

Diyanet Journal

ISSUE 5 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

LIVING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD WITH OUR MUSLIM VALUES

| Free From All Imperfections: Al-Quddus

| The Great Mosque Of Qurtuba

| Digital Age and Cryptocurrency



Tile art

Tile art is an ornamental art that is practiced in many parts of the world. In its simplest form, tile art involves decorating objects such as tiles, porcelain, and ceramics by adorning them with various figures. The protective transparent layer formed by the melting glaze on the plate made of tile paste as a result of coloring and glazing of various-shaped plates and firing them has become the basis of tile art. This layer not only provides durability but also imbues architectural decorations with enduring colorfulness that resists fading over time.



Editorial

In the last century, our world has witnessed astonishing developments. The rapid advancement of technology has led to increased convenience in transportation and communication, as well as the invention of various economic systems. Societies and social institutions have had to adapt to these new developments brought about by technology. With this new era, which is often described as “modern” and built on grandiose rhetoric, the world today is facing what could be considered the greatest crisis of meaning in history.

One of the most serious problems facing the Muslim world in the modern era is how Muslims can survive in the modern era while preserving their values. This is because past events have clearly shown that people can only continue to exist with their values, and when they lose their values, they lose their future. In modern life, Muslims need analyses that bring order to their world of faith and values in the midst of rapid change and interaction. In a world like this, the Muslim identity should be founded on the faith and values offered by Islam, and the individual and social behavior of believers should be nourished by these faith and values. In this context, building the world they live in on the basis of Islamic values is the only way for Muslims to exist in modern society with their own values.

In the latest issue of Diyanet Journal, we are pleased to present you with a subject titled “Living in the Contemporary World with Our Muslim Values”. Dr. Huseyin Ari, who stated that human beings should preserve their fitrah (nature) and stay away from all kinds of factors that may corrupt it, also presents us with the article titled “Corruption of Fitrah and Family Structure: The Ideology of Desexualization”. Additionally, in our “The World of Tomorrow” column, Seracettin Yildiz contributes an insightful article titled “Digital Age and Cryptocurrency”, exploring the implications of the digital era and the rise of cryptocurrency. Furthermore, we are delighted to feature an interview with Savas Barkcin, who shares his valuable insights on how Muslims should exist with their values in today’s world.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere congratulations to all Muslims as we embark upon the month of Ramadan. May Allah the Almighty grant us the privilege of celebrating many more eids in unity, togetherness, and solidarity. We look forward to meeting you in our next issue and wish you a pleasant time reading.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

EXISTING IN THE MODERN WORLD WITH OUR VALUES



Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAS

The President
Presidency of Religious Affairs

The world has witnessed extraordinary developments since the Industrial Revolution, especially in the last half century with the widespread adoption of digital technologies. Humanity has undergone significant change and transformation during this time. This process has globalized communication, making daily life easier, but it has also led to uncontrolled interaction, resulting in new and intricate problems concerning life and social relations. In fact, people, societies, and states are competing to take full advantage of the opportunities of the modern world while simultaneously struggling with the enormous religious, economic, moral,

social, political, cultural, and environmental problems caused by this change.

We are currently witnessing an era in which human virtues are weakening, materialistic ideologies are distancing individuals from their essence, and knowledge, faith, and morality are being undermined, with values being discredited. The Internet and digital media, prominent innovations of the modern age, have turned into spaces for dominant cultures to market their values. Especially in recent years, new thoughts, attitudes, habits, and behaviors have been influencing large masses of people through social media, which has become the primary medium of

communication and has pervaded every aspect of life, thus becoming highly determinative in daily life. Approaches such as disbelief, narcissism, individualism, and sexlessness, which have become widespread in this field and have undermined human nature, bring along deep deviations in terms of values that serve to determine the correctness, appropriateness, effectiveness, goodness, and morality of behaviors.

In fact, at the heart of the individual and social problems of the modern era lies a serious neglect of human nature. Understandings that seek to shape life solely through positive science and popular culture have unfortunately emphasized only the material and egoistic aspects of human beings, neglecting the spiritual and moral dimensions that render them valuable. Despite achieving great scientific and technological advances on a global scale, the same success has unfortunately not been manifested in terms of human values. On the contrary, there has been a significant decline compared to the past, and evolving lifestyles have made it exceedingly challenging to preserve and transmit values to future generations. The modern world, having grafted a virtual life and artificial values through the technological means at

its disposal, has suffered the biggest crises of meaning and morality in history as a painful consequence of neglecting ancient and universal values.

Indeed, life derives its meaning from theological, social, legal, humanitarian, and moral values that serve as guiding principles of behavior. It is a well-known fact that societies that neglect to protect their values and make no effort to transmit them to future generations have historically suffered great material and spiritual destruction. We observe that the demise of many tribes and peoples whose narratives are recounted in the Qur'an is attributable to their indifference toward values. Therefore, societies that have a vision of the future are obliged to stay away from all kinds of wrong beliefs, thoughts, understandings, and behaviors that will cause the erosion and degradation of the values that are of vital importance to them. Societies that turn their backs on their values, and neglect them, will not only fail to build an ideal life but will also lose their ambitions for the future and thus become vulnerable to the exploitation of others.

The resolution of the contemporary global crises of meaning and morality depends on people establishing

their relationship with themselves, their Lord, and the universe in the light of reason and under the guidance of revelation. Only by achieving this can people turn their existential crises into serenity. Therefore, there is a pressing need today for a vision of life, and the formation of a morality that will restore the balance between reason and revelation, matter and meaning, and soul and body. Humanity, having lost its way and direction amidst the maelstrom of wars, occupations, and material and spiritual crises, is in need of the revitalizing truths and universal values of Islam and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who transformed the Qur'an into a lived life. For this reason, in order to address the contemporary problems facing humanity, it is crucial to reintroduce Islam's vision of existence and life to humanity with an understanding that puts human virtues and moral values at the center, and to work to this end.

The responsibility of producing a work that will eliminate the problems and deviations caused by the modern age, bring a breath of fresh air to the world, and give hope to humanity lies on the shoulders of the Muslim ummah, which Allah the Almighty, characterizes as "the moderate ummah" and which He honors as

"the best ummah ever raised for humanity". This responsibility rests on all of us as Muslims. In terms of faith, knowledge, values, and experience, we possess more than enough power and means to ensure the peace, security, and prosperity of all humanity and to build a new world that is livable for everyone. In this context, our sublime religion, which aims to ensure the inviolability of religion, life, mind, progeny, and property by placing faith, knowledge, worship, and good morals at the center of life; and our civilization, which brings all humanity together around values such as rights, law, justice, mercy, truthfulness, trust, and sincerity, regardless of their belief, race, color, geography, and social status, are great opportunities for us. At this point, what needs to be done first is to protect our own values, to try to exist with our values in every field, and to represent our values in the best way possible through our lives. In this manner, humanity will have the opportunity to encounter through us the revitalizing values of our sublime book, the Qur'an, to be introduced to the transcendent example set by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), and to benefit from the prosperous environment of the Islamic civilization.

CORRUPTION OF FITRAH AND THE FAMILY STRUCTURE: THE IDEOLOGY OF DESEXUALIZATION

Dr. Huseyin ARI

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



The Almighty Creator created humankind as the most perfect and distinguished creature in terms of physiological, spiritual, and mental abilities (Tin, 95:4; Taghabun, 64:3). As in the creation of every living creature, He (swt) endowed human beings with certain characteristics that are not of our choice. We do not have the ability or authority to change these characteristics, which are entirely at Allah's discretion. Just as we cannot choose which parents we are born to, we cannot choose our genetic codes that determine our eye color, skin color, and blood type. One of the distinctive genetic characteristics of human beings is their sex. Allah (swt) expresses this truth in the Holy Qur'an as follows: "Do people think they will be left without purpose? Were they not (once) a sperm-drop emitted? Then they became a clinging clot, then He developed and perfected their form, producing from it both sexes, male and female." (Qiyamah, 75:36-39) It is clear from this verse that gender is an innate characteristic, not an acquired one. Therefore, denying one's sex is tantamount to denying the truth, and trying to alter it is an attempt to disrupt Allah's original creation and is a grave error that will ultimately lead to disappointment.

The equivalent of genetic traits in Qur'anic terminology is fitrah. One of the most important concepts of the Holy Qur'an, fitrah, means the creation of something for the first time, physical and biological characteristics, character, temperament, the ability to recognize Allah, etc. Fitrah signifies the creation codes of creatures determined by Allah at the moment of the first creation and their initial state that has not yet been affected by external influences (Hokelekli, "Fitrat", *DIA*, 13/47). In the tafsir of the 30th verse of Surah al-Rum, the mufasssirs, while explaining the word fitrah, mostly emphasize the creation of human beings with the ability to recognize Allah and the harmony between the religion sent by Allah and the fitrah created in human beings. One of the issues that need to be emphasized in the context of fitrah, especially today, is the fact that people are born with the gender of male or female. Allah determines whether a person is male or female with the formation of "xx" and "xy" chromosomes in the womb. In the Holy Qur'an, it is stated that efforts to change the characteristics created by Allah, such as biological sex, are the instigations of Satan: "Allah has cursed Satan, who said, 'I will certainly mislead them



and delude them with empty hopes. Also, I will order them and they will slit the ears of cattle and alter Allah's creation.” (Nisa, 4:119) The expression “altering Allah's creation” in the verse has been interpreted by mufassirs as an interference with the first code of creation, the fitrah. Tafsir scholars have interpreted the interference with fitrah as permanent changes in the human body, such as tattooing, women trying to resemble men and men trying to resemble women, homosexuality, and people trying to alter their biological male and female gender. Based on these interpretations, we can summarize interference with fitrah as people using their bodies for purposes other than the purpose for which they were created and trying to change their innate characteristics for the sake of this purpose. This is considered a grave deviation and a major sin in Islam.

It is also possible to explain the fact that the fitrah must not be corrupted with the values that Islam commands to be protected. Islam has set the protection of religion, life, lineage (nasab), intellect, and property as the main goal for the happiness of individuals in this world and the Hereafter, as well as for the stability of society. The



ISLAM HAS SET THE PROTECTION OF RELIGION, LIFE, LINEAGE, INTELLECT, AND PROPERTY AS THE MAIN GOAL FOR THE HAPPINESS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER, AS WELL AS FOR THE STABILITY OF SOCIETY.

principle of “protection of life”, one of these values, initially appears to entail obligations such as refraining from unjustly taking life and avoiding harm to others' bodies. However, this principle also includes provisions such as preserving the mental health of individuals and not interfering with their bodies except for treatment. In this context, biological sex should be considered within the framework of what Islam commands to be protected. In addition, the ideology of desexualization violates the principle of protecting lineage. In a desexualized society, the institution of the family will be destroyed and it will become impossible to raise healthy generations.

Unfortunately, in contemporary times, there are external groups, often supported from outside our faith, tradition, and cultural norms, that reject the concept of biological sex. They actively promote the ideology of desexualization within society through various means in pursuit of their objectives. This ideology is instilled in the minds of young people, especially through some foreign music groups, iconic characters, TV series, and social media influencers. What this ideology wants to do in the world is to

build a society where biological sex is trivialized and where people live according to the gender they identify with. For those who support this idea, principles of faith, traditions, customs, and cultures are characterized as impositions and oppressions on human beings. It is argued that no matter what sex a person is born with, the choice of gender should be left to the individual. Therefore, raising children according to their biological sex is considered wrong. It is claimed that this ideology will eliminate the inequality between men and women in societies. However, mistakes made in the past cannot be compensated by making bigger mistakes. The West is grappling with the consequences of its historical treatment of women as second-class citizens, which included portraying them as demonic beings during the Middle Ages. However, in attempting to rectify these past injustices, some have made grave errors by corrupting the natural order (fitrah) and denying the physiological realities of women in the name of so-called freedom and equality.

This ideology has brought many new terms to the agenda. Non-binary (behaving and living as neither male nor female),



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agender, non-gendered, gender-free, and gender fluid (a non-fixed gender identity that shifts over time or depending on the situation) are some of these terms. All of these are based on a denial of biological sex and a non-discrimination between men and women in terms of sexuality. Such thinking and approach are aimed at creating a society without boundaries where faith-based values and moral principles are ignored. It's crucial to recognize that these ideas often target the family as one of their primary institutions. People who adhere to such ideologies often struggle to maintain a healthy family life due to the inherent conflicts with traditional family structures and values. Therefore, the spread of such deviant movements in society is actually aimed at destroying the institution of the family, which is the core of society.

Our religion's perspective on this issue is clear: Allah created human beings as male and female and wanted them to live according to their biological gender. Allah has set boundaries for male-female relationships and prohibited transgressing these limits. He has permitted sexual intercourse between a man and a woman only within the bounds of

a legitimate marriage. Engaging in sexual relations with one's own sex is considered heresy and a major sin. As all of Allah's commandments and prohibitions are in harmony with human nature, any attempt to disrupt them is defined as paving the way for evil and sin.

When considering this critical issue, the paramount message to convey is that individuals must strive to preserve their fitrah, their natural disposition, and avoid social environments and ideological circles that may lead to its corruption. It will not be possible for people whose fitrah has been corrupted, whose genetic codes have been manipulated, and whose psychology has been distorted to hear the truth of al-Haqq and turn to Him. Perhaps this is why the malicious circles that regard Islam as the greatest threat consider it their greatest duty to destroy the fitrah and strive to spread deviant tendencies that are contrary to it. In fact, these circles are waging war against both the biological existence of human beings and Allah the Almighty, Who created this existence. However, it should be known that one cannot emerge victorious from a war against Allah.

CHILD: THE HOPE THAT IS ENTRUSTED TO FAMILY

Difficult or easy, happy or sad, hopeful or hopeless... In whatever condition he or she comes to this world, every newborn child deserves a fitting welcome with Allah's blessing. Allah the Almighty introduces the newborn child to this world after determining if it is a boy or girl, its livelihood, and its time of death (Shura, 42:49-50; Bukhari, Qadar, 1). While parenting is a challenging test (Taghabun, 64:15), it is also viewed as a divine gift from Allah, enriching homes with blessings and abundance (Isra, 17:31) and infusing joy into the lives of parents. This sacred responsibility is bestowed upon parents to nurture a new life, a labor of love that spans a lifetime. A child needs the care, love, compassion, and support of his parents throughout his/her life. Thus, the parents are aware of their responsibilities for material and spiritual

assistance, which starts before the birth of the baby. Birth is just one stage of the child's life. It is the first step on a ladder s/he will climb throughout his/her life, and the first station on the way to the final destination.

The birth of a baby, heralding the arrival of a new member to the family, not only strengthens feelings of responsibility but also ignites a sense of excitement. While other family members may shoulder some of the new responsibilities according to their age, the real burden rests on the parents' shoulders. The parents should not be like the mother and father who first pray, "If you give us a good and healthy baby we will certainly be grateful," only to later when the child comes into the world attribute Allah's goodness to a partner (A'raf, 7:189-191). They should wholeheartedly embrace



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the child regardless of its gender, and be not like the Jahiliyya people, who would be happy when they had a boy, but be upset when they had a girl (Nahl, 16:58-59; Zukhruf, 43:17). They should not forget how precious children are—the adornments of worldly life— (Kahf, 18:46) and the parents should remember that Allah (swt) tests them through their children (Anfal, 8:28). From day one, parents should provide their children with the deepest compassion and purest love.

When we reflect on the life of our Prophet, we see that his first offering to a guest, who was an innocent baby, was a date. A softened bite from the date, accompanied by prayers, was given to the newborn child, marking a sweet start to life. Although this bite would not suffice to satisfy a suckling baby, shortly thereafter, the newborn would receive



nourishment from his mother's milk, a process lasting for two years (Baqarah, 2:233). Stating that the date was a blessed fruit (Tirmidhi, Zakat, 26), the Messenger of Allah (saw) welcomed the newborn brother of his little helper, Anas (ra), with this tradition, called "tahnik" (Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 107; B5824, Bukhari, Libas, 22). Explaining that his mother, Umm Sulaym (ra), sent her baby to the Prophet (saw) without nursing him, Anas said, "When we

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THE ACT OF GIVING A NAME TO A CHILD HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED AS A SIGNIFICANT CEREMONY.

found the Messenger of Allah (saw), he was busy branding animals for ritual slaughter. When he saw me, he said, 'I suppose Umm Sulaym gave birth,' and put down the branding iron. I put the baby in his lap. The Prophet (saw) asked for a Medina date, chewed it until it was soft, and put it in the baby's mouth. Tasting the date, the baby began licking. At this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'Look how he loved the date!' He stroked the baby's face and

gave him the name 'Abd Allah.'" (Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 107; Bukhari, Libas, 22)

Welcoming newborn babies with prayers for prosperity and blessing is our Prophet's tradition. The companions (ra) brought their newborn babies to the Prophet (saw) without delay, and the Prophet (saw) chewed a date for them, while at the same time saying prayers for them. What a great blessing it was for a baby whose soul was soothed



by prayers pouring from a worthy mouth and to hear a voice beseeching Allah (swt) on his behalf! Abu Musa (ra), eager not to deprive his son of this opportunity, recounts bringing his baby to the Prophet (saw), who along with prayers gave him the name Ibrahim, and put a softened date into his mouth (Bukhari, Adab, 109).

The act of giving a name to a child has long been regarded as a significant ceremony. Since ancient times it has been believed that children will live up to their names. Throughout history, people have been meticulous in selecting names, often participating in ceremonies where the chosen name is whispered into the baby's ear. As a link in this chain, our Prophet gave importance to this practice of giving a child his or her name. By saying, "On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father's names, so give yourselves good names," (Abu Dawud, Adab, 61) the Prophet (saw) reminded mothers and fathers of their responsibilities in this matter.

Introducing the newborn child to the adhan, the call to prayer, is an integral part of the naming ceremony. The Prophet (saw) recited the adhan in the ear of his grandson,



WHILE PARENTING IS A CHALLENGING TEST, IT IS ALSO VIEWED AS A DIVINE GIFT FROM ALLAH, ENRICHING HOMES WITH BLESSINGS AND ABUNDANCE AND INFUSING JOY INTO THE LIVES OF PARENTS.

Hasan, when he was born, just as it is recited at prayer times (Tirmidhi, Adahi, 16; Ibn Hanbal, VI, 10). With the adhan recited in a low voice in his right ear, and the iqama (also a call to prayer) into his left ear, the baby heard for the first time the three essential principles of Islam. In other words, the adhan speaks to him/her of Allah's existence and oneness, and of the Prophet's role as the Messenger of Allah (saw) and also explains that worship is the way to salvation and to attaining happiness in the Hereafter.

Having a beautiful name himself, our Prophet said to parents who wondered what the best time to name a child was, "Every newborn baby is like a security deposit until an aqiqa sacrifice is performed for them on the seventh day after birth. On the same day, the baby's head is shaven, and a name is given to him." (Abu Dawud, Dahaya, 20, 21; Nasa'i, 'Aqiqa, 5) It seems that the Prophet (saw), who named his son on the night he was born (Abu Dawud, Jana'iz, 23-24) didn't wish this ritual to be put off more than seven days.

After tasting worldly blessings with his mother's milk; finding an identity by getting a name; learning the divine message by listening to the adhan; paying a debt of gratitude for his soul through

sacrifice; and cleaning up by having his hair shaved, there is one more service to be offered for the child if it is a boy: circumcision. A male child's circumcision is not only a religious duty but also a very important step in terms of health.

Although there was no circumcision ceremony or celebratory banquet during the Prophet's time, we see that the companions (ra) started this tradition shortly after his death. For example, when his son was circumcised, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) sacrificed a ram and invited guests (Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 426). Moreover, Caliph 'Umar, upon hearing the sound of entertainment accompanied by a tambourine, asked, "What is this?" He was told, "It's a wedding or a circumcision ceremony." ('Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, XI, 5) In such celebrations, one needs to pay attention to our Prophet's warnings regarding wedding feasts, namely, to invite to the table not only the wealthy and notable people, but also those who are poor and needy, and to avoid waste and showiness. Perhaps most importantly, for the child who follows the Prophet Abraham's sunnah, prayers should be offered for a proper life in accordance with the Prophet's sunnah.

HALAL AND PURE NUTRITION

Dr. Abdulkadir ERKUT

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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

“O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth
and do not follow Satan’s footsteps. He is truly your sworn
enemy.”

(Baqarah, 2:168)

Allah the Almighty, created the heavens and the earth, the night and the day, the land and the sea, the clouds, the winds, the rain that gives life to the dead earth, and the whole world of existence, and placed it at the service of humankind. Human beings are able to sustain their lives with the blessings bestowed upon them within this very delicate order. Allah the Almighty gives the opportunity to benefit from these blessings not only to the believers but also to the disbelievers who ignore the verses on earth and equate other beings with Him (Baqarah, 2:164-167). The Creator, Who wants to make Himself known to human beings by creating these blessings, also wants them to obey Him through the rules He has established to benefit from them.

The basic rules regarding the food that people obtain to meet their nutritional needs are expressed in the verse as follows: “O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan’s footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy.” (Baqarah, 2:168) The basic rule for enjoying the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon human beings is to consume halal food. Some foods in the world have been declared haram. For instance, pork is inherently haram, while others, even if initially halal, become haram if obtained through illicit means, such as theft. The foods deemed halal by Allah are devoid of both these negative attributes. The second rule for enjoying these blessings is that they should be clean (tayyib). There are two views about the meaning of the word “tayyib” in this verse. According to the first meaning,

'tayyib' serves as a synonym for 'halal'. In this context, something described as 'halal' is also considered 'tayyib'. According to the second view, the word 'tayyib' refers to food that is inherently delicious, pure, and free from any doubt, ensuring it does not harm the mental, spiritual, or physical health of the consumer. Therefore, Allah commands us to consume 'halal' food but also to prioritize consuming 'tayyib' food from the halal option as much as we can afford. This is because food increases in value and worth to the extent that it is pure, flavorful, and enjoyable. Thus, the servants, as recipients of these blessings, want to be grateful to the bestower of these blessings and praise Him (swt).

Another aspect to consider in enjoying these blessings is avoiding extremes in nutrition. Accordingly, it is not right to declare foods that Allah has not forbidden as 'haram'. Before Islam, certain tribes used to sacrifice animals in the name of various idols and considered it forbidden to consume their meat (Ma'idah, 5:103; An'am, 6:138-139). The ruling of these verses applies to anyone who prohibits for themselves what Allah has not prohibited. It is nothing but irrationality for people to fabricate

harams in order to cause themselves hardship and forbid themselves good blessings. Another extreme in nutrition is to abstain entirely from eating and drinking. The command to "eat!" implies that consuming halal food is permissible. Therefore, eating enough to sustain the body is considered wajib.

It is noteworthy that this verse begins with a general address to all people. The fact that it is addressed to all humankind is an expression of Allah's mercy. This form of address indicates that Allah the Almighty has created everything on earth for the benefit of all humankind.

There is one significant obstacle that hinders people from eating halal and pure food, and that is Satan. Allah commands us to partake in halal and pure substances and forbids us from following in the footsteps of Satan. This is because Satan, when people follow him, lures them into doubtful areas and invites them to go to extremes (Ma'idah, 5:87; Bukhari, Iman, 39). This is why Satan is portrayed as an enemy who seeks the evil of humanity. Understanding this dynamic empowers individuals to resist Satan's influence, enabling them to discern between genuine virtues and deceptive

impulses when confronted with unsettling emotions.

According to the Qur'anic verse, Allah the Almighty, commands His servants to eat food that is halal, pure, free from doubt, and not harmful to the well-being of the mind, soul, and body. In our era, unlike previous centuries, technological advancements have facilitated interference with food production. The widespread distribution of food via international trade, coupled with increased economic prosperity and evolving consumption patterns influenced by the advertising industry, presents additional challenges. If food is corrupted as a result of all these developments, it will not only prevent people from leading healthy and peaceful lives but will also disrupt the order established by the Creator on earth. Therefore, a principled approach to halal and pure food has become very important, especially today. Our Lord's warning against those who follow the path of Satan, indicating their propensity to wreak havoc for their own ambitions and greed, is profoundly significant: "And when they leave (you), they strive throughout the land to spread mischief in it and destroy crops and cattle. Allah does not like mischief." (Baqarah, 2:205)



ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ANIC VERSE, ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY, COMMANDS HIS SERVANTS TO EAT FOOD THAT IS HALAL, PURE, FREE FROM DOUBT, AND NOT HARMFUL TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE MIND, SOUL, AND BODY.

DU‘A: THE MOST PRECIOUS DEED

Halil KILIC

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

The Messenger of Allah (saw) used to take every opportunity to educate and inform his companions, trying to teach them the ways to be happy and peaceful both in this world and in the Hereafter. He would sometimes ask them questions and answer them himself in order to draw their attention, to point out the seriousness of the matter, and to make sure that the subject was understood.

One day he (saw) was sitting with his companions and asked them, “Should I not inform you of the best of your deed, and the purest of them with your Lord, and the highest of them in your ranks, and what is better for you than spending gold and silver, and better for you than fighting with your enemy?” When the companions

said “Of course, tell us, O Messenger of Allah!” the Prophet (saw) said: “It is the constant remembrance of Allah at all times and in all places.” (Tirmidhi, Da‘awat, 7)

It is extremely important to take every step for the sake of Allah, to observe Allah’s right in every breath, to love and to be angry for the sake of Allah, or, in short, to remember Allah at all times and in all places, for this is the proper fulfillment of the duty of servitude. For this reason, the obligatory ritual prayers that we perform regularly every day are not performed in one go but in five separate times. This is for the purpose of not forgetting our main duty of servitude during our worldly rush. Since du‘a (supplication) is an act of worship that enables the servants to

establish a connection with Allah the Almighty at all times and in all places and reminds them of Him, it has been described as the most precious deed in the sight of Allah, as stated in the aforementioned hadith.

Du‘a is the most active and continuous form of communication between the servants and the Lord of the Worlds. In this active and continuous state of communication, the servants realize their helplessness and weakness and experience the peace and happiness of taking refuge in a safe haven. They open their hands to Allah the Almighty, who is Omnipotent (al-Qadir) and in need of nothing (al-Samad); they express their heartfelt desires and wishes; they beg, plead, and ask for forgiveness, mercy, and help; they ask

for goodness and beauty in this world and the Hereafter.

Du‘a is a declaration that the servants know their limits and responsibilities. Du‘a is the banner of tawhid in the sense that it declares that Allah the Almighty is the only authority to obey and supplicate, and it is the essence of worship in terms of being a state of turning to Allah without being limited by time and space (Tirmidhi, Da‘awat, 1). Du‘a is the awareness that we are not alone, that Allah, the Lord of the worlds, is right beside us, and that He hears us and answers our supplications. This truth is expressed in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

“When My servants ask you (O Prophet) about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one’s prayer when they

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ
أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ

“There is nothing more honorable with Allah the Almighty than supplication (du’a).”

(Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 1; Ibn Majah, Du’a, 1)

call upon Me. So let them respond (with obedience) to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be guided (to the Right Way).” (Baqarah, 2:186)

The “response to prayer” expressed in this verse is often understood incompletely or incorrectly. Many people who say, “I made a du’a, but my du’a was not accepted,” referring to the above verse, understand the response of du’a as the realization of their du’a as it is. However, the response to a du’a can be in different ways. The response to a du’a may be the bestowal of the desired thing itself, or it may be the bestowal of something else (more auspicious) in place of the desired thing. It may even be that nothing in this world is given in return for the du’a. Can we talk about

a response in this case? Our answer is definitely “yes”. This is because the fulfillment of du’as is not only limited to the world but can also be left for the Hereafter. For example, removing the sins of the servant and raising his rank in heaven for the sake of the du’a is one of the forms of response to the du’a. Moreover, since the servants remember and mention Allah by making du’a, they will have the honor of being mentioned in the sight of Allah, as stated in the verse, “Remember Me; I will remember you” (Baqarah, 2:152). And this honor is far more valuable than many worldly privileges. Again, the response to du’a can be in the form of removing or alleviating possible accidents and calamities that may occur. In this regard, the Prophet (saw)

said: “The supplication benefits against that which strikes and that which does not strike, so hold fast, O worshippers of Allah, to supplication.” (Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 101) Therefore, it is not right to say, “I made du’a, but my du’a was not answered.” In fact, our Prophet (saw) said the following: “The supplication of every one of you is granted if he does not grow impatient and says: I supplicated but it was not granted.” (Muslim, Dhikr and Du’a, 91)

In order for the du’a to be answered, some issues that are described as the etiquette of du’a must also be taken into consideration. For example, one should pray sincerely, believing that one’s prayers will be answered. The Prophet (saw) expressed this truth as follows:

“Call upon Allah while being certain of being answered, and know that Allah does not respond to a supplication from the heart of one heedless and occupied by play.” (Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 65)

With this awareness, turning to Allah the Almighty with prayers in wealth and poverty, sickness and health, going to bed in the evening and getting up in the morning, on foot and in a vehicle, going to work and returning home, receiving a blessing, and facing a calamity; in short, turning to Allah the Almighty with du’as to be made at all times and under all circumstances and always keeping Him in mind will both increase our value in the sight of Allah and ensure that our most basic duty of servitude remains alive.

Dr. Savas Barkcin: “THE ULTIMATE VALUE IS SERVANTHOOD TO ALLAH.”



Interview by:
Zeynep Feyza AKKAYA

Dr. Savas Barkcin was born in Ankara in 1966. After completing his primary and secondary education there, he pursued his undergraduate studies at Bogazici University, majoring in the Department of Political Science, and graduated in 1989. Subsequently, he embraced on a career in the civil service that same year, where he specialized in international relations, strategy, political communications, administration, and consulting until his retirement in 2018. In 1966, he earned his Master's degree in World History and Theory from Johns Hopkins University in the USA, followed by a PhD in political philosophy from Bilkent University in 2001. Throughout his career, he has lectured at various universities and foundations, and he has authored numerous articles spanning topics such as music, history, literature, philosophy, politics, and culture.

The concept of “value” has been defined in various ways from the past to the present. Not only in the West but also in the Islamic world, various studies have been carried out on the concept of value. Can we hear your definition of value?

There are differences in definitions based on postulates. The postulates, the style of conceiving the universe, is based on beliefs. So a Muslim's conception of value is different from that of a non-believer. As a Muslim, I'm going to make a definition based on my convictions and beliefs. The ultimate value is servanthood to Allah. For us, whatever is beneficial in our relationship with our Creator is valuable. Is the value like all the other values that are defined in other philosophical systems? They may be relevant, but we always match them with our set of principles. If they conform somehow to the Islamic set of principles, we say that value can be included as well. But ultimately the value is something that saves you from the dangers of your ego in the world and which puts you in a brighter light in the Hereafter. That's how I define a value.

Allah (swt) has created the human being as

the noblest of creation (ashraf al-makhlūqat) and endowed him with superior qualities. Islam calls upon the individual to mobilize his inherent talents and potential and to discover the secrets of creation in the universe, especially in himself. It can be said that Islam seeks to build the individual primarily at the level of consciousness. In this context, what should the conscious person be in the modern world from the perspective of Islam?

I'm not in favor of using the adjective “modern”. Regardless of whether something is considered modern or not, the human being is the same. We have the same desires, the same drives, and the same aspirations. ‘Modernity’ is a Western concept and it is used either to justify certain Western manipulations of human nature or opposition to that. However, the human being is the most exalted creation with the basic touch, and the touch in this origin of the human being is divine. Thus, every human being is carrying a touch of the divine.

The Muslim is the one who is truthfully aware of his origin and his nature. He is the one who has awakened. The non-believer is in a state of sleep, maybe he will be awakened



IN ISLAM, EVERYTHING IS INTEGRATED AND HARMONIOUSLY COMPLEMENTS EACH OTHER. THERE ARE NO CONFLICTING OR CONTRASTING SETS OF RULES BASED ON YOUR PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION OR THE ROLE THAT YOU ARE PLAYING IN SOCIETY. THEREFORE, WE FIND UNITY IN MORALITY.

sometime. That is why we do not accuse nor do we despise non-Muslims. They are human beings, they are the creation that is the most important and highest. Indeed, the human being is the reflection of Allah and a mirror of Allah. Why? Because the beauty, power, compassion, mercifulness, whatever you can think of—which are the derivations of the holy names of Allah—are reflected in us. Therefore, the basic understanding of the human being is actually that he is not alone. The human being is not an isolated part of the creation. He is a part of the creation and he is realizing himself as long as he is aware of this unity with the creation. The real awareness is that we are coming from the One and we are traveling towards the One. If you keep in mind that you are coming from Allah who is the One and you are going to meet Him in the Hereafter that gives real value to being a human.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the believers built a society of Islam. If we open a window from the age of bliss (asr al-sa'adah) to the modern world, what are the dimensions of Muslims building a world in which they will exist with their values?

These are all sociological questions. I have always had some reserve about sociology, especially the Western-produced sciences. Man, society, humanity, the universe, the characterization of this relationship is quite secular. Sociology teaches of a secular society. I would like to express my reservation regarding this matter. As a Muslim, I have concerns. Sociology may be beneficial in some regards, but it cannot determine how I characterize myself and society. Primarily, every Muslim bears individual responsibility towards Allah. However, this responsibility is also inherently social in nature. It is not only isolated within me. I am responsible before Allah also for my actions towards others around me in society. To build a society you have to build a human being. However, that cannot be carried out by the government or schools. These are also some types of deceptions. We always think that some institutions do certain things. However, they cannot erect a human being. They can only support or facilitate the life of a human being. These are two different things. The real constructive building of human beings is carried out by other



THE VALUE IS SOMETHING THAT SAVES YOU FROM THE DANGERS OF YOUR EGO IN THE WORLD AND WHICH PUTS YOU IN A BRIGHTER LIGHT IN THE HEREAFTER. THAT'S HOW I DEFINE A VALUE.

human beings. Therefore, a human being cultivates the human being. Not the walls, not the schools, not the buildings, not the institutions, programs, policies, and so forth. These are all secondary instruments. The primary instrument is always your mother, your father, a good person you know, the author you like, and so on.

We are products of other human beings and everything in society begins with human beings and ends with human beings. The institutions can only act as mediators and assist in that regard; they cannot go beyond that role. Therefore I have to do certain things for Allah. This is my duty first and foremost, and then I can think of other things, but they are all intertwined. To make such general statements about societies, the world, generations, etc., you have to first ask yourself, what are you doing? What kind of person are you? It is easier to instruct people, but it is very difficult to instruct yourself. You have to first adapt this hard way to question yourself to open up the way for other people, for you have to be good to yourself so that you can disseminate that goodness to other people. Everything begins with the individual.

Values are the basic criteria that guide our individual and social lives.

The individual tries to give meaning to his life through the values he possesses. At this point, what can you say about the relationship between values and "morality"?

There are very stark differences between the word morality or ethics and akhlaq. This is because they refer to different things. Ethics comes from the ancient Greek word ethos, which means peoples, societies, customs, traditions, etc. Whereas morality comes from the Latin word mores, which means again the same thing as the traditions of a certain society but akhlaq does not have any relation to the society or traditions. Akhlaq refers directly to your creation. It comes from the Arabic root Hulk, which means creation. So being moral means you are conforming to the conventions of the society you are living in, but having akhlaq refers to you conforming to the nature of your creation by Allah. These are two different things because many societies have conventions, principles, and traditions that are against creation which may be haram. For example, in the West, taking interest is an ethical thing. It is



even theoretical. There is a theory of interest in economics, it is ethical, but for a Muslim it is haram. In today's society, all kinds of perversion are seen as legitimate. However, a Muslim cannot simply accept it solely because it is deemed normal by the broader society. We are not basing our value

judgments on what exists, but rather on what is created, what is original. Therefore, these are two very different things. Being moral in the Islamic sense, having akhlaq is following the path of our Prophet (saw) because he is the concrete example of akhlaq. How he behaved, how he smiled, how he

argued with people, how he fought in the war—these are all parts of the same akhlaq.

Another problem with the modern understanding of ethics is that it is actually fractured. You have business ethics that have different sets of rules about what is right and wrong. Subsequently, you

have political ethics, which is again very different from business ethics. Then, when you return home, there are distinct rules of family ethics. Moreover, when interacting with others, you encounter yet another distinct set of ethical rules.

Then there is the additional layer of ethics surrounding identity and so on. Thus, the modern Western understanding of ethics is fragmented.

In Islam, everything is integrated and harmoniously complements each other. There are no conflicting or contrasting sets of rules based on your profession or occupation or the role that you are playing in society. Therefore, we find unity in morality. That is what we must consider. Otherwise, when you fracture ethics, it becomes relativized, with different ethics for different tasks, professions, people, genders, etc. As a result, it becomes impossible to create a coherent, harmonious society by bringing together these contrasting pieces. In Islam, akhlaq makes you one in yourself, also with your environment and with Allah.

This is because 'hulk' implies the existence of a Khaliq, a Creator, and as long as you adhere to



the principles set forth by your Creator, you possess akhlaq.

Another important aspect is that the ethics of the West requires the presence of multiple individuals. An ethical relationship can only be established when there is interaction between two or more people. However, in Islam, even if you are just

one person in the world with no one else around, you are still obliged to uphold akhlaq because your relationship is not solely with others, but also with your Creator. This fundamental existential distinction is significant. Therefore, we must exercise caution when we equate concepts of Islam with the concepts of the West, because they may be

quite different. By blindly equating them, we risk sacrificing our own values in favor of Western ideals.

To what dimension do the concepts of unlimited equality and freedom in the modern world lead humanity, do you think that these concepts lead to a loss of values?

The portrayal of the situation as unlimited

freedom may also be misleading because the people are not free, even if they claim to be free. For example, in many European countries, we have Queens and Kings at the head of their state. They control many legislative procedures. So in that regard, a monarchy at the head of a democracy is unthinkable. Yet, that is what is observed. So they are not free. The people elected in the United Kingdom, they cannot pass a law until the Lords who are appointed alone by the King confirm such legislation. So, what kind of freedom and democracy do we truly have in such circumstances? These questions often lead to conflicting perspectives and debates.

Freedom is a philosophical concept, and philosophy is based mostly on justifying what is favorable to the powerful. So freedom has always been used by governments, the power structures, to advance their own interest. When you say freedom, you are referring to liberalism. Liberalism alone is based on this idea of freedom, rights, etc. One of the forefathers of liberalism is John Locke, a British philosopher. He was a shareholder in the London Stock Exchange of a company that bought and sold slaves. This

hypocrisy is the hallmark of kufr. It is not West or East, it is kufr. The non-believing produces a diversion within oneself and within the universe. Hence, in contemporary discourse about freedoms, it is easier to indulge in perversion, cruelty, and exploitation than to practice mercy, generosity, and altruism. There are more impediments to genuinely helping others with good intentions than there are to engaging in various forms of immoral behavior.

It boils down to the same question. How do you define yourself? Do you define yourself based on some secular philosophical explanations? Or do you define yourself as in relation to Allah? Thus, a Muslim should always choose the second one. When you define yourself in relation to Allah, then your relationship with other people and concepts becomes different. If I am a servant of Allah, I see other people as the creations of Allah. I respect them for that reason, not because of the law or legality or some social customs, etc. It supersedes all of them. So it is a very existential relationship and I think we have to make this distinction very clear.

Recently, there has been a search for a new order

that is to be created with the discourse of freedom and equality over sexual identity. How do you think the Muslim individual should respond to this?

First of all, in Islam, it is not a very good thing to publicly talk about such perversions, because public discussion of such perversions is an instrument actually to justify those perversions themselves. Sometimes, it is wiser to remain silent about these matters than to engage in constant debate, discussion, or complaints. I do not even use the abbreviation they are using for perverted people deliberately, especially because using that acronym itself is a justification for that kind of perversion. These are perversions under my religion.

Another crucial aspect is how this phenomenon exacerbates the division and degradation of humanity. This process of fracturing began in the West during the Renaissance when human beings were separated from Allah. It then progressed to further divide the human mind and heart. Moreover, it was further exasperated by saying that one person is a Westerner, while the other is an Easterner. Therefore, it is a constant process of



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actually splitting up and fracturing the human being. Now, individuals are defined by their sexual orientation or other similar traits. Thus, one is being defined by that kind of person. This shows the misery of the Western understanding of the human being.

There are other aspects that we, as Muslims, must be cautious about, and one of them is the concept of gender. Using this term can be problematic. I refrain from using such terminology because adopting it can inadvertently validate or justify certain perspectives or behaviors that contradict Islamic teachings.

What would you like to say as the final word to our readers?

Please never place anything above Allah and His Prophets (saw). Whatever you have, whatever you study, whatever you learn, whatever you do, put it under but never above. Secondly, iman is not an accessory. It is not a small thing. It is everything. Do not forget yourself. You are a Muslim. You are not just a free-floating person. You have your criteria. Learn those criteria and apply them to your individual life in whatever you are doing.

The “Coffee of Tolerance” tradition kept alive in Bulgaria



The traditional “Coffee of Tolerance” ceremony marked its 10th occurrence at the historic Murat Hudavendigar Mosque in the city of Plovdiv, in southeastern Bulgaria. In 2014, racist and ultra-nationalist groups attacked the historic Ottoman-era Murat Hudavendigar Mosque in the city center. Despite this regrettable incident, the residents of Plovdiv succeeded in transforming it into a constructive and positive tradition, serving as a reminder for people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds to live together in a spirit of peace and tolerance.

At the event, representatives from various religions and ethnicities joined together to convey messages of friendship and tolerance. In their speeches, they stated that the city of Plovdiv with a history spanning eight thousand years, predates both Athens and Rome and has consistently been a bastion of peace and tranquility. Among the distinguished attendees were the Mayor of Plovdiv Kostadin Dimitrov, the President of the Supreme Council of Muslims in Bulgaria Vedat Ahmet, and the Regional Mufti of Plovdiv, Taner Veli.



President of Religious Affairs Erbas evaluated the decision of the International Court of Justice on Israel

Regarding the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue an interim injunction in the genocide case filed against Israel, President of Religious Affairs Erbas stated: “The interim injunction declared today against Israel, which is being tried in the International Court of Justice for its war and crimes against humanity against the oppressed Palestinian people, has documented that the terrorist state is a murderous state and the crimes it has committed. The murderer and perpetrator Israel will be judged and held accountable before both humanity and history for its occupation and genocide policies in Palestine. I would like to thank everyone who pioneered this case, which is the beginning of an important step, and contributed to the just struggle of the Palestinian people.”



Silent vigil held in London in solidarity with Palestinians in Rafah

Amnesty International held a silent vigil at the entrance of Downing Street, the location of the British Prime Minister's Office, in solidarity with civilians in Rafah, located south of Gaza, amid Israel's plans for an attack. In a statement released by Amnesty International regarding the silent protest, it was pointed out that civilians in Rafah are at risk due to Israel's intention to attack and said: “As Amnesty, we call on the UK government to do everything in its power to dissuade Israel from its decision to attack Rafah.” The statement also underlined that the UK government should call for an immediate ceasefire and pointed out the importance of stopping arms sales to Israel.

Al-Aqsa Mosque Imam reacts to Israel's decision to restrict entry to Al-Aqsa Mosque

Sheikh Ikrim Sabri, the Imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque and former Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine denounced Israel's decision to restrict Palestinians' worship in Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan as invalid and contrary to the freedom of worship. In a statement posted on social media, Sheikh Sabri emphasized that Muslims are resolute in their determination to worship at Al-Aqsa Mosque, stressing that Al-Aqsa Mosque exclusively belongs to Muslims and is not subject to any authoritarian decision, court ruling, pressure, or political gain. At the same time, he pointed out that Muslims are preparing to welcome the month of Ramadan and reiterated the invalidity of Israel's decision. In a statement released by the Israeli Prime Minister's Office today, it was stated that "a balanced decision was taken after evaluating the security conditions" regarding the entry of Palestinians to the Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan. Since 7 October 2023, Israeli police have been restricting access to Al-Aqsa Mosque, especially on Fridays.

The Dallas Diyanet Mosque opened in Texas

The Dallas Diyanet Mosque in Dallas, Texas, USA, was inaugurated for worship with a ceremony, marking its status as the 35th mosque in the country affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The opening ceremony of the mosque was attended by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selim Argun, Vice President of Religious Affairs, Prof. Dr. Bilal Kuspinar, Religious Services Counsellor of the Embassy of Washington; Assoc. Dr. Bilal Bas, Religious Services Attaché of the Consulate General of Houston; Kemal Ustun, President of the Dallas Branch of the Turkish American Religious Foundation (TARF); and members of the Muslim community.

Addressing the program, Vice President of Religious Affairs Argun explained the services of the institution in many different categories in Türkiye and abroad, along with potential collaborative efforts with US Muslims. Mr Kuspinar, Religious Services Counsellor at the Embassy of Türkiye in Washington, also spoke of the activities of the American Religious Centre and evaluated the cooperation with other Muslim groups in the USA. Following the speeches, the mosque was officially opened for worship with prayers and a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by refreshments for attendees.

The Holy Qur'an was distributed in the Netherlands as a response to Islamophobic attacks



In the Netherlands, following an attack on the Holy Qur'an, the Qur'an with Dutch translation was distributed in the city center as a response. The managers of six mosque foundations in Arnhem, the Netherlands, held an event called "Don't burn, read" in Jansplein Square, where the incident took place, against the attempt to burn the Holy Qur'an. At the event, passersby were offered the Holy Qur'an with a Dutch translation free of charge, along with brochures explaining Islam.





DIGITAL AGE AND CRYPTOCURRENCY

Seracettin YILDIZ

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

Economists divide the history of currency into periods. It is argued that initially, people met their needs through bartering, then they transitioned to using standard goods such as salt and seashells as currency, before the invention of money. After gold and silver served as currency for an extended period, the gold-equivalent currency system was introduced, followed by a fiat currency system backed by state power. Subsequently, deposit money emerged with the development of the banking system, leading to the virtualization of money with technological developments and the emergence of electronic currency. However, it's important to note that even these forms of currency are backed by state power, falling under the category of fiat money. Finally, we entered a new dimension with the introduction of cryptocurrency into our lives about 15 years ago. Because cryptocurrency has no material asset and no value, there is no state power behind it, and a decentralized system is aimed with it.

When examining the history of humanity, we observe gradual technical development and change across all areas of life. However, the rapid development and change experienced in the last two centuries have probably never been witnessed before. This is because inventions sparked the Industrial Revolution and subsequently the Technological Revolution. This technological revolution has accelerated every aspect of life, including finance. Some operations and transactions that once took days, weeks, or months can now be completed in a very short time. For example, transferring money from one place to

another, which previously took hours, days, or even months, depending on the distance, has now been reduced to minutes or seconds. The most significant convenience brought by blockchain technology, which lies at the heart of the cryptocurrency system, is the transfer of money or any other digital asset. In the existing system, there may be certain delays and other problems due to the involvement of national or international institutions in money transfers. Since blockchain technology eliminates the intermediary institutions, these problems are also eliminated. However, it also introduces some issues due to decentralization. Therefore, this system has both advantages and disadvantages.

First of all, it is important to note that cryptocurrencies did not emerge overnight; they were the result of a process. It is well known that cryptography and the Internet, utilized for secure communication, particularly during times of war, laid the foundation for this currency. However, in our opinion, the most important thing is the mindset and concept behind cryptocurrency. It is recognized that the inception of Bitcoin, the first cryptocurrency, was influenced by a movement known as

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“cypherpunk”. The cypherpunk movement advocates personal privacy and freedom in all social, political, and economic spheres through the use of cryptography. Therefore, they strive for a decentralized system and for the Internet to be a hub for people. Cryptography plays a key role in blockchain and crypto-assets. This allows people to produce their money without the need for a center or a state. Therefore, the basic structure of cryptocurrencies is based on a mindset that puts the individual at the center and opposes centralized systems and institutions. Naturally, without understanding its inception, predicting its future trajectory and implications remains challenging.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention the blockchain technology that has been introduced into our lives due to cryptocurrency. In cryptocurrency debates, it should be made clear what exactly the opponents are criticizing. Otherwise, when discussing certain negative aspects of cryptocurrencies, it may seem as though the entire underlying technology is being rejected. Although cryptocurrencies do offer some advantages, their individual and social disadvantages are currently more

prominent. However, these are not related to the technology on which they are based, but rather to the cryptocurrencies themselves. Moreover, it cannot be said that all cryptocurrencies, which number in the tens of thousands, are the same. They are quite different from each other in terms of their production and intended use. Therefore, it is not feasible to make a blanket judgment that encompasses them all.

It is highly probable that cryptocurrencies will exist in some form in the future. However, it seems that the significant claims made when they first emerged have not materialized, at least not yet. Bitcoin, the pioneering cryptocurrency, has not managed to establish itself as an alternative currency, as initially claimed.

In fact, many states do not even recognize cryptocurrencies as “money” but rather classify them as intangible assets. Without state backing or physical value, people tend to utilize them more as investment tools. Nonetheless, there has been a considerable amount of victimization within this area. The victims often seek recourse within the centralized system and appeal to the state for resolution, contradicting the claim of being a decentralized system, which was the intended

purpose of the emergence of these currencies.

Nevertheless, cryptocurrencies will continue to affect people, and in our opinion, this effect will be seen more in the form of digitalization. Digitalization, which has been progressing steadily in the recent few years, accelerated significantly after the COVID-19 pandemic. People have already begun to reduce their reliance on physical currency through the adoption of systems such as credit cards, debit cards, and Internet banking. It is conceivable that the use of physical money will further diminish with the effect of cryptocurrencies. Specifically, the rise of

“IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO RESIST CHANGE, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE TO MANAGE CHANGE.”

virtual environments like the metaverse, where cryptocurrencies are the sole medium of exchange, is likely to accelerate digitalization even further.

In conclusion, it can be said that money has undergone a continuous change in the historical process and that this change is currently in the direction of digitalization. This digitalization has impacted and will continue to impact our habits, culture, and perspectives. However, it is imperative that digitalization occurs in a healthy and beneficial manner. In other words, we should not be caught up in the digitalization trend, but we should be the ones who manage the

process. Therefore, we should strive to ensure that digitalization, which cannot be avoided, takes place in accordance with our own cultural and religious values. It is not possible to resist change, but it is possible to manage change. Therefore, we must first accept change and then equip ourselves to manage it. Let us not forget the teachings of the Prophet (saw), who emphasized the importance of always being prepared for development and change, lest we suffer loss. Additionally, while technology may simplify our tasks, it should not disconnect us from the real world.

INVITING THE PEOPLE OF TAIIF TO ISLAM

Prof. Dr. Eyup BAS

Religious Services Counselor in Copenhagen

Following the passing of his uncle Abu Talib, and the refusal of his other uncle, Abu Lahab, to provide protection for the Prophet Muhammad (saw), there was a significant threat to his safety and to the cause of Islam. The absence of protection, crucial for security and

the guarantee of life in Arab culture at that time, became a major issue. Despite grieving the losses in his family, the polytheists exploited his lack of protection and continued to harass our beloved Prophet. Their aim was to alleviate the demoralization caused by

the failure of the boycott and to obliterate the future of the new religion.

Given the circumstances, even if Muslims could still maintain their presence in Mecca, there was little chance of others accepting Islam. All possible actions had been taken in Mecca,

leaving migration to safer locations as the only viable option. The Prophet decided to travel to Taif, located approximately 100 kilometers east of Mecca, accompanied by his freed slave, Zayd ibn Harithah.

Taif, like Mecca, was an important commercial

center with close relations with Yemen. The Banu Thaqif tribe residing in Taif was often in commercial cooperation with the Quraysh. Taif boasted a better climate than Mecca, with fertile land and abundant water resources. Consequently, many of the wealthy

Meccans owned land in Taif and utilized it as a retreat place during the summer season.

Due to the close relationship between the Banu Thaqif of Taif and the Quraysh tribe in Mecca, it was unlikely that the Prophet Muhammad would

receive the protection he sought from them. Nevertheless, he held onto a small hope. In Shawwal 620, he met with the notables of Taif, invited them to Islam, and requested their assistance. However, they did not take the Prophet's offer seriously and asked him to

leave the city immediately, as they did not want to cause a rift with the Quraysh. They even informed the riffrāf of the city and tried to force him out. During the forced removal, the Prophet was hit by many stones, despite Zayd ibn Harithah's attempts to shield him.

Both were wounded, but they managed to make it to Mecca. However, their return journey was longer and more difficult.

When our beloved Prophet approached Mecca, he learned from the people he met on the way that the members of Banu Thaqif had already sent word to the Quraysh. In this situation, he could not enter Mecca without protection. Since all the Muslims, including powerful men like Abu Bakr and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, were at odds with their tribes, he could not ask them for help in this matter. He waited on Mount Hira until he found a tribe leader from Quraysh who would protect him. While many people did not respond positively to his request, Mut'im ibn 'Adiyy, the chief of the Banu Nawfal, who was renowned for his efforts in lifting the boycott against his tribe, accepted his plea for protection. Mut'im took his sons, whom he had armed, to Hira and brought the Prophet Muhammad to the Ka'bah. After announcing to the polytheists there that he had taken the Prophet under his protection, he took him to his house and hosted him.

The Prophet did not find any favorable outcomes during his initial search for a safe refuge. The sorrow of losing his uncle and wife

was compounded by the agony of enduring stoning, mockery, and insults on his journey to Taif.

First contact with Yathrib

Despite facing such challenges, our beloved Prophet persevered in spreading the teachings of Islam to various communities. Approximately a month and a half after returning from Taif, he took the opportunity to explain Islam to those who came to Mecca during the pilgrimage season, as he did every year. Despite his uncle Abu Lahab's



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efforts to humiliate and discredit him, the Prophet Muhammad was able to convince a group of six people to accept the teachings of Islam at a place called 'Aqabah, about 3 km away from the Masjid al-Haram. He shared with this group, who were from the Banu Khazraj tribe of Yathrib, the challenges he and other believers of the new religion had faced in Mecca. He discussed with them the idea of migrating to Yathrib, which would later be known as "Medina". He hoped to meet again with the group of Banu Khazraj, who were his maternal relatives, later that year. They would also spread the word about Islam to others as much as they had learned until the next pilgrimage season, and consider the idea of emigration.

The events of Isra and Mi'raj

Our beloved Prophet, who had endured a series of profound sorrows during the previous year, had yet to establish a safe environment for those who believed in him, despite exerting every effort within his human capacity. On the 27th night of the month of Rajab in 621, he received spiritual support from Allah when he felt despair and uncertainty. In this spiritual support, which some accept to have occurred physically (Ibn Kathir, II, 477) and others spiritually (Ibn

Ishaq, 462; Ibn Hisham, II, 253; Al-Baladhuri, I, 296), the Prophet Muhammad was transported from the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca to the Masjid al-Aqsa in al-Quds, accompanied by the angel Jibril. From there he ascended with Jibril to the sublime place called Sidrat al-Muntaha. Then he was presented before Allah the Almighty, transcending the constraints of time and place. With this spiritual support, he was given the glad tidings that Islam would spread from the city of Mecca, where it had been confined for ten years, to distant lands.

The Mi'raj elevated the Prophet's spirituality, strengthened the faith of the believers, and intensified the enmity of the polytheists. When the Prophet narrated this event to the Meccans, they dismissed it as unreal and attempted to put Abu Bakr in a difficult situation by sarcastically telling him about it. However, Abu Bakr responded by saying, "Did Muhammad say what you are recounting? If he says it, it is true," and he confirmed it.

On the night of Isra and Mi'raj, the Prophet was instructed to inform his followers that ritual prayer (salah) was made obligatory five times a day. On this night, the Prophet instructed believers as commanded by Allah to worship only

Allah, treat their parents with kindness, fulfill their obligations to relatives, the poor, and those who are stranded, avoid being miserly or wasteful, refrain from killing their children due to fear of poverty, and abstain from fornication and adultery. He instructed them to refrain from taking a life or seizing orphans' property, to fulfill promises, to measure and weigh accurately, to avoid pursuing matters without knowledge, to avoid pride and arrogance, and to not be haughty (Isra, 17:22-29).

The hope of emigration to Yathrib: the pledges of 'Aqabah

As the Prophet endeavored to impart the teachings of Islam to his followers through new revelations, time passed amidst numerous challenges. He anxiously awaited news from the group in Yathrib, whom he had encountered during the previous year's pilgrimage season. The end of the hardships that Muslims were going through, and their ability to practice Islam comfortably and set an example for future generations depended on the news they would receive.

The group of six came to Mecca in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah 621, as they had agreed. They met again at a place called 'Aqabah. Our beloved Prophet found a group of 12 people, 10

from Banu Khazraj and 2 from Banu Aws. He assessed the situation with them. In addition to the Arabs, a significant number of Jews resided in Yathrib. Both groups were fragmented, lacking unity among themselves. Moreover, some Arabs cooperated and stood in solidarity with certain Jewish factions, while others opposed them and aligned with the remaining Jewish factions. These divisions led to civil wars that erupted periodically, almost resulting in mutual destruction. The most recent conflict between the two tribes occurred five years ago at a location known as Bu'ath, resulting in numerous casualties on both sides. In fact, this fragmented structure lacking authority indicated that Yathrib was suitable for emigration. However, the people who had chosen Islam as their religion were still few in number. Most importantly, the tribal chiefs were unaware of the situation, and their support had to be secured. Considering all these factors, it was concluded that it was premature to emigrate to Yathrib.

Our beloved Prophet then explained the basic principles of Islam to his new acquaintances and obtained their promise that "they would not associate anything with Allah, would not commit

theft or adultery, would not kill their children, would not slander each other, and would obey his commands". He urged them to lead by example in Yathrib and encourage others to embrace Islam. The group, who had pledged their allegiance to him with their promise, left Mecca to reconvene a year after this meeting, which was termed the First Pledge of 'Aqabah. Later, they sent a message to the Prophet, requesting assistance in explaining the new religion. Our beloved Prophet then sent Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr to Yathrib, who was well-versed in the verses of the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam.

Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr stayed as a guest in the house of As'ad ibn Zurara for a year. During this time, he diligently worked to spread the message of Islam, his efforts bore fruit as a large number of people in Yathrib, including the leaders of two great tribes, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Usayd ibn Hudayr, embraced Islam. The Prophet was delighted upon hearing this news. Consequently, Yathrib became a suitable place for emigration.

Our beloved Prophet eagerly awaited the pilgrimage season of the year 622. This time, 75 people from Yathrib, including two women, came to Mecca to meet

him. These people had ostensibly come for pilgrimage but their true intention was to meet the Prophet and invite him to Yathrib. Upon their arrival in Mecca, they secretly delivered the news to him and later met again at 'Aqabah. The Prophet welcomed the invitation of the people of Yathrib to put an end to the negative experiences of those who believed in him. However, he did obtain a promise from them that they would protect him and the Muslims of Mecca, obey him, help him financially, enjoin good and forbid evil, and stand up for the truth without hesitation from anyone. The people of Yathrib accepted these conditions.

The Muslims in Yathrib chose twelve representatives to act as liaisons between themselves and the Prophet. These representatives were also responsible for explaining Islam to the people of Yathrib and making the necessary preparations for the migration of Muslims and the Prophet.

The Muslims of Yathrib left 'Aqabah secretly without drawing attention to themselves. After this meeting called the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah, our beloved Prophet gave permission to his companions to migrate to Yathrib.

ARNOLD YASIN MOL: “THE QUR’AN SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO ITS READER.”



How would you introduce yourself to people who do not know you and are curious about you?

I'm Arnold Yasin Mol from Leiden, The Netherlands. I'm a Lecturer of Islamic thought, comparative theology, and philosophy of religion at the Islamic University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam (IUASR), a PhD Fellow and Lecturer in philosophy and Islamic studies at Leiden University, and a Researcher at the Dutch National Support Center for Extremism. Within my research, I specialize in the Hanafi-Maturidi school of thought, theological anthropology, ethics, and human rights, tafsir studies, religion and culture, ethics of belief, and religious conversion. Next to my academic studies, I study traditional madrasa with Deoband, Arabic, and Turkish scholars. I also try to use my identity as a convert in a constructive way by engaging both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences on these topics, in and outside academia, through public lectures and media.

Do you have any recollection of where you first heard about Islam?

While growing up, there were Muslim refugees in our neighborhood. It was only later, in 2002, during

my biochemistry studies while in conversation with a fellow student that I really heard about the Qur'an and Islam.

How did your journey to embrace Islam begin?

It was during my biochemistry studies, at the age of 20, when a fellow student from a Moroccan background, offered me to read his Qur'an translation. We had been discussing God and the meaning of life a lot, and he was curious how I would experience a text like the Qur'an. He gave it to me in September 2002, and although it was only a year after 9/11, there wasn't rampant Islamophobia in the Netherlands at that time. So, when we were discussing Islam, we never talked about 9/11 or terrorism. He gave me his Dutch Qur'an translation, without any instructions or advice. I just started to read it, just as I had read the Bible, Buddhist texts, and Bhagavad Gita before it. But the Qur'an felt different, it spoke to me so directly that in November 2002, I decided I wanted to become a follower of the Qur'an. I didn't even have the right vocabulary for what that would entail i.e., I didn't know that this meant religious conversion and becoming a Muslim. I discussed it with my fellow student and we

went to his elder brother, but nobody really knew back then what conversion entailed. Thus, I decided to visit the local mosques, and even they didn't know what to do with me for at that time they were not used to converts yet. So, my pronouncement of the Shahada only happened in April of 2003, about six months later. Some elderly Muslim men, Moroccans, and Turks, guided me a bit, but I was mainly left on my own.



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So these first years were lonely and difficult, with almost no literature or scholarly guides available to me. Yet I was an avid reader of both Dutch and English, so I was able to attain more and more English literature on Islam. Then in 2005, I started some Arabic classes and later also studied religion and theology at several universities. But it was in 2008 while meeting multiple Muslim academics that I was motivated to pursue an academic career in Islamic theology and religious studies. That changed everything for me.

What was your attitude towards Islam or Muslims before you were a Muslim?

As I said above, in those days people were more defined by their ethnicity than their religion. Although I was brought up as a Catholic Christian, visible religion had mainly disappeared from Dutch society. Multiculturalism emphasizes ethnic differences, whereby religious identities have a secondary or even no status. So my friends were defined as being Moroccan, Turkish, Dutch Caribbean, or Indonesian, but not by their religions. Today this has changed, partially due to Islamophobia, but also because the second and third generation of

Muslims see themselves as embodying multiple cultures while identifying with one religion. So today's generation of Muslims in the West emphasize their religious identity more than their ethnic identity.

How did your family and close friends react to your decision to become a Muslim? How did you tell them?

I told everybody with a deep enthusiasm, even though many gave negative responses. These negative responses were different forms of Islamophobia. Some found it strange that I became religious, through which they expressed their religiophobia. Others found it weird that I chose what was deemed an immigrant religion, through which they expressed their xenophobia. Then, there were also people specifically rejecting me embracing Islam, through which they expressed their clear Islamophobia. So, I lost most of my childhood friends, either because I used to of course not go to clubs with them, or because we simply couldn't understand each other anymore. Our worldviews became too different. That loneliness was difficult in the first years, as it is also difficult to integrate into

the Muslim community. They welcome you in their mosques, but not really in their homes and families. My own family also gave these mixed responses, but being family, they were stuck with me. For my parents, their main fear was that they would lose their son, but we all tried to stay connected and their support and tolerance of my life choices has always been my greatest blessing. Seeing your child convert

to another religion, which is alien to you in beliefs and customs, can be frightening. Yet my parents always supported my academic and traditional studies, both morally and financially. The fact is that I was a difficult child growing up. So, my conversion to Islam got me out of that lifestyle and made me focus on work and studies. My father eventually said, "You had to become a Muslim to

finally become a normal man." When he said that, I realized they had accepted my conversion as having a positive impact on their son. They are proud of what I do as an academic and as a convert, seeing that their upbringing aligned me with Islam.

What aspect of Islam impressed you the most?

The Qur'an enchanted me because it was so direct in its language. Other religious texts mainly talk



about how God talks to other people, and people in history. However, the Qur'an also speaks directly to its reader. Suddenly, God was speaking directly to me. I was only halfway to Surah al-Baqarah when I knew this text was true for me. In my later studies of Islam, it was the deep philosophical and psychological thought present among classical Muslim scholars that deeply impressed me. When I teach Farabi, Maturidi, Ibn Sina, Ghazali, Razi, Kemalpashazade, and others, I discuss their deep psychological, rational, and moral understanding of reality and what it means to be human. My academic publications not only want to show this deep intellectualism, but also how it can enhance the contemporary world.

Looking at what you've studied, we see that you've studied the Qur'an very deeply. What is it about the Qur'an that caught your attention the most?

As said earlier, the very direct address to its reader is what impresses me. But also, the way it combines multiple themes into a very small text. Classical scholars were able to discuss any science and discipline in their commentaries of the Qur'an (tafsir), as the Qur'an has

theological, philosophical, psychological, ethical, and social openness. This is the reason why I started to work on tafsir studies, as I was fascinated by how Muslim scholars connected any type of human discourse and knowledge to the Qur'an.

What would you like to say to those who are curious to know about Islam? What should they pay attention to when researching Islam?

Islam is a 1400-year-old worldview, with about 1.7 billion followers across hundreds of cultures. Both within Islam as a religion and as a multicultural civilization you will find thousands of ideas, histories, politics, and social customs. The unity in diversity is both beautiful and overwhelming, as it is difficult where to look and who to listen to. You will find beautiful people in your local mosque, but maybe also cultural ideas that feel too different from your own. If you really want to understand Islam, try to experience it through its different cultures and intellectual history. Read a Qur'an translation, read other books like Rumi or Ghazali, read about its historical civilization, talk to Muslims, and visit Muslim countries.

Istanbul has always been my second home. I visited it a couple of months after my conversion in December of 2003 and I have been constantly visiting it since. It is both a cosmopolitan city and a center of the Muslim world, representing the openness of Islam. Start with the Qur'an, and start with Istanbul I would say.

Arnold Yasin Mol is a Lecturer of Islamic thought, comparative theology, and philosophy of religion at the Islamic University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam (IUASR), a PhD Fellow and Lecturer in philosophy and Islamic studies at Leiden University. After reading the Dutch translation of the Qur'an, he embraced Islam in 2003. Since then, he has conducted his research around philosophy, intellectual history and Islamic studies, and broad subjects surrounding the humanities i.e., philosophy of religions and worldviews, religious studies, hermeneutics, and ethics.



IF YOU REALLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND ISLAM, TRY TO EXPERIENCE IT THROUGH ITS DIFFERENT CULTURES AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY.

DOES ALLAH HAVE A CREATOR TOO?

QUESTIONS ON MY MIND

Prof. Dr. Cagfer KARADAS

Some people have a question on their mind: Does Allah, the creator of everything, also have a creator?

People have contradictory pursuits and expectations. They are both in search of eternity and in search of desire for everything to end somewhere. Expectation and boredom usually follow each other. They go on a vacation, have a lot of fun, and want the fun to continue. However, in time, a feeling of boredom begins to form, they want to finish it and return as soon as possible, as if they did not come voluntarily to have fun. In addition to the sense of continuity in human beings, there is also a desire for change, which is the opposite of it. The balance of these two provides inner peace.

If this balance is disrupted in favor of one aspect over the other, individuals often feel unsettled and seek to swiftly escape that state.

We were talking about Allah the Almighty...

Exactly. When you say we, you are referring to human beings. The person who is asking and is asked. It is not possible to understand Allah the Almighty without understanding the human being. In other words, a person needs to get to know oneself first in order to know Allah, the Creator. As they say, if you know yourself, you know your Lord...

So how do we get to know the human being?

I was just trying to tell you that. Why does a person who thinks even the things that give pleasure must have an end, want the beings to be in an endless sequence? However, everything we see, hear, and even know in the universe

has an end. That means that the universe and everything in it is mortal. They start at one point and end at another point. Where it begins is when it was created. Therefore, the universe itself is finite and has a starting point when it was created.

Where do you get the idea that the universe is finite?

As I previously said, the universe that we perceive with our senses and understand with our minds and everything in it has an end. You mentioned creation in the question you asked. The creation of everything means that everything starts from somewhere. So, everything present in the universe definitely has a beginning. Scientific research also points to this. It is now accepted by scientists that the phenomena in the universe have a beginning when going backwards, and an end towards the future. We even have scientific predictions about the lifespan of the Sun, which warms and shines us. Obviously, an end is inevitable for everything that exists around us. Indeed, even our own empirical observations reaffirm that the beings in the universe have a beginning and an end. We witness those who die, those who are born; those who perish in the winter and turn to green in the spring, those that dry up and turn to seeds, those that grow out of the heart of the

earth, those that are turned to ashes and those that rise from their ashes... We witness them all around us.

Well, how do we go from here to the Creator?

Again, we know that everything happens for a reason, directly or indirectly. There is undeniably a reason for the creation of the universe in which such transformations and changes take place. Assuming that the Creator, the reason that brought the universe into existence with these changes and transformations, is within the universe that requires Him to be subject to the same law of transformation and change. However, such a notion of the Creator undergoing change and transformation necessitates the existence of yet another creator. This would lead to only impossibility on the one hand and uncertainty on the other. Ancient scholars termed this line of thought as a circular argument (tasalsul), characterizing it as invalid reasoning and fallacious argumentation. A circular argument forms an endless chain that extends infinitely, rendering it impossible to comprehend with the mind. Instead, it burdens the intellect, tires individuals, and subjects them to uncertainty. Indeed, contemplating the succession of creators in this manner contradicts reason and logic.

So, to think that the God within the universe makes him both a part of the universe and subject to the laws of corruption in the universe?

Yes, indeed, that is exactly what I mean. Therefore, God must be beyond the confines of the universe, and transcend the laws of creation and decay. Consequently, this leads us to the conclusion that God is distinct and separate from the universe and all its contents. Since God is not subject to the law of creation and decay, He does not require a beginning or an end. Since there is no beginning nor an end, the question of another creator becomes meaningless. So, asking questions like who created Allah is not meaningful and it is illogical. Thus, the idea of the Creator of everything being created is invalid both logically and theologically.

At this point, there is a question on my mind: Couldn't the universe itself be infinite?

The impossibility of this is proven by both historical experience and today's scientific findings. As we've mentioned before, scientific studies have predicted lifespan even for the planets within the universe, including the Sun. Observations and science prove that the beings in the universe have an end, so, it is a logical conclusion that the universe, which is the sum of these beings, is finite. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the

universe was claimed to be an indestructible machine that would work forever. What happened next? The facts and the science made this claim invalid. Thus, the claim that the universe is infinite, yet where all living things can become extinct, the vast seas are polluted, the ozone layer in the atmosphere is depleted and no place has been found for life in the wide space yet, contradicts itself. Although scientific studies have been extremely advanced so far, they still have not been able to prevent the extinction of certain species and the deterioration of the ecological balance in the world. On the other hand, the Big Bang theory, which is also embraced by atheists today, shows that the universe had a beginning. Thus, if there is a beginning, then inevitably there is an initiator because something does not happen by itself. The initiator must be outside the universe and completely different from it. In this case, it is impossible to say that Allah was created.

Well, why doesn't Allah prevent the extinction of a creature He created?

We said from the very beginning: that it is a necessity that the being that Allah will create is different from Himself. Therefore, if Allah, the Creator, is pre-eternal and eternal, there must be a beginning and an end to the existence He created. Naturally, if a being has a beginning, it must have an end.

FREE FROM ALL IMPERFECTIONS: AL-QUDDUS

Fatma BAYRAM

The name “al-Quddus”, an adjective derived from the root “quds”, meaning “to be clean”, expresses the superlative and signifies that our Lord (swt) is free from all kinds of deficiencies and imperfections; He is immaculate. It declares that Allah is free from everything that may be contrary to perfection. According to al-Ghazali, this name signifies not only that Allah is free from the attribution of imperfection but also that He is free from all conceivable attributes of being created and from the cognition of His essence by the intellect. The ultimate judgment that the intellect can make about Allah, whose essence cannot be known through the patterns of the intellect, is that He resembles nothing. He cannot be limited in any way to fit into the human imagination! That’s why it is stated in the Qur’an: “There is nothing like Him.” (Shura, 42:11)

This name, which expresses infinite remoteness from all kinds of imperfection, can only be used for Allah. It is

impossible to attribute this name to human beings, as it would imply the existence in them of some powers or qualities beyond a created being. Because no matter how good people are, no matter how perfect they appear to be, they cannot be completely free of imperfections and flaws. In fact, that is what makes them human. Even to be a perfect (kāmil) human being is not to be a person with superhuman qualities, but to be a person who can realize the morality that Allah expects of him/her despite having all the conditions of being a human. None of the truthful, martyred, or righteous people who are acceptable in the sight of Allah, including the prophets (Nisa, 4:69), nor the awliya whom people look upon with favor, nor even the angels (Nisa, 4:172; Yunus, 10:62-64), possess the “supra-creative and transcendent” qualities that constitute the essence of holiness.

As stated in the Qur’an, all the prophets warned their people not to attribute divinity, holiness, or perfection to anyone

other than Allah and not to practice servitude to them. In essence, this is the belief of tawhid, which is the basic principle of every prophet’s message. However, over time, among Muslims, there has been a tendency influenced by foreign cultures to sanctify natural objects, persons, places, and times, similar to practices in pre-Islamic religions. This tendency includes the elevation of leading scholars of theological and jurisprudential schools of thought to an infallible status where their views are considered uncriticizable. Additionally, sacrilegious expressions about deceased tariqah leaders are sometimes used, and there is a tendency to treat their graves as shrines in the hope of seeking help from them.

The path that Christianity has taken throughout history serves as a prominent example of the consequences of claiming holiness in someone or something based on personal beliefs rather than Allah’s revelation. However, the authority to determine what is

holy or not has never been delegated to human beings. When individuals interfere with this divine prerogative and attempt to establish their own sanctity, polytheism starts to emerge. The fact that there is no being other than Allah who is inherently holy does not prevent Allah from recognizing any being He wishes as holy. Like all other names, our Lord’s name “al-Quddus” is manifested in the created world according to His will. Allah, Who is “holy”, can render whomever He wills “holy”. Since these creatures, in which holiness is manifested, strongly evoke Him, they now reflect a reality beyond themselves. For example, according to Elmalılı, the term “Ruh al-Qudus” found in four verses (Baqarah, 2:87; Ma’idah, 5:110; Nahl, 16:102) means the spirit of holiness, that is, the spirit that cannot be tainted by any impurity, that is, trustworthy, holy, pure, and it refers to Jibril (as). Jibril is mentioned with this title to show the value of the Qur’an and to indicate that it was sent down from the



presence of the One Who is “al-Quddus” through a holy spirit untainted by any impurity. The word “qudsi” has been added to some of the hadiths to indicate that their meaning comes from the same source as the Qur’an and to distinguish them from the words of the Prophet himself. The essential conditions of human existence that our Creator requires us to protect, and that He Himself revealed the Shari’ah to protect, are also called “muqaddasat”.

Those who know that Allah is free from

all imperfection and negativity also know that no evil can come from Him. Believing that everything that comes from Him is pure goodness is a perspective that completely changes and purifies one’s view of life. Thus, it becomes easier for us to see the share of our own mistakes in the adversities that befall us. Moreover, Muslims who truly believe in this name do not deify anyone else because they know that no one can be perfect except Allah. Thus, they do not humiliate their personality, which is a blessing from

Allah, by attributing it to people like themselves.

With a sufistic approach, al-Qushayri says that the servants who receive their share of the name of al-Quddus will purify their faith, worship, and heart from all kinds of falsehood, and will keep their nafs from following inferior desires, their wealth from suspicion of haram, and their time from the impurity of opposing Him for the sake of Allah’s pleasure. Purity of faith is based on certainty (yaqīn) of knowledge, free from doubt and hesitation;

purity of worship is based on sincerity (ikhlas); and purity of heart is based on the elimination of bad traits.

To maintain the purity of mind and heart, it is crucial for individuals to lead a life of purity and cleanliness, repenting and purifying themselves from human errors. The lingering evil within us constantly pulls us down, tempting us back toward it. It is far easier for people to strive to live the purest, cleanest life possible than to attempt to eradicate the remnants of evil.

Islam in THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Omer Faruk SAVURAN

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White Mosque



The general status of Islam

The Russian Federation, boasting the world's largest territory in the world, has a population of approximately 146 million. Islam ranks as the second largest religion in Russia after Christianity, with over 25 million Muslims residing in the country. The Russian Federation is a multinational, multicultural, and multi-religious country, encompassing about 160 ethnic groups. The vast majority of Muslims are indigenous peoples who have been living in these lands for centuries. Today, the Russian Constitution lists Islam as one of the traditional religions of the country.

The Russian Federation holds observer membership status within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and is a major participant in the Eurasian Islamic Council, the largest international organization of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye.

Notably, there isn't a singular representative body for Muslims in the Russian Federation. Instead, Religious Administrations function as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The heads of religious organizations, regional muftis, and leaders of central religious administrations are

“ ISLAM MADE ITS WAY TO THE TERRITORY OF THE PRESENT-DAY RUSSIAN FEDERATION THROUGH VARIOUS ROUTES AND REGIONS.

elected by their respective members and officially registered with the appropriate state department. The state collaborates with and indirectly aids religious administrations and Muslim communities through various governmental organs.

History of Islam

Islam made its way to the territory of the present-day Russian Federation through various routes and regions. Notably, the city of Derbent in the Republic of Dagestan stands as one of the earliest places where the divine message of Islam was embraced. In the year 2023, the country commemorated the 1380th anniversary of the acceptance of Islam in Derbent. The historical city boasts 40 tombs of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), along with the oldest mosque in the country, the Juma Mosque, which continues to hold significant cultural and religious importance to this day.

The most important event regarding the mass acceptance of Islam is the voluntary adoption of Islam as the official state religion by the Volga Bulgarian state. Following the envoy sent by Khan of Volga Bulgarian, Almis Khan, to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir-Billah, expressing a desire to embrace Islam, the conversion occurred in 922 with the arrival of a delegation led by the renowned traveler Ibn Fadlan, who served as an advisor and secretary, in Bolghar. In this respect, Volga Bulgaria was recorded as the first Muslim-Turkic state to accept Islam as the official state religion.

These Muslims, who experienced a period of stagnation following the collapse of the Volga Bulgarian State in the historical process and the disappearance of the Khanate of Kazan in the region subsequent to the collapse of the Golden Horde, underwent a second scientific and

Derbent Muslim Tomb





intellectual revival after Catherine II restored some of their rights. While Muslims in Russia enjoyed one of the most prosperous periods in their history, they were detrimentally impacted by the Soviet Union era that commenced with the Bolshevik Revolution, just like members of other religions.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, religions began to reclaim their freedom in the country. The concentration of Muslims in the Volga-Ural region made significant contributions to both Tsarist Russia and the modern Russian Federation. The fact that Volga Bulgaria voluntarily accepted Islam as the official state religion has been commemorated by Muslims with various events in Bolghar since 1989. These events have progressively grown in scale and participation each year, evolving into



a festival for Muslims. In 2022, the state celebrated the 1100th anniversary of Islam's acceptance throughout the country for a year.

Activities of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye

Especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Presidency of Religious Affairs began to support the needs of its fellow believers and coreligionists in these regions, sharing its experience with them in accordance with their requests. Within this framework, it has cooperated with local religious administrations recognized by the state in the Russian Federation. The Religious Services Consultancy of the Presidency of Religious Affairs has been conducting its activities since 1993.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, alongside the exchange of students, the printing of basic religious publications, the deployment of religious officials, support for various construction projects, training programs for local religious officials, and the facilitation of Ramadan and Eid al-Adha activities, more significant cooperation between the two countries in the religious field began to emerge.

One of the most important steps in the religious diplomacy between Türkiye and the Russian Federation is the construction of the Moscow Central Mosque. Following the decision to rebuild the mosque in Moscow, Ravil Gaynutdin, President of the Religious Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation and the Russia Mufties Council, paid an official visit to Ankara in 2010. During his visit, Gaynutdin met with the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the project was presented to Erdogan. After the meeting, a protocol was signed for all interior works of the Moscow Central Mosque to be carried out by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation. The project and implementation phase lasted almost two years, and more than 100 craftsmen from Türkiye worked on the calligraphy works alone. The mosque was officially inaugurated with the participation of the President of the Republic of Türkiye, the President of the Russian Federation, and the President of the State of Palestine.

Another major joint construction project in the Russian Federation is the service building of the Russian Islamic University in Ufa, the capital of the Republic



of Bashkortostan. This building was constructed by the Istanbul Provincial Muftiate within the framework of the Sister City Project and officially inaugurated in 2022.

There is also important cooperation in the field of religious publishing. The project involving the translation of Islam through Hadiths into Russian holds a particularly special place, providing valuable information to the academic community and serving as a resource for universities. Additionally, dozens of works have been jointly translated at a foundational level. In December 2022, President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbas paid an official visit to the Russian Federation to

participate in the closing programs of the events commemorating the 1100th anniversary of the acceptance of Islam as the official state religion of Volga Bulgaria. Within the framework of his visit, the book 'Islam through Hadiths', which was translated into Russian in cooperation with the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation and the Russian Council of Muftis, was presented. To symbolize this historical moment, a logo dedicated to the 1100th anniversary of the acceptance of Islam was also included in the book.

One of the most significant forthcoming projects is the translation of the Basic Encyclopedia of Islam into Russian. This encyclopedia, published in eight volumes in Türkiye in 2019 by the Center for Islamic Studies (ISAM) of the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, will be translated under a protocol signed between ISAM and the Moscow Islamic Institute in December 2023. The protocol covers various issues related to proofreading, layout, online publication, and printing of the translated work in Russia.



THE SPARK THAT IGNITED THE LIGHT OF THE RENAISSANCE: AL-FARABI

Koray SERBETCI



A scholar is growing up

When the calendars marked the year 871, a child was born on the eastern edge of Islamic civilization in Vesich, near the city of Farab in Turkestan. This child would later emerge as the second teacher of Islamic philosophical thought and a renowned scholar known to Westerners as Al-Farabi or Avennasar. Thus, how did al-Farabi's journey of wisdom commence?

According to the available data, the only information we have regarding know about his family is that his father was the commander of the Vesich Fortress. No further details are known. Al-Farabi received his initial education in Farab, a cultural center under the governance of the Samanid Empire. Alongside mastering Persian and Arabic, he delved into the studies of fiqh, hadith, and tafsir. After successfully completing his education, al-Farabi served as a qadi for a period. However, the love of wisdom in him made him restless in the position of qadi. He left his position as a qadi and departed from his hometown, embarking on a journey in search of wisdom that continued throughout his life.

Al-Farabi discovers Aristotle

On his journey of wisdom, al-Farabi visited important centers of science and culture of the time, such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Marw, and Balkh. Then, at the age of forty, he made his way to Baghdad. He resided in this city, the political and cultural center of the Islamic world, for twenty years. During this period, Plato, Aristotle, and most of the later Greek poets were translated into Syriac, partly by Eastern Christians. Between the 8th to the 11th centuries, the Islamic city of Baghdad experienced a pinnacle of interest in Greek philosophy, fostering an atmosphere of open and extensive intellectual discourse.

Experiencing this atmosphere, al-Farabi studied logic with Christian Nestorian scholars and learned about the ancient Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle. In particular, studying logic under Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus, a Nestorian Christian, broadened his horizons considerably. From this teacher, he learned the method of expressing the most complex philosophical problems in a simple manner. But now his only passion was



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Aristotle. But now, all his efforts would be to understand this ancient Greek philosopher.

From then on, his entire life would be spent in the pursuit of wisdom under the guidance of Aristotle, reading, thinking, and writing without rest. In this respect, al-Farabi's writings on philosophy and logic earned him a special place among the Muslim philosophers of the Middle Ages. In fact, in the words of the renowned social scientist Ibn Khaldun, he was considered the person who understood and interpreted Aristotle best; hence, he was known as “the second master” (Mu'allim al-Thani) right after Aristotle. The philosopher, who resided in Baghdad for twenty years, the intellectual and cultural epicenter of the Muslim world, and penned the majority of his works there, was compelled to depart the city amidst the political upheaval that ensued. His initial destination was Damascus, followed by Aleppo.

Days in Damascus

When al-Farabi left Baghdad, he left behind not only a city but also many years during which he authored many works. Upon leaving Baghdad,

he journeyed to Aleppo, where he was welcomed at the palace of the Hamdanid Emir Sayf al-Dawla, attired in his Sufi garb. Subsequently, he accompanied the Emir to Damascus. During his stay there, it is reported that he briefly returned to Egypt before returning to Damascus. Throughout his years in Damascus, he continued his studies under the patronage of the palace, a pursuit that spanned most of his life.

Although one of the most famous Arab poets, al-Mutanabbi, claimed that his life ended at the hands of thieves while he was traveling between Damascus and Asqalan, historians have not been able to find sufficient evidence for such an event. What is known is that he passed on in Damascus at the age of eighty, that his funeral was attended by the Emir of Damascus, Sayf al-Dawla, and many other dignitaries, and that he was buried outside the neighborhood called Bab al-Saghir.

A glimpse into the soul of a scholar

Al-Farabi was a man who did not indulge in worldly comforts. He spent all his time reading and writing. It is even said that he read Aristotle's Physics forty times and De



AL-FARABI'S WRITINGS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC EARNED HIM A SPECIAL PLACE AMONG THE MUSLIM PHILOSOPHERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Anima (On the Soul) two hundred times in order to understand it thoroughly. He never gave up the Turkish attire he wore throughout his life. In his final years, al-Farabi found a conducive working environment, supported by his patron, Emir Sayf al-Dawla, who ensured his sustenance.

One day, in the presence of the Emir, an intriguing incident unfolded. Speaking in a language reserved for their exclusive use, the Emir

informed prominent statesmen that al-Farabi would be posed with questions, and failure to answer would result in his expulsion. Al-Farabi, who understood what was being said, reassured straight away the Emir in the same language to be patient and that the end of the matter was important. Astonished, Sayf al-Dawla inquired, "Do you understand this language?" To which the philosopher calmly responded, "I am conversant in over seventy languages." Subsequently, the scholars present at the gathering debated with him on various topics. When al-Farabi overwhelmed them all, they had no choice but to remain silent and listen to him, then take out their notebooks and start taking notes.

Undoubtedly, this polymath was not only proficient in unraveling philosophical enigmas but also possessed a profound mastery of music. During one gathering in the presence of the Emir, al-Farabi discerned flaws in the melodies performed by the musical ensemble. With characteristic expertise, he rectified the errors and proceeded to deliver an extraordinary lesson through his own performance. Extracting his musical instrument, he played a jubilant

song that elicited cheers and laughter. Swiftly shifting the tune, he invoked a somber composition, prompting tears to flow freely. Yet, his demonstration did not conclude here. Adjusting the tuning of his instrument once more, he played another piece, inducing a tranquil slumber upon all, even the guards. Then al-Farabi packed up his instrument and left the palace.

What legacy did al-Farabi leave to humanity?

Al-Farabi, the leading name of the al-Mashsha'iyun (Peripatetic) philosophy in the history of philosophy, is said to have written more than one hundred works, but today we have thirty-nine of them. Most of these works are interpretations of Aristotle. In particular, his work, Ihsha al-'Ulum (Enumeration of the Sciences), is a summary of the sciences of language, logic, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, and politics of his time.

Al-Farabi based his philosophy on the idea that Aristotle used to prove the existence of Allah. According to him, the existence of a chain of causes would indicate the existence of a first cause. A series of motions required a force that caused the first motion. Plurality was proof of



"Al-Wahid wa-l-Wahda"
by al-Farabi the first two pages
of his treatise.

oneness. The greatest goal of philosophy, which was never achieved, was to find the first cause, that is, Wajib al-Wujud. The first way to approach this knowledge was through the purity of the soul.

According to al-Farabi, philosophy is the knowledge of existence as a being. According to him, the first principle and the ultimate goal of existence could be found through philosophy, which is an all-encompassing and comprehensive science that places the entire universe before us. Al-Farabi had an unshakable trust in logic. So much so that he raised the most complex questions of metaphysics

based on the principles of logic and tried to solve them. The propositions that gained importance in the West with Kant had been put forward by al-Farabi centuries before. Al-Madinah al-Fadhilah (The Ideal City), one of his works, was a masterpiece of political philosophy. Al-Farabi begins this work with a description of the law of nature and asks how human society has escaped this law of the jungle.

In the history of philosophy, this has been much debated in later periods. According to some, society began as a result of an agreement between individuals. J. J. Rousseau was the main

proponent of this view. Others argued that society began when the strong dominated the weak. This group, in line with Nietzsche's view, argued that states were also rival organisms. According to this view, the right belongs to the strong.

Al-Farabi, on the other hand, opposed this idea. According to the conclusion he reached in this work, people would be able to reach the truth by establishing a society based on reason, sacrifice, and love, not on greed, strife, and jealousy. This would be possible with a sovereignty based on social religious faith. The basis of al-Farabi's moral philosophy is education and good behavior, and the ultimate goal is happiness. According to him, happiness is such a value that it is not a means to anything but a direct objective. Because after achieving happiness, people find all kinds of satisfaction in it and do not need anything else.

The philosophical doctrine he established soon spread throughout Muslim geography, from Transoxiana to Andalusia, both through his disciples and their works and through the philosophers who criticized him. However, its influence extended beyond these boundaries. His works influenced not only Muslim scholars but also Latin writers of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, they served as the catalyst for sparking the enlightenment of Renaissance Europe, transmitted through the conduit of Andalusia.

THE EASTERN BREEZE THAT INFUSED
THE WEST WITH CIVILIZATION:

THE GREAT MOSQUE OF QURTUBA

Sumeyra CELIK



Ibn Khaldun stated that history typically discusses the past, yet our connection to it lies in comprehending the future. In this context, it can be argued that civilizations exist with the legacies they leave behind, shaping the future with those same legacies. Similar to a business card, they depict their eras, periods, and ideologies through their works. The Caliphate of Córdoba, in addition to the hundreds of works it left behind, imbued Spain with its own character through the Great Mosque of Qurtuba. Among the many words used to describe Andalusia, the most notable are education, science, culture, and art. According to narrations, the history of Andalusia

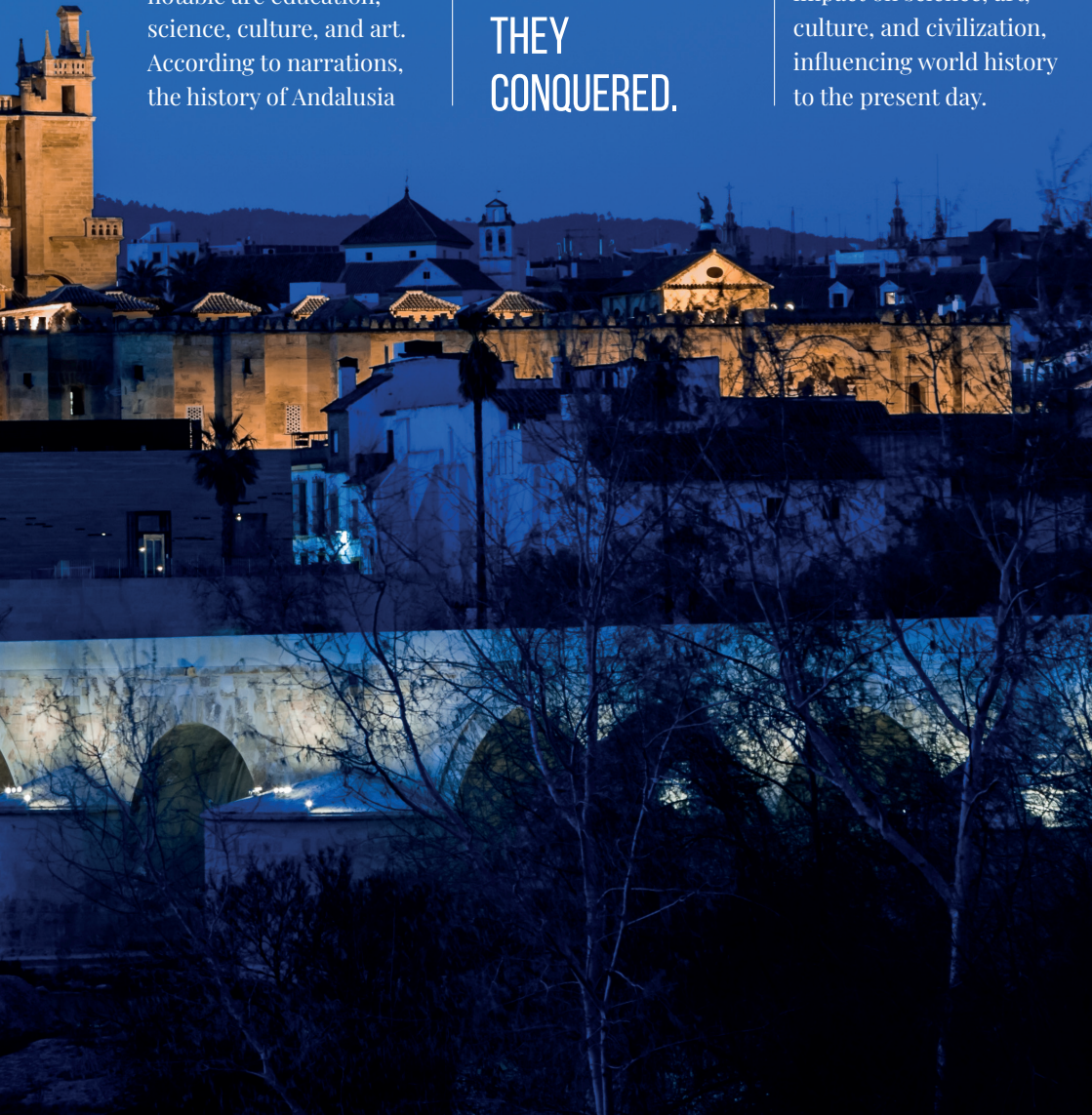
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begins with a commander who burned his own ships to eliminate the possibility of his army’s retreat, declaring, “There is an enemy like the sea behind us and the sea like the enemy in front of us, there is no turning back now”. Under the command of Tariq ibn Ziyad, the conquering army established its dominance over the Iberian Peninsula, leading to centuries of civilization.

Andalusia not only served as an Islamic state but also played a significant role in shaping the course of history. Its conquest had a profound impact on science, art, culture, and civilization, influencing world history to the present day.

Andalusia’s exceptional history is characterized by the construction of mosques, madrasas, inns, baths, libraries, palaces, and scientific studies. The list encompasses a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, astronomy, paper, printing, silk, astrolabe, history, geography, art, architecture, philosophy, logic, language, literature, music, fiqh, kalam, hadith, tafsir, tasawwuf, medicine, chemistry (including surgery, and pharmacy), zoology, and botany (including the cultivation of rice, sugarcane, and cotton).

Muslims, adhering to the principle of emulating the Prophet’s example, continued the tradition of building mosques first in the territories they conquered. The Great Mosque of Qurtuba stands as a testament to this practice, being the first building constructed following the conquest. Furthermore, they undertook the reconstruction of cities that still bear their names today, with thousands of works completed during their period of dominance. The Andalusians governed for 88 years in Barshalunah (Barcelona), 776 years in Maliqah (Malaga), 431 years in Lixbuna (Lisbon), 212 years in Majrit (Madrid), and 780 years in Gharnata (Granada), during which they built a civilization rich in material and





meaning. They established cities, neighborhoods, roads, bridges, castles, fortresses, walls, hospitals, dams, implemented advanced technical agriculture, undertook landscape architecture, and established industrial sites across the Iberian Peninsula.

After 525 years of Andalusian rule, the first building in Qurtuba (Córdoba), the Great Mosque of Qurtuba emerged as one of the masterpieces of Islamic civilization, renowned for its colossal dimensions, monumental impact, and unprecedented ornamentation. Modeled after the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, it not only rivaled but also surpassed its inspiration in both architectural grandeur and decorative intricacy. This magnificent edifice steeped in history, epoch, purpose, and legacy, stood as a spiritual beacon and a pinnacle of Islamic aesthetics during its era. It exuded scholarly sophistication, prosperity, majesty, elegance, aesthetics, power, and solidity, epitomizing the attributes befitting a sacred sanctuary. Moreover, functioning as a madrasa, it nurtured countless scholars. Prominent scholars such as al-Qurtubi, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ibn Hazm, Ibn Arabi, and Ibn Tufayl received their

education in this great mosque. The intellectual contributions of these luminaries emanated from the dome of the madrasas, disseminating across lands and seeding innovations that continue to enrich humanity to this day. Despite being converted into a church eight centuries ago, the Great Mosque of Qurtuba has retained its awe-inspiring majesty, a testament to its enduring architectural and cultural significance.

The construction of the sacred sanctuary, initiated by Abd al-Rahman I in 786 during the Caliphate of Córdoba, commenced on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, traversing the heart of Córdoba. Although begun under Abd al-Rahman I's reign, it was Hisham I who oversaw its completion. However, its ultimate form evolved over two hundred years through successive expansion projects undertaken by numerous sultans.

The mosque, which is characterized by relative simplicity in terms of its exterior, has magnificent splendor in its interior decoration. The harmony and majesty added by hundreds of columns, calligraphy, geometry representing infinity, and the array of colors in the decorations seem like a gateway to other realms. Its rows of arches, built



with elegant architecture, resemble an orchard of date palms. Andalusian architecture, including the mosque's design, showcases a clear, pure, and almost otherworldly beauty. The dense geometric ornamentation demonstrates the unity of intertwined motifs in connection with the infinite.

The mosque has the appearance of a fortress with its high walls and quadrangular shape, and the crown gates with the most magnificent ornamentation are located on the east and west facades. The mosque has a single minaret, which stands at 68 meters tall and is decorated with kufic writing and lines. Most of the minaret was demolished and turned into a bell tower, and

its original form was largely covered. With 860 columns, 110 of which were brought from Istanbul (Constantinople as it was known then) by ship, it is the mosque with the most columns in the world. It has nineteen gates in total. The edifice pushes the boundaries of scale with its impressive features, boasting 360 arches strategically positioned to allow sunlight to permeate throughout the structure year-round. Additionally, it boasts 113 chandeliers, the largest of which accommodates 1000 oil lamps, illuminating its vast expanse. The construction also utilized a staggering 320 tons of mosaic, adding to its opulence and grandeur. Covering an area of 22 thousand square meters, it can accommodate up to

30 thousand worshippers at once. Its mihrab, which is the first example in terms of being in the form of a room, is decorated with floral patterns and kufic writing with a mosaic technique on a gold background. With its octagonal structure, magnificent dome in the shape of an oyster shell, and extraordinary acoustics, the mihrab is the seal of the Great Mosque of Qurtuba. In the inner courtyard, which is decorated with orange trees, there are fountains (shadirwans) that have been transformed into ornamental pools today. Orange trees, which were introduced with the conquest, were planted all over Córdoba and have since become the symbol of the city. This exceptional masterpiece, which

functioned as a mosque for approximately five hundred years, underwent a transformation into the Cathedral of Córdoba following the demolition of 63 columns and closure to Muslims after the fall of Andalusia from Muslim rule.

In 1984, the Great Mosque of Córdoba, also known as the Great Mosque of Qurtuba, was officially recognized as a "UNESCO World Heritage Site", along with the entire historic center of Córdoba. This prestigious designation highlights the cultural and historical significance of this architectural marvel, affirming its place as one of the most important landmarks not only in Spain but also in the Muslim world as the third largest mosque.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



When and how should one make an intention to fast?

To observe fasting, it is essential to express an intention, just as in all other forms of worship. Simply abstaining from food and drink without intending to fast does not constitute fasting. Therefore, articulating the intention for fasting is a prerequisite, regardless of whether the fasting is obligatory (fardh), obligatory as a duty (wajib), or voluntary (nafl). When one decides on something and puts effort to make it happen, then such a person is considered to have made the intention. It is deemed commendable to express this intention verbally. Waking up for suhoor (pre-dawn meal) is also considered a means of the same intention. The time frame for intending to fast during Ramadan, for votive fasting (nadh'r), and for voluntary fasting starts from sunset and extends until mid-morning, allowing flexibility in making the intention within this period. Islamic scholars, however, have allocated a broader range of time to make the intention. The time to make the intention for Ramadan fasting, votive fast (nadh'r), and supererogatory (nafl) fasting starts from sunset and continues until the middle of the morning. However, it is inappropriate to form the intention for fasting before sunset, at noon, or any time between noon and sunset. Making the intention until noon is permissible under the condition that no action invalidating the fast is performed from dawn until the time of intention. Since each day of fasting in Ramadan constitutes a separate act of worship, the intention should be made individually for each day. It is not acceptable to make a single intention encompassing all the days of Ramadan.

What are the conditions to be obliged to fast?

In Islam, one needs to be Muslim, of sound mind, and have reached puberty to be deemed accountable. These criteria also apply to fasting. Therefore, in order for an individual to be accountable for Ramadan fasting, they need to be Muslim, of sound mind, and have reached puberty (Kasani, Bada'i, II, 87). While some people possess the necessary qualities to be accountable for acts of worship, they may be excused from fasting due to certain circumstances. Although children who have not reached puberty yet are not held accountable for worship, it is encouraged for them to engage in prayer and fasting to become accustomed to these practices. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) recommended that children from seven years of age until ten be made accustomed to performing prayer

(Abu Dawud, Salat, 26).

What is the importance of the suhoor meal in Islam?

Suhoor is the meal eaten before imsak at night by people intending to fast. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) would wake up for suhoor and encouraged and advised the ummah (Bukhari, Sawm, 19, 20) to do the same. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) expressed that there is a “blessing (barakah)” in the suhoor meal (Bukhari, Sawm, 20) and highlighted suhoor as a distinguishing practice between the fasting of Muslims and the People of the Book (Muslim, Siyam, 46). Based on his hadiths and practices regarding suhoor, Muslim jurists have deemed waking up for suhoor and delaying the suhoor meal as late as possible as sunnah (Kasani, Bada’i, II, 105). Scholars state that suhoor provides strength for fasting and facilitates the attainment of blessings, both materially and spiritually. This is because by waking up for suhoor, people will be awake for the time of dawn and can partake in prayers and seek forgiveness, thereby attaining the virtues associated with the people of paradise (Dhariyat, 51:18). Consequently, starting the fast with such spiritual fervor enhances one’s experience of fasting and brings about a sense of liveliness and spiritual joy. Given the moral and material blessings associated with suhoor, it is imperative not to overlook this time-honored practice.

Can we observe fasting on the days of Eid?

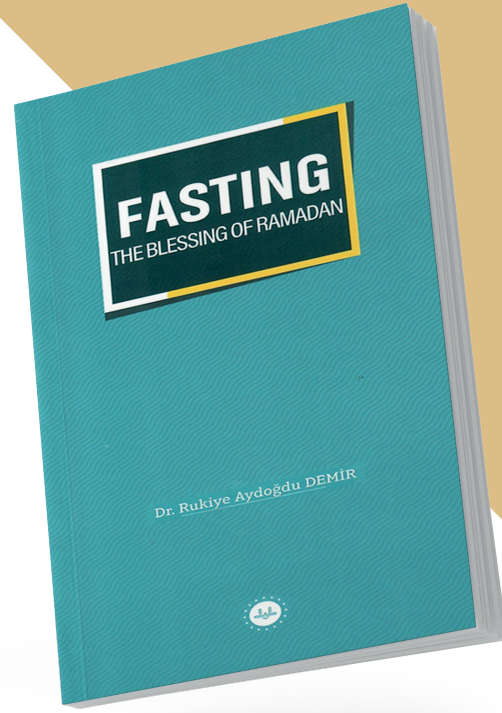
The days of Eid come at the top of the list of days when fasting is prohibited. It is considered makruh tahrimi to fast on the first day of Eid al-Fitr and all four days of Eid al-Adha (Mawsili, al-Ikhtiyar, I, 395–396; Ibn Abidin, Radd al-Muhtar, III, 336). The reason why it is disliked and forbidden to fast on these days is that Eid days are meant for celebration, enjoyment, and communal feasting. Eid al-Fitr is considered “a general iftar feast” offered after one month of fasting performed for the sake of Allah (swt). The first day of Eid al-Fitr is akin to a grand iftar feast, symbolizing the culmination of the fasting period. Fasting on such a day is considered as neglecting to participate in the symbolic feast of Allah (swt), which is obviously disrespectful. Similarly, Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice, is a time when sacrifices are made for the sake of Allah (swt). These days are also regarded as days of feasting and celebration. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated that the days of tashreeq (the three days following Eid al-Adha) are for eating, drinking, and praising Allah (swt) (Bukhari, Sawm, 66–67; Abu Dawud, Sawm, 49).

Does eating or drinking something forgetfully invalidate the fast?

Eating or drinking something forgetfully does not invalidate the fast. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “If somebody eats or drinks forgetfully then he should complete his fast, for what he has eaten or drunk, has been given to him by Allah.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 26) A person who eats or drinks forgetfully while fasting should spit that thing and wash his/her mouth immediately, and then continue fasting. If something is swallowed after remembering that one was fasting, it invalidates fasting (Marghinani, al-Hidayahh, II, 253–254).

FASTING THE BLESSING OF RAMADAN

Meryem KILIC



The month of Ramadan holds significant spiritual importance in Islam as a holy month of mercy. It marks the beginning of the revelation of Islam's holy book, the Noble Qur'an, and is therefore often referred to as the month of the Qur'an. Our Lord is merciful towards his servants, the doors of mercy are wide open during this month and He grants various gifts to the servants who put the month of Ramadan to good use. It is a unique opportunity for those who want to purify themselves from sins, stay away from evil, and expiate

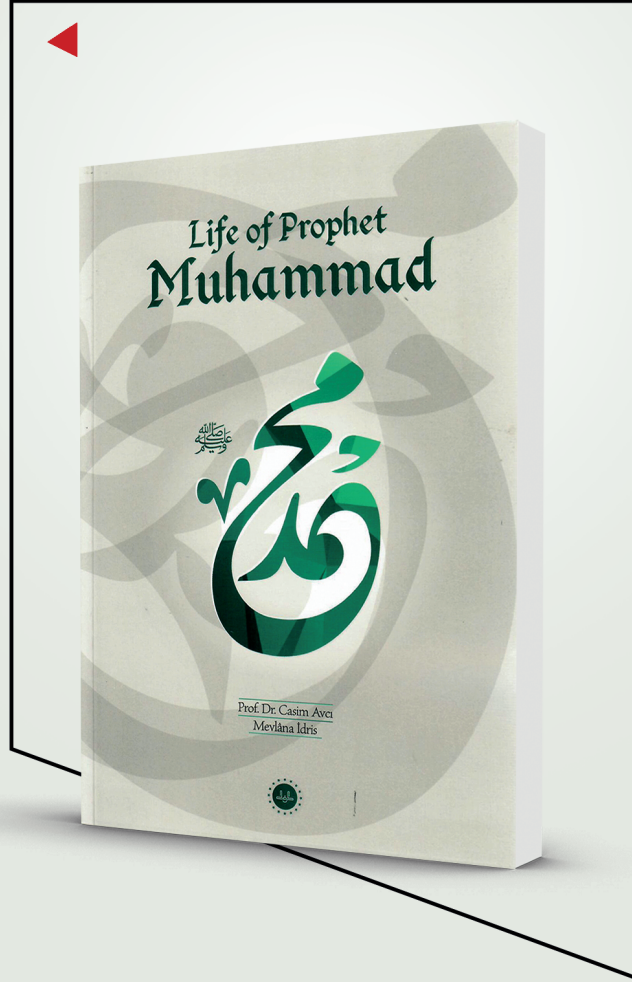
for their mistakes in this month. One of the most fundamental features that make the month of Ramadan important and valuable to Muslims is 'fasting'. Fasting during the month of Ramadan is fardh for every Muslim and it is one of Islam's primary acts of worship.

The work entitled "Fasting the Blessing of Ramadan", which explains the meaning of fasting and especially the nature of fasting in the month of Ramadan, has taken its place among the publications of the Presidency of Religious

Affairs. In the first chapter of the book written by Rukiye Aydogdu Demir, it is emphasized that it is the month of the Qur'an, worship, fasting, mercy, patience, gratitude, repentance, cooperation, solidarity, and friendship. With verses from the Holy Qur'an and examples from the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), the book expresses that fasting is not only a sign and indicator of being Muslim but also the most beautiful expression of our servitude, closeness, and gratitude to our Lord. The book also emphasizes that fasting is a training

of the will and a great opportunity for a person to discipline himself spiritually and physically.

The last chapter of the book informs us that Eid al-Fitr is a time for Muslims to come together and share their joy with one another. We are truly pleased to present this valuable work, which delves into the most fundamental acts of fasting, a cornerstone of worship during the spiritually rejuvenating month of Ramadan, in a comprehensible style for the benefit of our esteemed readers.



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Diyamet publications are available from local bookshops as well as our attaché and consulting offices abroad.

**“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness
(O Prophet)-the natural Way of Allah which He has
instilled in (all) people. Let there be no change in this
creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most
people do not know.”**

(Rum, 30:30)