

Diyanet Journal

ISSUE 4 | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN ISLAM

| The Palestine Case

| Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi: A Philosopher Who Puts Tawhid at the Center

| Islam in Malaysia



Tazhib

Tazhib, one of the Turkish decorative arts, refers to gold ornamentation, which translates to “golding” or “work done with gold” in Arabic. It is a branch of art used to decorate religious, literary and scientific works and plates, particularly the Holy Qur'an. Throughout its historical course, this art has evolved in response to the prevailing understanding of time and era, synthesising with diverse cultural and artistic interactions in the geographies where it has spread.



Tazhib: Dilek SAR

Editorial

The clearest distinction between Islam and the deviant understandings that preceded it lies in the value it places on women. Islam treats everyone equally, men and women alike, and assigns responsibility to everyone to the extent of their means.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) treated all his interlocutors equally, irrespective of their gender. Our Prophet (saw), who attached great importance to the education of women from the first day he received the revelation, allocated special time for the female companions upon their request. He paid particular attention to their education, answering their questions regardless of the circumstances and environment.

Women, like men, were educated by the Messenger of Allah (saw). The mobilization to memorize the Qur'an was also widespread among women. In fact, 'A'isha, Umm Waraqa, Hafsa, and Umm Salama are mentioned among the first female memorizers (huffaz). Many of the female companions who were educated by the Prophet (saw) were as dedicated as the men in understanding and transmitting revelation. They memorized and narrated hadiths and practiced jurisprudence to the extent of their knowledge. The fact that the number of women who narrated hadith in the first age of Islam, which was a reference for all ages, is expressed in hundreds, and that the names of many of them are mentioned in the main sources, is important to show the intertwined nature of women and education in Islamic society.

In this issue, Diyanet Journal is dedicated to the theme of 'Women and Education in Islam'. Dr. Elif Arslan, who asserts that the Prophet initiated an educational mobilization encompassing the entire 'ummah, contributes to our Agenda column with her article titled "Women and Education in Islam". In the "Pioneers" column, Koray Serbetci writes about the Palestinian philosopher Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, one of the most important intellectuals in the Muslim world. In the "The World of Tomorrow" column, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bahset Karshi emphasizes, in his article titled "The Digital World and Our Religious Life" that committing acts on digital platforms with an anonymous identity does not absolve us of religious and legal responsibilities. Najla Tammy Kepler shares her journey of accepting Islam with us in the "Revert Stories" column. This month, we conduct an interview with Prof. Dr. Huriye Marti, Vice President of Religious Affairs, about the importance given to women's education in Islam.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that we strongly condemn the massacres carried out by the occupying Israel in Palestine that have taken place for years in front of the eyes of the world without regard for women, children, or the elderly. We hereby declare once again that we stand with a free Palestine.

We look forward to meeting you in our next issue and wish you an enjoyable reading experience.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

EDUCATION OF WOMEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAM



Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAS

The President
Presidency of Religious Affairs

The ability to know, to use knowledge, and to form concepts is the most important characteristic of human beings that distinguishes them from other living beings and, at the same time, makes them responsible beings. Knowing and knowledge, which elevate human beings to an exceptional position among the created beings, are values emphasized by our sublime religion. The first revelation to the Prophet (saw) begins with the command “read” and continues with “Read (O Prophet), in the Name of your Lord Who created—created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by

the pen—taught humanity what they knew not.” (Alaq, 96:1-5), emphasizing the importance of knowledge and learning. From the perspective of revelation, it is clear that those who use their intellect and those who do not are not equal, nor are those who have knowledge and those who do not. It is emphasized that on the path to becoming a perfect human being, one must first know the Creator, and then the created, in other words, oneself and the universe (Fatir, 35:19-21). Both verses and hadiths reveal that education is aimed at eradicating all forms of ignorance and preparing people to be servants worthy of Allah in the light of knowledge. In this

respect, there is a strong relationship between knowledge and deeds, as well as between knowledge and faith.

Islam emphasizes reason, knowledge, and contemplation because human beings are obliged to read and understand the Qur'an and their environment together. The fact that our holy book emphasizes the importance of research, study, thinking, and learning indicates the aim of an established society of knowledge based on education in behavior as well as in faith and worship. The universal message of the Holy Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet (saw) focuses on the peace and happiness of all human beings, regardless of gender. According to the understanding shaped by the primary sources of our religion, the responsibility of knowing is based on the inherent nature of human beings. Since the Holy Qur'an recognizes women as equal to men in terms of being human beings and servants of Allah, there is not even a trace of any sexism regarding this responsibility.

Allah the Almighty clearly declares that He does not evaluate behavior on the basis of gender by saying, "I will never deny any of you, male or female, the reward of your deeds." (Al-i 'Imran, 3:195). Our Prophet

(saw), who regarded the scholars as the heirs of the prophets, did not discriminate between men and women when he said, "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim". There is no difference between men and women in being the addressees of revelation, and their responsibilities are also the same. In the process of revelation, with the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and the example of the Prophet (saw), there has been a radical change and transformation in the negative perception of women from the Age of Ignorance. Our sublime religion, Islam, abolished all the corrupt practices of the Age of Ignorance and granted women their rights and freedoms in individual and social life. Thus, with the universal message of Islam, women gained all the rights required for human dignity, especially education.

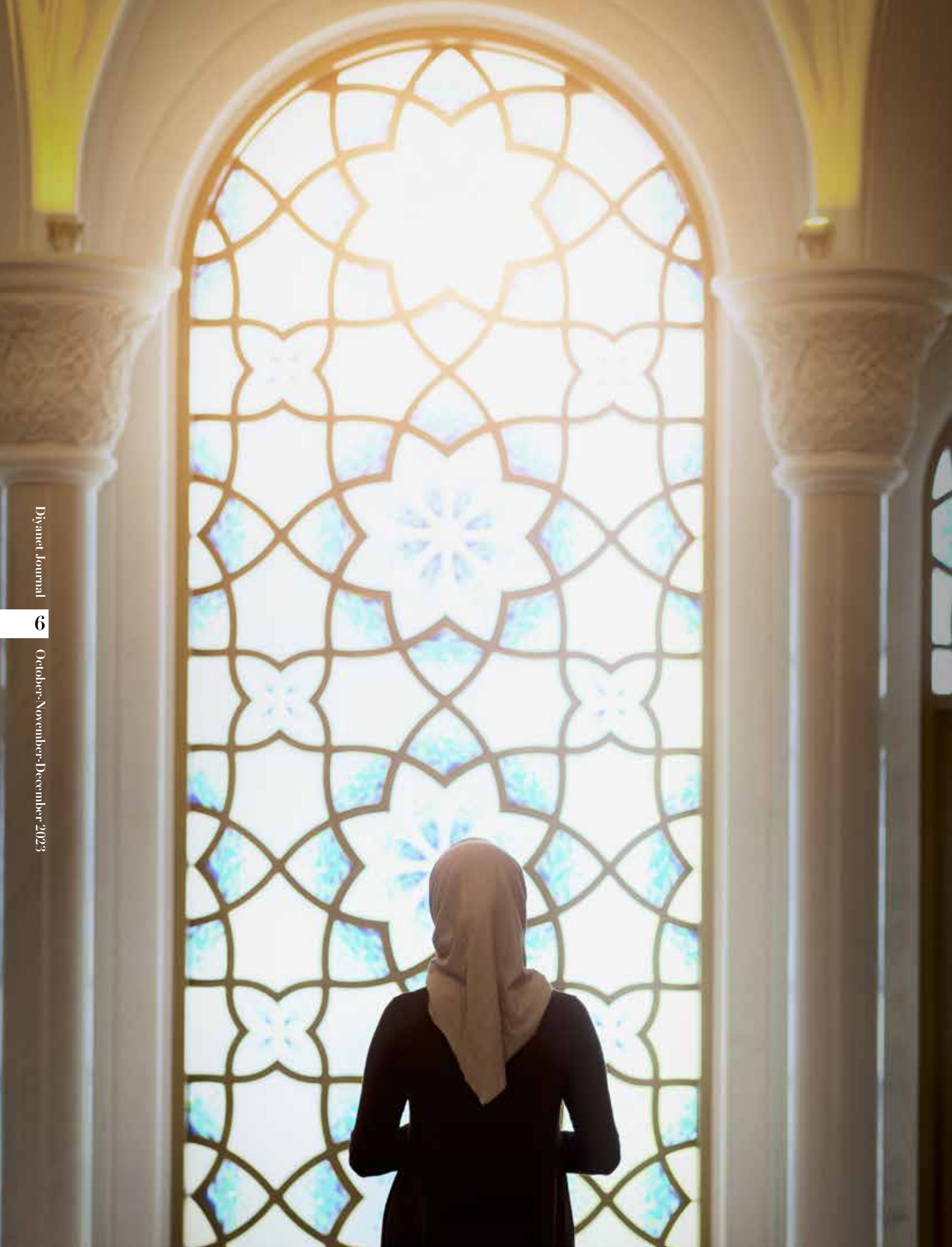
Prophet Muhammad (saw) educated his companions at every opportunity and in every place without discriminating between men and women, and he continued his educational activities without interruption. In the pursuit of establishing a virtuous society, he (saw) first of all educated his companions on the subject of faith, imbued in them a belief in tawhid, and maintained an attitude conducive to shaping their

moral foundations in this direction. All the practices of education in the 'Asr al-Sa'adah (Age of Bliss) show that the Messenger of Allah carried out an educational mobilization that included all members of the 'ummah without discrimination between men and women. For this reason, women were always present in the mosques, which were the most basic educational institutions of the time, and participated in the sermons of the Messenger of Allah (saw) without facing any difficulties. The Prophet's (saw) inclusion of women in educational activities is important in terms of demonstrating his inclusive and sensitive attitude toward the mental, emotional, and spiritual development of Muslims. For Islam recognizes human beings as equal individuals before the Creator. As the bearer of a human-centered message, the Prophet (saw) also reminded humanity of the value of women with the duties he assigned to them in all spheres of life, especially in their education. In fact, when we look back at the 'Asr al-Sa'adah, we see how the value placed on women's education paved the way for a great transformation in society.

We live in the information age, where new information technologies constitute the primary means of interaction and

where information is constantly multiplying and becoming obsolete at the same rate. The information societies of the future will, of course, be made up of educated people, with well-equipped men and women who are able to analyze and evaluate events correctly. In this regard, it is imperative to update our perspective on life, taking into account the effectiveness of education in social and cultural life and realizing our reason for existence without assigning a special place to the sexes.

In order to properly fulfill the duty of being a servant of Allah, to render the earth prosperous, and to bear the responsibility of being the caliph of Allah on earth, it is essential to be in a continuous educational activity of reading, understanding, and learning. In this regard, the message of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (saw), which emphasizes "the creation of human beings as respectable and honorable beings", can provide a solution to many negativities that put women's personalities in the background, especially the problem of education. What is incumbent upon us is to recognize the inspiring example of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in the field of education as well as in all other matters, and to incorporate it into our lives.



WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN ISLAM

Dr. Elif ARSLAN

Head of the Department of Family and Religious Counseling of
Presidency of Religious Affairs

Woman is one of the two genders created by Allah as caliph. The woman is the one who was created together with the first human being and the first prophet, Adam, and sent into the world together with him. As the recipient of commands and prohibitions, she is a responsible being in the world of trial. The Holy Qur'an expresses this fact as follows: "Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds." (Nahl, 16:97) In the Qur'an, believing women and men are

mentioned together in matters related to faith, worship, morality, social, and economic issues, even though they may have different responsibilities at times due to their distinct genders (Ahzab, 33:35).

The Qur'an does not differentiate between women and men when it asks, "Do they not reason, do they not think, do they not contemplate?"; when it mentions the obligatory acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and hajj; and when it lists moral qualities such as patience, chastity, and reverence for Allah.

To fulfill their responsibilities, people

must first be aware of them. Moreover, since the rewards for deeds committed are of varying degrees, all people should have opportunities to know, read, and learn in order to improve in this regard. It is evident that these opportunities include both religious and worldly knowledge. Since the Qur'an does not equate individuals who have knowledge with those who do not, it is obvious that depriving some of Allah's servants of knowledge or restricting them to a very limited field of knowledge would not be in accordance with the Creator's will. These considerations are

significant in shaping the Muslim perspective on women and education.

When examining the verses and hadiths related to knowledge in Asr al-Sa'adah, we do not find any instances of women being exempted. Prophet Muhammad's (saw) life, practices, and recommendations to his companions provide several examples of the inclusion of women in education. These examples, which we will present below, hold significant importance today due to their powerful message, as they are practices that were carried out in spite of the established beliefs,



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traditions, and entrenched misconceptions of society in a period when women were deprived of their most basic human rights.

In the days when the Divine Message was being revealed one by one and educated people under the example and leadership of the Prophet (saw), the companions had the opportunity to be with him at various times during the day. Additionally, certain individuals, known as the people of the Suffah, dedicated all their time to the Masjid al-Nabawi to receive education from the Prophet. The female companions were saddened by the fact that they did not have the opportunity to be with the Prophet (saw) all the time and did not benefit enough from his conversations.

For this reason, a female companion came to the Prophet (saw) on behalf of her fellow companions and requested, "O Messenger of Allah, men receive your instructions; kindly allocate at your convenience a day for us also, on which we would come to you and you would teach us what Allah has taught you." The Prophet (saw) allocated a special day for them and personally took care of their education (Muslim, Birr, 152).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) ensured that all segments of society –men, women, young, old, children, slaves, and

free people– benefited from the Prophetic education in the process of creating an Islamic society that would serve as an exemplary model for all ages, transitioning from the Jahiliyyah society. The creation of a novel society, the eradication of wrong thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and practices, and their replacement with the right ones required a total mobilization for education and transformation. This objective could only be achieved by all members of society. Moreover, according to the Holy Qur'an, women, like men, are the recipients of Allah's commands and are responsible for them (Ahzab, 33:36). Therefore, they should know what they are responsible for and their nature.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) attached special importance to the education of women from the earliest days of receiving the revelation. Even before announcing his message to the wider society, he met secretly with his closest companions in the house of Al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam, where women also came to learn about Islam despite the various dangers and threats they faced. Many of us may have assumed that the participants in the secret meetings in Arqam's house were male companions, but we learn from the

sources that there were also female companions in those meetings (Muwatta, Bay'ah, 1). We believe that this example from the early days of revelation is important to show that the issue of women in educational life or the education of women is beyond discussion in all environments and conditions.

There are many examples of the importance given to the education of women during the time of the Prophet (saw) and their desire and enthusiasm for learning. As a matter of fact, there are many narrations in the hadith sources that can serve as examples in this regard. One of the most basic examples in this regard is the Prophet's (saw) encouragement of women to attend the mosque, as well as his admonitions to men not to prevent women from attending the mosque: "Do not prevent your women from going to the mosque when they seek your permission." (Muslim, Salah, 137) and "Do not prevent the maid-servants of Allah from going to the mosque." (Muslim, Salah, 136; Bukhari, Jumu'ah, 13). When we consider the function of mosques in the early years of Islam, it is clear that the purpose of these warnings against preventing women from coming to the mosque was not only to enable them to participate in congregational prayers.



THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SAW) ATTACHED SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF RECEIVING THE REVELATION.

In those days, the mosque also served as a center of education. The Messenger of Allah wanted everyone, men and women, to benefit from this educational environment, implementing practices and guiding his companions accordingly. Our Prophet (saw), who wanted women to benefit from this education, advised a woman who said that she had no clothes to come to the mosque

and borrow some from her friend (Abu Dawud, Salah, 238). This clear attitude of the Prophet (saw) invites believers to remain vigilant about the obstacles or excuses that may impede the education of women and girls.

One of the best examples of the education of all believers, men, and women, in the Asr al-Sa'adah was evident in the Friday and Eid prayers. By attending Friday and Eid prayers, women who attended these prayers experienced spiritual connection and peace through the khutbah. All female companions, young and old, came to the prayer hall for Eid prayers, with their participation in these prayers being at the special request of the Prophet (saw). They were not deprived of this shared activity, which also served as a form of education (Muslim, 'Eidayn, 11). Another incident demonstrating the accessibility of mosques to women during that era is as follows: Umm Salamah heard the Prophet (saw) addressing the congregation with "O People!" while a woman was combing her hair at her house, prompting her to immediately direct her attention to the mosque. The woman assumed that the Prophet (saw) had only addressed men and commented, "He (saw) has addressed the men only, and he has not invited the attention of

the women." In response, Umm Salamah asserted, "I am also amongst the people" (Muslim, Fadhail, 29). Umm Hisham, a female companion from Medina, reported that she attended Friday prayers and learned Surah al-Qaf from his recitation, as the Prophet himself recited it every Friday from the pulpit (Muslim, Jumu'ah, 52).

In the process of societal transformation, the Prophet (saw) prioritized the education of his companions in matters of faith, instilling the belief of tawhid in their hearts, and shaping their moral structures accordingly. Alongside these educational activities, while the Prophet (saw) not only encouraged his companions to read, write, and acquire knowledge but also regarded scholars as the heirs of prophets (Abu Dawud, Ilm, 1; Tirmidhi, Ilm, 19). He recommended that the knowledge that they gained from him should be imparted to others (Bukhari, Ilm, 9; Muslim, Qasamah, 29). He declared that those who learn and teach will be equally rewarded (Ibn Majah, Sunnah, 17), and he did not differentiate between men and women in his educational approach. When we examine his life, practices, and words, we see that he envisioned and implemented an educational mobilization that encompassed the entire ummah.



MOTHER AND FATHER: THE TWO GATES TO PARADISE

After a long journey, he was able to reach Medina to see the Prophet (saw). First, he intended to declare his belief in him as Allah's last Messenger, and then he was going to underpin this belief by pledging loyalty to him. He had left his family behind. His needy mother and father were in tears when he departed... They understood that their son's soul was filled with zealous passion. Perhaps they felt that he would not return home once he left for Medina. Now, he was standing before the Prophet (saw). When he expressed his intention to the Prophet (saw), he could not help but say, "I came to you, O Messenger of Allah but I have left behind my mother and father in tears." He appeared eager to demonstrate what he was willing to sacrifice for his religion. However, the response of our Prophet was very disheartening to

him. For the Prophet said: "Go back to your family, and make them smile as you made them cry!" (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 31; Nasa'i, al-Bi'ah, 10; Ibn Majah, Jihad, 12; al-Sharh ala Ibn Battal, IX, 191)

When the Prophet (saw) was asked what was the best deed, he replied, "To perform the (daily compulsory) prayers at their stated fixed times, to be good and dutiful to one's own parents, and to participate in jihad in Allah's cause." (Bukhari, Tawhid, 48; Muslim, Iman, 139) Thus, it is clear that relations with parents have an aspect closely related to the appreciation of Allah.

The hadith books are replete with accounts containing principles to guide our relations with our parents. In these hadiths, the term "al-birr" is used to refer to good deeds. In fact, the term "al-birr" refers to all kinds of good deeds and



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beauties in this world and the hereafter. For example, being rightly guided, and enjoying blessings and abundance in this world are all different forms of "al-birr." This term also includes the meaning of attaining ultimate happiness on the Day of Judgement and earning Paradise as a final reward.

Furthermore, "al-birr" refers to the genuine interest a child takes in his or her parents, enduring not to break their hearts, and taking on the responsibility of caring for them in their old age. Performing these good deeds is also a sign of being a good servant of Allah (swt). This is one of the best ways to gain Allah's pleasure.

Allah Almighty abhors the idea of anyone rebelling against their parents (Abu Dawud, Dahaya, 20-21; Nasa'i, 'Aqiqa, 1). On the Day of Judgement, the He will

not look at the faces of those who rebelled against their parents (Nasa'i, Zakat, 69), and will not receive them in His Paradise (Nasa'i, Ashriba, 46; Darimi, Ashriba, 5). Moreover, our Prophet made unequivocal statements about being rebellious against one's parents. For example, after asking, "Shall I inform you of the biggest of the great sins?" the Prophet (saw) first mentioned, "To join partners in worship with Allah," and then added, "to be undutiful to one's parents" (Bukhari, Adab, 6; Tirmidhi, Shahada, 2).

The Qur'anic verse, "If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them even 'ugh,' nor yell at them" (Isra, 17:23) has been interpreted by Muslim scholars in various ways and they all agreed that it means not to be rebellious against one's parents, and to heed their words at any stage of life. Nevertheless, Allah Almighty also warns us that there are some requests that parents cannot make, "We have commanded people to honour their parents. But if they urge you to associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, then do not obey them." (Ankabut, 29:8)

As with all other actions, it is the responsibility of the adults to set an example for children in treating their parents well. This



THE PARENTS HAVE A LIFELONG RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN, DEPENDING ON THEIR NEEDS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THEIR LIVES.

is perhaps the best way to teach children how to behave with their own parents in the future. Hence, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "Is there any reward for goodness except goodness?" (Rahman, 55:60) According to Anas b. Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "If a young person honors an elderly one on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to honor him in his old age." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 75) A child does not have a right to treat his parents poorly because the parents may have treated him badly when he was a child. In this matter, our guide is the following advice from the Prophet (saw) who said, "Do not let yourselves be a people who agree with everything that someone else asserts by saying: 'If the people are good then we will be good, and if they are wrong then we will be wrong.'" (Tirmidhi, Birr, 63) We have to leave our selfishness aside, and heed the advice of our Lord: "Good and evil cannot be equal. Respond 'to evil' with what is best, then the one you are in a feud with will be like a close friend." (Fussilat, 41:34) Therefore, children should not forget that they will be parents one day. Likewise, parents should not forget that they were young once.

The parents have a lifelong responsibility towards

their children, depending on their needs at different stages of their lives. However, when the parents get older it is the children who have the responsibility of taking care of them. Hence, Allah the Almighty says, "For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them even ugh, nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, 'My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young.'" (Isra', 17:23-24) Therefore, it is expected from all children who grow up, even those who might have a tendency to neglect and disrespect their parents, to do good deeds towards their elderly parents and respect them.

Our Lord asks from us, as He did from the previous communities, (Baqarah, 2:83) to do good to our parents. It is noteworthy to point out that Allah Almighty mentions this demand literally next to the commandment of "pray to Allah only" (Nisa', 4:36; An'am, 6:151; Isra', 17:23). This is because, some of Allah's attributes, such as creating out of nothing, bestowing blessings, providing protection, and showing compassion to humankind, are manifested through the deeds of the parents.

The fact that parents are conduits through which these divine attributes are transferred to children makes parents worthy of honor and respect.

It is noteworthy that even when Allah praises one of His prophets, He refers to that Prophet's relation with his parents: "...and kind to his parents. He was neither arrogant nor disobedient." (Maryam, 19:14) When Allah (swt) enjoins children to do good deeds toward their parents, He does not restrict the options. For example, verbal good deeds including respectful conversations with the parents (Isra', 17:23-24), and material good deeds including financial support and physical care (Baqarah, 2:180; Nisa', 4:36) are some of the good deeds that Allah would accept from them. As long as the children want, there are countless ways to do good deeds towards their parents in order to fulfill the commandments of our Lord. Moreover, the things that can be done for parents are not limited to this world. A child who is dedicated to continuing to serve his parents can give charity on their behalf after their death, (Muslim, Wasiyyah, 12) fulfill their unfulfilled nadhr and oaths, (Bukhari, Wasaya, 19) supplicate to Allah for their forgiveness (Abu Dawud, Adab, 119-120; Ibn Majah, Adab, 2),



RELATIONS WITH PARENTS HAVE AN ASPECT CLOSELY RELATED TO THE APPRECIATION OF ALLAH.

and even perform hajj and umrah on their behalf (Abu Dawud, Manasik, 25; Tirmidhi, Hajj, 87). As such, the parents will join the group of people whose good deeds will continue and the book of records will remain open after their death. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the glad tidings about this matter as follows: "When a man dies, his action discontinues from him except three things: the recurring charity, the knowledge by which benefit is acquired, or a pious child who prays for

him." (Muslim, Wasiyya, 14; Abu Dawud, Wasaya, 14)

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) also said, "The father is the middle gate to Paradise. So the choice is yours if you wish to neglect that door or protect it."

(Tirmidhi, Birr, 3; Ibn Majah, Talaq, 36) In short, in our relationship with our parents, we should always pray "Our Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day when the judgment will come to pass." (Ibrahim, 14:41)



THE QUR'AN: THE GUIDE THAT LEADS EVERYONE TO WHAT IS MOST UPRIGHT

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bayram KOSEOGLU

Expert of the High Board of Religious
Affairs of the Presidency of Religious Affairs

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

“Surely this Qur’an guides to what is most upright, and gives good news to the believers—who do good—that they will have a mighty reward.”

(Isra, 17:9)

Allah the Almighty, Who created the heavens and the earth, the visible and the invisible, the living and the nonliving creatures out of nothing, created them all in their proper places based on wisdom in accordance with His name al-Hakim. The creation of humankind, *ashraf al-makhluqat* (the most honorable creature), at whose service the earth and the heavens, the Sun, and the Moon were placed, is also based on many wisdoms. Humanity, which was made superior to other beings by their intellect and willpower, has also become a responsible being thanks to these qualities. The world of life began for humankind with Prophet Adam, who was given the task of rendering the earth prosperous, which is humankind’s responsibility. Since the time of Prophet Adam, who was not only the first human being but also the first prophet, Allah (swt) has shown humankind the path of guidance, taught them the truth, and prevented them from going astray through the teaching of the prophets. He has sent them and the divine books He has revealed. Our Prophet Muhammad (saw) was sent as the last member of the chain of prophets, and the Holy Qur’an was sent as the last divine book.

The most essential characteristic of the Qur’an, the word of Allah, is that it is a guide for humanity, leading to “the most upright” in accordance with the truth: “Surely this Qur’an guides to what is most upright, and gives good news to the believers—who do good—that they will have a mighty reward.” (Isra, 17:9) The “most upright” emphasized in this verse has been explained in terms of the religion of Islam, the most correct path, the best deeds, righteous deeds, etc. (Maturidi, *Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunnah*, 7/11–12; Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf*, 2/651) The most upright is first and foremost the religion of Islam, that is, its

basic teachings of the true faith and good deeds. The Qur'an gives glad tidings of great reward to believers who have strong faith and righteous deeds and draws attention to what is necessary for people to find the truth by informing them that Allah has prepared a severe punishment for those who do not believe in the Hereafter (Isra, 17:10) (Kur'an Yolu, 3/465). Thus, the Qur'an warns people against wrongdoing by pointing out what is wrong and wants them to reach the most upright path by pointing out what is right.

In addition to the quagmire of shirk (polytheism) in which the society that was the first addressee of the Qur'an found itself, many moral and social weaknesses such as oppression and injustice, the strong oppressing the weak, women and slaves being considered worthless, etc., are examples that show that this society literally went astray. Just as Allah the Almighty sent prophets and books whenever humanity went astray, He also sent this society the Qur'an to guide them to the most upright path. As the last divine book, the Qur'an will continue to enlighten, guide, and direct people until the Day of Judgment.

The Holy Qur'an is a book that brings people out of darkness into light with its

principles and guidelines for faith, morality, and other areas of life (Ibrahim, 14:1). Each of the names of the Qur'an is an expression of this fact. As it is stated in the verse, "This is an insight to humanity - a guide and a lesson to the God-fearing" (Al-i 'Imran, 3:138). It is "al-Bayan" that explains the truths, "al-Hidayah" that guides those who have taqwa (piety), and "al-Maw'iza" that gives advice. It is "al-Furqan" that distinguishes between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, halal and haram (Furqan, 25:1). It is "al-Nur" that illuminates the path of people and protects them from straying into darkness (Ma'idah, 5:15; Araf, 7:157). It is "al-Dhikr" that explains the truth to people and reminds them of what happened to previous societies so that they can take an example from them (Hijr, 15:9). Besides all these, the Qur'an is "ar-Rahmah" in every aspect (An'am, 6:157; A'raf, 7:52 et al).

When we examine these characteristics in the Qur'an itself about the nature of the Qur'an, we see that it is a book of guidance that illuminates the path of humankind, shows the way, sets sound measures, and helps them in their march in the course of life (Halis Albayrak, Tafsir Usulu, Sule Publications, 1998, p. 70). Thus, clearly being able to benefit from the guidance of the Qur'an depends

on one's relationship with the Qur'an. For this, one must first believe that it is the word of Allah. Subsequently, it is essential to strive to read, understand, and live by it. If we do not read and understand the Qur'an and reflect its principles in our lives, we will not be able to benefit from its wisdom and guidance, its advice and reminders, or its mercy and healing. The Qur'an, which is one of the two basic sources that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) entrusted to us and declared that we will never stray from the straight path if we follow it (Muwatta, Qadar, 3), will only lead us to the most upright state in this way. Just as the Qur'an brought its first addressees out of darkness into the light and transformed the Age of Ignorance into the Age of Bliss, this was only possible by understanding and living, without hesitation, by the universal messages of the Qur'an addressed to all ages. Today, to eliminate corruption in every aspect of life and address problems related to faith, humankind must adhere to the principles of the Qur'an, guiding them towards the most upright state, fostering the healing of the heart, and embodying mercy in every aspect. The happiness of humankind, both in this world and the Hereafter, hinges on embracing this reality.



THE HOLY QUR'AN IS A BOOK THAT BRINGS PEOPLE OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT WITH ITS PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR FAITH, MORALITY, AND OTHER AREAS OF LIFE.

IHSAN: LIVING AS IF ONE SEES ALLAH

Halil KILIC

Expert of the High Board of Religious Affairs of the Presidency of Religious Affairs

One day, while the Prophet (saw) was sitting with his companions, engaging in conversing with them, a person appeared with no signs of travel, dressed in white, with pitch-black hair, whom no one knew. He sat down next to the Prophet, touched his knees to the Prophet's knees, and began to ask questions about what Islam is and what iman is. At each of the Prophet's (saw) answers to his questions, the stranger said, "You are telling the truth" which surprised the companions. One of the questions asked by the stranger, whose identity the Prophet (saw) later informed to the companions by saying, "This was Jibril who came to teach the people their religion," was, "What is ihsan?" The Prophet's (saw) answer to this question was the

most comprehensive definition of the concept of ihsan up to that time and summarized the philosophy of the life of the Muslims. The answer of the Messenger of Allah to this question was as follows: "Ihsan is serving Allah as if you see Him for even though you cannot see Him, He sees you."

(Bukhari, Iman, 36)

Ihsan, one of the qualities that complement religion, is the only way to live by iman and Islam at an epitome level, and this concept has a world of meaning for both Allah and His servants. When used in reference to Allah, ihsan means that He bestows favors on all His creatures, provides them with sustenance, and treats them with mercy. From the perspective of the servants, there are four stages of ihsan.

Ihsan towards oneself

It is not possible for people to know Allah the Almighty and reach the absolute truth without knowing and recognizing themselves, both in terms of creation, knowledge, and ability. The most important way to know and recognize oneself is to be in a state of ihsan toward oneself. Knowing the purpose of their creation and being aware of the fact that they will be held accountable for what they have done is the greatest ihsan for people. This consciousness will lead to peace in this world and salvation in the eternal realm.

Ihsan towards Allah the Almighty

As seen in the above-mentioned hadith, one of the most important meanings of ihsan is to live as if one sees Allah. Likewise, ihsan is taking

the verse "... And He is with you wherever you are. For Allah is All-Seeing of what you do." (Hadid, 57:4) as a principle and acting accordingly. In this respect, ihsan is the pinnacle of servanthood. Muslims who conduct themselves if they see Allah in every breath they take and are aware that they are in the presence of Allah in every step they take will refrain from engaging in any action that harms themselves or others.

Ihsan towards other people

Ihsan also means to do good deeds without asking for anything in return and to display good behavior. It is also ihsan when people want for their Muslim brothers and sisters what they love and want for themselves. Similarly, it is ihsan to do good deeds and do favors

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ..."

"Verily Allah has enjoined goodness (ihsan) on everything..."

(Muslim, Sayd, 56)

for people, to be a remedy for hardships, heal hearts, and guide those who have lost their way. In short, it is ihsan to do all kinds of good deeds that benefit humanity. Believers who prioritize ihsan in their lives can potentially make new discoveries, akin to numerous Muslim scholars who have achieved breakthroughs in science and can contribute innovations that facilitate the endeavors of Muslims and people worldwide, particularly in the fields of informatics and technology. There is no doubt that it is much better to be useful to others and engage only in obligatory acts of worship than to spend a lifetime in supererogatory acts of worship without being useful to others. In fact, the Prophet (saw) expressed this truth with the following words: "The best of people is the

one who is beneficial to others." (Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, VI/58; Bayhaqi, Shu'ab al-Iman, X/115)

Ihsan towards all living and non-living beings

Treating all living and non-living beings with kindness is also a form of ihsan. The Prophet (saw) reported that Allah the Almighty enjoins goodness in all things.

In addition, ihsan can also be defined as doing something in the best way. Based on this meaning, believers should be in a state of ihsan in every aspect of life and act accordingly. Examples such as scientists aiming to benefit humanity and all other living creatures in their research, food producers keeping halal and harmless ingredients in the food they produce, and engineers constructing a building in



IHSAN, ONE OF THE QUALITIES THAT COMPLEMENT RELIGION, IS THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE BY IMAN AND ISLAM AT AN EPITOME LEVEL.

a sound and aesthetically pleasing manner are all requirements of the concept of ihsan. In addition, the principles that Islam emphasizes, such as treating people with justice, entrusting property to trustworthy people, and prioritizing merit, will only survive with the concept of ihsan.

In short, ihsan is to do everything in the best and most beautiful way, knowing that Allah sees everything, and to do everything to the best of one's ability. When the consciousness of ihsan is lost, the consciousness of people and the reverence in worship are also lost. Therefore, it is the duty of the believers to strive to live in a state of ihsan in their worship or worldly pursuits, whether they are in public or alone and to draw their last breath in this state.

Prof. Dr. Huriye MARTI

“Allah the Almighty has bestowed the honor and responsibility of being ‘caliph’ on both men and women.”



Interview by:
Dr. Lamia LEVENT ABUL

Huriye Marti was born in Ankara in 1974. After graduating from the Faculty of Theology at Selçuk University, she received her M.A. degree from the same university in 1998 with her thesis titled “The Evaluation of the Narrations of the Messenger of Allah on the Subject of Women - Fabricated Narrations on the Subject of Women”. Subsequently, she completed her Ph.D. degree from the Faculty of Theology at Selçuk University in 2005 with her thesis titled “Muhammad Birgivi’s Character as a Hadith Scholar and al-Târiqat al-Muhammadiyah (Investigation and Analysis)”. Between 1999 and 2000, she studied at Shuaib Al-Arna’ut’s Center for Tahqiq and Takhrij in Amman, Jordan. She became an assistant professor in 2011, an associate professor in 2012, and a professor in 2017. She served as an editor and author for the Thematic Hadith Project published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs under the title ‘Islam through Hadiths’. She was appointed as the Head of the Family and Religious Counseling Department of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2011, as the Counselor of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2014, and as the Vice President of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2017. Marti, renowned as a prolific scholar, has authored numerous articles, conducted many conferences, and published extensive papers focusing on women from the perspectives of sunnah, family, ethics, and values.

In contemporary discourse, the evaluation of any concept related to 'Women,' whether it be women in Islam, working women, or women in social life, often becomes intricate and susceptible to misinterpretation. How should we interpret the wisdom of the prominence of the subject of "Islam and Human" in the Qur'an and hadiths, and how should we analyze today's life in this sense?

The discussion of issues related to women should be rooted in authentic knowledge derived from verses and hadiths. This foundation is established by defining a woman as a 'human being'—the honorable caliph of the earth. We are all aware of the serious misconceptions that arise as a result of considering Islam's perception of women separately from its perception of human beings. A view and belief that has positioned women against men rather than alongside them since their first steps in the world have seen women as a pendulum oscillation trying to drag men in the opposite direction of the truth. In other words, this belief constructed men and women as two different beings moving in opposite directions and thus in constant

opposition and tension. However, the Qur'an and the authentic hadiths point out that men and women are only two different ends of the same pendulum (i.e. human reality) and that they offer each other a new possibility of movement through their mutual oscillation.

Men and women have the potential to create new goodness by complementing each other, due to their inherent differences. They are equal in being created with such potential. Therefore, when women create their own spaces with their unique feelings, thoughts, talents, and experiences, they lead men into a world of meaning whose boundaries cannot be clearly defined and offer them the opportunity to perceive themselves and then life itself from a new perspective.

In this context, the Messenger of Allah, the honorable remarker of the hadiths, did not ascribe an unprecedentedly high value to women but only revived and supported their ability to be "caliphs". The Messenger of Allah (saw) removed the obstacles to women's self-expression and paved the way for them to reflect their intrinsic value as human beings in society.

The prophetic attitude wants everyone to realize



HE (SAW) DOES NOT HAVE TWO SEPARATE AND SPECIAL APPROACHES TO WOMEN OR MEN; HE HAS AN APPROACH TO HUMAN BEINGS.

that women, as the other dimension of human existence that oscillates like a pendulum, can show humanity different aspects of the truth through their unique insights, discoveries, and experiences and thus assume their own responsibility. If the essence of human existence is perpetual action and movement, then women, as the other end of this action and movement, acquire their own identity and character. This is the point that the Prophet (saw) wants people to see: It is only through the movement of the other end of the pendulum that both genders can form their own movements, actions, and identities. A perception that alienates and antagonizes men or oppresses and humiliates women—in short, a perception that degrades the human being—does nothing but disrupt the movement of the pendulum, that is, hinders humanity's activity of goodness and reconstruction on earth. For the sake of a world worth living in and a Hereafter in which there is hope of salvation, it is imperative that all ideas and actions toward women be based on justice, mercy, respect, and affection, which is exactly what human beings deserve.

We can see that Islam has reconstructed the negative perception of women that had developed under the shadow of ancient traditions, distorted religions, and cultural conceptions. In this context, can you explain the position and reputation that women have gained with Islam in terms of the value of women?

In a picture as old as history, it is possible to see the traces of indecision about what color could symbolize the value of women. The period in which the Prophet Muhammad (saw) lived, both before and after, witnessed perhaps the sharpest color transformations in this picture. The main reason for this is that in the teachings of the new and final religion, women had a wider and deeper sphere of existence than before. In other words, a long period in which women, although ontologically accepted within the concept of the human being, were positioned at a lower level in economic, cultural, and political terms that had not yet reached the competence of men, came to an end with the Prophet of Islam.

The material and spiritual benefits to women of the changes brought



WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE SERIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS THAT ARISE AS A RESULT OF CONSIDERING ISLAM'S PERCEPTION OF WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM ITS PERCEPTION OF HUMAN BEINGS.

about by the Prophet (saw) can be analyzed in detail. However, the question of what level of consciousness-raising lies at the basis of these benefits, in other words, which basic thought pattern determines the new position of women in society, needs to be answered first. The importance of this question is not limited to the determination of the arrangements in daily life that allowed women to breathe but is perhaps more related to the "value" debates that continue to rage today. To put it briefly, does the elevation of women's status stem from the idea that they are inherently "valuable"? Did women gain value due to religion, or did they have the opportunity to uncover the value that already existed in their own being? If we take a step back and ask again, did the Prophet Muhammad give women a value that did not exist before, or did he introduce society to "women who derived their value from their own womanhood"?

Our opinion, based on countless examples, is that the Messenger of Allah (saw) does not focus on "sexes" but on "human beings". He does not have two separate and special approaches to women or men; he has an approach to human beings. As a

natural consequence, he does not give value to women through men. On the contrary, he recognizes, sees, and shows the value that women derive from their own existence and brings into this world as "the noblest of creatures".

As in every aspect of life, the Messenger of Allah acted in the light of the revelation concerning women. Allah the Almighty, who did not mention any gender when He said to His angels, "I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth" (Baqarah, 2:30) and when He said that He "placed humans as successors on earth" (Naml, 27:62; Fatir, 35:39), attributes the honor and responsibility of being a caliph to both the men and the women. Therefore, it is clear that the mentality that says that men can be caliphs but women can only be deputy caliphs at best is not based on the verses of Allah the Almighty.

In the words of the Almighty Creator, men and women are like a veil or a garment that compensates for each other's shortcomings and covers and protects each other (Baqarah, 2:187). These two souls, who deserve the same reward when they do a good deed (Al-Imran, 3:195) and the same



punishment when they commit a mistake (Ma'idah, 5:38; Nur 24:2), are too similar to be ahead of each other in representing the human concept.

Islam not only recognized women as ontologically equal to men, but also drew attention to their potential to achieve a similar position to men on cultural, political, economic, and social levels. From this point of view, the Prophet's attitudes, which present the value of women to the minds, actually revitalize and develop their ability to become "caliphs". Stating

that the children of Adam and Hawwa did not have the possibility of gaining superiority in the eyes of their Lord through their race, language, and color, the Prophet (saw) said: "O people, your Lord is One, and your father is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor does a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white except by piety and good action. The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most pious." (Ibn Hanbal,

Musnad, V/411) Therefore, he (saw) does not make a distinction between the sexes but rather points out the inherent responsibility of each individual to behave in a manner that befits human dignity and the right to be valued as a human being. Consequently, both the measures he took to prevent women from being victimized and the rights he granted them to express their existence ultimately reinforce the value of the human being.

How can we exemplify the importance the Prophet (saw) placed on the

education of women?

Immediately after the hijrah, the women who came to visit the blessed guest who honored Medina believed that he was the "Messenger of Allah" and pledged allegiance to him with the excitement of faith that had just blossomed in their hearts: "O Messenger of Allah, we give you our pledge that we will not associate anything with Allah, we will not steal, we will not have unlawful sexual relations, we will not utter slander, fabricating from between our hands and feet, and we will not disobey you in



goodness.” (Nasa’i, Bay’ah, 18) Our Prophet accepted the pledge of allegiance from the women who came to meet him in groups.

The relationship between women and the mosque began in the Masjid al-Nabawi. Women who wished to see their Prophet (saw) and follow his example, to learn religion by listening to his speeches, to ask him questions and give him gifts, and to enjoy the pleasure of worship by forming ranks behind him, took their place among the permanent congregation of the Masjid al-Nabawi.

The last Prophet (saw) said: “Verily, I have been sent as a teacher.” (Darimi, Muqaddimah, 32). His message was addressed to all members of society, regardless of their gender, so the masjid, the indispensable place for conveying the divine message, embraced everyone. Thanks to the power of the masjid to bring together, unite, and reconcile, the people of Medina were more peaceful.

In this city that embraced the Prophet and incorporated Islam

into its very fabric, neighborhoods, streets, houses, and spouses were nourished from the same source as parts of a magnificent whole. On the one hand, the Prophet strove for them “as if he were grieving himself to death” (Kahf, 18:6), and on the other, the companions listened to him with such reverence and care “as if a bird had landed on their heads” (Ibn Hanbal, IV/278). In order to ensure that no one was deprived of this mobilization of “listening and transformation”, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Do not prevent

the maid-servants of Allah from going to the mosque.” (Bukhari, Jumu’ah, 13). Indeed, the message of the Prophet (saw) was very clear: Women are the servants of Allah just like men. The servants are Allah’s, and the masjids are Allah’s. Who would dare interfere with them! Of course, parents and children would respond to the same adhan; they would feel the enthusiasm of the same takbir, the peace of the same qira’ah, and the impact of the same guidance in their souls; and they would achieve unity and peace as a family.

So, can we conclude that the women's relationship with the mosque during the 'Asr al-Sa'adah (Age of Bliss) was very strong and their position in the mosque was very important?

Our Prophet (saw) did not exclude women from his congregation and did not deprive them of the honor of performing prayers behind him and the pleasure of listening to his sermons. In fact, women who complained that they could not be in the mosque as much as they wished due to work, asked, "O, Allah's Messenger, men receive your instructions; kindly allocate at your convenience a day for us also, on which we would come to you and you would teach us what Allah has taught you." He gave them special lessons at the times and places they agreed upon (Bukhari, l'tisam, 9).

The Masjid al-Nabawi was like a nucleus that contained all the codes of Muslim society. There, the Prophet (saw) used to lead the congregation as the imam, listen to those who came to consult him, make decisions on cases, receive official delegations, name the children and pray for them, watch folkloric performances, and make speeches about the problems of the city. Therefore, he (saw) invited women not only to worship but also to be "present" in the most vibrant

environment where social life flows.

Do the negatively attributed statements about the role of women in cultural, religious, and family life, falsely attributed to the Prophet Muhammad from the past to the present, impact the discourses surrounding women in the contemporary world? Could you provide a general assessment of this?

The fabricated narrations, which attempt to give a religious guise to negative judgments against women, range from daily advice on how to treat girls to judgments on critical issues such as women's social status and education. When the narrations are juxtaposed, it is not difficult to see the portrait of women that the mentality that produced them wants to present. Roughly speaking, we are confronted with an image of a woman whose intellectual, ideal, and scientific knowledge is considered inadequate and even unnecessary, whose contribution to the direction of life is not allowed, who is not consulted, and whose skills are not utilized, who is assumed to be untrustworthy and an obstacle to the proper worship of men, and therefore whose living space is restricted, and who is believed to be kept

away from education and training.

It is obvious that the evil view that hides behind fabrications does not regard women from the perspective presented by the Prophet (saw). Such a perspective dared to speak against women through the words of the Messenger of Allah and

continued its existence in Muslim societies by creating like-minded people with every sentence it fabricated. The image of women whose presence causes discomfort dominates almost all fabrications. As a result, the balance that should have existed between men and women was disturbed in favor of one side, and women, although created with the potential to undertake such a difficult and valuable task as being the caliph on earth, lost even their fundamental rights to live humanely and turned against men. In fact, fabricated narrations that create a negative prejudice against women and foster a relationship that is far from respect, compassion, and trust, position men and women against each other rather than alongside each other. Confining women to domestic life with stagnant preoccupations and limited information actually harms men as much as it harms women. Such a disconnected and value-deprived relationship ignores the fact that the world of meaning of human beings can only be created by men and women together, prevents the two genders from achieving insight and establishing a balanced coexistence by evaluating their differences, and eliminates the possibility of seeing every aspect of life together.



AS IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE, THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ACTED IN THE LIGHT OF THE REVELATION CONCERNING WOMEN.

The Palestine Case



Al- Quds

It is the city where the miracle of al-Isra and al-Miraj took place, which is described as one of the three mosques deemed worth traveling to by Muslims (Bukhari, Anbiya, 8; Masajid, 2) and the Qur'an states that the area around it has been blessed (Isra, 17:1).

BCE 3000
It was founded by
the Canaanites.



997
David ruled the city of
Jerusalem.



931
Solomon ruled the city of
Jerusalem.



587
Nebuchadnezzar
conquered the city and
the Babylonian exile took
place.



332
It was occupied by
Alexander the Great of
Macedon.

CE 629

The Byzantine Emperor
Heraclius recaptured
the city back from the
Sassanids.



1517
Yavuz Sultan Selim
annexed it to the
Ottoman Empire.



1187
The 100-year Crusader
occupation ended with
the conquest of Saladin
Ayyubi.



638
Caliph Umar
conquered Jerusalem
and honored it in the
name of Allah and His
Messenger.

1798

The occupation of
Napoleon ended
by Ahmet Cezzar
Pasha.



1820
Jerusalem was
annexed to the
province of
Damascus.



1831
Jerusalem and
Damascus
were occupied
by Ibrahim
Pasha.



1841
The Ottoman
Empire
regained
control of the
region.



Kufiyya

It is a type of cloth with a fishing net and olive leaf pattern with thick strips on it, and it is identified with the resistance of Palestinians against the occupying Israel.

1974

The United Nations recognized the Palestinians' right to freedom. .

1967

The occupation expanded with the Six-Day War.

1948

The Jewish National Council convened in Tel Aviv and issued a declaration establishing the state of Israel.

1947

The United Nations recognized the partition of Palestine.

1917

The region came under British control and the first steps of the occupation were taken by increasing the Jewish population in the region.



Zionism

Zion is the name used in the Old Testament for the city of Jerusalem which was conquered by King David and made the center of the kingdom. The scope of the word has expanded over time to refer to the entire land of Israel. Zionism, based on the word Zion, refers to the political movement that aims to establish a Jewish state in Palestine in the sense of the "return of the Jewish people to their historical homeland".

1987

The wall separating the West Bank from Jerusalem was built.

2014

UN member Sweden recognized Palestine as a state.

2015

The Palestinian flag was raised at the United Nations General Assembly.

2023

Israeli attacks intensified and thousands of Palestinians lost their lives. Against these attacks, large protests were organized in many countries with the participation of thousands of people of different religions, languages, and nationalities.



Six-Day War

The 1967 war, also known as the Six-Day War, began on 5 June 1967 with Israel attacking Egyptian airfields and destroying 280 aircraft.



Hanzala

The ten-year-old cartoon character with bare feet, patched clothes, and a back always turned, is one of the symbols of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. Hanzala is drawn by the Palestinian cartoonist Naji al-Ali.



Intifada

It is the Palestinian uprising against Israel and the concept of resistance against the occupation.



Nakba

14 May 1948, the day when the establishment of Israel was officially declared and many Palestinians were subjected to forced displacement and massacre, is referred to by Palestinians as "al-Nakba", the day of the "Great Catastrophe".

THE DIGITAL WORLD AND OUR RELIGIOUS LIFE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bahset KARSLI

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Human history has witnessed various changes and transformations, some sudden and others intertwined with one another. Social scientists have classified these developments in the social structure primarily based on production relations and social organizations. The most commonly used categorizations include agricultural and industrial societies, as well as traditional and modern societies. These concepts, brought to the forefront to describe social and economic activity, challenge prior practices, and incorporate past projections. We define it as a challenge because, even if there is a fundamental change and transformation, the normality of certain periods and the

consciousness of belonging in relation to that normality can give rise to conflicts. On the other hand, the harmonization and transformation of normality, while progressing reasonably in daily life practice, is brought to the forefront of the agenda with a sharper discourse due to the fear of the destruction of belonging. The key objective is to eliminate language that incites conflict among discourses and fields of representation and cultivate a thorough comprehension and interpretation of periods and the corresponding sociality on a sound basis. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the concept of digitality, used to refer to the postmodern era and the social and religious



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organization it produces, in terms of its dimensions of possibility and risk.

Although there are many definitions, in its most general form, digitalization can be defined as “the process of transferring accessible information into a medium that can be read by technological tools such as computers, smartphones, and tablets, edited in these environments, and incorporated into workflows”. In a sense, digitalization also refers to the radical change in the tools used to produce, distribute, and store information. Digitalization has an infrastructure that also triggers its own transformation.

Mass media, the primary tool of digitalization, has eliminated barriers



of time, place, and physicality. Technological advancements have paved new opportunities in social, political, and religious spheres. Digitalization, rooted in the new technological landscape of the twenty-first century, has brought about variations in the daily lives of society. Since the early 2000s, Web 2.0 technology and its product, social media, have transformed communication from one-sided to multidimensional. With the Internet, all social structures, from individual life to traditional institutions, have begun to be affected by the online transformation.

We can analyze the social organization produced by this chronology under overarching headings such as digitality and the network society. In examining the relationship between the digital world and religious life, it is essential to highlight the structural differences that are prominent in the areas of risk. On the ontological level, the digital age derives its understanding of its social organization on the basis of technological, mathematical, and numerical data, while the religious sphere relies on a concept of truth based on scriptural and traditional teachings, preferences, and internal processes.



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AT ALMOST NO
COST.**

Today, in the digital universe, worship and social memory have begun to transform from a set of transmitted information to stored data. It is more important to photograph and store the places visited than the journey itself, to capture the act of worship than the pleasure of worship, and to present data with an aesthetic presentation than the place of worship itself. The image reflected in the digital world has become more valuable than the subject and the act itself.

The other pillar of the structural difference produced by digitalization is the “problem of centrality”. While traditional religious structures or societies were hierarchical, based on sacred references, and rooted in tradition, centralized hierarchy and control have become obsolete in the digital world. In this world, where the local is globalized, the global can penetrate the local, and the relationship between subordinate and superior disappears, everyone is equal. We are entering a new world where participation is valued, where people can communicate regardless of time and place, and where they can access all kinds of information at almost no cost. Digital tools can be considered positive in terms of the unrestricted

circulation of data and information, equality of access to information, and their ability to provide diversity. In this regard, the digital medium provides a platform for encountering various forms of information and engaging in the exchange of diverse ideas.

The widespread use of digital media as a source of information exacerbates not only the problem of centrality but also the problem of trust. The ease with which website content can be manipulated amplifies skepticism towards the information presented. It is important to recognize that local and global digital power groups have the ability to manipulate the virtual information environment to their advantage by spreading disinformation on the aforementioned mediums. Additionally, the process of digitalization, which is promoted for reasons such as facilitating life and commerce, can become a highly susceptible and misleading platform. While digital information is decentralized, devoid of hierarchy, and has no source, the ultimate source of knowledge in Islam is Allah. For He alone is the “Allam al-ghuyub” (the All-Knowing of all that is unseen) and the absolute al-Alim (Ma'idah, 5:109). Allah has taught humanity what

they do not know (‘Alaq, 96:4) and bestowed the knowledge of the names of objects on the Prophet Adam, the father of humanity (Baqarah, 2:131).

All kinds of information obtained from digital media can be used as the raw material for ethical problems such as lies, slander, suspicion, and obsession. These platforms lack ethical criteria, allowing everything to be used solely for the purposes of getting likes and attracting attention. Conversely, the religious field is based on a teaching that is based on truth. Especially the way of existence in virtual environments and the idea that the information created therein has no reality blunts the conscientious responsibility of people. Consequently, young individuals, for whom anonymization is prevalent, may perceive any activities performed under virtual identities as exempt from accountability.

It is important to remember that it is human beings who are experiencing the process of digitalization. We are now living in a world where what is committed in the virtual environment also has religious and legal consequences. The use of anonymous identities does

“ DIGITALIZATION ALSO REFERS TO THE RADICAL CHANGE IN THE TOOLS USED TO PRODUCE, DISTRIBUTE, AND STORE INFORMATION.

not relieve individuals of responsibility for their actions online. On the other hand, religious posts on social media, which are important socialization platforms of the digital age, do not exempt individuals from the obligation to worship. Therefore, upholding the reference value of religious foundations in the performance of the religious field in digital media seems to be important in overcoming these structural disparities. It is important

to learn digital culture in order to act in harmony with the ecosystem of social media and to be able to exist there without deviating from human values based on Islam. As a result, instead of viewing the digital environment as a contaminated world and a medium to be avoided, we can cultivate a digital habitat dominated by mutual understanding and empathy by incorporating the basic sensitivities on which our civilization is based into social media.





THE STRENGTHENING OF MUSLIMS THROUGH TWO IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

Prof. Dr. Eyup BAS

Religious Services Counselor in Copenhagen

‘Umar and Hamza’s acceptance of Islam

It was a time when a group of Muslims had to emigrate to Abyssinia under the command of our beloved Prophet (saw). In addition to the constant pursuits, deliberations, and diplomatic attempts to recapture and punish the

fleeing Meccan Muslims, the polytheists continued to persecute our beloved Prophet and the believers in Mecca.

On just such a challenging day in the year 616, the Messenger of Allah was en route to Safa Hill when he encountered Abu Jahl. It was then that Abu Jahl

insulted him and belittled the religion and his prophethood, just as he had continuously done in the past at every opportunity. Saddened by the insults our Prophet returned home with much sorrowfulness. An eyewitness later recounted this same incident to the Prophet’s

uncle, Hamza, who was at that time returning from a hunting expedition. Hamza, the Prophet’s paternal uncle and foster brother, was renowned for his bravery and held great affection for his nephew. Due to their closeness of age, they were more like friends. Therefore,



although Hamza had not yet accepted the new religion, he looked out for his nephew. So, hearing of this incident of the unjust attack upon the Prophet made him very upset.

Enraged by Abu Jahl's harassment and insult of his nephew Muhammad, Hamza immediately went

to the Ka'bah. Just as he had expected, he found Abu Jahl conversing with the elders of the Quraysh tribe. He moved toward Abu Jahl, and he shouted, "You curse and insult my nephew Muhammad? I am of his religion, so insult me too if you dare!" Those accompanying Abu

Jahl sided with him, but Abu Jahl, acknowledging Hamza's stance, pointed at them and affirmed Hamza's right to defend his nephew. After Hamza left, Abu Jahl said to his men, reassuring them, "Do not interfere with him, or he will get angry and become a Muslim for real."

This is because Abu Jahl was seriously concerned about the possible conversion of Hamza to Islam. This concern on the part of Abu Jahl was well-founded as Hamza, a respected and feared Qurayshi in Mecca, went later to his nephew and announced that he had embraced Islam. Hamza's acceptance of Islam proved to be a substantial morale booster for the Muslims who, at that time, were grappling with the severe oppression and torture inflicted by the polytheists. As the Muslims gained strength, the polytheists found themselves compelled to reconsider their harsh attitude towards the Muslim community.

Along with Abu Jahl, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab stood out as one of the most hostile people to the Prophet and the Muslims in Mecca. He was literate, interested in the foreign affairs of Mecca, and had a very harsh temperament. While the Messenger of Allah was striving to ensure that some influential people from outside the Banu Hashim accepted Islam, he was continually supplicating to Allah by praying, "O Lord! Strengthen Islam with 'Umar ibn al-Khattab or Abu al-Hakam 'Amr ibn al-Hisham (Abu Jahl)." (Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, 3/247; Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 18) In answer to his prayers, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab embraced Islam in the same year.

In fact, Umar told the story of how he became a Muslim to those who were surprised by his decision: "One night I went out for a drink, and when I could not find a place to drink and no one to accompany me, I decided to go to the Ka'bah and perform circumambulation. When I arrived at the Ka'bah, I saw Muhammad praying, so I walked slowly under the cover of the Ka'bah to listen to what he recited in prayer so as not to be seen by him. He did not notice me so I began to listen to what he was reciting in prayer (Surah al-Haqqah). When I thought, 'What he is reciting are the words of a poet, as the Quraysh say,' the Prophet recited the Qur'anic verses, "It is not the prose of a poet (as you claim), (yet) you hardly have any faith. Nor is it the mumbling of a fortune-teller, (yet) you are hardly mindful." (Haqqah, 69:41-42). So, then I thought, 'If this is not the word of a fortune-teller or a poet, then it is Muhammad's own invention.' At that point the Prophet recited, "Had the Messenger made up something in Our Name, We would have certainly seized him by his right hand, then severed his aorta, and none of you could have shielded him (from Us)!" (Haqqah, 69:44-47). Everything I thought was answered and my heart softened. I felt satisfied, and my eyes filled with tears. The verses of the Qur'an helped me embrace

Islam. Finally, Muhammad finished his prayer and started to walk towards his house. I walked behind him. In the street in front of his house, he noticed me and recognized me. He said, 'What is it, O 'Umar?' I said, 'I have come to believe in Allah and His Messenger and what he has conveyed.' He approached me, put his hand on my heart, and prayed. Then the Prophet said, "Allah has granted you guidance, O Umar!" (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah, 1/374) and went home.

The same night that 'Umar became a Muslim, he went straight to the house of Abu Jahl and told him that he had accepted Islam. His acceptance of Islam made



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the Prophet (saw) very pleased but the polytheists were shocked and stunned. It was such a shock to them that they could not even utter a word when the Messenger of Allah performed congregational prayer with the Muslims in the Ka'bah for the first time.

Oppression and boycott by the Quraysh

The fact that the emigrants who went to Abyssinia were living there in safety, that Najashi did not extradite them but protected them, that the number of Muslims was gradually increasing, and that important figures such as Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab embraced Islam, worried the Meccan polytheists very much. In response, the Meccan polytheists sought preventive measures and eventually settled on a drastic plan – the assassination of Prophet Muhammad. They declared the Banu Hashim enemies and agreed amongst themselves not to trade with them, live with them, or talk to them until he was killed or handed over to them. They regarded the spread of Islam, which promised peace to all humanity, as the spread of an epidemic and took measures to keep it away from themselves. Moreover, they announced this boycott decision, which had social and economic aspects, by

hanging it up on the wall of the Ka'bah. Thus, instead of expelling the Muslims from the city, they decided to keep them under their control by making their living conditions as difficult as possible.

As soon as Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, heard about the decision taken against them, he called a meeting of the Banu Hashim tribe, of which he was the leader. He informed them about the decision of the polytheists. Even though not all the members of the tribe believed in the religion that the Prophet Muhammad was trying to spread, the decision from the meeting concluded with all agreeing to uphold the honor of the tribe and to protect the Prophet with all their strength. This is because, in the Arab tradition, failure to protect a member of the tribe who was attacked by an outsider was a disgrace to the honor of the whole tribe. Immediately after the decision was taken, Abu Talib moved his nephew and the members of his tribe to his own neighborhood to ensure their safety.

For three years (616-619) the Banu Hashim lived under a social and economic blockade in the neighborhood of Abu Talib. Many merchants, especially Prophet Muhammad, Khadijah, and Abu Talib, risked their wealth. In the course

of time, they exhausted all their wealth because they could not engage in caravan trade. Only during the pilgrimage season, during the sacred months, did they go out of the neighborhood and try to supply their needs. However, the polytheists, especially Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, threatened the merchants to not sell them goods or to sell them at very high prices. Thus, the Banu Hashim tribe could not buy enough provisions, and their supplies began to rapidly deplete.

When the severity and negative effects of the embargo on Banu Hashim intensified, some people came together to try to end it. Some of them were relatives of the Banu Hashim. For example, Zuhayr ibn Abu Umayya and 'Hisham ibn 'Amr were among them. One day, these two people went to the elders of Quraysh and convinced them that the boycott decision, which had been taken under the pressure of Abu Jahl, should be opposed and that the agreement hanging on the wall of the Ka'bah should be torn down.

The next day, the others, except Zuhayr, went to the Ka'bah and sat there with the Quraysh. While they were still there, Zuhayr came, circumambulated the Ka'bah, and without sitting with them, he pointed to the agreement hanging on the wall of

the Ka'bah and shouted loudly, "O Quraysh, know that I will not sit with you again until this cruel agreement is torn down." Abu Jahl replied with equal vehemence that it would never be torn. However, when Zuhayr's companions, with whom he had made an agreement, unanimously supported him, Abu Jahl, fearing that the disagreement that had arisen would become worse, kept silent. Mut'im ibn 'Adi got up and tore up the page of the agreement. They all went to the neighborhood of Abu Talib, explained what they had done, and brought the members of Banu Hashim out of the neighborhood where they had been confined. Thus, the boycott ended.

Throughout the three-year embargo, both the Prophet and all members of his tribe, regardless of their acceptance of Islam, endured unprecedented pain and loss. Amidst this challenging period, a sense of unity and solidarity flourished among those who sought refuge in the neighborhood of Abu Talib, while the polytheists grappled with internal divisions driven by tribalism. Even though they suffered from hunger and disease, those who believed in the Prophet never blamed him for what happened to them. In fact, many people communicated with the



KHADIJAH, WHO NEVER WITHHELD HER SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THEIR MARRIAGE, WAS THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE HIS PROPHETHOOD AND SPENT ALL HER WEALTH ON THE CAUSE OF ISLAM.

Muslims and accepted Islam as their religion. Ultimately, the polytheists could not achieve their goal with the boycott decision.

Two major losses: the demise of his uncle Abu Talib and his wife Khadijah

Sometime after the end of the embargo on his tribe, Banu Hashim, the Prophet lost his uncle Abu Talib, who had loved him dearly and had always protected him.

After the passing of Abu Talib, Abu Lahab assumed the leadership of the Banu

Hashim tribe. Meanwhile, the Prophet's aunts went to Abu Lahab and told him that Muhammad was also his nephew and that he was now without protection. They stressed to Abu Lahab that Muhammad was the most appropriate person to protect. As a result, Abu Lahab decided to protect the Prophet even though he did not agree with the opinion of his sisters. In fact, he explained that he made this decision only to ensure unity and solidarity within the tribe. However, after a while, he openly reneged on this commitment.

While the Prophet Muhammad was still mourning his uncle, he lost his wife Khadijah (10 Ramadan 620). Khadijah, who never withheld her support throughout their marriage, was the first to recognize his prophethood and spent all her wealth on the cause of Islam. She gave him strength when everyone turned away from him. The Prophet buried her in the Hajun cemetery in Mecca. The Messenger of Allah, who visited her grave many times, always told the people around him about the good deeds of his wife and always remembered her with goodness.

In the Prophet's own words, the year 620 was named "Am al-Huzn"—the Year of Sorrow—reflecting the profound grief he endured during that time.

NAJLA TAMMY KEPLER:

**“WE HAVE
TO TURN
TO ALLAH,
TRUST HIM
AND SEEK
WHAT HE
WANTS.”**



Interview by: Zeynep Feyza AKKAYA

I would like to begin this interview by asking questions about your life before embracing Islam. What was your life like during that time, particularly in terms of your faith?

I was very fortunate to have a father who was dedicated to helping me. Not only, was he physically active, serving as my athletics coach in some sports like track and basketball, but also mentally he wanted me to be stimulated. He would buy little workbooks even before we went to school and once we were in school, there was a constant effort to educate us. But his greatest passion for us was for us to be spiritually aware and enriched. So he would even study the Bible and then teach us lessons to us at the dinner table. So there was a very good opportunity for me to dive into faith and religion at a very young age.

One of the things that my father's efforts to be a good father taught me was that every person is multifaceted and everything needs to be in harmony, physical, mental, emotional, and most of all spiritual. So that was where I started and it was a very early process and it went on until I entered my teens when I went to live with my mom who was going to a different church and was a part of

a Protestant experience where they were celebrating Christmas and even Halloween. I mean the culture of Christianity, she wanted me to have the full experience. So whereas in my father's church, we were trying to live according to what was in the Bible, which did not include Easter and Christmas nor birthdays and Halloween and these kinds of things that had Pagan foundations, my mom was more concerned about me being involved in society. So seeing these two different sides, it was a very stark difference between them and I needed to process, my dad showed me a perspective that included many profound truths, and they were based on something that was supposedly from God. And then there's mom, who wants to convey the culture I was growing up in, of the society I was growing up in, as well as some religious aspects. But it didn't have the depth that my father's efforts entailed. And the church that my father was going to was trying to teach us. So to be honest, I was more inclined to believe as my father had believed.

So once I reached young adulthood, the natural state of the soul kicks in and it tells you that you are responsible for your future, and you are responsible for your own spirituality. Thus, I began feeling these things and I

began wondering, what is my purpose in life? Why am I here? Where am I going? What am I going to do? All of this led to more inquiry and an expansion of my perspective, of what my possibilities are or what my possibilities were.

So, this led me into a state of searching. And because I couldn't find exactly what I was looking for in my dad's church nor and I couldn't

find it exactly what I was looking for in my mom's church. And I couldn't find exactly what I was looking for in school. I didn't know where else to look except to God. So I started praying, Oh God, give me wisdom. I was in search of the truth. I was in search of what God wanted from me. But I couldn't find that in Christianity, and I couldn't find that in the education system. So I thought, OK, there has to be a path. There has to be some way of knowing what God wants from me. But I didn't know what that was, and I didn't know how to find it other than prayer.

What was your view of Islam back then? Were you familiar with Islam or Muslims at that time?

My first encounters with Islam were somewhat subliminal. For example, I watched a movie that was supposed to be about Muslims, but I did not realize that it was about Muslims. It was interesting and entertaining, but I didn't get the religious aspect of it because they didn't show how to pray properly in the movie. They weren't conveying Islam correctly anyway. So it is a good thing I didn't make the connection with the religion, but that was the first time I heard the words 'Allah' and 'Muhammad' (saw) and it just went in one ear and out the other. I didn't make a connection but a seed

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I BEGAN WONDERING, WHAT IS MY PURPOSE IN LIFE? WHY AM I HERE? WHERE AM I GOING? WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

was planted because I still have the recollection of that movie. I don't know if it was my world history class or this movie that came first, but the other possibility of introduction to Islam was my high school world history class. This was a very interesting introduction to Islam. My teacher was standing in front of the class very excitedly saying these people wash themselves five times a day. And I was thinking, how does someone wash themselves five times a day? And later on, when I became a Muslim, I understood that she was talking about taking ablution. It took years for that connection to click. Back then I did not have any Muslim friends. I didn't know what Islam was. I didn't know what a Muslim was. These things were, like I said, very subliminally planted into my life, by Allah, alhamdulillah.

I understand that you were questioning everything during that period, but was there a particular moment or turning point when you made the decision to become a Muslim? Can you share the details of when you decided to embrace Islam?

It is a process, not like a sudden acceptance or rejection. It was taking those beliefs one by one, belief in God, in the prophets, and in my



understanding of Jesus (peace be upon him). Yet, it was a fast process, spanning about six months from my initial introduction to Islam until my acceptance. This is because I was searching for the truth and wisdom. I had been praying for wisdom for three years and then when finally that book of 40 hadith was placed in my hands, I read it in two nights. And these 40 sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), were so astounding to me. It is like they were the complete truth. The more I delved into the religion, the more I learned about it, and the more hope grew, this is something that we can actually not only believe but apply and truly benefit from. So when I was able to see the truth of Islam, it was a very easy decision to make, very quick decision alhamdulillah. And so I took that leap of faith.

You stated that you started to learn about Islam by reading a hadith collection. What has impressed you the most about our Prophet?

So when people are telling their stories about Islam, about how they became Muslim, often people refer to the Qur'an or dreams that they had or whatever. Mine is a bit different in that I started with the hadith, the sayings and sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and that being able to see an applicable way of life through the life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was really very impressive to me.

I did struggle because of my Christian background with the concept of prophethood because in Christianity, there's not a lot of emphasis on prophethood. In the stories about the prophets

anyway, in the Bible, the majority of them have unbecoming behavior to what a prophet should be like. I know, as a Muslim, through the guidance of the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (saw), that these stories of the prophets in the Bible have unfortunately undergone changes.

It's so wonderful to have the opportunity to learn about the Prophet and be blessed with the knowledge of how to be the best human being. But that is also a big responsibility. The more we hold ourselves accountable, the more we learn and apply this gift from Allah, the life of the Prophet (saw), this path that he described and exemplified for us, the better our lives will be. It is not something to be taken lightly, and it is something to be pursued hastily because life is just too

short. One moment we are here, the next we are gone. So, seize the moment. Seize the opportunity and benefit from it. That is a little bit of advice from your sister Najla.

In your book called “A Road From Texas to Truth”, you are talking about the hesitation your mom has about how women are treated in Islam. What do you think about the place of women in Islam?

My mom was concerned about how I would be treated as a Muslim woman, but that was because of her lack of knowledge of Islam. One of the first pieces of information I got about the role of women in Islam was from a very small brochure titled ‘Women in Islam’. It was like four or five pages, you know, very little information, and concise. However, it taught me that there was a tremendous bias against Muslims, which I was not aware of and found to be highly unfounded. There are cultures in the West that consider women property, not human, not intellectually capable enough to place a vote or own property. But the place that I saw that women held in Western society was not the place that I wanted to be in. It lacked protection. It lacked respect. It lacked care. Of course, that is not how every man behaves



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towards every woman in Western society.

In contrast, in Islam, Allah, as dictated in the Qur’an, and by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), through his words and deeds, emphasizes that women are to be protected, treated kindly, and respected, not violated. Unfortunately, many aspects of Islam are not often conveyed correctly. But we have the sources to learn our religion and learn the truth from the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the scholars. We can come to an informed conclusion. Whether individuals worldwide accept Islam or not, it is crucial to at least be aware of the truth and avoid conveying misinformation.

What is your last message to our readers?

I would like to say to everyone that we need to go back to our very first belief, and that is the belief in God. Unfortunately, as I came into Islam, I did not have a comprehensive understanding of my Creator. It was a superficial One that had been carried over from Christianity and somewhat added on and corrected in Islam. But the depth of our understanding of who Allah is, and what he wants from us, is the key to everything else. So it is crucial that we learn who Allah is so that we can trust Him and truly feel the comfort of knowing

that He’s there, always watching, always caring, always embracing, always guiding, always rectifying, always establishing good and forbidding evil. It is just that we have to turn to Him, trust Him, and seek what He wants. Moreover, if we do not hold on to that rope with everything we have, the end will not be a pleasant one. It’s a very dark end. It is very miserable and it is a very painful end. Choose the light. Choose al-Nur.

She was born in 1971 in Texas, USA, the first child of a religious family. Always questioning since her childhood, Kepler decided to become a Muslim at the age of nineteen. She decided to settle in Türkiye in 2005 and continues to write actively. She is the author of “A Road from Texas to Truth” and “Reflections on the Journey”.



HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE TO PEOPLE ABOUT ALLAH?

QUESTIONS ON MY MIND

Prof. Dr. Cagfer KARADAS

I wonder, if you were to describe the Almighty Allah in a sentence or two, how would you describe Him (swt)? In a sentence or two?

Certainly, let me respond to this question with a verse from the book of the Almighty Allah and a hadith containing the words of the Messenger of Mercy. Our Almighty Lord says: "Your God is only One God. There is no god worthy of worship except Him—the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful." (Baqarah, 2:163). The Prophet (saw) also stated the following to explain this Qur'anic verse: "First of all, there was nothing but Allah." (Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 1)

Then how did all the created things come into being?

Allah created all things. Allah created the entire universe. He created the angels, jinn and Satan, which are invisible beings to us. He also created as well the visible world with its plants, animals, human beings, rocks, and landscapes. He created the water we drink and the air we breathe. He (swt) created the sun to provide light and warmth, and the moonlight to illuminate the night. He created the celestial ornaments of the sky with the stars.

Why did Allah create all these? Is there any wisdom behind these creations?

It is a fact, that Allah cannot be comprehended within a prescribed or foreseeable framework. That is why it is not right to seek reasons in His creation. However, He (swt) certainly created everything with wisdom. Yet, we cannot make definitive statements about it because we cannot

fully understand the entirety of the universe or the essence of Allah. How much do we truly know about ourselves? We only possess knowledge to the extent that He reveals to us. As it is written, “With Him are the keys of the unseen—no one knows them except Him. And He knows what is in the land and sea. Not even a leaf falls without His knowledge, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth or anything—green or dry—but is written in a perfect Record. He is the One Who calls back your souls by night and knows what you do by day, then revives you daily to complete your appointed term. To Him is your ultimate return, then He will inform you of what you used to do. He reigns supreme over all of His creation, and sends recording-angels, watching over you. When death comes to any of you, Our angels take their soul, never neglecting this duty. Then they are all returned to Allah—their True Master. Judgment is His alone. And He is the Swiftest Reckoner.” (An’am, 6:59–62)

What do you expect to happen when we die?

Well, death is the greatest truth. Who could escape death? No one and nothing can evade it. You know that Allah has created another world for us beyond this world. We are all destined for it. Based upon what we do in this life our Almighty Lord will determine what He grants us in the hereafter.

Why is that so?

This is because the Almighty Allah has created two groups of beings, human beings, and jinn, both are intelligent and willful beings. He (swt) informed them by sending prophets and scriptures that He would put these two groups to the test in the life of this world. As part of this test, He granted them the freedom of will, desiring that these intelligent beings with free will would recognize and appreciate the blessings bestowed upon them and not take them for granted. He (swt) clearly outlined how they should express gratitude through the messengers He appointed and sent. Allah did not compel anyone; those who perform good deeds in this world do so by their own choice, and those who engage in wrongdoing also act of their own accord. Only those who do good receive Allah’s mercy, and those who do evil are subject to His justice. He does not oppress any of His servants and seeks the well-being of each one. He has explained this through His books and messengers in the simplest way so that it can be understood by all.

What is the wisdom behind our Almighty Lord sending so many instructions to His servants?

This is because Allah is the only God and the ultimate sole Ruler. He has sent these instructions through His prophets as the sole owner of both worlds,

encompassing the entire universe. To put it briefly, He created the universe, established its system, and conveyed His instructions to intelligent beings who also have free will. Therefore, these intelligent beings have choices and Allah the Almighty knows best, for He created them, which of these choices will be beneficial for them. Thus, the Almighty Allah has informed His servants about their choices through His mercy: “Indeed, that is My Path—perfectly straight. So follow it and do not follow other ways, for they will lead you away from His Way. This is what He has commanded you, so perhaps you will be conscious of Allah.” (An’am, 6:153)

What is this path? How will we know it?

The Almighty Lord has provided clear guidance on how to know this perfectly in Surah al-Fatiha. He named this path ‘the straight path’ (sirat al-mustaqim), emphasizing its direct and unwavering nature. He also told us how to recognize it for He said, the path of those whom I have blessed. Who are these blessed ones? The prophets, the martyrs, the truthful people, and the moral and reliable scholars who put into practice what they know... He said to follow the path they took. Moreover, He cautioned against deviating from the right path and associating with those who have rebelled and incurred His wrath, as they have strayed

from the path of truth and followed misguided directions. Thus, staying away from wrong paths is taqwa (piety), and following the right path is iman (belief), ikhlas (sincerity), and ihsan.

So, does that mean there is no other possibility for us, and there is only one way?

Indeed, in this universe, human beings and jinn have no possibility of finding another god, because there is no other god. Therefore, it is in the best interest of people to submit to the true one God, Allah. Indeed, when they are punished instead of being rewarded in the hereafter, that is what justice requires. Actually, Allah states in the Surah al-Fatiha that He is the Sovereign of the Day of Recompense and commanding people to turn only to Him for help and worship. This is the only path for them, and straying from it will inevitably result in facing His wrath. In fact, Allah emphasizes His attributes as the Creator and Lord in the first verses He revealed (Alaq, 96:1). It is not unreasonable that Allah, who is the Creator of the whole universe and everything in it, is at the same time directing and administering them, evaluating people according to their actions and attitudes, and making decisions about them. This is because “He reigns supreme over all of His creation.” (An’am, 6:61)

THE ETERNAL AND THE EVERLASTING SOVEREIGN: AL-MALIK

Fatma BAYRAM

Derived from the root “m-l-k”, which literally means “to own and possess,” the term “ism al-sharif” signifies “being truly sovereign over both the physical and metaphysical realms and having the authority to dispose of them as He pleases”. It conveys the undeniable and boundless sovereignty of Allah the Almighty in this world and the Hereafter.

The Qur’an places great emphasis on highlighting that “all sovereignty” belongs to Allah by using various words derived from the infinitives of this root (Ali ‘Imran, 3:189; Fatir, 35:13; Mulk, 67:1; An’am, 6:75; Araf, 7:185; Mu’minun, 23:88; Ya-Sin, 36:83). In this sense, only Allah is the absolute sovereign/ruler.

“al-milk” refers to sovereignty over people, and “al-mulk” refers to the authority to dispose of property. Accordingly, “al-Malik”, derived from the infinitive “al-milk”, is the name of the power that governs society for the benefit of the general public. This “governing” is done by taking precautions, setting rules, and enforcing promising

awards (wa’d) and threats of punishment (wa’id) with the authority granted by law. This is also the case with Allah, Who governs by means of rules. By tying His every action to a rule (sunnatullah), He informed His servants from the very beginning how He would use His authority as the “Lord of the Worlds”. In this way, He shows that there can be no rule over property without rules.

The phrase “malik-i yawmi’d-din” (Owner of the Day of Judgement) in the Fatiha indicates that on the Day of Judgment, the relative ownership of humankind in this world will be taken away, leaving only the sovereignty of Allah, the eternal and everlasting Owner (Infitar, 82:19; Ghafir, 40:16). On that day, only those who, during their earthly lives, accepted the right of abode in the Divine homeland by believing that Allah is the true Owner (al-Malik) will receive their share of happiness (according to their rank). All others will face eternal dismissal for not accepting the one and only Owner as the true sovereign.

In several verses of the Holy Qur’an, it is explained that all property in this world and the hereafter belongs to Allah. This kind of statement is followed by the names of Allah that affirm that Allah is the Giver of security, the Owner of peace and salvation, the Merciful, and the Lord of humankind

(Fatiha, 1:1-4; Hashr, 59:22-23; Furqan, 25:26; Nas, 114:1-2). These names serve as promises illustrating that our Lord, despite the vastness of His power, places priority on forgiveness, giving security and salvation, and manifesting His mercy.

The relationship between Allah the Almighty’s power over the visible world is described as His being Malik al-Mulk, while His sovereignty over the invisible worlds is described as His being Malik al-Malakut. Hence, those who allow Allah’s authority to rule and command in both their inner and outer worlds are referred to as ‘mu’min’ (believers). In contrast, those who make Allah’s authority prevail only in their outer worlds are called ‘munafiq’

(hypocrites), and those who accept this authority in their inner world but do not reflect this authority in the reality of the outer world are called ‘fasiq’ (transgressors). Human beings are endowed with both physical eyes and the spiritual insight of the heart to comprehend this dual ownership of Allah.

Thus, al-Qushayri says that anyone who attains the consciousness that Allah is the sole Owner will not bow down to any created being. The fact that some people are willing to abandon honor and moral principles and do anything for money in order to gain power can lead those who possess such power to believe they are all-powerful. Therefore, the perception that people with certain forms of power (such as status, wealth, etc.) can open any door with their influence is, in part, a result of the people around them organizing all their relationships according to power dynamics. In other words, the more we value worldly powers and not Malik al-Mulk (the Owner of all), the more



we inadvertently nurture and reinforce their tyranny over us.

However, merely not submitting to the forces of the external world is not enough to make us virtuous. While gaining external freedom, people should not lose sight of mastering their own nafs (soul) and bodies and should not neglect the path to becoming masters of their inner world. When Allah gives us a share of His property for a while, instead of being proud of it and thinking highly of ourselves, we should

try to gain permanent positions in the sight of Allah through this wealth and status. People should not forget their duties of worship and servitude to the Owner of all and should not base their self-importance solely on the favors they extend to those around them.

Again, those who have been bestowed with wealth and status by the grace of this ism al-sharif should observe how Allah the Almighty, as the rightful Owner of all, conducts His ownership. They should behave accordingly,

and not be miserly, nor should they fall into the error of extravagance. They should know that Allah is the true Owner of all, and they should not judge people according to their wealth and status. In addition to all these, as a manifestation of the name “al-Malik”, the people entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing any earthly endeavor should exercise complete control and ownership over every stage of that endeavor. This is essential because often, the absence of effective

management, stemming from weakness and incompetence, can result in the loss of property.

In the end, it’s crucial to recognize that everything we perceive as our possessions in this world is, in reality, temporarily worldly assets entrusted to us. We and everything we think we own belongs entirely to Allah. To avoid any misconception in this regard, it’s essential to remember that we are but travelers and guests in His vast property for a brief moment in time.

Islam in MALAYSIA

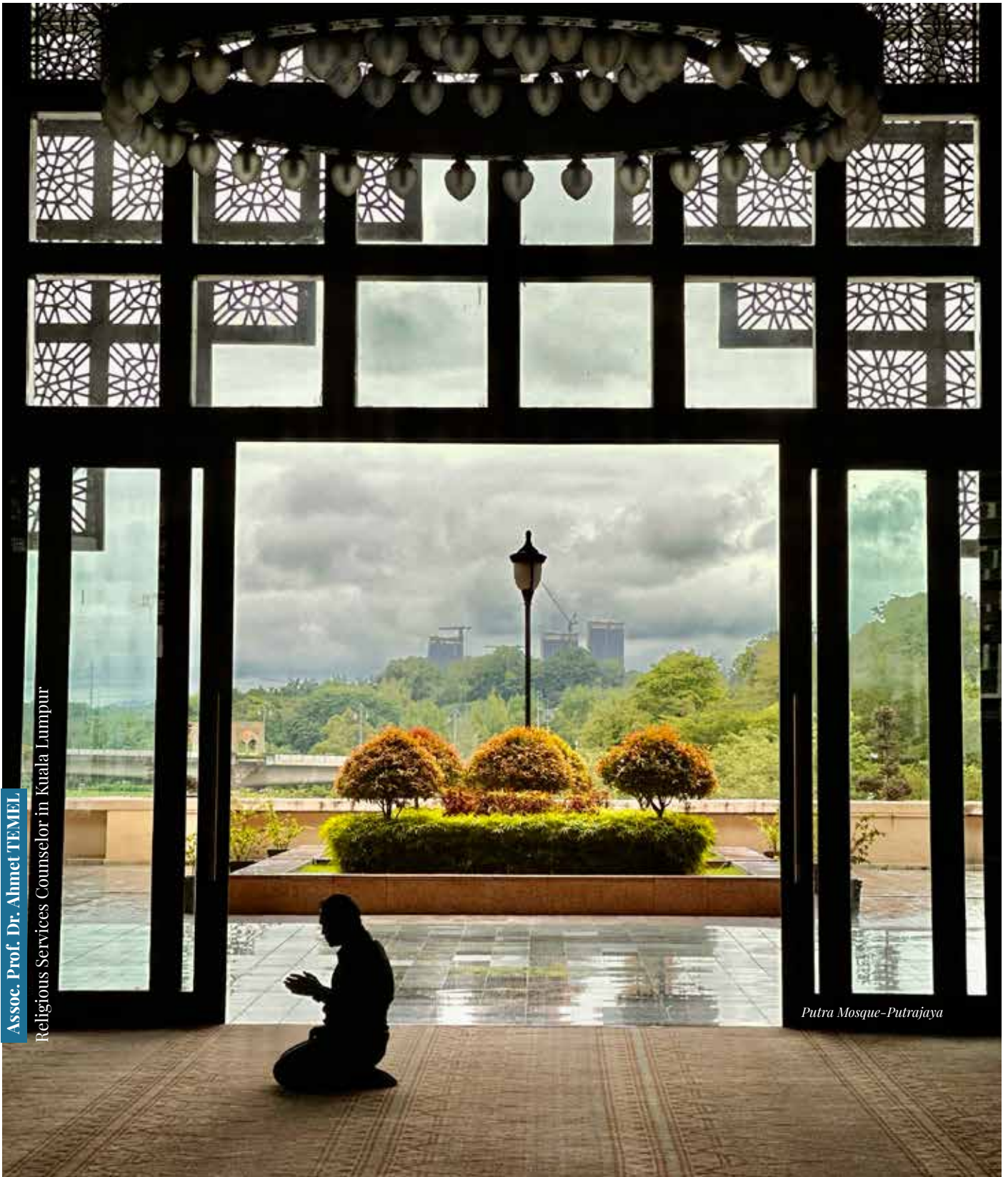
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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet TEMEL

Religious Services Counselor in Kuala Lumpur



Putra Mosque-Putrajaya

Malaysia, a Southeast Asian nation known for its diverse cultural heritage and picturesque landscapes, has a rich history deeply intertwined with Islam. Islam's arrival and subsequent spread in Malaysia played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's identity, culture, politics, and society.

The arrival of Islam

The history of Islam in Malaysia can be traced back to the 13th century when Islam was introduced to the region through trade contacts with the Middle East and India. Merchants and traders from these regions brought not only their goods but also their faith, leading to the gradual conversion of the local population. This early phase of Islam's spread in Malaysia was peaceful and driven by trade relations.

One of the first regions in Malaysia to embrace Islam was the state of Kedah, where the Sultanate of Kedah officially converted to Islam in the 13th century. The Sultanate of Malacca officially embraced Islam in the 15th century. The exact year of this conversion is traditionally dated to 1414 during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Shah (also known as Parameswara), who was the first ruler of Malacca to convert to Islam. This conversion marked a



IKIM (Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding) Kuala Lumpur

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significant turning point in the history of the Malacca Sultanate and contributed to the Islamic heritage and influence in the region. Over time, Islam continued to spread across the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and other nearby islands.

During the 15th century, Sufism began to take root in Malaysia. Sufi orders like the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya played a significant role in the spiritual and cultural development of the Malay-Muslim community. Sufism contributed to the syncretic nature of Islam in Malaysia, blending indigenous customs and beliefs with Islamic teachings.

Islam in modern Malaysia

In 1957, Malaysia gained independence from British colonial rule, and Islam played a prominent role in shaping the newly established nation. The Federation of Malaya, later renamed Malaysia, adopted Islam

as the official religion, while safeguarding the rights of other religious communities. Today, the Constitution of Malaysia guarantees freedom of religion to all its citizens.

Contemporary Malaysia is known for its vibrant Muslim community, and Islam is an integral part of the nation's identity. As of 2023, Malaysia's population is 33.4 million. According to the Population and Housing Census 2023 figures, approximately 63.7% of the population practice Islam, 17.7% practice Buddhism, 9.4% Christianity, 6.0% Hinduism and 1.2% practice Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions. The predominant majority of Muslims in Malaysia adhere to the Sunni-Shafi'i school of jurisprudence, with approximately 18% of the population identifying as non-denominational Muslims.

Administration of Islamic Affairs in Malaysia

Malaysia is a parliamentary democracy based on a Federal Constitutional Monarchy. It consists of 13 states (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor and Terengganu) and one central state consisting of

*The Crystal Mosque-Terengganu**National Mosque-Kuala Lumpur*

three federal territories (Wilayah Persekutuan: Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, Putrajaya). The head of state is the King (Yang di-Pertuan Agong-Paramount Ruler). The King is also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and head of religious institutions. The King is elected every five years by rotation by the “Malay Sultans’ Conference” (established: 1 July 1896) consisting of the sultans of nine states (except Melakka, Pulau Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, which had no sultans during the British rule). The governors of the four states (Melakka, Pulau Penang, Sabah, and Sarawak) are also members of the Sultans’ Conference; however, they do not participate in the election of the King. The highest authority for religious administration in Malaysia is therefore the “Conference of Sultans” and the King elected by

*Putra Mosque-Putrajaya**National Mosque-Kuala Lumpur*

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this council. The decisions of the Sultans’ Conference, especially the dates of the beginning of Ramadan and the dates of Eid, are announced to the public by the Keeper of the Great King’s Seal (the office was established in 1948), who acts as the secretariat of the council. While the highest religious authority in the internal affairs of the nine states, each of which is ruled by a sultan, is the sultan of that state; at the federal level, the Minister of Religious Affairs on behalf of the Prime Minister within

the cabinet is the highest authority in terms of executive power. The Conference of Sultans shapes the MKI (National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia), the highest council for religious affairs at the national level, while official organizations such as JAKIM (The main body for execution of religious affairs in federal level), JAWHAR (coordinates the affairs of Waqf, Zakat, Property and Hajj/Umrah), YADIM (Malaysian Islamic Dawah Foundation), and TABUNG HAJI (Hajj Fund)

which carry out executive activities, operate as offices under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Each state has its own Islamic Religious Council, mufti, sharia courts, and religious administrative officials, as well as its own justice administration officials. At the state level, three main authorities are the actors of religious administration:

1. The Islamic Affairs Council (Majlis Agama Islam): This is the provincial supreme council that assists the Sultan by being responsible for Islamic religious affairs other than fatwa and Islamic law.

2. State Mufti: The provincial mufti and deputy mufti are appointed by the Sultan of the province in charge of fatwa affairs at the provincial level to exercise the Sultan's authority in Sharia matters.

3. Sharia Courts: It has jurisdiction over the application of Islamic law, particularly family law, waqf law, and some religious punishments.

Religious architecture

Malaysia has more than 6800 mosques. Almost every neighborhood has a small masjid called surau in the local language. One of the most visited mosques among them is The Federal Territory

National Mosque-Kuala Lumpur



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ISLAM'S
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Mosque, which is located in the central area of the Segambut district in Kuala Lumpur. This mosque's architectural design was influenced by the Ottoman Empire of the 16th century, with a particular focus on Sultanahmet Camii (the Blue Mosque) in Istanbul. It features 22 domes of different sizes, all beautifully adorned with stunning turquoise tiles. The Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque in Shah Alam district, also known as the Blue Mosque, stands out as the largest mosque in the country in terms of its seating capacity with 24,000 people. It captivates the visitors with its splendid blue-and-silver dome and

the four grand minarets that reach an impressive height of 142.2 meters at each corner. Other than these The National Mosque, Putra Mosque, and the Crystal Mosque are attracting visitors.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye in Malaysia appointed its first counsellor of religious affairs in Malaysia in August 2022. Although the Turkish population in the country is not big, the increasing partnerships on different levels between the two countries necessitated the presence of religious diplomacy. The religious counselor's office builds bridges with counterpart institutions in Türkiye in the field of religious administration of the country and academic institutes focusing on Islamic sciences. In this context, it proceeds with the procedures concerning different memoranda of understanding, particularly those involving the Presidency of Religious Affairs, JAKIM, and academic institutions. Furthermore, the religious counselor's office has launched a Values Education Course at the Yunus Emre Institute in Kuala Lumpur for Turkish children in the age groups of 4-6 years and 7-15 years, and it is currently ongoing with considerable success.

ISMA‘IL RAJI AL-FARUQI: A PHILOSOPHER WHO PUTS TAWHID AT THE CENTER

Koray SERBETCI



The process of shaping his identity and personality

Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi was born on January 21, 1921, in Jaffa, Palestine. He completed his primary and secondary education at St. Joseph's College before pursuing his undergraduate studies in philosophy at the American University of Beirut.

Faruqi's Western-style education would prove advantageous, allowing him to offer a comparative analysis of Western and Islamic thought as a Muslim intellectual. Additionally, he served in administrative capacities, including as the final Palestinian governor of Galilee from 1945 to 1948. His familiarity with the political atmosphere of the era was extensive, as evidenced by his persistent defense of the rights of Palestinians, who were being relegated to second-class status in their own land. However, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 represented a turning point in his life and that of the people of the region. Unable to remain in occupied Palestine, he emigrated to the United States.

Upon reaching the United States, the education he had received laid a solid

foundation for him. He did not abandon intellectual activity, pursuing graduate studies in philosophy at Indiana University and Harvard University. He completed his doctoral dissertation on "Justifying the Good: Metaphysics and Epistemology of Value" at Indiana University in 1952.

However, Faruqi did not limit himself to studying Western thought as an Easterner. He pursued his own intellectual roots with a similar level of seriousness and enthusiasm. To this end, he spent three years studying the religious sciences at Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Later, he began teaching in the United States. While teaching at universities in the country, he emphasized the importance of promoting an organized Muslim presence in Western society. To ensure cultural solidarity among Muslim students, he established a close relationship with members of the "Muslim Students Association" and guided them on scientific and intellectual issues. He went even further by founding the Islamic Studies Department at Temple University in Philadelphia and the "American Islamic College" in Chicago.



ACCORDING TO FARUQI, TAWHID IS THE ESSENCE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT, BOTH AS A PRINCIPLE THAT RECONCILES KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH AND AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR ALL STEPS OF THOUGHT AND LIFE.

These institutions served not only to fulfill the sense of belonging of Muslims residing in the West but also to offer a prescription of ideas for all Muslims against the hardships engendered by the twentieth century through their scientific and intellectual endeavors.

He resided in the United States while continuing his scholarly activities. Despite this, a part of him was always in touch with the Muslim world. He maintained contact with Islamic research institutions in Pakistan, India, South Africa, Malaysia, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, contributing significantly to their projects, implementation, and consultancy efforts.

Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi and his wife, Lois Lamya, were murdered in their home in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, on May 27, 1986, in a knife attack during sahur time. The incident caused widespread repercussions in the Muslim world.

Ideas expressed by Faruqi

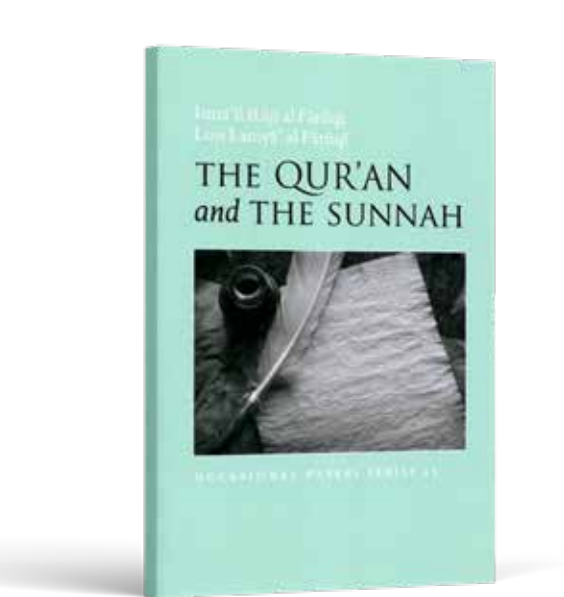
Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi was a highly esteemed intellectual figure in the Muslim world in the twentieth century. He engaged in diverse fields of study and developed

his own ideas based on years of research. His expertise spanned across various disciplines, including comparative history of religions, art, history of thought, political philosophy, Western philosophy and theology, moral metaphysics, epistemology, and ontology.

However, his central concern in all these areas was the position that Muslims ought to adopt in a modern world shaped by a new era.

According to Faruqi, Muslims faced a major dilemma in the second half of the nineteenth century until the twentieth century. They merely imitated the West without attaining any noteworthy successes, which presented a fundamental issue.

In the political atmosphere that emerged after the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the nineteenth century, artificial borders emerged in the Muslim world, resulting in a sense of despair among the ummah, as noted by Faruqi. The establishment of this political foundation by Western imperialist colonizers resulted in the creation of new issues. Foreign interpretations dominated the Muslim



mindset through the colonial establishments instituted by the West in Muslim territories. The cultural and intellectual dynamics of the Muslim ummah deteriorated over time, losing their distinctive qualities and becoming unrecognizable. Under the guise of modernization, Western academic institutions were introduced, and English and French were adopted as languages of education. This also affected the mindset of Muslims. Over time, foreign myths infiltrated the consumption and clothing habits, home decor and furnishings, the streets, avenues, and zoning of the cities in which the Muslims



FARUQI'S WESTERN-STYLE EDUCATION WOULD PROVE ADVANTAGEOUS, ALLOWING HIM TO OFFER A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WESTERN AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT AS A MUSLIM INTELLECTUAL.

lived, their societal organization, and the way in which they spent their leisure time. Due to this infiltration, Muslims gradually deviated from the genuineness of their intellectual identity, to the extent that Muslims, in general, have become chaotic in both their thinking and their lives. This is because, after extensive imitation, Muslims could be neither distinctly Islamic nor Western.

Faruqi's proposed solution

Faruqi, who identified and diagnosed the conflict in the Muslim world, emphasized proactive steps rather than succumbing to despair. Unlike individuals and groups who only provide political prescriptions for the Muslim world to get back on its feet, he revealed his uniqueness by addressing the issue of mindset, where the defeat began in the first place.

His greatest thesis was the "Islamization of Knowledge" project, which he believed would serve as a remedy for the salvation of the Muslims. But what did this mean and how was it to be realized?

According to Faruqi, there was a need for an

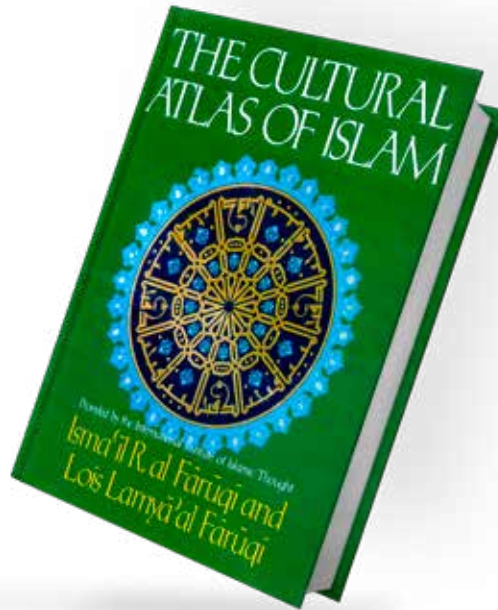
educational method and educational institutions that would cultivate a new worldview that reflected the spirit of Islam. This would be of utmost priority since only such a worldview could guarantee the salvation of Muslims. Muslims would not be able to provide unique institutions, produce scientists and politicians, or generate novel economic and social ideas without a worldview that is distinctively their own.

What is the meaning of this Islamic worldview?

By this, Faruqi meant a set of rules produced on the basis of the oneness of Allah, the oneness of reality/truth, the oneness of knowledge, the oneness of humanity, and the oneness of life, based on the inseparability of reason and revelation. This concept constituted the Islamization of knowledge. The roadmap for this endeavor included five fundamental conditions: thoroughly mastering modern disciplines, completely refining Islamic cultural heritage, achieving special compatibility and reconciliation between Islam and every field of modern knowledge, developing methods for a productive synthesis of Islamic cultural heritage and modern knowledge,

and placing Islamic thought on a trajectory that would fulfill the divine model and make it operational.

The basic compass of this roadmap was “tawhid”. According to Faruqi, tawhid is the essence of Islamic thought, both as a principle that reconciles knowledge and truth and as a guiding principle for all steps of thought and life. In brief, tawhid represents a worldview. This view is an axis view for Muslim individuals. In other words, for Muslims, metaphysics, science, history, ethics, morality, art, social, political, and economic systems are all areas that should be



interpreted based on this principle.

In short, according to Faruqi, with the project of Islamization of knowledge, contemporary ideas would be reshaped, defined, and regulated through the filter of the Islamic worldview. Consequently, the mental framework of Muslim individuals would be restructured according to their unique worldview, thus freeing them from blind imitation and preventing degeneration. The Muslim population could offer its distinct perspective to help solve contemporary issues and regain global prominence, as it did during past centuries.

The greatest proof of this is hidden in the golden ages of Islamic civilization. During these periods, the Muslim world Islamized the scientific heritage of civilizations such as India, Ancient Greece, and Persia, and incorporated them into the Islamic sphere of knowledge and culture, reaching its zenith. Today, by progressing through five stages of modern knowledge and grounding it in tawhid, the contemporary Muslim world has the potential to break free from these chains.



**ISMA'IL RAJI
AL-FARUQI
WAS A HIGHLY
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THE MUSLIM
WORLD IN THE
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THE PEARL OF THE EAST AND THE WEST

HAGIA SOPHIA

Sumeyra CELIK

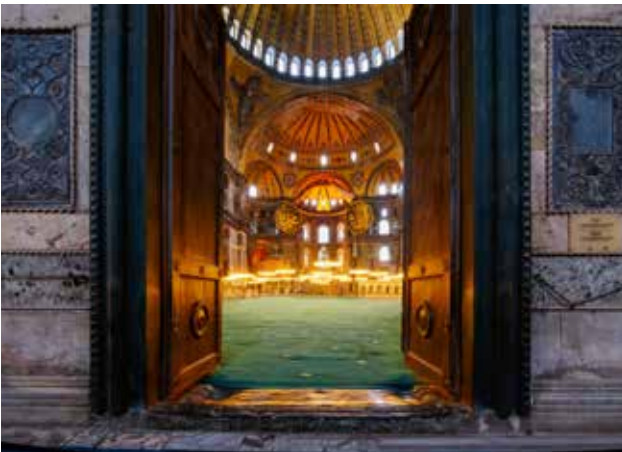




The significance of place is a key factor in influencing individuals. The beliefs and values held by individuals also shape their connection to a place. Throughout history, humanity has constructed buildings that reflect its own thoughts and beliefs. In this context, the masjid plays a significant role for Muslims on the axis of faith, worship, and morality. The construction of a masjid by Prophet Muhammad in Medina following the hijrah stands as an enduring example for Muslims, emphasizing the unity of mosques and people. Hence, traditional Islamic cities center on the mosques, and life flows around the mosques.

Hagia Sophia, despite emerging on the historical stage about 15 centuries ago, remains a monument of intense attention to this day. The conquest of Istanbul holds significance not only for the Muslim world but also for world history. This momentous event has set unique examples in the name of humanity and morality, faith and values, freedom, and reconstruction. The Prophet's (saw) words praising the conquest of Istanbul were the driving force behind Mehmed II's decision to undertake the conquest. Seeking to be the recipient of the Prophet's glad tidings, Mehmed II embraced this

ambition when he was still a young boy. The above-mentioned hadith can be seen on a plaque dated 1109/1698, which is placed near the Emperor's Door of Hagia Sophia. On the morning of Tuesday, May 29, 1453, on this historic day that ushered in an era and ended another, the people took refuge in Hagia Sophia with fear and anxiety. When the Sultan entered this magnificent building, he was first impressed by its splendor and magnificence and thanked Allah for the conquest. He granted life and safety to the anxiously awaiting people and then performed the prayer of gratitude in a suitable place within Hagia Sophia. The khutbah for the conquest was delivered, and Friday prayers were performed in Hagia Sophia. Consequently, Mehmed II earned the title of the Conqueror for capturing the city, often referred to as the pearl of the east and the west. To commemorate the victory, Mehmed the Conqueror converted the city's largest church into a mosque but retained the name Hagia Sophia, which means "Wisdom of God". Therefore, this place of worship became one of the symbols of the Muslim world and Istanbul became a sister city to Mecca, Medina, and al-Quds. Mehmed the Conqueror



allocated considerable amounts of funds for the maintenance, repair, and all kinds of needs of Hagia Sophia. Due to the great civilization of endowment, Hagia Sophia, which was on the verge of collapse, withstood the test of time and has persevered to this day through the reinforcement

efforts subsequent to its conquest. For 481 years, from the conquest until 1934, Hagia Sophia stood as one of the largest mosques in Istanbul and the Muslim world. After being closed for worship for an extended period, the great mosque was reopened on July 24, 2020, as the Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque,



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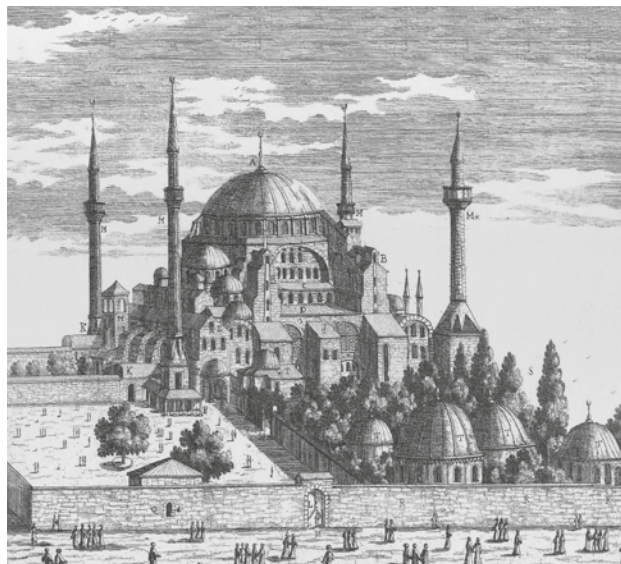
marking the end of an 86-year hiatus. The reopening of the Grand Mosque was met with immense joy in the Muslim world and continues to attract Muslims from around the globe.

Following the conquest, numerous initiatives were undertaken to establish Istanbul as a center of knowledge and wisdom. The city was adorned with social complexes that included mosques, madrasas, covered markets, bathhouses, medical centers, and soup kitchens. Mehmed the Conqueror converted Hagia Sophia into a social complex, repurposing structures on the north side into madrasas. During the Ottoman era, Hagia Sophia served as a social complex with classes conducted in the mosque, madrasa, and library. The Hagia Sophia Library, inaugurated during the reign of Mahmud I with the complete recitation of Bukhari and had a collection of 4000 works, continued scholarly activities until 1924. Even today, hadith classes are conducted within its walls.

With gradual additions of new structures, Hagia Sophia took its present and complete form. Following the wooden minaret constructed during the conquest plans, Mehmed the Conqueror had another brick minaret built in the southeast corner.

Subsequently, Mimar Sinan constructed a minaret on the northeast corner and twin minarets on the west side and strengthened the mosque with buttresses. Sixteen couplets from the “Qasida al-Burda” are inscribed in gilded calligraphy on the outer faces of the marble portico arches of the elegant fountain. The tulip-shaped finial of the fountain bears the verse “And We created from water every living thing” (Anbiya, 21:30).

The first of the Sultan’s mausoleums of Hagia Sophia, built around the city’s great mosques as a tradition, was built for Selim II and was also the work of Mimar Sinan. In the following periods, the minaret, minbar (pulpit), and mahfil (loge) were added to the architecture of the grand mosque. With significant emphasis placed on its interior decoration, Hagia Sophia was ornamented with the tile-written basmala al-sharif in 1607. The world’s largest calligraphic roundels, written by Kazasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi in the 19th century, adorn the great mosque with their magnificence. The following verse 35 of the Surah al-Nur written on the colossal dome, is like the seal of the mosque, “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a crystal, and the crystal is like a shining star, lit from the



oil of a blessed olive tree, located neither to the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow, even without being touched by fire. Light upon light! Allah guides whoever He wills to His light. And Allah sets forth parables for humanity. For Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.” Moreover, the sultan’s tughra, crafted from the mosaics of Hagia Sophia during the reign of Abdulmejid I, has earned a place in art history as an exceptional calligraphy practice. Many calligraphy plates that were once housed in Hagia Sophia have been relocated to other locations, with some remaining unexhibited, including several now found in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Additionally, numerous calligraphies and inscriptions adorn various places, such as the sultan’s loge, library, almshouse, treasury building, fountain, and mausoleums, although specific details about these locations have not been mentioned here.

This magnificent mosque, with its captivating ambiance, imposing size, opulent mosaics, vibrant marbles, harmonious integration of architectural elements and art, intricate tiling, ornate calligraphy, embellishments, and its significant religious, political, and historical ties will undoubtedly endure as a centerpiece for centuries to come.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



Where is Allah (swt), can I see and hear Him?

Why the Qur'an is the last holy book?

The Holy Qur'an is a book sent to all people. Its messages are universal. It is full of truth and wisdom that will answer the needs of every age. As it is under the protection of Allah, its provisions will continue until the Day of Judgment (Hijr, 15:9). In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says that Prophet Muhammad is the last of the prophets (Ahzab, 3:40), and the religion is finalized and completed with him (Ma'idah, 5:3). The completion of the religion means that no new religion will be sent and that the provisions of the last book will be valid till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an is the final scripture from Allah (swt).

Being in a place and venue is a feature of creatures. However, our Lord is not a created being. It would not be the right approach to attribute a place, or location to Allah (swt) within the realm He created. Allah (swt) is the creator of everyone and everything, and His presence is beyond all our thoughts. There are many things we cannot see in the world.

This is not because they do not exist in the world, but because our eyes do not have the ability to see them. It is not possible for us to comprehend the Almighty Allah (swt) directly through our senses. Our Lord explains this by saying, "No vision can encompass Him, but He encompasses all vision. For He is the Most Subtle, All-Aware." (An'am, 6:103) in the Holy Qur'an. Even though we cannot see Him, our Lord is everywhere with the manifestation of His names and qualities – just as the Sun penetrates everywhere with its heat and light.

Can we see angels?

Angels are metaphysical beings. They are created from light. We cannot see and perceive them with our sense organs. We cannot see them not because they do not exist, but because our eyes are not created with the capacity to see them. However, angels were seen by prophets in their actual forms. With Allah's permission, angels can take on different shapes and disguises. It is possible for them to be seen by other people, if they come out of their original form and take on another material shape, for example, human shape. For instance, Jibril who is an angel was seen as a human by the companions of the Prophet in the hadith known as the hadith of Gabriel, in which the definitions of the concepts of faith, Islam, and beneficence were made (Muslim, Iman, 1). In the Qur'an, it is said that the angels disguised themselves as humans and gave the good news to Prophet Ibrahim that he would have a son (Hud, 11:69-70). It is also stated in the Qur'an that the angel Gabriel (Jibril) appeared as a human to Maryam even though she was not a prophet (Maryam, 19:16-17) (M. Sait Ozervarli, "Melek," Encyclopedia of Islam, v. 29, p. 40-42)

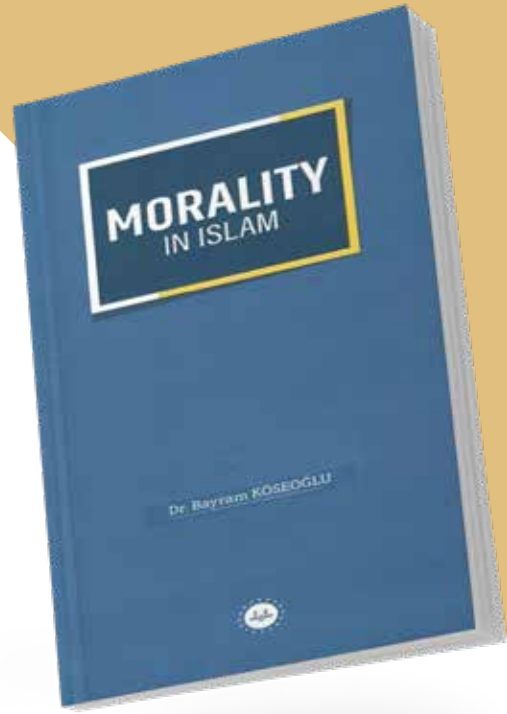
What is the explanation of the principle of tawhid?

The foundation of the religion of Islam is based on the principle of tawhid, namely the belief in the unity of Allah (swt). This principle is summarized in the sentences of Kalima al-Tawhid and Kalima al-Shahada. Kalima al-Tawhid, "La-ilaha illallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah", means that "there is no god but Allah (swt), and the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is His messenger". Kalima al-Shahada is the sentence of "Ash-hadu an la-ilaha illallah Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa Rasuluh" and it means "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah (swt) and that Prophet Muhammad (saw) is the servant and messenger of Allah". The principle of tawhid means that Allah (swt) is One and Unique in His entity, attributes, and actions. The fact that Allah (swt) is One in His entity means that He is the only One, and there is nothing equal, similar nor opposite to Him. The fact that Allah (swt) is One in His attributes means that His qualities are not found in anyone else. For example; the fact that Allah (swt) has the attribute of life and the living things' life is not the same. The life of Allah (swt) is an attribute that is not given by anyone else, has no beginning and end, does not need conditions like breathing and so on. There are also some attributes that belong only to Allah (swt). Like creating out of nothing, having no beginning or end, not needing anything else, and everybody needing Him... The fact that Allah is One in His actions means that it is only Allah who creates and administers the universe from nothing.

It is against the principle of tawhid to accept gods other than Allah (swt), to pray and worship others besides Allah, to believe that anyone other than Allah knows about the future, and to show respect and tribute to other beings that can only be shown to Him.

MORALITY IN ISLAM

Meryem KILIC



Almighty Allah (swt) sent prophets and books to guide people to the truth and goodness. Thus, He revealed divine religions that encompassed orders and prohibitions for people to follow. Religion, in the most general sense, can be described as the path set by Almighty Allah (swt), chosen by individuals with their own minds and wills, leading them to the truth and goodness in terms of faith and deeds. “Iman,” which signifies surrendering to Allah’s orders and prohibitions and being wholeheartedly committed, also necessitates moral conduct.

Separating morality from religion means separating the inner world of man from himself. However, the human being is a whole with his inner world. Morality encompasses not only certain behaviors of a person but also the whole

of one’s life. According to this perspective, in addition to all aspects of a person’s life and actions, his relationship with living and non-living things around him is also considered within the scope of morality. The person’s relations with the family, society, and environment in which he lives are also included in the scope of morality. In this context, morality is at the center of religions sent by God. Similarly, Islam as the last divine religion is a source of morality. The two main sources of Islam, the Qur’an, and the sunnah, are also the source of morality.

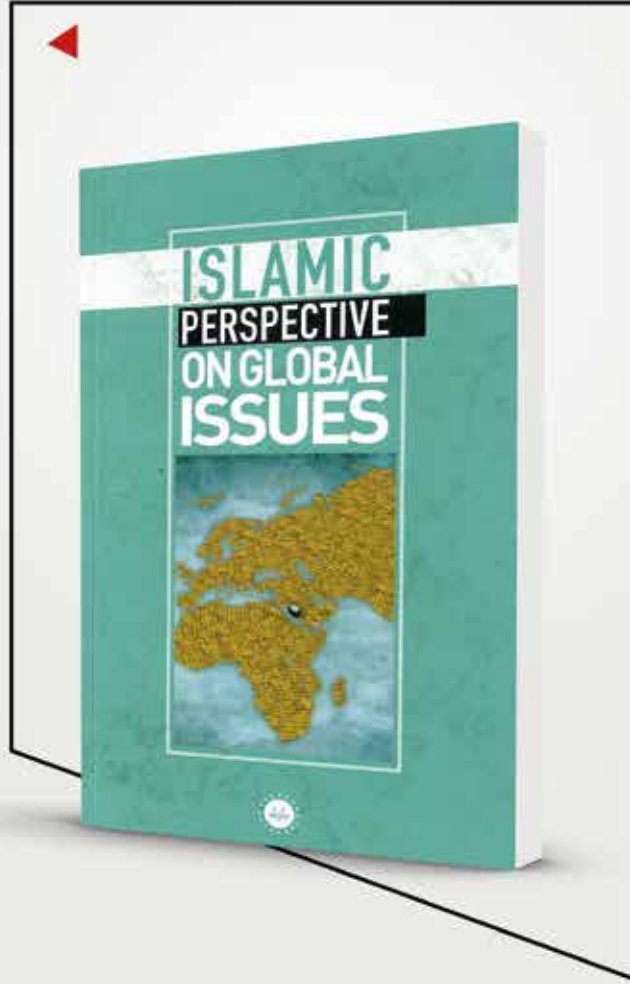
The Qur’an, as the primary source of the religion of Islam, not only guides people on how to have a correct faith and how to worship Allah but also imparts teachings on the moral characteristics they should embody in their

daily lives. In this context, the Qur’an also provides a source of morality by revealing what is right and wrong.

The sunnah, as the second source of morality after the Qur’an, embodies the life of the Prophet (saw) in its broadest sense. Our Almighty Lord (swt) presents the life of our Prophet (saw) as an exemplary model for us in the Qur’an, stating “I was sent to perfect good character.”

(Muwatta’, Husn al-Khuluq, 1) Through this hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) emphasizes that His life also serves as a source of morality. He (saw) consistently stressed the importance of good morals at every opportunity and encouraged Muslims to cultivate them on every occasion.

The book titled “Morality in Islam,” shedding light on the significance of moral values within the religion, stands as one of the publications of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Authored by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bayram Koseoglu, the book delves into the definitions of morality and adab. It seeks to answer crucial questions such as the source of morality, the manifestations of morality, the means to attain morality, and the moral characteristics a Muslim should embody. We present this valuable book, which discusses in a simple and comprehensible style what a Muslim with good morals should be like, for the benefit of our esteemed readers.



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**“Whoever does good, whether male or female,
and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good
life, and We will certainly reward them according to
the best of their deeds.”**

(Nahl, 16:97)