from any category of being, whether present or absent ... It contains ontotheology, registers it, and transcends it irreversibly.”²⁶ According to Caputo, différance, when defined as a concept that neither exists nor does not exist, has sometimes been understood as the *deus absconditus** of negative theology, as the condition of the possibilities of words and concepts that supposedly transcends the limit of human consciousness. Derrida, the originator of différance, suspects that the adequacy of language is a logocentric exercise that conceals rather than reveals being. Written words are mere “traces” that have lost their connection with their original referents; thus, the essence created by language has been shredded by différance. “Différance provides the reminder that the word or form differs from what it represents and keeps open the discovery of new and ever-changing meanings that result from further or hermeneutic interpretation.”²⁷

Words only refer to other words; hence, Derrida’s well-known statement, “there is nothing beyond the text.” To borrow a line from Leonard Cohen: There is a crack (of différance) in everything (of existence), that is how the light gets in (to disclose being). What predicative subjects and objects language constructs, différance deconstructs in the course of everyday language, as evidenced by a pause in voice or a comma in text that can let in new light.²⁸

Caputo also puts forward Derrida’s idea that there is nothing outside the text in this sense. Additionally, the text should adhere to conventional academic structure and formatting, and technical terms should be used when necessary to convey precise meaning. Words do

²⁶ Hanson, “Surviving Postmodernism”, 16.

* The Hidden God, which the human mind cannot comprehend through rationality or logic.

²⁷ Hanson, “Surviving Postmodernism”, 14.

²⁸ Hanson, “Surviving Postmodernism”, 14.

not have an objective truth beyond their cultural and social context, and they merely point to other words. According to the theory presented, “reality” is a social construct that is created through language. This interpretation is subjective and varies between individuals and societies. Therefore, a text in and of itself cannot contain meaning; rather, the reader creates meaning by interpreting the text through their own understanding and cultural background. Finally, the text should be free from grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and punctuation errors. The language used to construct meaning should be clear, concise, and objective, avoiding the use of biased or emotional language.²⁹ According to Caputo, deconstruction is again used to strip God of his name and voice and to remove God or the divine from being and cast it into inaccessible nothingness. Caputo states that being and God cannot be connected, and therefore, any onto-theological stance toward God is idolatry: “We must always and ceaselessly criticize the idols of ontotheology.”³⁰

Initially, it was assumed that deconstruction and religion had a negative correlation. However, deconstruction has primarily been understood in the English-speaking world in a secularist and atheist context, particularly in a Nietzschean context. This may be due to understandable reasons. Since deconstruction presents itself as a critique of Western metaphysics, it is reasonable to subject theology to this critique. However, as Armor suggests, it is premature to apply deconstruction to the field of theology. Deconstruction may limit the classical concept of God as the guarantor of truth, but it does not necessarily challenge the idea of God.³¹ It is rather a practice that helps us understand and decode the workings of metaphysics in any discourse.³² For Hart, it is clear that deconstruction includes a critique of theism, but it is a critique of its “ism”, not its theos. It should be noted, however, that it does not make any claims about the reality of God. If deconstruction is a critique of theism, it is also a critique of atheism.³³

²⁹ Best - Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*, 13.

³⁰ John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 87.

³¹ Alpyağıl, *Dekonstrüksiyon ve Din*, 63.

³² Alpyağıl, *Dekonstrüksiyon ve Din*, 63-64.

³³ Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign*, 27.

Caputo's main concept is expressed through the term "religion without religion", which refers to a religious perspective or attitude that is not limited to any particular creed. Although Caputo was a Christian, he uses biblical quotes to illustrate his point and does not believe that adherence to a specific creed is essential for being religious. Caputo believes that the pressure to maintain orthodoxy applied by religious authorities is antithetical to the kind of religious faith he espouses. He respects religious traditions and creeds but sees them as historically contingent forms that do not take precedence over the direct and unmediated expression of genuine faith. It consists of love for God without knowing what we love. According to Caputo, what does true belief or religion consist of? This is a stance that reaches toward what Caputo calls the "impossible" without having any propositional knowledge of what we love is or what we actually love.³⁴ Caputo constantly returned to the question asked by Saint Augustine: "What am I loving when I love God?" This question is posed by those who claim that we cannot answer it, but we must continue to ask it to form our true religious beliefs. Furthermore, it is claimed that what we are looking for when we pursue this question is not an epistemological truth but a truth in action: a truth that we realize through love and devotion in our lives.

Religion is re-ligare, that is, the one-to-one bond of the existing individual with the Absolute, its absolute relation to the Absolute. Re-ligare is ob-ligare, absolute bond, obligation, but without the shelter provided by the universal.³⁵

Here, we are confronted with several problems. Indeed, the nature of a deconstructed God is a serious problem. According to Hanson, Caputo states that God's "persistent call" is made in the name of God, but God has no name or attribute. This is not surprising since Caputo represents a God who has been deconstructed and cannot be found. Caputo's approach raises the question of whether there is anything theological about a mysterious call from an unidentified God. Caputo's call is a minimal call that makes no sense and is not based on any source or reference, and he faces such a situation because of the excesses of deconstruction. Hanson, therefore, views Caputo's

³⁴ Caputo, *On Religion*, 1.

³⁵ Caputo, *Against Ethics*, 18.

approach as no different from baseless mysticism. He can look for such a call in being, in the immanence of being, or in the natural laws of the world. Meaningless calls, having no referents, are not theological. How can one know what connection any calling has with reality? Usually, when one hears mysterious, eerie calls without seeing anyone, a psychiatrist is consulted, not a theologian. Without verification and validation, God is a ghost of our own creation.³⁶

In response to these criticisms, Caputo argues that religion is a human construct and that the bonds and obligations it involves are inherent in the nature of life. In other words, religion can be understood without the need for religious teachings. Caputo suggested that the love of God, or religion, can be discovered without being preached. He posits that love is the means of this discovery. Caputo argues that individuals can be deeply and permanently religious with or without theology or religion. This idea of “religion without religion” is the central thesis of his argument. He suggested that religion can be found in various forms, regardless of the presence or absence of traditional religious structures.³⁷

According to Caputo, religion, when defined in a simple way, has meant the “love of God” since classical thought. Of course, this expression is not enough to explain Caputo’s point. For this reason, Caputo asks the question, “What do I love when I love God?” In our opinion, this question, when interpreted in a sense in connection with God being love, points to loving everything because of God.

I love this question in no small part because it assumes that anybody worth their salt loves God. If you do not love God, what good are you? You are too caught up in the meanness of self-love and self-gratification to be worth a tinker’s damn. Your soul soars only with a spike in the Dow-Jones Industrial average; your heart leaps only at the prospect of a new tax break. The devil take you. He already has. Religion is for lovers, for men and women of passion, for real people with a passion for something other than taking profits, people who believe in something, who hope like mad in something, who love something with a love that surpasses understanding. Faith, hope, and love, and of these three, the

³⁶ Hanson, “Surviving Postmodernism”, 13-21.

³⁷ Caputo, *On Religion*, 3.

best is love, according to a famous apostle (I Cor. 13:13). However, what do they love? What do I love when I love my God? That is their question. That is my question.³⁸

According to Caputo, a person without religion is, in fact, a person without love. Religion is ultimately love. This is what makes all religions religions. In every religion, there is definitely both hospitality toward the other and love. This love also means loving everything, loving the other. God is love, and love is God. According to Caputo, who calls this translatability, there is an ambiguity here. Notice how easily it slips from stating that God is love to stating that "love is God". This shift is provocative and creates an important ambiguity, allowing for infinite substitution and translation between "love" and "God".³⁹ According to Caputo, religious belief is fundamentally concerned with passion –or, more specifically, with a passion for the impossible– which constitutes the structure of experience through the "passion of not knowing". This structure of experience is a passion for and commitment to *tout autre*, to something new and unexpected, something that breaks the existing horizon of possibility and looks toward the impossible, the wholly other. Caputo goes so far as to say that what constitutes experience as experience is religious – it is only with the impossible that one can truly experience something new. According to Caputo, this "religious side of experience", "the notion of life at the limit of the possible, at the threshold of the impossible, constitutes a religious structure, the religious side of each of us."⁴⁰ Following Derrida, Caputo calls this fundamental passion for the impossible in human experience "the love of God", which is religion.⁴¹ For Derrida and Caputo, "the name of God" is "the name of that which we desire and love without question – "God" is the impossible that we passionately desire (without seeing, possessing, or knowing).⁴² The passion for life, therefore, leads us to the love of God.

Caputo's philosophy and theology are based on the deconstruction of the Nietzschean view of God, which denies the existence of a supreme and absolute being corresponding to the definition of God

³⁸ Caputo, *On Religion*, 2.

³⁹ Caputo, *On Religion*, 5.

⁴⁰ Caputo, *On Religion*, 11.

⁴¹ Caputo, *On Religion*, 113.

⁴² Christopher Ben Simpson, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 18.

found in Western religious understanding or theistic religions. Caputo attempts to counter Nietzsche's perspectives on the death of God through deconstruction. Deconstruction can incorporate "religiosity" into the human experience of joy and suffering without the dogmatic structure of religious belief and the concrete belief system of Western religion that Nietzsche sought to refute.⁴³ Deconstruction allows for religiosity, but it is a postmetaphysical religion, not a metaphysical religion. According to Caputo, deconstruction is not amenable to metaphysical and dogmatic structures in which it questions the possibility of a historical, pure, prelinguistic experience and perception.

Caputo finds in deconstruction a means by which the practice of religion can exist independently of dogma. He refers to this as "religion without religion", borrowed from Derrida. In a sense, Caputo tries to save religion through deconstruction.⁴⁴ In *On Religion*, Caputo continues to develop the religious implications of this affirmative deconstruction. Religion is the loving, the desiring, the hoping that animates our life, rather than a belief in some intellectual propositions. It is not the love of this or that particular God but rather the loving of or desiring for "God," where "the name of God is the name of love, the name of what we love".⁴⁵ Caputo, as a theologian, must explain his own faith tradition in a way that is consistent with his notions of khôra and radical hermeneutics. This project begins in earnest for him with *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*. In this work, he challenges the traditional picture of God as a sovereign (hyper) being with unlimited abilities such as omnipotence and omniscience. Instead, he conceives of God as the 'weak force' of desiring or loving, as described in *On Religion*. Caputo critiques the omnipotence of God by equating God with an event that occurs in the name of God. He even questions whether God can exist in the traditional sense of that term. Our traditions contain the promises that drive us, so there is no need for an immaterial or supernatural realm that can be distinguished from the plane of human experience. Instead, this life is all there is, with its promises and events that require contemplation, action, and

⁴³ Caputo, *Religion without Religion*, 15.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey W. Robbins, "Introduction: After the Death of God", *After the Death of God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 17.

⁴⁵ Caputo, *On Religion*, 6.

manifestation by existing entities. God represents one such call, promise, or event.

2. Radical Hermeneutics and Weak Theology

Historically, hermeneutics has referred to the task of interpreting facts with certainty in the notion of truth as correspondence. In the last half of the 20th century, a movement emerged in hermeneutics that suggested that interpretations are responses to contingent questions and that the value of interpretations lies in their function as a coherent picture. Gianni Vattimo describes hermeneutics as a “nihilistic vocation” that is held in tension by the relationship between linguistics (Gadamer) and ontology (Heidegger). The theory of interpretation now begins with a disclosure of how we experience the world. The concept of interpretation arises from a significant change in the understanding of truth as proposed by Jeffrey W. Robbins:

The phrase weak thought refers to the gradual weakening of being that has transformed contemporary philosophy from its former obsession with the metaphysics of truth to its current and more limited understanding of itself strictly as an interpretative exercise.⁴⁶

For Caputo, hermeneutics has a very important function. This function also leads to a weakening of metaphysics.

Hermeneutics wants to describe the fix we are in, and it tries to be hard-hearted and to work “from below.” It makes no claim to have won a transcendental high ground or to have a heavenly informer. It does not try to situate itself above the flux or to seek a way out of physis, which is what the fateful “meta-” in meta-physics always amounts to, but rather, like Constantin, to get up the nerve to stay with it.⁴⁷

Caputo views hermeneutics as the key to the postmodern shift in the idea of truth and considers language games and paradigm shifts to presuppose a theory of truth based on hermeneutics. Interpretation is defined as a tool that questions the concept of absolutism and leads to the perspective of relativism. This approach functions like a thumbtack that pierces the bubble of absolutism before and after it drops us into

⁴⁶ W. Robbins, “Introduction: After the Death of God”, 16.

⁴⁷ John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3.

the pit of relativism while rejecting the inflated privileges of pure reason. This explanation emphasizes how hermeneutics influences the postmodern era and the understanding of truth. "Absolutism supposes that truth must be presuppositions; relativism agrees that this indeed is what truth is, and adds, 'but it is impossible', so think whatever you like. Hermeneutics says truth is not a matter of presuppositionlessness but of having the right presuppositions and avoiding the wrong ones."⁴⁸

Caputo's approach, which emphasizes the differences between postmodernism and theology, combines theological reflections with postmodern philosophy to address the understanding of religion and God. Caputo's work shows that he considers postmodernism not only as a philosophical current but also in a theological context. Caputo's approach to radical theology takes a radical approach to understanding religion and God, questioning and transforming traditional theological concepts. This requires a theological depth and commitment that transcends the critical and volatile nature of postmodernism.⁴⁹ Again, Caputo states that hermeneutics began with Heidegger. According to Caputo, the starting point of hermeneutics can be seen when we go back. However, the main issue is the meaning of hermeneutics for life. This meaning can be seen in the works of thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. According to Caputo, hermeneutics does not evaluate life in certain frameworks. It states that life should be open to risks.

Hermeneutics starts out in Heidegger as radical thinking, and it is the process of its radicalization that I want to pursue in the pages that follow. I do not approach hermeneutics in the usual way, by following its historical genesis from Schleiermacher and Dilthey; that has already been done well and elsewhere. I am concerned here not with its historical genesis but with its radicalization, not with where it came from but with its innermost direction and momentum. That is why the protohistory of hermeneutics for me is to be found in radical thinkers like Kierkegaard and Husserl, Nietzsche

⁴⁸ John D. Caputo, *Truth: The Search for Wisdom in the Postmodern Age* (London: Penguin Press, 2013), 194.

⁴⁹ Sands, "Confessional Discourses, Radicalizing Traditions: On John Caputo and the Theological Turn", 46.

and Meister Eckhart, and why its late history has to do with the late Heidegger who drops the term from his vocabulary and criticizes hermeneutic phenomenology and Derrida, who is an outspoken critic of hermeneutics. For hermeneutics always has to do with keeping the difficulty of life alive and with keeping its distance from the easy assurances of metaphysics and the consolations of philosophy.⁵⁰

In the past two decades, Caputo's philosophical endeavors have focused on excising "faithless" metaphysics from our conceptual framework. According to Caputo, such a metaphysics fails to be faithful to life, neglecting the facticity of human existence by losing sight of the lived experience amid the complexities of speculative thought. It is equally unfaithful to the human other, as it obscures the individuality of persons within the abstraction of universal laws. Furthermore, it is not faithful to "faith" as it undermines genuine religious belief and the relational understanding of the divine, reducing "God" to an object of theoretical scrutiny through an obsession with formulating proportionate propositions. This entanglement with the duplicity and "bad faith" inherent in such "faithless" metaphysics, as it permeates metaphysics, ethics, and religion, constitutes the adversary against which a novel, postmodern mode of thinking and existence contends. For Caputo, this emergent approach is characterized by an authentically honest, ethical, and, above all, religious fidelity that operates independently of traditional metaphysical structures.⁵¹

Both Caputo and Vattimo aim to radicalize hermeneutical philosophy in their works. They differ in their views on the philosophical and theological significance of the death of God. Vattimo sees the death of God as having a nihilistic implication,⁵² while Caputo has a different perspective. Caputo believes that the death of God enables deconstructive readings, emphasizing the re-evaluation and repetition of religious ideas. Caputo argues that religion has been degraded and devalued, particularly with the absolutist and monist understandings of Enlightenment thought. However, he believes that this situation is no longer valid today. Although religion has been purged from a powerful structure, it has not been completely

⁵⁰ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 3.

⁵¹ Simpson, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern*, 7.

⁵² W. Robbins, "Introduction: After the Death of God", 14.

eradicated. Caputo opposes the idea of absolute reason and universality created by the Enlightenment but acknowledges its achievements. He proposes a new Enlightenment, suggesting that the role of reason should change and that the absolutist understanding has been shaken.

I promise to be faithful to the progress created by the Enlightenment, which freed us from the Church, superstition and the authority of royalty and replaced it with human rights, scientific research and technological advances. It is useless to object to the Enlightenment. However, I think the old Enlightenment has done all the good it could do, and we need a new Enlightenment, not anti-Enlightenment.⁵³

Caputo contrasts and blends the Enlightenment with the uncertainties of the postage. The aim is not to extinguish the light of the Enlightenment but to bring forth a new, revised version of it, complicating its pure light with shadows, black holes, and other unexpected nuances and challenges.* Caputo argues that God alone can have an absolute perspective, perceiving only one mind and truth, while human beings are limited to their own interpretations, resulting in multiple perspectives. He rejects the notion of a universal reason or truth, instead emphasizing the existence of individual minds and truths. This concept is central to his hermeneutic philosophy. As products of their time and place, human beings are inherently limited to multiple perspectives. Otherwise, we must acknowledge that our perspective is limited to our earthly existence. We must address our truths in a contextual manner, considering factors such as time, place,

⁵³ Caputo, *Truth*, 19.

* The following can be said about Caputo's ideas about the Enlightenment. According to Caputo, postmodernism should be viewed as a continuation of the Enlightenment and not just an opposition to it. In this context, postmodernism should be regarded as a different form of Enlightenment, and it is necessary to re-evaluate the basic principles of Enlightenment from a different perspective. While Caputo emphasizes that postmodernism is a continuation of the Enlightenment, he also highlights three main ideas of postmodernism, which include a radical and indispensable pluralism, a rejection of a general metaphysical or grounding scheme, and skepticism of fixed binary categories. These ideas constitute the basic philosophical content of postmodernism and shape the approach of postmodern thought to religion, metaphysics and other issues. The following works can be consulted on the subject: Caputo, *Truth*; John D. Caputo, *Modernity and Its Discontents* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992); and Caputo, *On Religion*.

language, culture, gender, and caste. Our understanding is always situated and, therefore, constrained. However, this limitation is not necessarily negative. In fact, it is necessary for human beings to remain open to interpretation. However, this limitation provides us with an entry point, approach, perspective, and interpretation. It is important to note that while God does not require a point of view, we, as mortals, do. A point of view allows us to access truths that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Originally, the word “hermeneutics” was a theological one, having to do with interpretation of the Scriptures. But what we today mean by “hermeneutics” is a more general theory, that every truth is a function of interpretation, and the need for interpretation is a function of being situated in a particular time and place and therefore having certain inherited presuppositions.⁵⁴

Caputo argues that postmodernism challenges the modern use of reason, and this has significant implications for religion. The Cartesian subject, according to the author, has been dismantled by postmodern thought. According to Caputo, truth cannot be confined within the bounds of modern thought. The postmodern perception of truth cannot be limited to reason alone. This is not because it is identified with the infinite God, as it was before modernity, but because it has acquired a different kind of infinity in itself, namely, endless difference and diversity. However, as we have stated above, Caputo tries to distinguish himself from postmodern thought, especially by presenting a hermeneutical theology. Therefore, the difference between Caputo's view and that of postmodernism becomes evident primarily through his theological focus. Caputo's work often focuses on theological issues and emphasizes the theological dimension of postmodernist thought. This shows that Caputo prefers to address postmodernism in a theological context. Caputo argues that metaphysical and humanistic thought must also be subject to criticism. If religion is to have a place in the postmodern era, it will only be possible through the critique of metaphysical thought, including onto-theology.

According to Caputo, the problem with metaphysics can be summarized as follows: To provide a stable basis for life, metaphysics

⁵⁴ Caputo, *Truth*, 23.

proceeds from the idea of a fixed and static first cause, unity, or uniqueness. This misses life because it is an abstract system. Metaphysics seeks to take an individual above (meta) the flow (physis) of reality – to provide him or her with a “quick way out the back door of the flow”.⁵⁵ Such metaphysics involves elevating one’s knowledge of reality to a kind of absolute knowledge – privileged access to the real. Caputo is uncomfortable with this use of metaphysics in philosophy.

I find the word ‘metaphysics’ in philosophy. I use the word ‘metaphysics’ rhetorically to indicate what makes me uneasy in philosophy. When philosophy becomes transcendental, when it becomes pretentious, when it thinks it has everything in its place, that is exactly what I am after.⁵⁶

Against such a definition of metaphysics, Caputo offers a radical hermeneutics as an alternative way of thinking about reality and our place in it. Radical hermeneutics, unlike traditional Western metaphysics, is a way of thinking about reality, a kind of “metaphysics” that aims to be “nonmetaphysical”.⁵⁷ As an alternative to metaphysics (or perhaps an alternative kind of metaphysics), radical hermeneutics is faithful to life insofar as it is a way of thinking that engages with life in its particularity and difference to orient the person to the challenge of his or her existence. Caputo’s radical form of hermeneutics is about “keeping alive the difficulty of life and avoiding the easy assurances of metaphysics and the consolations of philosophy”.⁵⁸

According to Caputo, radical hermeneutics provides a minimalist understanding of human existence. Recognizing that it is not possible to do away with metaphysics altogether, Caputo seeks a “minimalist metaphysics” because, for him, it is best to “keep metaphysics to a minimum”.⁵⁹ A minimalist metaphysics does not exaggerate the status and scope of its knowledge. It is concerned with modest “finite phenomena” as they appear, however vaguely, on the surface of experience and does not speculate about constitutive depths.⁶⁰ It seeks a minimalist, minimally restrictive, or limiting experience to

⁵⁵ Simpson, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern*, 1.

⁵⁶ Caputo, *Modernity and Its Discontents*, 137.

⁵⁷ Simpson, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern*, 9.

⁵⁸ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 3.

⁵⁹ Caputo, *Against Ethics*, 93.

⁶⁰ Simpson, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern*, 10.

accommodate this constrained stance. Thus, unlike traditional metaphysics, radical hermeneutics aims to offer metaphysics without metaphysics, a minimalist metaphysics of a “postmetaphysical rationality” that recognizes the “inevitable futility of trying to fix things”.⁶¹ This minimalist metaphysics is important in that it makes room for religion. As a matter of fact, Caputo states that life has a religious structure and that this religion is not the religion that is known and supported by the holy books but rather that it contains the element that exists within them.

This raises questions about the extent to which weak theology can truly escape the confines of traditional theological structures and whether it inadvertently imposes its own limitations on the interpretation of faith experiences. From a hermeneutical-poststructuralist view, the concern may be that any form of theology, even if characterized as weak, inherently carries with it certain assumptions and biases that influence the understanding of religious concepts.⁶²

Caputo referred to his theology as “weak”. This concept draws heavily on Derrida’s “weak force” and Vattimo’s “weak thought”.^{*} The content of the improved text must be as close as possible to the source text, and any additions must be avoided at all costs. The language used in theology should be clear, objective, and value-neutral, avoiding biased, emotional, figurative, or ornamental language. The text should adhere to the conventional academic structure and formatting conventions, with clear titles and consistent technical terms. Caputo is

⁶¹ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 21.

⁶² Swart, *Religious Experience at the Limits of Language*, 176.

* The term weak thinking can be expressed as an attempt to reconstruct rationality in a postmodern, postmetaphysical way. With this concept, Vattimo aims to move away from modern reason’s claim that absolute truth, reality, and absolute objectivity are attainable. Weak thinking asserts that the world is not “given” to us as a pure, uninterpreted and unmediated reality. Vattimo states that the world is always “given” to us as an already-interpreted reality. In addition, it is precisely for this reason that strong thought must be avoided, with its avoidance of the claims of Western metaphysics to truth, certainty, objectivity, and absolute knowledge, and the accompanying historical contingency. For details, see Thomas G. Guarino, *Vattimo and Theology* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2009) and Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity - Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

interested in the act of calling on the name of God rather than the response to that call. He neither confirms nor denies the existence of God. Instead, he suggests that theology should concentrate on what God requires us to do rather than on God's existence or nature. Caputo refers to this as a theology of the event, rather than a theology of God, due to its focus on insistence rather than existence and on provocation and the call rather than indication and the Being (who is called God).

Caputo's understanding of 'weak theology' stems from his belief that traditional theological systems often convey an image of God as an all-powerful and all-knowing being, with a fixed set of attributes and a clear understanding of how God operates in the world. This view is criticized by Caputo as a form of "strong theology" that limits our understanding and experiences of the divine. Caputo's weak theology emphasizes the need for openness and humility in our approach to theological inquiry, acknowledging the limits of human understanding and embracing the uncertainty and ambiguity that come with exploring the divine. By embracing the concept of "weak theology", Caputo suggested that we should not attempt to fully define or comprehend God but rather embrace the mystery and unknowability of the divine. Throughout this debate, until recently, both traditionalists and modernists have remained committed to the notion of transcendent otherness, even though their views on what it involves differ. Caputo argues that a "weak theology" allows for a more dynamic and transformative understanding of God, one that is not constrained by fixed notions or dogmas but is open to continuous questioning and reimagining. Both Caputo and Vattimo embraced the idea of weak thought and explored its implications for philosophy and religion. Caputo's interest in weak thought led him to develop the concepts of weak theology or radical hermeneutics. This is related to his interest in the place of religion in the postmodern era. When Caputo speaks of the postmodern return of religion, he almost always invokes the qualifier he learned from Derrida, namely, "religion without religion". Caputo argues that a postmetaphysical religion exists, which he refers to as "religion without religion". This type of religion highlights the religious aspect of life without monopolizing truth as traditional religions do. Caputo believes that religions, rather than a single religion, contain truth and that life can be religious without adhering to a specific religion. He expresses this idea as follows:

The idea is to move beyond literalism, fundamentalism, and outright superstition without simply repeating an Enlightenment critique of religion whose presuppositions, as I have argued, have been widely discredited. For a religion without religion requires a full charge of "religious truth" where that is to be sharply distinguished from "true religion" in the sense of "the one true religion" (by which we always mean, invariably, mine-not-yours). The several religions, in the plural, are unique and irreducible repositories of their distinctive ethical practices and religious narratives, representing so many different ways to love God, but without laying claim to an exclusive possession of "The Truth." In the Confessions, Augustine said that the Scriptures may have many meanings, so long as all of them are true. That I would say also goes for religion. We may and need to have many religions, and many "sacred scriptures," so long as all of them are true.⁶³

Caputo suggests a closer collaboration between hermeneutics and deconstruction, as both depart from the metaphysics of being and aim to overcome it. Although there is a return of religion, it does not necessarily imply a return to monist religions, as revealed by revelation or in the traditional sense. The term "return" refers to the resurgence of religion and faith in social and intellectual circles, as well as the rejection of the idea of "the death of God" and the discrediting of those who oppose religion.⁶⁴

In contrast to religions and religiosity, which assert themselves in a strong and absolute way, Caputo presents a postcritical religion. This religion seeks to affirm faith without absolute or certain knowledge, valuing religious tradition while avoiding faith communities based on a historical origin. Caputo's theology is not one of power but of weakness, combining the ethical imperative to serve the poor and needy with the weakness of God. Caputo's theological reflection presents God as a calling, a weak power, rather than a cause endowed with omnipotent metaphysical power. However, Caputo does not leave us with an impotent God who has no claim on the lives of human beings. The weak God and weak theology view rejects the dogmatic,

⁶³ Caputo, *On Religion*, 110.

⁶⁴ Caputo, *On Religion*, 56-66.

confessional, nonpluralistic, and intolerant understandings that define the modern intellectual tradition. The concept of a weak God invites the world to obtain justice through love and forgiveness, as exemplified in the “logos of the cross”. According to Caputo, the paradox of a weak God, as exemplified in the suffering on the cross, contrasts with strong theologies of victory. In justifying his theology, he speaks of the desire to reach God. For Caputo, religion is the desire for an unknown God, which represents a future, a hope, and a promise.⁶⁵

Think of it as a “theology without theology” to accompany what Derrida calls “religion without religion,” a “weak theology” to accompany Vattimo’s “weak thinking,” or perhaps a weak messianic theology to accompany Benjamin’s “weak messianic power.” In defending weakness, I am clearly lumping Derrida, Vattimo and Benjamin together, but I am also shamelessly quoting St. Paul on the “weakness of God” (1 Cor. 1:25), all in the hope of provoking a holy revolt, as Paul was sometimes wont to do.⁶⁶

The concept of weak theology involves rejecting a strong theological understanding that emphasizes a dogmatic and absolute reality. According to Caputo, weak theology provides a more flexible perspective that is open to interpretation and not universally valid. In his defense of weak theology against theistic theology, Caputo criticizes the strong standard version for belonging to the dominant order of power and presence and favoring a grammar consisting of large universal nouns and hyperverbs.⁶⁷ In contrast, weak theology is content with the use of a small verb such as “perhaps” that is unable to do more than interpret or intervene. It focuses on “how” rather than “what” and on small prepositions rather than big propositions. Weak theology acknowledges that theology can be inherently open to ambiguity, contradiction, and questioning.⁶⁸ This allows for the development of critical thinking where theology intersects with philosophy. Caputo developed his weak theology in relation to

⁶⁵ Caputo, *On Religion*, 4.

⁶⁶ John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 22.

⁶⁷ Caputo, *The Weakness of God*, 9.

⁶⁸ Hanson, “Surviving Postmodernism”, 17.

Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction. Derrida's deconstruction posits that texts do not have fixed meanings and that every interpretation can contain contradictions and multiple meanings. Caputo views weak theology as a theological interpretation of deconstruction. It offers a way to critically question religious texts in light of deconstruction. For Caputo, who defines deconstruction as the experience of the impossible, theology is the hermeneutics of the experience of the impossible as the experience of God.⁶⁹

Indeed, Caputo's approach involves a form of atheism that rejects the notion of a metaphysical deity that is in control of everything. This form of atheism serves as a starting point in his work, leading to a deeper exploration of how the concept of God insists upon humanity rather than existing independently. By questioning the nature of justice and the motivations behind actions in relation to the divine event, Caputo prompts a reflective and autodeconstructive exercise that challenges static beliefs and rigid pronouncements.⁷⁰

Chalameet argues that Caputo's rejection of theistic concepts of divine power stems from his belief that such concepts lead to atheistic rejection. He argues that the type of theism one subscribes to influences the type of atheism one may encounter. Despite the importance of exploring the theme of God's power in contemporary theological discourse, Caputo is quick to dismiss this theme in favor of highlighting God's weakness. One of the key points of contention in Caputo's theology is his denial of God as an agent who actively intervenes in the world. He argues that the weakness of God implies that God is not an agent who performs actions or fails to do so. While Caputo acknowledges God's role in calling and provoking, he seems to downplay the idea of God as an active agent with agency. However, the critique raised against Caputo's perspective is that by disconnecting God from agency, there is a risk of diminishing the interest and significance of God's role in human lives. Some argue that God should be viewed as one with a constant, invisible agency that invites and

⁶⁹ Caputo, *The Weakness of God*, 114.

⁷⁰ Justin Sands, "Radical Theology's Place within Theology", *The European Reception of John D. Caputo's Thought*, ed. Joeri Schrijvers - Martin Koci (London: Lexington Books, 2023), 219.

urges individuals to transform.⁷¹ The emphasis on human response in Caputo's theology is seen as overly anthropocentric, with the burden placed too heavily on human actions rather than acknowledging a broader creaturely response to God. Critics suggest that the imbalance between human response and God's action in Caputo's theology is striking, with the human response being portrayed as more significant than God's call. There is a call for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between God's actions and human responses, moving beyond a compartmentalized view to envision a dynamic interaction between God and humanity in shaping and inspiring human lives. In summary, Caputo's concept of the weakness of God challenges traditional views of divine power and agency, emphasizing God's vulnerability and the importance of human response. However, critics argue that his theology may overlook the broader scope of God's agency and the intricate dance between God and humanity in shaping and inspiring human existence.⁷²

Using the notion of weakness in Caputo's theological reflections, he argues that weakness can, in fact, have a powerful influence on theological reflections and contribute to a deeper and more meaningful understanding of faith. This can be considered as keeping the weakness strong. This approach reflects the idea of discovering the potential of elements that are characterized as weak and using this potential effectively to create a strong impact. Thus, the idea of a structure similar to traditional theologies and religions, which are actually expressed as structures, also emerges.

In response to this criticism, Caputo emphasizes that philosophy and theology cannot be effectively applied in isolation from each other. However, with this statement, it is indicated that both must be weakened. For theology to be meaningful and for people to begin to trust it, it is stated that it must be freed from the 'supernatural attitude'. This means that theologians must give up the illusion that they have privileged knowledge through communication from supernatural forces that transcend the natural order. Deprived of the supernatural

⁷¹ Christophe Chalamet, "Caputo and the Unidentifiability of God", *The European Reception of John D. Caputo's Thought*, ed. Joeri Schrijvers - Martin Koci (London: Lexington Books, 2023), 181.

⁷² Chalamet, "Caputo and the Unidentifiability of God", 182.

attitude, theology becomes theopoetic and presents a vision in which “God” and “the kingdom” rule the world.

Caputo refers not to “God” but to the ‘event’ occurring in the name of God, thereby attributing to God (as well as theology) a certain “weakness”. However, Caputo does not mean weakness in the sense of being weak-kneed, indecisive, or anemic. Instead, he refers to what St. Paul called God’s folly or the “weakness of God”, that is, the “logic of the cross”. The concept of weakness in relation to God is expressed through the paradoxical logic of the cross, which does not exert power or might but rather challenges the wisdom of the strong and stands in solidarity with the weak. This idea is drawn from various sources, including the New Testament, Jacques Derrida’s reference to Walter Benjamin’s “weak messianic force”, and Gianni Vattimo’s development of “weak thought” (*pensiero debole*).⁷³ Caputo critiques classical notions of divine transcendence and omnipotence and develops a weaker theology that emphasizes immanence and hopeful uncertainty. According to Caputo, to think about God, we must abandon all metaphysical frameworks, especially the idea of God as a “final cause”, and instead be open and comfortable with the “allure” of the possible God. Caputo does not present a theology of the death of God that assumes the failure of all God-talk. Instead, he aims to free God-talk from metaphysics, deconstruct it, and direct it toward the “event”. This “event” refers to a call, demand, claim, objection, promise, or attraction. The goal of this approach is to deconstruct all “powerful” structures of identity and domination that exclude or dominate others. Caputo considers this work to be a matter of justice and, like the Kingdom of God, an ongoing process.

Conclusion

John D. Caputo’s idea of weak theology is based on a postmodernist perspective. Instead of a traditionally defined, rigid, and fixed theology, Caputo advocates an approach suggested by weak theology. Weak theology opposes dogmatic and definitive belief systems and emphasizes uncertainty, doubt, and openness. In this sense, Caputo’s theological approach rejects the rigid boundaries of religion and adopts a more flexible, open-ended understanding. Caputo’s idea of

⁷³ Calvin D. Ullrich, *Caputo on Radical Political Theology* (England: William Temple Foundation, 2022), 27.

weak theology questions the dogmatic elements of tradition and encourages a constant reassessment of the meaning of religion. Drawing on postmodern thought in particular, this approach argues that religion should not be understood in terms of a fixed and absolute reality but rather as a product of individual and social experiences.

In contrast to contemporary religiosity, which asserts itself strongly and triumphantly, Caputo offers a postcritical religion. He affirms faith without absolute or certain knowledge and values religious tradition while maintaining his distance from actual historical faith communities. In summary, this is not a theology of power but rather a theology of weakness that links the weakness of God with the ethical obligation to assist the impoverished and needy. Unlike the strong Christian, Jewish, or Islamic theologies that are historically determined and specific, Caputo presents a more flexible theology that is “weakened by the flux of undecidability and translatability”. Caputo describes it as a “theology of the event”, which can be thought of as a “theology without theology”. The aim of Caputo’s radical hermeneutics is to update hermeneutic philosophy for the vastly different cultural milieu of the postmodern condition. This radicalization demonstrates the continued relevance of hermeneutics in the postmodern world. Caputo’s approach sees postmodernism as a dynamic process of interpretation and considers it a perspective that needs to be constantly reinterpreted. This enables Caputo to treat postmodernism not as a fixed doctrine but as a perspective that is constantly changing and evolving.

In essence, the discussion around weak theology underscores the ongoing dialog and critique within theological and philosophical circles regarding the nature of faith, interpretation, and boundaries of theological inquiry in a postmodern and poststructuralist landscape. Of course, we can say the following: Caputo’s understanding of religion offers a more flexible and open perspective rather than a rigid and clear structure like those of traditional theologies. His ‘weak theology’ approach aims to approach religious experiences and concepts in a more critical and open way by questioning and transforming traditional theological frameworks. Caputo’s understanding of weak theology focuses on elements such as fragility, uncertainty, and openness when dealing with religious issues. This approach aims to interpret religious experiences and make sense of religious concepts with a questioning attitude. While traditional

theologies are often associated with rigid dogmas, specific belief systems, and rigid structures, Caputo's weak theology approach is important because it offers a more flexible, open-ended, and constantly reconfigurable perspective.

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BOOK REVIEW



Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750

Edited by Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu

Abdur Rahman Fuad



Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750, edited by Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu. *Islamic History and Civilization* 177 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020), xvi + 530 pp., €149.00.

The edited volume “Historicizing Sunnī Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750,” curated by Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, poses a comprehensive analysis. It comprises three chapters that introduce a nuanced exploration of Sunnī orthodoxy within the complex socio-political landscape of the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period. The book’s in-depth analysis of Sunnī identity formation, institutionalization, and interaction with other religious and intellectual currents makes it a must-read for scholars and students in Ottoman studies and Islamic history, ensuring their engagement with the latest research in their field.

The editors set the stage with a thoughtful introduction (pp. 1-30), frame the discourse within the broader historical context, and highlight the significance of reexamining Sunnī orthodoxy in dialogue with the past and the present. The subsequent chapters are organized into three distinct parts, each searching for specific aspects of Sunnī Islam’s evolution within the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter I lays the groundwork for the ensuing exploration. Helen Pfeifer’s examination of the emergence of a new hadith culture in the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century decodes the intellectual currents shaping Sunnī identity. Nabil al-Tikriti’s study of Shāhẓādah Qorqud’s writings draws a contrarian perspective, challenging conventional narratives and illuminating early articulations of Ottoman Sunnism. Derin Terzioğlu’s research of Ibn Taymiyyah’s influence on the early modern Ottomans provides valued intuitions into the ideological underpinnings of Sunnī orthodoxy within the Empire.

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Tijana Krstić's exploration of Ottoman catechisms redefine the role of knowledge and belief boundaries, providing a fresh perspective on religious education and indoctrination. Nir Shafir and Guy Burak intensify the discourse by examining the interpretation of heresy and the edification of Ottoman supplicants, respectively.

Chapter II focuses on the spatial aspects of Sunnī Islam's dissemination and consolidation within Ottoman society. Çiğdem Kafescioğlu's study of urban institutions and their transformative roles underscores the dynamic nature of Ottoman religious spaces. Grigor Boykov's exploration of Abdāl-affiliated convents furnishes significant perceptions into the process of "Sunnitizing" Khalwatī darwishes and interprets the intersection of spirituality and statecraft. H. Evren Sünnetçioğlu's scrutiny of congregational prayers and *imāms* elucidates the juridical debates surrounding religious practices. At the same time, Ünver Rüstem's examination of postclassical Sultanic mosques poses a glimpse into the evolving architectural expressions of Ottoman piety.

Chapter III explores the complex interplay between Sunnī Islam, Shī'ism, and Qizilbash identity within the Ottoman realm. Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer's study challenges prevailing victimhood narratives and presents Qizilbash actors as nuanced borderland actors. Vefa Erginbaş's exploration of Ottoman historical writing suggests additional knowledge into the reception and interpretation of controversial figures like Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah. Besides, it focuses on the dynamic relationship between history and ideology. Selim Güngörürler's assessment of Ottoman-Safavid peacetime diplomacy delivers a fascinating glimpse into the pragmatic realities of confessional politics in the early modern era.

After an overall discussion, all studies must find the literary drawbacks. Within Chapter I, the study "A New Hadith Culture? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth Century" by Helen Pfeifer (pp. 31-61) presents a comprehensive examination of the emergence of a new hadith culture within the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century and sheds light on the dynamic interactions between Arab scholars and Ottoman intellectual circles. The chapter also suggests valuable intuition into the processes of Sunnitization and the transmission of religious knowledge within the Ottoman context, contributing to a deeper understanding of the intellectual and cultural

dynamics of the period. However, engaging with theoretical frameworks related to cultural exchange and intellectual synthesis could be advantageous. Incorporating perspectives from cross-cultural studies or postcolonial theory could refine the study and lay out a broader context for understanding the dynamics of Sunnitization.

Then, the following title, “A Contrarian Voice: Şehzâde Qorqud’s (d. 919/1513) Writings on Kalâm and the Early Articulation of Ottoman Sunnism” by Nabil al-Tikriti (pp. 62- 100) stipulates a fresh perspective on the early articulation of Ottoman Sunnism by examining the writings of Shâhzâdah Qorqud, challenging conventional narratives and highlighting the diversity of intellectual currents within the Ottoman Empire. The chapter boosts our understanding of Ottoman intellectual history by exploring the role of individual voices in shaping religious discourse and identity during the Empire’s formative period. On the one hand, while the chapter delivers a valuable understanding of Shâhzâdah Qorqud’s writings and their significance in Ottoman intellectual history, it could be enriched by a more extensive inspection of the broader socio-political context in which these writings emerged. From the perspective of political history or social theory, it could deepen the research inquiry and propose a new apprehension into the relationship between intellectual currents and broader historical processes.

After Nabil al-Tikriti’s study, the title “Ibn Taymiyya, al-Siyâsa al-Shar‘iyya, and the Early Modern Ottomans” by Derin Terzioğlu (pp. 101-154) comes into the front. Terzioğlu approaches a nuanced assessment of the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah’s political thought on the early modern Ottomans and explores the complex interactions between religious ideology and political practice within the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, this section contributes to our understanding of the intellectual and political dynamics of the period. It also highlights how religious ideas shaped Ottoman statecraft and governance. Thus, the chapter allows constructive perceptions of the reception of Ibn Taymiyyah’s ideas within the Ottoman context, which could increase its value from a more critical engagement with the implications of these ideas for broader historical processes. Incorporating perspectives from political theory or comparative politics could improve the research and give new insights into the relationship between religion and power in the Ottoman Empire.

Another interesting academic research “You Must Know Your Faith in Detail: Redefinition of the Role of Knowledge and Boundaries of Belief in Ottoman Catechisms (‘İlm-i hâls)” by Tijana Krstić (pp. 155-195) describes a detailed assessment of Ottoman catechisms and their role in redefining the boundaries of religious knowledge and belief within the Ottoman Empire and clears up the processes of religious education and indoctrination during the period. Therefore, it could benefit from a more explicit engagement with the broader cultural and intellectual contexts in which these catechisms emerged. Incorporating perspectives from cultural history or literary studies could upgrade the evaluation and make new perceptions into the relationship between religious education and broader cultural processes.

Nir Shafir’s work, “How to Read Heresy in the Ottoman World” (pp. 196-231), illustrates an innovative approach to studying heresy in the Ottoman Empire, investigating how textual and visual sources were used to identify and interpret heterodox beliefs and practices. Moreover, the study focuses on constructing religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy within the Ottoman context and highlights the role of textual and visual culture in shaping religious identity and discourse. Hence, regarding the lack of study, it would be more exclusive if the author used systematic analysis of the methods and techniques to identify and interpret heterodox beliefs. Meanwhile, religious studies or anthropology could polish the inspection of religious diversity and conflict dynamics within the Ottoman Empire.

The title, “Prayers, Commentaries, and the Edification of the Ottoman Supplicant” by Guy Burak (pp. 232-254), presents a comprehensive scrutiny of Ottoman prayers and their role in shaping religious practice and belief within the Ottoman Empire and clarifies how prayers were used to edify and instruct supplicants. In emphasizing how prayers functioned as a means of moral and spiritual instruction, this section enhances our understanding of the aspects of Ottoman religious practice. However, more cultural history or performance studies could deepen the arguments and hold out a new perspective on the relationship between religious practice and broader cultural processes.

In Chapter II, Çiğdem Kafescioğlu’s “Lives and Afterlives of an Urban Institution and Its Spaces: The Early Ottoman ‘İmāret as

Mosque” (pp. 255-307) yields a detailed examination of the early Ottoman ‘*imārah* as a mosque. It also affords valuable intuitions into its historical development, spatial organization, and societal significance. The study explicates the complex relationship between urban institutions and religious spaces by enriching our understanding of Ottoman urban life. However, this chapter adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on architectural history, urban studies, and religious studies to analyze the ‘*Imāret* as both a physical structure and a social institution. This interdisciplinary perspective enhances the depth and breadth of the study, making it accessible to a wide range of scholars. Furthermore, the chapter bears a comprehensive research outline of the early Ottoman ‘*imārah*; it could benefit from a comparative perspective. Incorporating comparative case studies or engaging with similar urban institutions in other contexts could enhance the considerations and submit a broader understanding of the role of mosques in urban life.

Grigor Boykov’s research title, “Abdāl-affiliated Convents and ‘Sunnitizing’ Halveti Dervishes in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Rumeli” (pp. 308-340), depicts original research on the Abdāl-affiliated convents and their role in “Sunnitizing” Khalwatī darwīshes in sixteenth-century Ottoman Rumeli. The chapter fills a gap in existing scholarships by providing new visions into the dynamics of religious conversion and institutionalization within the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the chapter is rich in historical detail and contributes a nuanced understanding of the social, political, and religious factors shaping the emergence of Sunnī orthodoxy among the Khalwatī darwīshes. Boykov’s meticulous archival research and attention to primary sources contribute to the depth and credibility of the investigation. Therefore, some readers may find Boykov’s study overly complex, especially for those unfamiliar with the intricacies of Ottoman religious history. While the chapter renders precious knowledge, a more accessible presentation of key concepts and arguments could enhance its readability and appeal to a broader audience.

Another academic title of this chapter is H. Evren Sünnetçioğlu’s “Attendance at the Five Daily Congregational Prayers, Imams and Their Communities in the Jurisprudential Debates during the Ottoman Age of Sunnitization” (pp. 341-375). He thoroughly examines the

jurisprudential debates surrounding attendance at the five daily congregational prayers during the Ottoman age of Sunnitization. The chapter delivers significant intuitions into the evolving interpretations of Sunnī Islam's religious obligations and communal practices. The chapter engages with various primary sources, including legal treatises, fatwá collections, and court records. It also presents a rich and nuanced analysis of the debates among Ottoman jurists and religious scholars. On the other hand, its narrow focus on jurisprudential debates may limit its relevance to scholars outside the field of Islamic law. A more explicit discussion of the broader implications of these debates for Ottoman society and culture could enhance the chapter's significance and appeal.

The title "Piety and Presence in the Postclassical Sultanic Mosque" by Ünver Rüstem (pp. 376-422) portrays an innovative approach to the study of postclassical Sultanic mosques, concentrating on the interplay between piety and presence in the architectural design and spatial organization of these religious institutions. The chapter breaks new ground by exploring the experiential dimension of mosque architecture, enriching our understanding of religious practice in the Ottoman Empire. However, the chapter visually explores mosque architecture and incorporates images, plans, and diagrams to illustrate key concepts and arguments. This visual approach enhances the reader's engagement with the material, providing a deeper appreciation of mosque design's aesthetic and symbolic dimensions. Therefore, it could benefit from a comparative perspective. Comparative case studies or cross-cultural comparisons could enrich the analysis and recommend a broader understanding of the evolution of mosque architecture in the Islamic world.

In the last chapter, the academic contribution "Neither Victim Nor Accomplice: The Kızılbaş as Borderland Actors in the Early Modern Ottoman Realm," noted by Ayşe Baltacıoğlu and Brammer (pp. 423-450), clarifies a nuanced portrayal of the Qizilbash, challenging traditional narratives that often depict them solely as victims or rebels within the Ottoman Empire. The chapter expounds on the agency and complexities of Qizilbash identity and politics by positioning them as borderland actors. In offering fresh insights into the dynamics of religious diversity and interaction in the early modern period, the chapter contributes to historiographical debates surrounding religious

minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, both researchers draw on various sources, including archival materials, literary texts, and secondary scholarship, and develop the research module with multiple perspectives and methodological approaches.

However, some readers may need more than the scope of geographical and chronological coverage. A broader examination of Qizilbash communities across different regions and periods could further enhance the quality of the study. Some may also desire theoretical frameworks about identity, agency, and power. Integrating postcolonial or critical race theory perspectives could deepen the analysis and produce new perceptions into the construction of Qizilbash identity within the Ottoman Empire.

The second title of the third chapter, "Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History: Approaches toward Yazīd b. Muʿāwīyah in Ottoman Historical Writing" by Vefa Erginbaş (pp. 451-478), designs a thought-provoking examination of Ottoman historical writing through the lens of Yazīd ibn Muʿāwīyah is a controversial figure in early Islamic history. In analyzing how Ottoman scholars interpreted and engaged with Yazīd, the chapter enlightens on the intersections between Sunnī orthodoxy and historical memory. It demonstrates a high methodological rigor and draws on a wide range of primary sources while critically and constructively engaging with secondary scholarship. The chapter's exploration of Sunnī orthodoxy and historical interpretation has relevance beyond the early modern period. It contributes to broader discussions on the relationship between religious identity, historical memory, and political authority.

However, the chapter has some narrow scopes. Though the subject matter is complex and specialized, a certain familiarity with Islamic history and historiography is required. Greater clarity and contextualization could enhance accessibility for readers less familiar with the topic. Meanwhile, its detailed exploration of Ottoman approaches toward Yazīd ibn Muʿāwīyah may be pointed out from a broader investigation of how Ottoman scholars engaged with other figures and events in Islamic history. A comparative approach could enhance the analysis and suggest a more comprehensive understanding of Ottoman historical writing.

The last title of this book, "Islamic Discourse in Ottoman-Safavid Peacetime Diplomacy after 1049/1639" by Selim Güngörürler (pp. 479-

500), remarks a well-noted study. The contributor comprehensively examines Islamic discourse in Ottoman-Safavid peacetime diplomacy, offering valuable intuitions into the religious dimensions of diplomatic relations between the two empires. Its focus mainly on peacetime diplomacy adds an essential dimension to our understanding of Ottoman-Safavid relations, moving beyond conventional narratives of conflict and rivalry. Güngörürler also draws on diverse sources, including diplomatic correspondence, historical narratives, and religious texts. Therefore, some bookworms and researchers may find the abundance of historical and diplomatic detail overwhelming, particularly those less familiar with the intricacies of Ottoman-Safavid relations. Greater clarity and synthesis could enhance accessibility without sacrificing scholarly rigor. Moreover, it needs a comparative perspective with neighboring powers or regions that could improve the reviewed title and give broader concepts into the dynamics of Islamic diplomacy in the early modern period.

In conclusion, the book depicts a rich and multifaceted exploration of Sunnī orthodoxy within the Ottoman context. While the book provides valuable insights into various dimensions of Sunnitization, there are opportunities for further engagement with theoretical frameworks and comparative perspectives. Therefore, it represents a significant contribution to Ottoman studies and Islamic history, inviting scholars to revisit and rethink conventional narratives of religious identity and power in the early modern period. The book offers valuable contributions to understanding religious identity, historical memory, and diplomatic relations within the Ottoman Empire. While each chapter presents its strengths and limitations, they enrich the scholarly discourse on early modern Ottoman history and Islamic studies.

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Aydın, Abdullah. "Ebû Zer el-Gıfârî." In *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, X, 266-269.

Book

Kâtib Chalabî, İḥājî Khalîfa Muṣṭafâ ibn ‘Abd Allâh. *Kashf al-zunûn ‘an asâmi l-kutub wa-l-funûn*. 2 vols. Edited by M. Şerefeddin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941-1943.

Michot, Yahya M. *Ibn Sīnâ: Lettre au Vizir Abû Sa‘d: Editio princeps d’après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l’arabe, introduction, notes et lexique*. Beirut: al-Burâq, 2000.

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