

# Diy Janet

## Journal

ISSUE 8 | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

## THE NEED OF HUMANITY: PEACE AND MERCY

| On Technology and the Muslim Subject | Is the World Flat? | The Watchful Protector: Al-Muhaymin | Islam in Ghana |



## The art of paper and leather cutting: **Qat'i**

The word qat means cutting in Arabic. Qat'i, derived from this word, is an art of ornamentation practiced by carving a pattern or stack of writing out of layers of paper or leather. It is a work created by cutting out the writing or motif on paper or leather with a sharpener and gluing the hollowed-out piece or the removed piece onto another piece of paper, leather, or glass. When this shape is cut out, the part of the paper that remains hollow is called female-carving, and the writing and shape that comes out is called male-carving, these male or female shapes can be glued separately on a separate surface to create two different plates. There are also solid' works made of leather. Both works made of leather and paper are called muqatta, and those who make them are called qatta.



*Qat'i: Safiye Gulen*

# *Editorial*

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Allah the Almighty, Who introduces Himself to us as ar-Rahman (the Most Compassionate) and ar-Rahim (the Most Merciful), has encompassed all of creation with His mercy. As a manifestation of this mercy, He created humanity, elevating humans to a position of honor and appointing them as stewards of the Earth. Being a steward implies bearing responsibility toward all of creation. Consequently, humanity is obligated to approach all beings with a sense of trust, showing compassion and mercy in fulfilling this responsibility.

Throughout history, mercy has been regarded as a universal human value. Yet in our present age, we are witnessing its rapid withdrawal from every sphere of life. The void left by mercy, one of the most essential emotions in human existence, has been filled with negative sentiments such as violence, anger, and oppression, which are universally condemned by human conscience. This reality not only fosters isolation among individuals but also gives rise to profound conflicts between societies. This deeply troubling and thought-provoking reality highlights that restoring social peace, harmony, and brotherhood depends on humanity reviving its sense of mercy and transforming it into a living value.

In this issue, we aim to draw attention to the profound role of compassion in addressing the greatest challenges of our time with the theme “The Need of Humanity: Peace and Mercy”. Our guest for this issue is Abdullah Eren, President of YTB, who emphasizes that spreading morality, compassion, and benevolence should be a fundamental duty for each of us. In the “Revert Stories” column, Ameena Blake shares the journey of her introduction to Islam in response to our questions. Meanwhile, in the “On the Footsteps of the Prophet” column, Prof. Dr. Eyup Bas explores “The Societal Structure and Balance Shift in Medina After the Hijrah”, detailing the system established by the Prophet (saw) in Medina following the Hijrah.

With the hope of building a future where peace and compassion prevail, beginning with Palestine and extending to every corner of the world, we proudly present our magazine to you, our esteemed readers.

*Dr. Lamia LEVENT ABUL*



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

# AN ACTIONABLE AWARENESS OF COMPASSION WILL RESHAPE THE WORLD



**Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAS**

The President  
Presidency of Religious Affairs

Our sublime book, the Qur'an, introduces Allah to us with the attributes of ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful) and ar-Rahim (the Most Compassionate). Mercy, derived from the same root as these two attributes, is among the foremost of the emotions that Allah bestows upon His creation as a manifestation of His mercy. In this sense, mercy signifies being sensitive to every living being and adopting a merciful approach in all interactions with the world.

The mercy of Allah, which is a reflection of His name ar-Rahman, can essentially be described as the feeling of compassion towards

someone or something, a deep sorrow felt for their plight. This definition also encompasses showing concern for the troubles and difficulties of others without discrimination, feeling pity for their plight, empathizing with their situation, and feeling sorrow alongside them. However, limiting mercy to just this sense would be an incomplete approach, as this profound emotion also has an action-oriented dimension alongside its inner (spiritual) aspect. In this context, true mercy, as understood through the universal moral principles of Islam, is not just an abstract feeling of pity but a concept that also concerns attitudes and

behaviors that manifest in the service of others' well-being. Indeed, because Islam aims to spread goodness and virtuous character on earth, it commands approaching all living beings with love, treating them with compassion, and helping them through these feelings, thus guiding people toward active altruism and, in a way, transforming mercy into action.

In Islam, mercy has a comprehensive nature and does not harbor any discrimination based on religion, language, race, species, or similar distinctions. Indeed, addressing the inequalities among people and establishing social justice can only be achieved through an all-encompassing understanding of mercy. Allah, the one Who grants mercy, treats all His servants and all creatures with compassion, without any distinction. He is the most merciful of the merciful. The fact that Allah has sent prophets to humanity and revealed books to distinguish between right and wrong is a manifestation of His mercy towards all of His creation. The rewards that believers earn for their deeds are a result of Allah's mercy and compassion. Similarly, the rewards for those who remain

patient in the face of life's difficulties are also the result of Allah's mercy and compassion. Allah is the owner of infinite mercy, and as stated in the Qur'an, His mercy encompasses everything (A'raf, 7:156). Both believers and non-believers share in His mercy.

Allah the Almighty endowed the Prophet Muhammad with noble qualities such as compassion and mercy, and He commands the believers to follow His example by adorning their lives with these virtues and advising one another to practice patience, compassion, and mercy (Balad, 90:17). Indeed, one of the most notable attributes of the Prophet Muhammad, who was sent as a mercy to the worlds (Anbiya, 21:107), is that he was a prophet of mercy and compassion (Tawbah, 9:128). The Prophet said, "Allah shows mercy only to those of His servants who are merciful" (Bukhari, Marda, 9), and despite the harm he received from others, he always responded with mercy. He also said, "Show mercy to those on the earth, and you will be shown mercy by Allah" (Abu Dawud, Adab, 58), emphasizing the expansive and encompassing nature of mercy. The trust people had in him and their coming together around him were also a

result of his deep sense of compassion (Al-i 'Imran, 3:159).

Allah the Almighty has clearly stated the attitude that should be exhibited by the believers, regardless of circumstances, in His verse: "(They are) those who donate in prosperity and adversity, control their anger, and pardon others. And Allah loves the good-doers." (Al-i 'Imran, 3:134) This verse calls for approaching everyone with love and compassion, regardless of lineage, wealth, or social status, protecting and caring for the poor and the orphaned, and striving to develop a morality of mercy and love in society.

Today, one of the gravest challenges humanity faces is its indifference to compassion, which nurtures the heart and gives life to the soul, its distance from goodness, and its yearning for love. The root cause of the violence, the bouts of rage and ambitions that overshadow the modern world, is this very detachment. Sadly, the world has become a place where injustice and inequality are widespread, and issues such as poverty, migration, and discrimination increasingly dominate life. Humanity is now confronted with a profound moral and civilizational crisis. This is why the world is

witnessing atrocities, massacres, and genocides that are unprecedented in history. The recent human tragedies, particularly in Palestine and other oppressed regions, starkly illustrate how far the world has strayed from mercy and reflect the dark, barren climate through which humanity is passing.

Undoubtedly, this drought that scorches consciences and this darkness that stifles souls can only be alleviated by bringing the mercy-laden messages of our sublime religion, Islam, to prominence in life. An actionable awareness of compassion will reshape the world. The responsibility of striving to achieve this ideal and building a world grounded in justice and mercy centered on the truths of divine revelation rests on the shoulders of Muslims. In this regard, the first step is to strengthen the sense of compassion within our own lives, placing it at the heart of our existence. Thereafter, we must carry the mercy-filled messages of our faith, the ideals of the goodness of our civilization, and the noble legacy of our forebears into the present and the future with a sense of entrusted duty. Only then, every cycle of violence that wounds humanity and every vortex of hatred will be replaced by an atmosphere of peace.



# THE NEED OF HUMANITY: PEACE AND MERCY

Mustafa IRMAKLI



The two concepts that best complement any sentence mentioning “humanity” and that bring beauty to every word about humankind are peace and mercy. Without these two words, it is nearly impossible to provide a true definition of humanity or to articulate its unique position in the realm of existence. Indeed, humanity stands out on Earth as the ambassador of peace and the embodiment of mercy. What sets humans apart from other living beings is not physical or biological attributes but rather a conscious morality values such as peace and mercy. In Islamic thought, these concepts of peace and mercy are central to explaining humanity’s purpose and the wisdom behind its presence on Earth. According to Islam, the purpose and primary duty of humanity on Earth are to live in alignment with values such as goodness, peace, justice, and mercy through sincere devotion to Allah, striving to strengthen these values and establish an environment of harmony and security. Allah the Almighty impressively expresses this noble ideal in the Qur’an: “O believers! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and do not follow Satan’s footsteps. Surely he is your sworn enemy.” (Baqarah, 2:208) In essence, both the words “Islam”

and “Muslim”, in their root and terminological meanings, most clearly and comprehensively convey the concept of peace. Thus, peace is a foundational concept in Islamic thought, morality, and worldview. The system of values people uphold, along with the feelings of peace and mercy they carry in their hearts, manifests in their responses to life. Their interactions and relationships with themselves, others, society, and nature reflect the ideals of peace and mercy that they embody. For this reason, our beloved Prophet describes a Muslim as “one from whose hands and tongue others are safe”. When we look at his hadiths, we see that a believer is someone who embodies a sense of responsibility, toward Allah the Almighty above all, but also toward family, neighbors, the environment, animals, the oppressed, orphans, and those in need, and reflects this in their actions. Indeed, throughout history, civilizations built on the guidance of the Qur’an and the sunnah have demonstrated the finest examples of justice and law, peace and mercy, serving as a guarantee of tranquility and security for all humanity. However, beginning in the 18th century, we see that a dark era in terms of values emerged across the world. In an era termed



## THE SYSTEM OF VALUES PEOPLE UPHOLD, ALONG WITH THE FEELINGS OF PEACE AND MERCY THEY CARRY IN THEIR HEARTS, MANIFESTS IN THEIR RESPONSES TO LIFE.

the “enlightenment”, humanity experienced an unprecedented level of wars, suffering, global catastrophes, environmental crises, turmoil, and despair. While science, technology, transportation, and communication advanced at a dizzying pace, values that bring tranquility to humanity such as peace, security, and sharing have drastically weakened.

In recent years, the world has been engulfed by significant political, economic, and social crises. On one hand, we witness rampant wastefulness, selfishness, and complacency, while on the other, more than half of the global population is condemned to lives plagued by hunger, poverty, misery, and social problems. Wars, terrorist organizations, and pandemics have dragged millions into a vortex of bloodshed, tears, and hopelessness. This is a reality known to anyone living in this era with the awareness to observe what is unfolding around them. One of the most common phrases used over the past century to describe life is that we are living in the “age of speed”. Everything moves so quickly that people often lack the time for self-reflection, for contemplating existence, truth, and meaning, and are frequently forced to follow life and events from



behind. Yet, these are only portrayals of “what” is happening on our planet. What truly matters and what will contribute to a better future is to reveal “why” these things are happening. In an undesirable and painful situation, the crucial step is to accurately identify the causes behind the symptoms, enabling a realistic diagnosis and an appropriate prescription for healing.

In this context, one of the most serious causes behind the crises, disasters, and tragedies experienced from the individual level to the global scale in the modern era is the sidelining of human values and the corruption of natural disposition. Essentially, this is a profound crisis of truth and mercy. The loss of truth has led to a deep crisis of meaning, while the loss of mercy has resulted in a severe moral crisis. Unfortunately, the paradigms of the modern era have overlooked the connection between humanity and the transcendent being, Allah. As a result, humans have lost awareness of their noble mission on Earth and their responsibility and accountability to divine authority. Yet, humanity is a dignified being (*Isra*, 17:70) created in the most beautiful form (*Tin*, 95:4), endowed with superior qualities (*Balad*, 90:8-10), appointed as a



## EVERYONE WHO VALUES PEACE, MERCY, TRANQUILITY, AND SECURITY ON EARTH MUST WORK DILIGENTLY TO ESTABLISH PEACE AND WELL-BEING IN REGIONS BESIEGED BY OPPRESSION AND WAR.

vicegerent (*Baqarah*, 2:30), and entrusted with the task of ensuring that goodness and mercy prevail on Earth while eliminating evil (*Al-i 'Imran*, 3:104). Similarly, in the modern era, humanity has been highlighted solely in its physical dimension and regarded through a power-centered perspective as if it were merely an element of natural selection. However, what distinguishes humans as unique and special in the realm of existence are their virtues and sense of responsibility.

Today, it has become painfully clear that international projects and expenditures based on peace and mercy are dwarfed by budgets allocated for war. The investments made by the world's dominant powers in the arms industry and technology far exceed spending on humanitarian sectors, particularly health, by thousands of times. Unfortunately, over the past century, global centers with the power to influence humanity have created fronts centered on war, power, and conflict, rather than on projects promoting mercy, peace, and tranquility. As a result, vulnerable regions have been transformed into lands of blood and tears, plagued by rampant attacks, proxy wars, and laboratories of terrorism and discord. Even more tragically, the perpetrators of these atrocities and

oppressions, through the use of informational tools, camouflage their horrific actions behind the guise of peace, presenting themselves as guardians of peace while extinguishing hope and possibilities for genuine reconciliation. This is what is happening in Palestine, Gaza, and Lebanon... Scenes of babies being torn apart by bombs flash across screens like an animated film... The Zionist Israeli regime surpasses even the Pharaohs in its oppression and inhumane policies. The reality that the dominant imperial powers fail to understand is that peace and tranquility cannot be ensured on Earth without bringing peace and harmony to Palestine and other oppressed regions. The flames rising from the territories they have turned into battlegrounds will also engulf them. Therefore, everyone who values peace, mercy, tranquility, and security on Earth must work diligently to establish peace and well-being in regions besieged by oppression and war.

On the other hand, human peace, security, and well-being have become entirely dependent on the advancement of technology, transportation, and communication, while values centered on mercy have been excluded from the ideal conception of humanity. Laboratories



that disregard mercy have become the subjects of sentences that evoke the nightmares and disasters of humanity.

The force that gives life to humanity and sustains it is mercy, which precedes money and material possessions. The means that facilitate life stem from mercy before they arise from technology. Indeed, these developments serve the betterment of humanity only when rooted in mercy; without it, the economy, material goods, and technology can transform into mechanisms of oppression, cruelty, and torture. Therefore, during these challenging times marked by global confusion and the search for direction, if a global consciousness can emerge, humanity will have found a path toward hope for the future. Conversely, sacrificing common sense and rationality in troubling times to feelings of anxiety and panic will further undermine human values.

The sole guarantee of people's inner peace is to establish communication with themselves on the foundation of mercy. People who do not align their minds and hearts with the guidance of mercy are doomed to become alienated from themselves and their true nature. Indeed, cooperation, sharing, positive thinking, and acts of kindness



## BEFORE THE MARVELS OF DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE FORM OF CHIPS, HUMANITY NEEDS TO IMPLANT THE GEM OF MERCY IN THE HUMAN HEART.

primarily benefit their own hearts. Conversely, pride, selfishness, envy, and negative thoughts and emotions will first and foremost harm their own hearts. When people's hearts are attuned to peace and tranquility through mercy and sincerity, to confine themselves to lives centered on image and ambition is to do a disservice to themselves. The tragedy of humanity lies in the erasure of mercy from their hearts.

Humanity must realize that it is impossible to construct a peaceful life outside the realm of mercy; if it cannot build a world based on mercy, no digital model it creates will bring peace and security. Therefore, before the marvels of design

and technology in the form of chips, humanity needs to implant the gem of mercy in the human heart. Indeed, no object, miraculous device, or security system can make people feel safer and more at peace than carrying a heart filled with mercy.

Certainly, there are individuals and entities that have become so distant from mercy that they are unable to find their way back to their hearts, chasing after wild dreams fueled by the resources and technology at their disposal. However, it is also a clear truth that those who take mercy, common sense, and good ethics as their guiding principles are stronger and will ultimately prevail.



# GENEALOGY: IDENTITY AND BELONGING





In Arab society, which had a social structure based on tribal solidarity, it was very important for a person's ancestry and lineage to be known. Tribal law, based on lineage, determined matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the relationships and responsibilities toward relatives. An individual was identified, above all, with their tribe. A person who had no tribe or who could not find a place for themselves in a tribe by agreement had no security.

Thus, in a sense, the tribe was the individual's social and legal assurance. All of this demonstrates that knowledge of lineage was of vital importance. This was because the determination of a child's paternity had many legal consequences, above all with respect to inheritance. Moreover, it was not always easy to determine a person's ancestry. In fact, there were those who practiced the science of physiognomy, which was called *qiyafa*, and who could, when necessary, determine lineage. Based on physiological and physiognomic similarities, the physiognomist, who was called a *qa'if*, decided if someone was related to one person or another.

In a society whose social structure was based on the tribe, a confused lineage gave rise to unfavorable consequences, morally as much as legally. The Prophet (saw), who was aware of these possible consequences, warned in strong terms those who did not accept his own family, that is, the lineage to which he belonged. In fact, he said in a hadith that anyone who alleged that his lineage was connected to another lineage would be ungrateful to Allah (swt) (Ibn Hanbal, II, 215). If we take



## THE WISDOM IN CREATING DIFFERENT TRIBES, RACES, COLORS, AND LANGUAGES, WAS NOT TO DIVIDE PEOPLE AND MAKE ONE GROUP SUPERIOR TO ANOTHER BUT FOR THEM TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND TO COMPETE IN DOING GOOD WORK.

into account that all laws related to tribal society came into being on the basis of the tribe, then this strong warning from the Messenger of Allah (saw) intended for those who denied biological reality and the social structure attached to it is extremely significant.

In this respect, there is another Prophetic warning which seems to have been recorded in a legal text from the time of the Prophet (saw) and which is known as a written document belonging to Ali (ra). It states, "And whoever claims someone else to be his father, or claims wala' (attached by proximity, affiliation) to someone other than his mawali (a person linked by proximity to another: former master of a freed slave), then upon him is the curse of Allah, the angels, and the people. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will not accept either his repentance or excuse." (Muslim, Hajj, 467; T2127, Tirmidhi, Wala', 3)

At the time of the Prophet (saw), determining identity or lineage had very great importance, especially in such matters as marriage, inheritance, and criminal law, for it could frequently open the way to disputes. But in every instance, the Prophet (saw) decided according to legal legitimacy. As for the legal



consequences of lineage, it would appear that children only had a relationship with the father. In other words, in determining identity, the basis of one's relationship was not the mother but the father. For instance, in a hadith in which the Prophet (saw) condemned those who denied their lineage, he said, "May a place in Hell be prepared for one who claims that he belongs to someone other than his father." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 5) and in another hadith he said, "Whoever claims to be the son of a person other than his father, and he knows that person is not his father, then Paradise will be forbidden for him." (Bukhari, Fara'idh, 29) Thus he indicated that the relationship in fact depended on the father.

The Prophet (saw) was trying to dismantle the mentality of the Arabs of the Jahiliyya which was based on tribal solidarity and to establish a perspective grounded in the brotherhood of faith (Hujurat, 49:10) and the notion that they were all the children of the same father. All humanity was created from one male and one female (Hujurat, 49:13). The wisdom in creating different tribes, races, colors, and languages (Rum, 30:22), was not to divide people and make one group superior to another



## WHILE ON THE ONE HAND, ISLAM FORBIDS PREOCCUPATION WITH CLAIMS OF LINEAGE, WHICH IS THE CAUSE OF DIVISION AND CONFLICT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IT ENCOURAGES KNOWING ONE'S LINEAGE IN ORDER TO OPEN THE PATH TO SOCIAL COHESION AND SOLIDARITY.

but for them to get to know each other (Hujurat, 49:13) and to compete in doing good work (Ma'idah, 5:48). These divine messages state that He determines the value of humans not from their biological strain or lineage but from values of faith and morality, such as goodness, charity, justice, and piety. In our time in particular when we are experiencing global disasters for the sake of regional interests and identities are threatened by mass murder and genocide, humanity is in greater need to heed these commandments of the Holy Qur'an than ever before. The following message of the last Prophet, who was sent to humanity 1,400 years ago in an environment in which there was inter-tribal competition for superiority, has much greater importance today than in his time: "Allah has removed the pride of the Jahiliyya (period) from you and boasting about lineage. (A person is either) A pious believer or a miserable sinner, and people are the children of Adam, and Adam is from dirt."

(Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 74)

People have psychological and social ties to the family, clan, or tribe to which they belong. It is quite natural that they sense a need to identify themselves with the social

structure to which they are connected. As for the transformation of the sense of belonging into a concern that is much different from need, it incites discrimination and opens the door to all kinds of divisions. The warning of Allah's Messenger to those who, while expressing themselves, wanted to give priority to the blood ties to which they belonged because of various concerns such as tribal solidarity and social anxiety was intended to prevent such fragmentation.

All of this, of course, does not mean that lineage or a person's ancestry is meaningless. On the contrary, lineage is one of the basic rights that Islam aims to protect. There are many reasons for this. For example, lineage is a factor that cannot be ignored in marriage. Islam encourages people to have a knowledge of their lineage with respect to its effect on kinship relations. This is because the protection of kinship ties, to which Islam gives great importance, in an orderly and strong manner depends on a knowledge of one's lineage. Indeed, according to Abu Hurayra (ra), our Prophet said, "Learn enough about your lineage to facilitate keeping your ties of kinship. For, indeed, keeping the ties



of kinship encourages affection among relatives, increases wealth and the lifespan.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 49; Ibn Hanbal, II, 374)

While on the one hand, Islam forbids preoccupation with claims of lineage, which is the cause of division and conflict, on the other hand, it encourages knowing one’s lineage in order to open the path to social cohesion and solidarity. It requires one to accept his family and adopt his identity but not to assume any sense of superiority as a result. We

can understand from all of this that lineage and the sense of belonging have nothing to do with superiority with respect to religious, legal, political, or social status and is only of great significance in social and civil relations. Today in particular when the borders between countries have begun to lose their importance and international relations bring together a variety of identities, the measures that Islam takes against ethnic discrimination take on new importance. While the Holy Qur’an states, “On the day when

“  
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the Trumpet is blown, the ties between them will be as nothing and they will not ask about each other” (Mu’minun, 23:101) the Prophet (saw), parallel to this, addressed his people, whose lives in the Jahiliyya period had been built on an obsession with tribe and racism, saying, “...He who is slow paced in doing (good) deeds, his (high) lineage does not make him go ahead.” (Muslim, Dhikr, 38; Tirmidhi, Qira’at, 10) Thus, he basically stated that what was fundamental was not ancestry or ethnicity but good deeds, that is, good behavior.

# TO READ, TO UNDERSTAND, TO LIVE

**Dr. Abdulkadir ERKUT**

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

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ  
إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“Say, (O Prophet), “Are those who know equal to those who do not know?” None will be mindful (of this) except people of reason.”

(Zumar, 39:9)

One of the most significant attributes that Allah the Almighty (swt) has granted to humans, distinguishing them from other creatures, is intellect. Through intellect, people learn, think, and discern between right and wrong, good and evil. Being endowed with intellect and will make humans inherently responsible beings. In this context, individuals must use their intellect, read, learn, seek the truth, and discern what is right through the exercise of their will. By exercising their intellect, they will attain knowledge and comprehend the reality and essence of things and events.

The frequent use of words derived from the root “ilm” (knowledge) in the Qur’an underscores the central importance of knowledge and the pursuit of learning within its message. When examining other related terms that convey knowing, understanding, and thinking, the emphasis placed on knowledge and comprehension in the Qur’an becomes even more apparent.

According to Raghīb al-Isfahani, who divides knowledge into theoretical and practical categories, theoretical knowledge attains perfection through the comprehension of what is known, such as understanding the nature of beings. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is only completed through action, as in the case of the knowledge of worship (Raghīb al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, 343). This distinction is noteworthy in highlighting the practical aspect of knowledge, as merely knowing is not sufficient for worship; worship is the manifestation of knowledge through action.

One aspect of the superiority of humans, who are created in the best form (Tin, 95:4), is their ability to acquire knowledge, a capability stemming from their being rational beings. In the verses addressing the creation of Prophet Adam, it is mentioned that he was created as a vicegerent on Earth, and to fulfill this responsibility, Allah (swt) taught him all the names (Baqarah, 2:30–31). This truth also reveals that knowledge carries a sense of responsibility. Similarly, there is a strong link between knowledge and faith. Faith is categorized into two types: imitative (taqlid) and investigative (tahqiq). Imitative faith arises when a person believes without knowledge, under the influence and persuasion of their environment. In contrast, investigative faith is rooted in



evidence, knowledge, and inquiry. The ideal for a Muslim is to attain investigative faith, as it strengthens belief, enables resilience against external challenges, and fosters unwavering steadfastness.

The fact that the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and humanity began with the command “Read!” in Surah al-Alaq highlights the significance of knowledge for humanity. This command to “read” goes beyond mere reading; it signifies a deeper process of understanding, comprehension, and applying knowledge in action. The act of seeking knowledge in Islam involves not only reading the verses of the Qur’an but also reflecting on the signs in nature. Humans are tasked with reading, interpreting, and acting in alignment with these revelations. The Qur’an encourages us to study the world around us, understand the relationships between things, and uncover their underlying causes. It does not settle for superficial observation; it demands a profound comprehension of the essence of things. The story of Prophet Musa and Khidr (Kahf, 18:65-82) illustrates that there is always wisdom behind events, even if it is not immediately apparent to human perception.

Therefore, humans must undertake all forms of reading and learning in the name of their Lord, as instructed in the verse, “Read, (O Prophet), in the Name of your Lord Who created” (Alaq, 96:1). This means that the knowledge one acquires should be used for the sake of Allah, for only with such guidance can one correctly understand and interpret the world. Any pursuit of knowledge that lacks the foundation of faith, sincerity, and devotion will not lead a person to true understanding. The ultimate outcome of this comprehensive reading and acting upon it is true servitude to Allah. Knowledge inherently brings responsibility,



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AND EVIL.**

requiring submission and worship. The Qur’an frequently addresses people of understanding, asking, “Do you not think?” “Will you not use your intellect?” and “Will you not take heed?” These reminders urge believers towards proper worship and servitude to Allah. Those who can comprehend and act upon these truths will be superior to others, as the verse proclaims: “Say, (O Prophet), “Are those who know equal to those who do not know?” None will be mindful (of this) except people of reason.” (Zumar, 39:9) Similarly, the verse “Of all of Allah’s servants, only the knowledgeable (of His might) are (truly) in awe of Him.” (Fatir, 35:28) emphasizes the profound connection between knowledge and the responsibility that comes with it.

As a rational and responsible being, humans are advised through the Qur’an not to pursue matters of which they have no knowledge and not to act ignorantly. This is highlighted in several verses, such as: “Here you are! You disputed about what you have little knowledge of, but why do you now argue about what you have no knowledge of? Allah knows and you do not know.” (Al-i ‘Imran, 3:66) and “Do not follow what you have no sure knowledge of. Indeed, all will be called to account

for their hearing, sight, and intellect.” (Isra, 17:36) These and similar verses (A’raf, 7:33; Hajj, 22:3, 8; Luqman, 31:20) teach us that just as knowledge requires responsibility, acting without knowledge also brings accountability. To avoid acting ignorantly, human beings are urged in the Qur’an to verify any information they receive. (Hujurat, 49:6) By adhering to this guidance, individuals can avoid making errors and reach the truth more reliably.

In the Qur’an, the divine statement addressed to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), “...and pray, ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.’” (Ta-Ha, 20:114), signifies the importance of seeking divine assistance in acquiring knowledge. When considering the overall commands and recommendations of the Qur’an, which begins with the command to “Read”, it becomes evident that these directives regarding knowledge, learning, contemplation, and gaining insights are meaningful and valuable only when they are reflected in practical life. Indeed, when one considers that knowledge without action is akin to a fruitless tree, it becomes clear that faith that does not manifest in behavior, and knowledge that does not contribute to one’s moral development holds little significance in the Qur’an’s perspective.

# GOOD MORALS: THE ATTRIBUTE THAT PERFECTS THE FAITH

Halil KILIC

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

Religion is a set of divine rules that governs people's relationship with themselves, their Lord, and all of creation in this worldly life. These divine guidelines, aimed at ensuring a life of happiness and peace both in this world and the Hereafter, can be categorized into three main areas: faith, worship, and morality. These three areas, which are inseparably connected, encompass numerous commands, prohibitions, and recommendations within religion. Morality, in particular, as the practical outcome of faith and worship, constitutes the essence of religion. Indeed, in the hadith, "I was sent to perfect good character" (Muwatta, Husn al-Khulq, 8; Musnad, XIV/513), the Prophet Muhammad (saw) emphasizes morality as the purpose of his mission.

The hadith above is just one of the countless invaluable messages the Prophet Muhammad (saw) gave to Muslims, encouraging them to adorn their faith with Islamic ethics and strive for its perfection. The hadith effectively underscores that a believer cannot harbor negative behaviors, particularly harmful speech that would sow seeds of hatred and enmity among people. Four key traits are highlighted as qualities that should not be found in a believer. According to this:

### **True believers are not reproachful**

The term "reproachful" mentioned in the hadith refers to someone who constantly finds fault with others. Additionally, to reproach also means to insult others' honor and dignity, to slander, or to criticize them. Indeed, wise

believers should focus on their own shortcomings and refrain from blaming, defaming, or criticizing others for their faults and imperfections. Instead, they should take heed of the Prophet's (saw) guidance: "The clever person is the one who subjugates his soul, and works for what is after death." (Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 25) With this in mind, a believer should concentrate on addressing their own flaws. In this regard, a true believer's stance is best embodied in holding fast to Rumi's principle: "Be like the night when covering the faults of others."

### **True believers do not curse**

The concept of cursing, which signifies being distanced from Allah's forgiveness and mercy, is considered a worse behavior than the act of reproaching mentioned

in the previous point. For when a person curses their believing brother, it means they wish for him to be distant from Allah's mercy. However, believers are required to want for their fellow believers the same things they love and desire for themselves. Furthermore, just as the limbs of a single body are interconnected, whatever troubles one part should also affect the others. Not only is it unacceptable to harbor such feelings, but withholding divine mercy from a believing brother is not much different from throwing him into the fire alive. At this point, the saying of our Prophet, "Cursing of a believer is tantamount to killing him" (Muslim, Iman, 110), becomes much clearer. Just as killing a person deprives them of worldly blessings, cursing a believer signifies wishing for their



«يَسْرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَيَبْشُرُوا، وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا»

“The believer does not reproach the honor of others, nor curse, nor commit impudence, nor is he foul.”

(Tirmidhi, *Birr and Sila*, 48; *Musnad al-Ahmad*, VI, 390)

deprivation of spiritual rewards in the Hereafter, which is why it is equated with murder.

Cursing believers is not only wrong; it is equally inappropriate to direct such behavior toward others, including all living beings. Setting aside certain exceptional circumstances, it is far more commendable for noble believers to wish for guidance and righteousness for non-Muslims rather than cursing them, desiring that they too may be blessed with eternal mercy in the Hereafter.

#### **The speech of true believers is not impudent**

In the hadith, the term “impudence” refers to all kinds of ugly words that stem from the tongue, such as lying, mocking, cursing, and insulting. It is essential for believers,

who are prohibited from staying in a state of resentment or anger for more than three days, to avoid any falsehoods, mockery, and coarse or indecent language that may lead to hurt feelings and destroy the bridges of affection between them. This avoidance is one of the fundamental principles of Islamic morality. Believers take to heart the verse, “As the two recording angels—(one) sitting to the right, and (the other to) the left—note (everything), not a word does a person utter without having a (vigilant) observer ready (to write it down).” (*Qaf*, 50:17-18), and live with the awareness that every word they utter will be accounted for in the Hereafter. They strive to ensure that nothing emerges from their mouths that would displease Allah,

whether consciously or unconsciously.

#### **The behavior of true believers is not indecent**

While the previous three points address aspects that a believer must observe in their verbal conduct, this final concept (*al-badhi*) encompasses both words and actions and is more appropriately translated as “modesty” or “decency.” Decency, which is the most beautiful manifestation of faith, is the trait that reminds people of their humanity and distinguishes them from other beings that lack free will. In societies that lose this virtue, storms of immorality can erode all boundaries. People who lose their sense of decency may engage in many actions and words that contradict the very purpose of their creation. For this reason, the Prophet (saw) said, “One

of the sayings of the early Prophets which the people have got is: “If you don’t feel ashamed, do whatever you like” (*Bukhari, Adab*, 78). This statement highlights that decency serves as the most important barrier against immoral and wicked actions.

Therefore, the most fundamental duty of believers, who are adorned with faith and worship, is to ensure that in all interactions and communications, whether with fellow believers or with all other human beings, they never stray from the core of Islam, which is good character and moral values. At this point, regardless of who they are dealing with, believers must let decency govern their speech and actions, striving to reflect the beauty and ethics of Islam in every aspect of their lives.

# Abdullah EREN: “Our civilization is built upon a path that places mercy at its core.”



Interview by:  
Zeynep Feyza Akkaya

*He holds a BA in Sociology from Bogazıcı University and an MA in Diplomatic Studies from the University of London-Westminster. Appointed as the President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, Eren has pioneered the implementation of activities for the 7 million Turkish citizens living abroad, cognate and related communities spread across a broad region from the Balkans to Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and North Africa and include elements of the Ottoman legacy, as well as international students from around the world studying in Türkiye.*



**Esteemed President, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), which carries out activities in numerous regions from the Balkans to the Caucasus and from Asia to America, plays a significant role in building bridges across various geographies for the benefit of both the Islamic faith and Turkish civilization. Could you share some insights into the vision and motivation behind these efforts?**

We are aware that culture has a connecting, diversifying, unifying, and reconciling power. In this context, we recognize that our own culture and civilization inherently possess an inclusive mission that extends a hand of compassion. As the Turkish nation, we are conscious of our cultural values and experiences, and we have the potential to serve as a positive example to other cultures through these experiences. With this understanding, we draw inspiration and strength from our civilizational heritage and focus our efforts accordingly. As an institution, we strive to reflect this perspective concretely in the activities we implement.

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related

Communities (YTB) works in coordination with institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), the Yunus Emre Institute, the Maarif Foundation, and the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, all of which are a source of pride for our nation abroad. Operating under shared principles and common goals, YTB undertakes diverse activities in alignment with these institutions. As essentially a diaspora-focused institution, YTB's primary mission is grounded in cultural and educational diplomacy, recognized as a form of soft power in international relations. In this context, alongside diaspora activities for our citizens living abroad, we also implement projects and programs aimed at our fraternal communities, referred to as kin and related communities, who share a common historical and cultural geography and the same civilizational heritage.

The history of our nation, the geographies it has engaged with, and the resulting cultural heritage are so vast and inclusive that the relationships we establish with neighboring countries



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on this foundation serve as gateways to collaboration in all other areas. Solidarity, development, and a shared perspective become possible only in this way, with these common values manifesting in different forms depending on the country, sometimes as a prominent figure, sometimes as a literary work, a language, architectural structures, or shared memories.

At its core, YTB is a diaspora institution that strengthens our existing bonds with our spiritual geography through the lens of our culture and civilization while building new bridges of connection. As you know, we have a prophetic principle: "Actions are judged by intentions." When our intentions are sincere, the outcomes are blessed accordingly. We approach our work with genuine dedication, seeking Allah's pleasure in every step we take. Our motivation stems from the saying of an elderly woman from Western Thrace who said, "If Türkiye is well, so are we," and the saying of an elderly Ahiskan Turk man who proclaimed, "Our hearts, minds, and souls are with Türkiye; our prayers are for you." It is fueled by the love for Türkiye in the hearts of Nigerian

Ahmed, Kazakhstani Bekzat, Azerbaijani Ali, and Egyptian Fatima, all of whom pursue their education in our country through the Türkiye Scholarships program. In short, we continue to approach our work with the devotion of worship, anchoring our morale and motivation in seeking the approval of Allah.

**In your speeches, you frequently mention the concept of “geography of the heart.” What does “geography of the heart” mean, and what is required to become a part of it?**

“Geography of the heart” is a beautiful and profound term we use to describe communities that have relationships with our country that go far beyond diplomatic formalities. Initially, this term was used to refer to communities in regions that are historically, religiously, nationally, and culturally close to us, with whom we share a common fate. In a broader sense, it refers to all communities and geographies, no matter where they are in the world, whose hearts beat for Türkiye, who rejoice and sorrow for Türkiye. Sometimes, we also use terms like “brother communities” or “cultural geography” instead of “geography of the heart,” but none



**WE SEE THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE OF THIS IN THE DELIBERATE GENOCIDAL CAMPAIGN BEING CARRIED OUT AGAINST OUR GAZAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS FOR OVER A YEAR.**

of them are as effective, sincere, and heartfelt as the phrase “geography of the heart”.

Every place friendly to Türkiye, especially the Balkans, the Middle East, Turkistan, and Africa, as well as from Malaysia and Indonesia in Southeast Asia to Venezuela in South America, all fall within the borders of our geography of the heart. From the past to the present, anyone who shares in the noble heritage and struggle of our ancestors, who strove for the establishment of order in the world, peace, justice, and the enforcement of rights and laws, is part of our geography of the heart. For our goal is to enter the heart, act from the heart, and find a path from heart to heart. There are no other conditions for being part of our geography of the heart beyond what I have mentioned.

**The moral, national, and spiritual values we hold are also influenced by the innovations brought about by globalization. However, the sense of compassion, a value shared by all societies and people, remains a virtue that binds people together despite all challenges. Can you speak about the need for compassion in the social and communal aspects of humanity today?**

As you know, our religion is a religion of mercy. Our Prophet is the messenger of mercy and compassion. Our civilization is also built upon a path that places mercy at its core. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “He who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy,” emphasizing the importance of mercy, which is one of our primary religious, moral, and human duties, and succinctly illustrating that the essence lies in being merciful. However, it is evident that in recent centuries, we find ourselves in an environment where worldliness has reached its peak, with egoistic and materialistic attitudes, focused solely on self-interest, prevailing among the majority. In this environment, mercy has been abandoned, allowing the strong to oppress the weak.

Unfortunately, we see the most recent example of this in the deliberate genocidal campaign being carried out against our Gazan brothers and sisters for over a year. The merciless Israeli regime, which has not known compassion nor shown it, is ruthlessly killing unborn children, the elderly, and the sick without hesitation. The entire world merely watches this brutality



unfold. Except for Türkiye and a few other countries, there is no voice raised against the Zionist vandals. In reality, it is not just our Palestinian brothers and sisters who are being killed, but the very sense of compassion for the ummah and all of humanity. Yet, this fact remains unnoticed. I do not know if humanity has ever experienced a period in history when it was in such dire need of compassion, but it is certain that it is compassion that will save humanity, and if we are to rise again, it will be through mercy.

**What do you think should be done to spread the awareness of compassion to both individuals and communities?**

In my humble opinion, humanity must return to its original state of creation and gaze into their own hearts. Human beings, who are inherently pure and have the seed of beauty and compassion in their nature, should cleanse the ashes of compassion in their hearts and ignite the flame of the heart that will enlighten them both materially and spiritually. They should prioritize truth, goodness, and righteousness, and never let go of justice and compassion. People who progress in all these aspects become beautiful



**HUMANITY MUST RETURN TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE OF CREATION AND GAZE INTO THEIR OWN HEARTS.**

examples through their way of life, transitioning from word to action.

The best example is to live sincerely and teach through living. In this way, the behavior affects the interlocutor. As the elders say, one's state is contagious. In this manner, mercy, which is the essence of beauty, reflects from the individual to society and spreads. Promoting good morals, compassion, and kindness should be our fundamental duty, and we must view this as both a religious and human responsibility. Without a doubt, it will be those whose hearts flow with the waters of mercy who will save the world, and the future will be shaped by their merciful hands.

**How can we use the ethics of compassion to**

**combat hate speech and the spread of anti-other rhetoric around the world? In the face of the immense destruction and oppression we see today, especially in places like Palestine, how can we mend a world devoid of compassion?**

Since the dawn of time, humanity has been entrenched in the struggle between the self and the other. We are all familiar with the story of Abel and Cain. Selfishness fuels hatred, and the first blood is shed. As human beings, we all carry a soul that inherently seeks its own desires and craves self-centered consideration. From this inclination emerges a pervasive sense of hatred and the perception of "otherness," which extends from individuals to the collective character of societies. However, in our understanding, human beings are the most noble of all creations. Sadly, this noble being disrupts the divine order and sows corruption on earth by acting contrary to their purpose of creation. As the Qur'an describes, they descend to "asfal al-safilin", the lowest of the low. Through their deliberate and willful actions, they defy both the Creator and creation. When we consult experts on such matters, the 11th

verse of Surah al-Baqarah immediately comes to mind: “When they are told, ‘Do not spread corruption in the land,’ they reply, ‘We are only peacemakers!’” Unfortunately, even today, the mercy-deprived Israeli regime claims to be a peacemaker while exterminating humanity. They trample upon all human, moral, and civilizational values under this pretext.

As I have expressed before, we need to embark on a journey of returning to our essence. Instead of focusing on “I”, we must strive to embrace “we”, attaining a maturity that prioritizes others over our own desires. When we unite as one, those who perpetuate division, incite hatred, and replace love and harmony with chaos and conflict will ultimately lose. We must cling to the rope of tawhid that our Lord has provided and be colored by His paint of wahdah. Once this state is achieved, the poison of those who sow seeds of hatred, thrive on blood and tears, and lack compassion will, inshallah, have no effect on us.

I would like to particularly emphasize this point. As YTB, we are deeply concerned about the spread of pathological ideologies such as Islamophobia and



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Turkophobia, especially in the West, and the adverse impact these issues have on our citizens as well as our kin and co-religionists. As an institution, we have established a platform called NESAM (Portal for Combating Hate Crimes and Discrimination). Through this site, individuals who experience hate crimes, discrimination, or rights violations can report these incidents to us. In turn, we assist them in various ways, including documenting these crimes, providing legal support to the victims, and more. The reports we prepare are shared with relevant counterparts abroad, and we diligently follow up on these matters.

**Finally, what message would you like to convey to our readers?**

As an institution, we remain steadfast in our

commitment to our activities for our citizens living abroad, our kin and related communities, and the international students we host in our country.

Like a master weaver patiently threading each stitch, we proceed on our path, steadily achieving positive results in the medium and long term. With the motto, “Wherever there is a citizen, kin, or related community of ours in the world, we are there”, we strive to serve wholeheartedly. At YTB, we remain committed to ensuring that all our plans, projects, and programs align with the mutual interests of Türkiye and the respective countries we engage with while extending a hand of compassion and sincerity to our geography of the heart.

Finally, I pray to Allah the Almighty for the swift extinguishing of the flames of oppression, injustice, and inequity engulfing the Islamic world and the entire globe, for the relief of all the oppressed, wherever they may be in the world, starting with our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and for the establishment of a system rooted in compassion and justice, with the conviction that a just world is possible.



## 40th anniversary of DITIB celebrated with joy



The Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) celebrated its 40th anniversary with a program held at the Rhein Sieg Forum in Siegburg, Germany. The program was attended by the presidents of DITIB associations across Germany, founding general assembly members, former executives, religious officials, heads of non-governmental organizations, and many guests. During the event, the unity and solidarity of the Turkish community living in Germany was emphasized. The program started with the recitation of the Qur'an. In his speech, DITIB President Dr. Muharrem Kuzey summarized DITIB's 40 years of work and its contributions to the community in Germany:

“DITIB started from a small sprout and grew into a big tree. While initially serving with around 200 mosques and masjids, it has now reached a wide network with 858 mosque congregations, 16 regional associations and more than 60,000 volunteers. I would like to express my gratitude to all our volunteers who work in our mosques with great dedication and sincerity.”

## Darul Erkam Mosque reopened for worship

The new building of the Darul Erkam Mosque in Bern, the capital of Switzerland, was inaugurated with a ceremony. The opening ceremony of the new building of the mosque in the Herzogenbuchsee area in the canton of Bern was attended by the President of the Islamic Union of North Macedonia, Reis-ul Ulema Sakir Efendi Fetai, Religious Affairs Representative David Leutwyler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Darul Erkam Mosque Dzemil Dauti, President of the Swiss Turkish Community Suat Sahin, Communications Counselor of the Turkish Embassy in Bern Bayram Altug, representatives of Turkish associations in Switzerland and many guests from Switzerland and other countries.



## World Children's Rights Day in Gaza

On November 20, 1989, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child by 193 countries to protect children and improve their living conditions and declared November 20 as “World Children's Rights Day”. Children gathered in Khan Younis, Gaza to call on the UN Secretary-General to stop the war and ensure the right to education, play, and a safe life.



## Turkish Islamic Arts introduced in Paris

The first “Turkish Islamic Arts Exhibition from Tradition to Future” was opened in Paris within the scope of the project prepared by the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye. The exhibition, hosted by the embassy in Paris and DITIB France at the Grand Mosque of Paris, included calligraphy, marbling, tazhib, tile, dival art, and rare Turkish handicraft arts. Within the scope of the exhibition, Nourane Ben Azzouna, lecturer on the History of Art in the Islamic World at the University of Strasbourg, gave a lecture titled “Calligraphy as a Form of Expression of Muslim Identity” in which the audience learned about the traces of calligraphy in the world and in history.



## Israel's attacks on Gaza and Lebanon protested in Sweden

Despite the extreme cold, around 1,000 people gathered in the Odenplan area of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, to protest against Israel and support Palestine and Lebanon, and marched towards the Swedish Parliament. With banners reading “Children are being killed in Gaza”, “Stop the genocide”, “Palestine forever”, “Netanyahu is a war criminal”, the demonstrators called for an end to Israel's attacks on Gaza and Lebanon and an immediate ceasefire.



## Majority of European countries to implement ICC arrest warrant for Netanyahu and Gallant



The arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant continues to be at the top of the agenda, with most European countries saying they will comply with the order.

Following the ICC's announcement of the arrest warrant against Netanyahu and Gallant "for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza", many European countries announced that they would unconditionally comply with the court's order, while some European countries criticized the decision and showed an ambiguous approach.

Countries such as Ireland, Belgium, France, Slovenia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Spain, Norway, and Liechtenstein have said that the ICC's decision must be respected and that they will comply with the arrest warrant.

## Palestinian painter practicing her art despite Israeli attacks

Maysa Yusuf, a 40-year-old Palestinian collage artist who lost both her home and her studio in the Israeli attacks on the blockaded Gaza Strip, continues to practice her art in her studio, which was damaged in the attacks. Youssef, who has had the opportunity to hold exhibitions in many countries before, is trying to announce the Palestinian cause to the world with her paintings.



# ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE MUSLIM SUBJECT

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhammet OZDEMIR

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as people around the world adapted to living online, several concepts related to digital technology gained popularity. Among these, transhumanism, posthumanism, blockchain, Web 3.0, cryptocurrency, the metaverse, and second life stand out. Each of these terms corresponds to a key context within international literature. It is clear that a distinct body of literature has emerged around each of these concepts, with numerous books, articles, and thesis studies dedicated to them.

Transhumanism is the movement centered on the idea of enhancing, empowering, and improving humanity. This concept promises that biological and physiological characteristics, such as illness, disability,

aging, and death, can be alleviated through advancement in biotechnology and nanotechnology. As a result, it envisions a future where humans could potentially live indefinitely in youthful, healthy, and fit bodies. There are two primary fields of expertise that advocate for and explore this idea: the first is engineering, and the second includes philosophy, which encompasses theology and the social sciences. Ray Kurzweil is considered a leading figure in the former, while Max More is regarded as a pioneer in the latter. Kurzweil and other engineers take a broader approach to humanity's challenges, primarily focusing on issues such as shelter, food, and health. They argue that only new technologies can address problems like food and

housing shortages, and that eliminating illness, disability, aging, and death would lead to eternal peace, making technology support essential. In contrast, more and other social scientists focus primarily on the problem of death, considering illness, disability, and aging in relation to it. Philosophers who focus on transhumanism primarily concentrate on the concept of human consciousness. They argue that if death can be eradicated, human consciousness would be freed from the burden of fear and confusion, leading to greater liberation. Among these philosophers are critics with theological backgrounds, such as Ted Peters. Peters acknowledges the significance of transhumanism but contends that the quest for eternal life alone cannot answer the deeper







question of the meaning of life. He suggests that the transhumanist movement should adopt a more receptive approach towards religions. According to Peters, transhumanism could evolve further if it becomes more open to religious beliefs and teachings.

Posthumanism is a philosophical movement that rejects anthropocentric views of the universe and life, advocating for the equality of all beings. This philosophy suggests that through advancements in biotechnology and nanotechnology, biological and physiological conditions such as disease, disability, aging, and death can be improved, leading to a transformation in humanity. This transformation entails a critique and rejection of the self-centered universe and life designs created by humans. The human-centric view of the universe, in which human beings see themselves at the centre, can often lead to conflict among individuals. According to posthumanist thought, societal divisions of labor and hierarchies are not inherently necessary. While division of labor and communication may be natural or necessary, hierarchies and status are not. The existence of status and hierarchy stems from human selfishness. The path to overcoming this

selfishness begins with fostering peace with other living beings, both within and beyond humanity. This requires recognizing the equality between humans and animals. Once humans accept this equality, they can free themselves from divisions based on language, religion, ethnicity, color, race, gender, and social status.

Blockchain and Web 3.0 can be introduced together as complementary technologies. Blockchain refers to a decentralized network technology that enables the sharing of information and media without the need for a central authority. Web 3.0 is the communication network that underpins this technology.

Cryptocurrency, designed to replace traditional currency, is a symbolic digital currency used for production, calculation, transfer, and storage, ensuring clarity regarding its value in real-world applications. In essence, there is no significant difference between digital and traditional currency in terms of symbolic meaning and function. The primary aim of blockchain and Web 3.0 is to protect individuals' privacy, keep the identities of people conducting transactions confidential, and through cryptocurrency, eliminate costs associated with banks, paper, logistics, and ATMs, as well as reduce the risks of theft.

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A BALANCED  
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WITH  
TECHNOLOGY.**

The metaverse is a virtual, simultaneous living environment used by people from different geographical locations around the world, who have varying biological and physiological capabilities, to communicate, meet, receive education and information, exchange ideas and values, make

investments, advertise, and come together for entertainment. The “Second Life” literature falls under the same scope as the metaverse and represents an earlier technology designed for a similar purpose. The metaverse promises to operate using its own database, powered by Web 3.0 and blockchain technology. Within this virtual environment, people will be able to move around freely using avatars, replicas or representative models of themselves. The Second Life literature also offers a shared virtual living experience, where existing social media accounts can be enhanced and transformed into 3D formats. The goal of both the metaverse and Second Life is to provide an environment where people can enjoy themselves freely without being tracked, monitored, or punished.

Transhumanism envisions the transformation of individual humans, posthumanism focuses on socialization, and the metaverse foresees the transformation of the environment (ecology) and living spaces (ecosystems). A key detail in all three frameworks is that these transformations require energy, technological infrastructure, and economic capacity. Currently, much of the world lacks the necessary energy, technological



infrastructure, and economic resources to support such changes. Additionally, the metaverse requires an abundance of free time, something that, in the context of the global economic crisis following two years of low productivity, seems unimaginable for some societies. According to transhumanists, the year 2030 will be a pivotal moment; for posthumanists, the uncertain cyborg future date is yet to be determined; and for metaverse experts, the year 2045 is critical. In these years, humanity is expected to undergo a major revolution, which is seen as both the result and reward of historical progress and development.

From the perspective of the Muslim subject, it is necessary to evaluate these concepts and related literature regarding technology. However, it is still premature for such an assessment, as we are currently in a phase of recognition and understanding. Additionally, some expectations from transhumanists, particularly the belief that religious beliefs and practices will become unnecessary, echo certain claims made by Enlightenment thinkers, making them unacceptable from an Islamic standpoint. It can be added that transhumanists

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 SIDE  
 EFFECTS.**

may not fully understand humanity and could be somewhat indifferent to its spiritual needs. As they come to know humanity better over time, their views might change. On the other hand, the ideas of posthumanists seem more favorable and sympathetic to the Muslim subject, as their approaches are more egalitarian. Moreover, a worldview where one person cannot speak of their truth to another gives the impression of being overly rigid. While it is true that no one should interfere in another's life, wishing for each other's well-being does not always lead to negative outcomes. Furthermore, both transhumanism and posthumanism create the perception that they seek to strip humans of their emotions. Humans cannot live without emotions and it is expected that psychologists would be the first to object to this notion. As posthumanists learn more about humanity and religions, they may come to realize that their ideas need updating. The views of metaverse advocates, much like those of transhumanists, also appear somewhat fantastical. However, the metaverse can be beneficial in business, advertising, education, marketing, meetings, and conversations. Just as today's social media platforms can achieve positive results when

used for good purposes, a similar outcome might be possible for the metaverse, which is a more advanced version. However, there is a crucial detail: the metaverse is an investment, and if Muslim subjects engage with it solely as consumers, it could lead to the concentration of wealth in a single entity. Furthermore, it is impossible for places of worship to exist in the virtual world of the metaverse, nor can worship take place there. This is because worship is commanded for individuals, not for their avatars. Nevertheless, the metaverse could provide a valuable life experience for education and teaching.

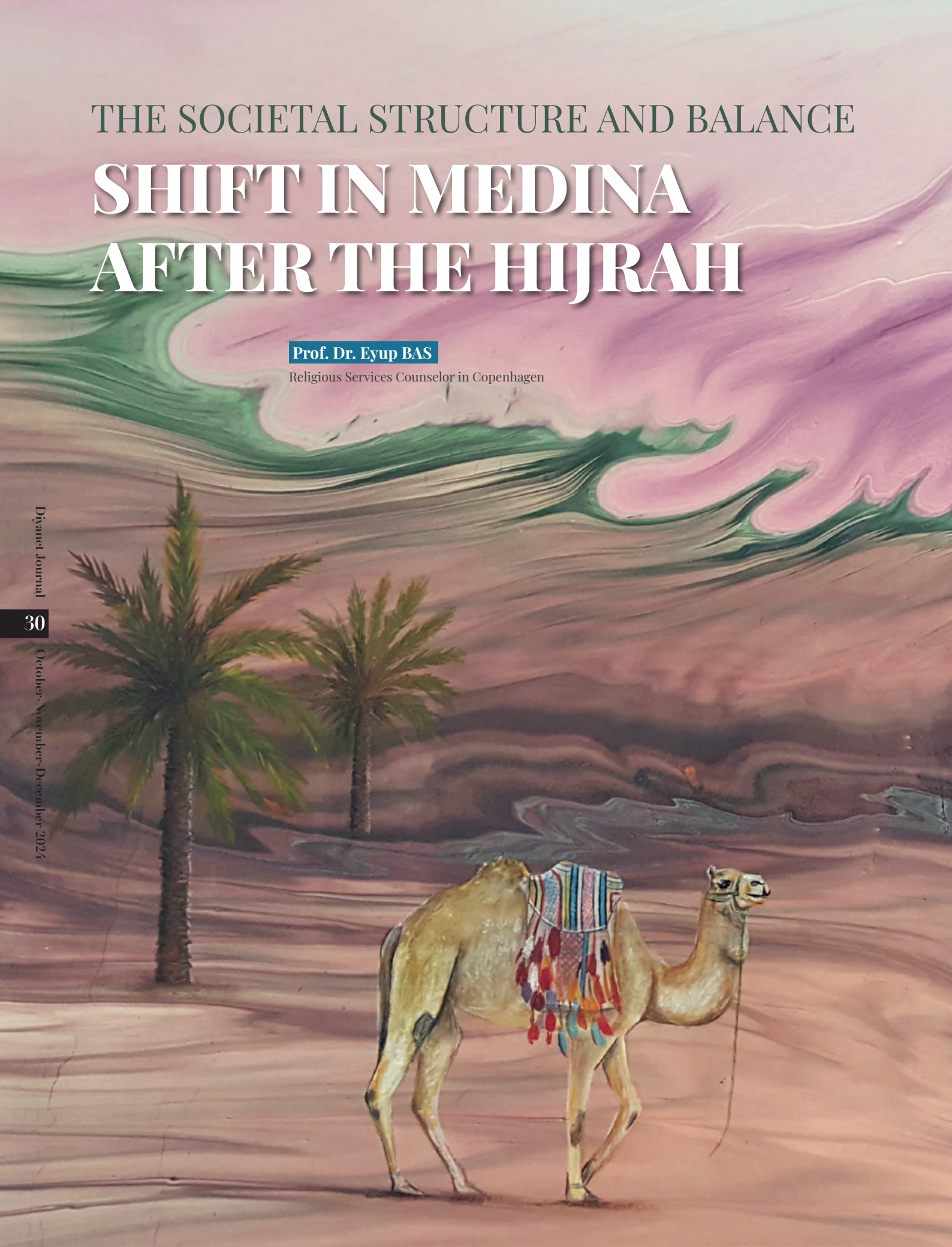
The purpose of technology is to simplify life while generating profits for those who invest in it. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balanced relationship with technology. For the Muslim subject, there is nothing to fear once they gain a proper understanding of the world and learn to engage with technology responsibly. The Muslim subject should understand technology, learn to benefit from it while also managing its impact, and remain mindful of its potential side effects. In fact, this approach for the Muslim subject is equally applicable to all individuals and societies.



# THE SOCIETAL STRUCTURE AND BALANCE SHIFT IN MEDINA AFTER THE HIJRAH

**Prof. Dr. Eyup BAS**

Religious Services Counselor in Copenhagen





Although Medina had a scattered urban structure, the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly in areas such as trade and agriculture, were inevitable. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), as with all matters, was highly sensitive to the potential negative consequences of these interactions. He utilized the mosque also as a center of education and a space for fostering

coexistence. He believed that it was essential to strengthen the spirit of unity swiftly in preparation for a possible Quraysh attack.

Over time, the atmosphere in Medina began to shift, with an Islamic identity gradually coming to dominate. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), leveraging the positive environment fostered by the citizenship agreement,

would occasionally visit all the non-Muslim tribes in Medina, inviting them to embrace Islam. Some of the Arabs and Jews responded positively to his invitation and embraced Islam. This development gradually added a political dimension to his position.

In Medina, the first Jew to accept Islam was Abd Allah ibn Salam, from the tribe of Banu Qaynuqa. He was a Jewish scholar

well-versed in the Torah and the Talmud, the commentary on the Torah. Originally named Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) changed his name to Abd Allah. According to Abd Allah ibn Salam's account, he had learned of the prophethood of Muhammad (saw) during his period in Mecca and felt great joy because he had read about the Prophet's name, attributes, and the time of his arrival



in his own religious texts. He believed that Muhammad (saw) was the brother of Musa ibn ‘Imran and was sent with the same truth that Musa had been sent with. However, he had kept this belief to himself until he felt the time was right to publicly declare his faith. In a predominantly Jewish setting, he stood up and addressed his community, “O Jewish community, fear Allah. Accept the truth that has come to you. I swear by Allah, you know that this man is the Messenger of Allah. His name and attributes are in your Torah. I bear witness that he is the Messenger of Allah. I believe in him, I confirm him, and I recognize him.” With these words, Abd Allah ibn Salam openly embraced Islam, making his faith known to all.

Abd Allah ibn Salam’s conversion to Islam greatly angered the Jews of Medina. As a respected religious scholar and authority among them, they had never expected such a decision from him. Previously, they had regarded him as a trusted guide and a source of knowledge. However, upon learning that he had embraced Islam, their attitude changed drastically, and they began to speak negatively about him, contradicting their earlier respect and acknowledgment of his status.

Despite all the accusations and slanders from his Jewish compatriots, Abd Allah ibn Salam’s true faith was affirmed through divine revelation: “Ask (them, O Prophet), ‘Consider if this (Qur’an) is (truly) from Allah and you deny it, and a witness from the Children of Israel attests to it and



**EXPRESSING THE SENTIMENTS OF THE MUSLIMS, THE WORDS OF THE ADHAN WERE NOW EMBRACED IN MEDINA AS THE HALLMARK, MOTTO, AND SLOGAN OF ISLAM. IT WAS AN OPEN AND RESOUNDING DECLARATION OF FAITH.**

then believes, whereas you act arrogantly. Surely Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.” (Ahqaf, 46:10)

After embracing Islam, Abd Allah ibn Salam invited his close family to follow his example and embrace Islam as well. As a result of his efforts, his entire household, including his paternal aunt who initially opposed him, chose to accept Islam.

Islam was no longer, as it had been in Mecca, the religion of the weak and oppressed. In Medina, Muslims were on their way to becoming a dominant force, establishing themselves not only as a social presence but also as a political power. Consequently, the Prophet Muhammad’s role evolved, and in addition to his role as a prophet, he also assumed a political identity.

#### **A declaration: the adhan**

As the Prophet Muhammad’s influence expanded in Medina, he took steps to establish distinguishing features for Muslims within the community. One notable example occurred in the second year of the hijrah when the mosque in Medina increasingly became the hub of social and religious life. A pressing issue at the time was how to inform Muslims of the prayer times in a manner that

would unify and engage the community. In addressing this, the Prophet sought an innovative solution that not only resolved the practical need but also strengthened the social fabric and identity of the Muslim community.

Although prayer had been made obligatory during the Meccan period, no method had been devised to announce the prayer times until the Prophet Muhammad’s migration to Medina. The conditions in Mecca at the time were not conducive to such a practice. However, in Medina, Muslims were able to openly practice their faith, and their numbers were steadily increasing. Yet, those who arrived early for prayer had to wait for the prayer time to begin, which caused them to be delayed in their daily tasks, while those who arrived late were upset about missing the congregation. For a time, the call to prayer was made in the streets by proclaiming the phrase “as-salah, as-salah” (prayer! prayer!). However, this method proved insufficient to effectively gather the community.

The Prophet Muhammad, in consultation with his companions, considered various ways to announce prayer times and ensure that Muslims could gather for congregational prayers. Suggestions included sounding a bell, blowing





a horn, lighting a fire, or raising a flag. However, the Prophet rejected these proposals, as each was associated with the customs of other religious communities: the bell with the Christians, the horn with the Jews, the fire with Magians, and raising a flag would not be helpful for those who were asleep or distracted. After various opinions were presented, no final decision was initially reached. However, the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims' daily interactions and debates with the polytheists and Jews in the city, particularly concerning beliefs in God and prophethood, seemed to make a vocal proclamation necessary, one that would

serve both as a call to prayer and as a challenge in their ongoing discourse. Especially in the context of their discussions against idol worship, the oneness of Allah and His supreme greatness, as well as the prophethood of Muhammad, should be loudly emphasized.

The Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims he consulted continued to deliberate on statements and expressions that could encapsulate the essence of the call to prayer. They even considered phrases concise enough that could be recited in a single breath. According to some reports, the following day, Abdullah ibn Zayd and Umar ibn al-Khattab informed the Prophet that

certain words had been taught to them in their dreams, suggesting these could be served for the call to prayer (Bukhari, Adhan, 1; Muslim, Salah, 1).

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad explained the order and repetition of these words to Bilal ibn Rabah al-Habashi and instructed him to recite them from an elevated place. Bilal then climbed to the top of a tall house belonging to a woman from the Banu Najjar and recited these words for the first time. This call, which later came to be known as the "adhan," was thus shared with all Muslims. Shortly thereafter, a raised platform was built on the qiblah side of the Masjid al-Nabawi for the adhan

to be delivered. The words of the adhan, recited from this spot at every prayer time, quickly became entrenched in the hearts and minds of Muslims.

The words of the adhan succinctly encapsulated the entire purpose and essence of Islam. Particularly, the phrase Allahu Akbar, meaning "Allah is the Greatest", likely served as a response to the frequent verbal disputes in daily life, countering the efforts of the polytheists to glorify their idols. Expressing the sentiments of the Muslims, the words of the adhan were now embraced in Medina as the hallmark, motto, and slogan of Islam. It was an open and resounding declaration of faith.



AMEENA BLAKE:  
“I FEEL HONORED  
THAT ALLAH HAS ALLOWED  
ME TO SERVE HIM.”



**Can you tell us briefly about yourself?**

My name is Ameena Blake. I am an English revert to Islam and reverted 32 years ago when I was a teenager. My background is interesting. I was adopted as a tiny baby as my birth mother was too young to care for a child. My adoptive parents were a professor and his wife who was a painter and poet. They are the reason that I ended up living in the city I did. Allah (swt) was guiding my life (as He does with all of us) to where it needed to be to become a Muslim.

Now, in 2024 I have many roles, Alhamdulillah. I am a Muslim scholar, teaching degree-level Islamic studies and education in a UK-based Islamic university. I am also a public speaker, speaking at events and conferences around the globe. As well as this I am a Muslim chaplain, working in a university and I run a project which provides housing and care for ladies who are victims of domestic abuse. I feel honored that Allah has allowed me to serve Him in His dawah.

**How was your life concerning faith in the past?**

Before Islam, as a child, I was raised as an Anglican Christian (there are

many denominations of Christianity in the UK).

**Can you tell us when and why you started to ask yourself questions about your beliefs?**

When I was around 16 years old, I began to question the legitimacy and proof of the Bible, as it was unable to fit into proven science. The Bible (New Testament) is a collection of stories written by others, about Jesus (as). They were written, many of them, long after He ascended to Allah, and all of them were written in a different language to what he spoke (Aramaic and Hebrew). There is no original text of the Bible, and I cannot accept the following writings that were authored by human beings (no matter how pious they were), especially when the same stories often contradict each other. There was also the contradiction with scientific facts. Yes, I was told to believe it with my heart. For me, that was simply not good enough. I needed guidance straight from Allah that made sense. I became a believing agnostic at that point.

**What were your thoughts on Islam at the time? Have you ever heard about it?**

I had always known Muslims as a child and



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OTHERS IN  
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DAWAH.**

while growing up, but I didn't know much about Islam. Many of my friends at school were Muslim, but although they identified as such, they were not practicing, or at least not outwardly. In fact, as far as I know, there were no practicing Muslims in the school I attended and nobody wore the hijab. Therefore, Islam for me was alien and unknown. I was taught at school in religious education classes that Allah was the God that Muslims believed in and the Christian God was the God that Christians believed in. It was totally different. It wasn't until much later that I learned that it is the same God with only a linguistically translated difference in name. I knew a few cultural things about Muslims—that they did not eat pork. That was about it. My Muslim friends did the same things as me and enjoyed the same games and pastimes. I didn't really see any difference. Children are innocent of the societal and identity segregation that society imposes on them as they grow. Maybe the internet, smartphones, and access to global biases have accelerated the loss of this beautiful, innocent outlook toward other human beings. As Muslims, we must shield our children from this toxic



view of difference being negative and teach them to embrace others in the name of dawah.

**What was your breaking point when you decided to become a Muslim?**

When Allah (swt) directs someone to hidayah (guidance), it is both a spiritual journey of the mind and the heart. The mind is opened to receive knowledge and the heart is opened with the sweetness of faith. Again and again, I see this in others and I look back and recognize it in my own journey. The human condition is such that the need for faith and spirituality is buried deep in our DNA. As Muslims, we would identify this as al-fitrah (the natural inclination to believe in The One God), and indeed some research into DNA supports this. Society or the people that the person mixes with and so many other circumstances lead to either nurture or suppression of al-fitrah.

I was in a difficult situation as a teenager. I got into bad company and left home to live in a small apartment alone. Some of these people attacked and robbed me one day in my apartment. After that, I was too frightened to go back, but I had no place to stay. A Muslim friend offered me a room in her

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**I WAS CONVINCED WITH KNOWLEDGE BUT NEEDED THE OPENING OF THE HEART.**

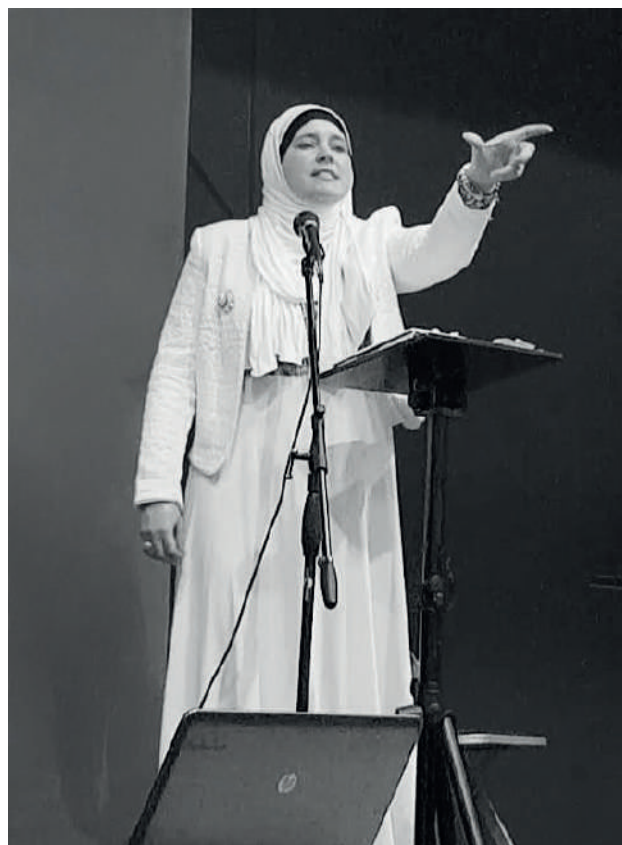
own place. A risk for her as she hardly knew me. I was grateful for a place to stay. Whilst I was staying with her, I got ill really ill for a couple of weeks with a nasty infection in my face. I had to remain in the house and I was very bored. One day I found her Qur'an (in English and Arabic), so I asked her if I could take a look. She explained that this is the Muslim Holy Book and it is the true word of God. So I said, "Prove it to me!"

She asked her neighbour, a convert to Islam if he could help with my questions, so he gathered some information for me. Verses from the Qur'an

showing the embryonic development and the development of the fetus in the womb were shown to me. The more I asked, the more I believed. Why? Because it was proving itself. Then, the biggest surprise was that this book lined up so perfectly with scientific facts that was revealed to an illiterate man in a desert 1500 years earlier! I was convinced with knowledge but needed the opening of the heart. Then it came. Like a bolt of lightning that swallowed my senses and heart all in one. I heard the adhan for the very first time. I knew then that this was it. I turned to my (shocked) friend and told her I wanted to take my shahadah.

**How did your close circle (your family and your friends) react to this?**

When I took my shahadah in 1992, Islam was less known about but also much less criticized than it was pre-9/11. I clearly remember the day when I told my parents. I had decided to show up at their house with Asian clothes on (because my Asian friends had said that this was the way to be a Muslim). I went into my Father's study where he was reading the newspaper, and told him I had become a Muslim. He raised his eyes above



the paper and as far as I remember said, “That’s nice dear”. My Father was a very kind, giving, and a gentle man. He was my world both before and after Islam. I miss him every single day. My mum and dad thought this was probably a phase I was going through, but they didn’t object to it too much. They read books on Islam to try to understand my new faith. However, I did lose a lot of my old friends after becoming Muslim. They thought I had gone crazy and some really hated my new faith. But although it was difficult, I later realized that isolation was good for me at the time. Allah (swt) was creating a space for me that was much healthier and allowed for new journeys and friends who were good for me.

#### **What do you find the most admirable about Islam?**

The most wonderful thing about Islam is Islam itself. I can say no more than this. It is a full and a complete packed perfect gift from the Creator to His servant.

#### **What impressed you the most about the Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Mercy (saw)?**

What can I say about Rasool Allah Muhammad (saw)? How can words begin to describe this wonderful human being whom Allah



## **WHEN ALLAH (SWT) DIRECTS SOMEONE TO HIDAYAH (GUIDANCE), IT IS BOTH A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF THE MIND AND THE HEART.**

(swt) chose? His wife Aisha Bint Abu Bakr describes him as ‘the walking Qur’an’. I cannot do justice to him in my humble writing just like I cannot do justice to Islam in my humble writing.

However, I will offer some of his words, a part of a Hadith that describes the love he feels for me and all his beloved ummah and one of the countless reasons we should love him (saw). It speaks about the Day of Judgement when all of humankind will be

there. We’ll be desperate for intervention to save us from hell, running to different prophets and messengers to beg them to intercede. They will refuse due to their own burdens. Yet, Prophet Muhammad (saw) will agree to intercede. Here is one of the versions of this hadith:

“They (the people) would come to me and I would say, ‘I am for that (interceding).’ Then I will ask for my Lord’s permission, and it will be given, and then He will inspire me to praise Him with such praises as I do not know now.

So I will praise Him with those praises and will fall down, prostrate before Him. Then it will be said, ‘O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.’ I will say, ‘O Lord, my followers! My followers!’ And then it will be said, ‘Go and take out of Hell (Fire) all those who have faith in their hearts, equal to the weight of a barley grain.’ (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 97, 135) and the hadith continues.

May Allah’s peace and blessing be on the Prophet (saw) and his family and companions.

*Ameena Blake embraced Islam in 1992. She holds a BA in English Studies, an MA in Teaching, an MA in Leadership and Management, and an MA in Islamic Studies. She is currently a chaplain at the University of Sheffield and a lecturer at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education. Ameena also teaches at events, courses, conferences, and on social media. She is the project director of the EHUK women’s refuge project, which provides support to vulnerable women and children.*



# IS THE WORLD FLAT?

QUESTIONS ON MY MIND

Prof. Dr. Cagfer KARADAS

**Some disbelievers claim they have a hundred reasons for not believing in the Qur'an, based on its translations. One of these reasons is that "the Qur'an says the earth is flat". Let us first of all ask if there is such a statement in the Qur'an. If so, how do we explain it?**

The fact is that if the Qur'an is read like a geography, biology, astronomy, or history book, asking such questions becomes possible. However, the Qur'an is a guide to honest living and a guide to the truth.

**Could you explain it a bit more?**

People are in a race in this life whether they are believers or not. This race is about either reaching something or running away from something in order to get away. In other words, it is about seeking what is right and avoiding what is wrong. Eventually, people reach something but what they reach sometimes leads to disappointment. Sometimes the thing they avoid causes regret. It appears that it is very difficult to determine what is right and beneficial in this world. It is almost impossible to do alone, so people need external support. This support is essential until they reach a certain age. However, people need this support as adults as well. Knowing this, Allah the Almighty sent a prophet among them to offer support, along with a book to guide humanity.

Unfortunately, many people misunderstand this purpose, attempting to turn the divine book into material for subjects like biology or geography.

**As for the earth being flat?**

The origin of this question is a misunderstanding of the Qur'an, isn't it? The Qur'an provides some examples to help people find the truth and righteousness. One of these examples is the physical structure and function of the world. However, when the Qur'an addresses the physical aspects of the world, it does not do so from the perspective of an astronomer or a geography expert. It begins with what the physical structure means to an ordinary person and how it is perceived. The Qur'an encourages people to focus on how to understand and evaluate the world in their life journey. If the concept of the world's roundness is constantly on a person's mind, it can detract from their quality of life. Think about it: if we were constantly aware that we are in the 'upper' part of the world when we see the sun and the 'lower' part at night, our perception of life would become disorienting. It would turn everything upside down. However, we perceive ourselves as being at the

top of the world, both day and night. Although the earth is round, we do not have the perception that we are standing 'up' or 'down', 'straight' or 'upside down'. This is because Allah the Almighty has created us in such a way that we can see and perceive the world as flat. Yet in reality, the earth is round like an orange. The fact is that there is always a difference between perception and reality. A thoughtful person sees these differences between perception and reality, and can easily recognize them as blessings or signs of the existence of Allah. Yet people who lack a reflective understanding and in-depth thinking may try to read the Qur'an like an astronomy book. Especially if they are prejudiced, they may perceive misleading mistakes and fall into denial.

**So, why was the flat earth idea so influential for a while?**

People did not have enough opportunities for scientific observation back then. They would base their thoughts on perception, not on facts. From where they were standing, they saw the world as flat and assumed it was flat. The expression "And it is He who spread the earth." in

the third verse of Surah al-Ra'd in the Qur'an is meant to align with human perception. It uses language that is accessible and understandable from a human perspective, reflecting how the earth appears to us. It does not specifically address whether the earth is flat or round. If this was the case, none of the Islamic scholars would have stated that the world is round.

**This means that the claim made about the Qur'an is a baseless ascription due to ignorance. Well, weren't there other people in different nations claiming that the Earth was flat?**

Of course, there were. There were those who claimed that the earth was flat and the sky was round, while others believed the sky was like a glass ceiling, with the moon and sun hanging there. This was based on what they observed with their eyes, as it appeared that way to them. There were even those who thought that the sun rises from 365 different places throughout the year. There are even philosophers who claimed that the world was flat. However, after a certain century, the majority began to say that it was spherical. Until relatively recently, the claim that the earth was the center of the universe and that

the sun revolved around the earth was widely accepted. This was known as the Ptolemaic theory. With Copernicus (d. 1543), this theory changed and the heliocentric theory was accepted. However, in Europe, Galileo (d. 1642) faced opposition for advocating the heliocentric theory. He was tried by the church during the Inquisition for advocating the heliocentric theory and found guilty of heresy for promoting ideas that contradicted the Church's teachings.

**Why are Muslims the target of these accusations?**

There are mainly two reasons for this: First, Muslims did not have a strong understanding of their own history, which led to a loss of self-confidence. Second, those opposed to Islam conducted perception campaigns based on this psychology. In this case, we have a duty: to learn about and recognize our own historical background without blaming anyone. Then, we must create a new thought grounded in balanced self-confidence. However, if we turn this into a dry eulogy of history, we might fall into another trap. The key is to establish a new future based on the lessons we have learned from historical experiences.



# THE WATCHFUL PROTECTOR: AL-MUHAYMIN

**Fatma BAYRAM**

The word “Muhaymin” is derived from the root “haymana”, meaning “to oversee, protect, and manage something”. It refers to the One Who governs all the affairs of the universe. A person who watches over and protects something is considered its muhaymin. Allah, with His name al-Muhaymin, knows all the conditions necessary for the continued existence of His creation; He guards it and watches over it. He knows their deeds, provisions, and lifespans, and He preserves them. Protecting His creation from dangers that threaten its existence is also a manifestation of this divine attribute.

Through these manifestations, we can preserve our existence as a whole and avoid disintegration. Just as maintaining our physical integrity is essential for the continuity of our material life, preserving our spiritual wholeness is equally important for our spiritual existence. Our

thoughts, feelings, goals, desires, and aspirations must support one another as a cohesive whole to maintain our mental and spiritual well-being. Therefore, there is a close relationship between this divine name and the tranquility of the heart. Knowing that we have a Lord who is aware of everything, knows all our needs, and has the absolute power to fulfill them who watches over and protects us closely accepting that the things we desire are known to Him and that when they come to pass, they are His grace, while their absence is His decree, enables us to be in perfect harmony with the universe. It is the source of our peace. Our Lord constantly oversees and protects human beings, the most distinguished elements of the universe, just as He governs “all the affairs of the universe”. It is this awareness that enables a person to reach the level of “ihsan” (excellence in faith). Living with the

consciousness that our actions are always under observation while life continues propels us forward; knowing that even the smallest act of goodness or evil will not be lost after our lives come to an end is the greatest assurance of continuity in our deeds. Only when we believe that Allah sees all our states and observes our most hidden intentions we can continue to do good without seeking recognition, knowledge, or appreciation from others. We can also cultivate the awareness to avoid even the most hidden evils that others may not recognize. This is what we refer to as the consciousness of being in the presence of Allah.

According to al-Ghazali, the effectiveness of the name al-Muhaymin is due to the divine attributes of knowledge, power, and action being at the highest level of perfection. Without knowledge, or even if knowledge is present but the ability to act on it is lacking, is it

possible to govern, protect, or oversee properly? We all recognize this from our own experiences. Yet sometimes we realize that things are going wrong, and we even understand what needs to be done, but we feel powerless to act. However, for Allah, no form of inadequacy can be at all imagined. As with all of His names, knowledge, and power vast and beyond human comprehension are found only in Allah.

Based on this information, the key elements of the attribute al-Muhaymin are as follows: possessing knowledge, establishing authority through knowledge-based power, and protecting the things under His dominion.

Success in these three aspects is achieved through knowledge, strength, intellect, and wisdom. People who manifest the attribute of al-Muhaymin manage their affairs following these qualities. Just as our Lord continuously oversees and protects this world,





maintaining it in perfect order, people should also manage their own affairs with care, precision, and diligence, preserving the rightful place and rights of everything and everyone within a well-ordered system.

According to al-Ghazali, for the attribute of

al-Muhyimin to be manifested in people, they must first thoroughly understand their inner world (self-awareness) and dedicate all of the abilities and strengths granted by Allah to ensure that their character and conduct are aligned with righteousness (self-actualization). As they gain mastery over their

thoughts and emotions, they expand this awareness to positively influence others, guiding them toward righteousness. This leads to taking care of and watching over those around them, reflecting a sense of social responsibility and concern for others. When this happens, the

manifestations of al-Muhyimin increase. Such people develop intuition the ability to perceive inner realities from outward appearances (interpretation skills) and become a means of salvation not only for themselves but also for others.



# Islam in GHANA

**Suleyman KISA OGLU**

Religious Services Counselor in Accra





Ghana... The land of gold...  
The country of golden-  
hearted people...

A nation where Muslims,  
Christians, and followers  
of indigenous beliefs live  
together in peace...

The Republic of Ghana is  
located in the western part  
of the African continent.  
The largest city and capital  
of the country is Accra.  
It gained independence  
from the United Kingdom  
on March 6, 1957.  
According to 2022 data, the  
population is 32,402,710.  
Among this population,  
70% are Christians, 25%  
are Muslims, 4% follow

traditional African  
religions and 1% practice  
other religions. While there  
are numerous languages  
and dialects spoken in  
the country, the official  
language is English.

### **The birth and spread of Islam in Ghana**

In the 13th century,  
the renowned Ashanti  
Empire in Ghana began  
to introduce Islam to its  
people when some Arab  
Muslims were appointed to  
the role of clerks for trade  
purposes.

The inhabitants of the  
Tamale region in northern

Ghana learned about Islam  
from the Arab Muslims  
who visited the area  
approximately 750 years  
ago and subsequently  
accepted Islam. Under  
an ancient tree next to  
the Larabanga Mosque,  
these early Arab Muslims  
explained the principles  
of Islam to the local  
population, facilitating  
their conversion. As a  
result of the growing need  
for a place of worship, the  
Larabanga Mosque was  
constructed. Built in 1420,  
the Larabanga Mosque  
still remains standing and  
is open for worship. It is

recognized as the first  
mosque built in Ghana.

Although the people of  
Ghana were introduced  
to Islam around the 13th  
century, the broader  
spread of Islam occurred  
in the 17th century. This  
expansion was primarily  
due to numerous Nigerian  
Muslim scholars who  
entered the country from  
the north to preach Islam.  
Through their efforts,  
Islam gradually spread  
from northern Ghana,  
reaching other parts of  
the country in successive  
waves.



The country is home to hundreds of mosques, both large and small. Local imams serve in these mosques and also provide Qur'anic education in nearby Qur'an schools, known locally as Makaranta. To date, no official or unofficial study has been conducted to determine the exact number of local mosques throughout the country.

In the country, Islamic education is provided in primary, middle, and high schools established by either the state or private initiatives. Additionally, madrasas have been set up in certain regions, where a seven-year Islamic education program is offered. This curriculum includes studies in Arabic, tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), hadith, and aqidah (Islamic creed), among other Islamic sciences.

#### **Religious authority representing Muslims in Ghana**

The religious administration representing Muslims in Ghana is the Ghana Chief Mufti Office, commonly referred to as the "Office of the National Chief Imam of Ghana."

Ghana gained independence in 1957, and during this period, numerous well-respected Muslim scholars were recognized across the



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**ALTHOUGH  
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AROUND  
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SPREAD  
OF ISLAM  
OCCURRED  
IN THE 17TH  
CENTURY.**

country. The most prominent of these scholars was Osman Nuhu Sharubutu. By the 1970s, the Ghanaian government decided to establish an official structure to represent Muslims at the state level and to appoint a representative. Following discussions in 1974 among tribal leaders, academics, Muslim scholars, and other notable figures, Osman Nuhu Sharubutu was unanimously chosen as the official leader of the Muslim community and was subsequently acknowledged by the state. Born on April 23, 1919, and now 105 years old, Osman Nuhu Sharubutu continues to serve as the National Chief Imam. He holds the distinction of being Ghana's first and only Chief Imam, highly

esteemed across Ghana and the West African region.

The Ghana National Mosque Complex, completed by Turkish philanthropists, also includes an administrative building constructed specifically for the Ghana Chief Imam's office. This building was gifted to the Ghana Chief Imam's office as part of the complex.

#### **Ghana National Mosque Complex**

The Ghana National Mosque and Complex, which was inaugurated in 2021 with the presence of the President of Religious Affairs of Türkiye, Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAS, holds significant importance for Muslims in West Africa.

The Ghana National Mosque Complex is located

in the capital city of Accra. It includes the Ghana National Mosque, Tiwnikli International Senior High School, and the Ghana Chief Imam's Office. The complex also houses the Religious Services Consultancy Office of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye, a girls' Qur'an school, housing and guest accommodations, a sports hall, and children's parks. As such, it stands as the largest Islamic complex in West Africa. The Ghana National Mosque itself has a capacity of 15,000 people, with 5,000 spaces available in its indoor area.

The Religious Services Consultancy at the Ghana National Mosque Complex, in addition to its representation duties, organizes humanitarian aid sent to Ghana by the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation. The Consultancy oversees various activities such as the construction of wells and mosques, food aid for needy families, special food assistance for orphanages, clothing and stationery donations for orphans, the slaughtering and distribution of sacrificial animals, and Qur'an courses and vocational training for both male and female students.

There are several organizations that

represent Muslims in Ghana. Some of these organizations include:

**a) Coalition of Muslim Organization Ghana (COMOG)**

It is the umbrella organization for many Islamic associations and institutions in the country. It organizes programs on all matters concerning Muslims.

**b) Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA)**

The association was established in 1982 to defend the rights of Muslim students in high

schools and universities and to represent them in academic circles. It has 416,200 high school students and 236,800 university students under its affiliation.

**c) Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services (ICODEHS)**

This organization works closely with the Ghana Chief Imam's office. ICODEHS organizes various humanitarian aid for Ghanaian Muslims and conducts activities in the religious, social, and cultural fields.

**d) Tijaniyyah Muslim Council of Ghana**

This organization represents Muslims who belong to the Tijaniyyah Sufi order in Ghana.

**e) Zongo Development Fund**

In Ghana, areas predominantly inhabited by Muslims and considered underdeveloped are referred to as "Zongo." These regions are prioritized for investment and development. The Zongo Development Fund organizes various activities aimed at the development and progress of Muslims in the country.

**f) Zakat and Sadaqa Trust Fund of Ghana**

The Zakat and Sadaqa Trust Fund of Ghana holds significant importance among Ghanaian Muslims. Its main purpose is to ensure that the zakat and sadaqah of Ghanaian Muslims are directed to the appropriate recipients.





# AL-JAZARI AND HIS MARVELOUS MACHINES

Koray SERBETCI



In the turbulent climate of the Middle Ages, the two primary reasons for the rise and flourishing of Islamic civilization in terms of thought, science, art, and spirituality were: the first, the ability of Muslims to adopt and absorb the best aspects of the ancient civilizations they encountered in the lands they conquered. The second reason was that the faith and spirituality manifested to humanity through Islamic revelation, along with the sciences and arts that emerged from it, nurtured a transcendent love for knowing Allah. In this way, between the 8th and 14th centuries, in particular, Islamic civilization became one of the pinnacles of intellectual thought.

One of the scholars who thrived in this intellectual climate was a man whose full name was Abu al-'Izz Isma'il ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari, though we know him simply as al-Jazari. Historians note that he worked under the patronage of the Artuqid dynasty in Diyarbakir between 1181 and 1206. Based on the epithet at the end of his name, it can be inferred that he was born in Cizre.

#### Al-Jazari's place in the history of science

Al-Jazari, recognized as one of the greatest geniuses of the Middle

Ages in the field of cybernetics, was a physicist, and master of mechanical robotics, and matrix systems. The use of the term "robot" in the Middle Ages might sound surprising, but it does not refer to robots as we know them today. Instead, it refers to automata, derived from the Greek word "automatos",



**WHAT ELEVATED AL-JAZARI TO THE PINNACLE OF INNOVATION WAS HIS METICULOUS AND SERIOUS STUDY OF THESE PREDECESSORS AND HIS ABILITY TO HARNESS HIS OWN INTELLECTUAL BRILLIANCE TO BUILD UPON THEIR WORK, CREATING ENTIRELY NEW INVENTIONS.**

meaning "self-moving". An automaton is a mechanical device that starts moving on its own, performs a task systematically, and then stops on its own. This term typically applies to machines that mimic human or animal movements. Another field in which al-Jazari excelled was cybernetics, the science of communication, regulation, and control. It examines the exchange of information, control, and balance in both humans and machines. This discipline is known as a foundational field that paved the way for the development of modern computer and automation systems.

Al-Jazari, having completed his education in Cizre, eventually focused his work on physics and cybernetics. His contributions were not limited to theoretical work; he made dozens of inventions that continue to inspire awe even today. While Western science history tries to attribute the title of the first robotic invention to the Greek mathematician Archytas, who created a steam-powered pigeon around 300 BCE, the earliest known records related to robotics actually belong to al-Jazari. The undeniable historical evidence we possess demonstrates that al-Jazari was the first



*The candle clock.*





*The elephant clock.*

cybernetic scholar from Anatolia and the inventor of sixty devices, including automata, clocks, water machines, encrypted locks, safes, thermoses, and automatic children's toys, thereby laying the groundwork for early computer science.

### The marvels of al-Jazari

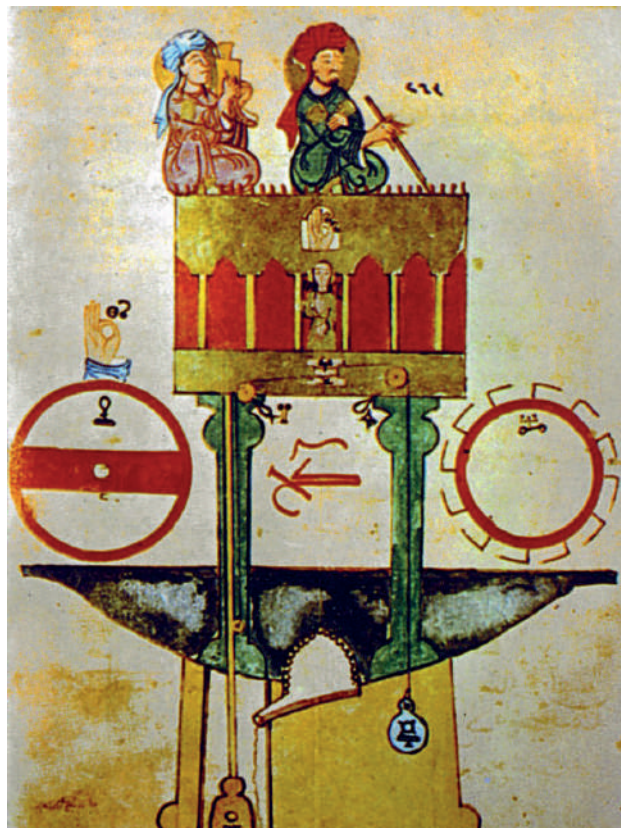
Certainly, throughout history, and even before al-Jazari, there were studies on automata. Figures like Ctesibius, Heron, Philo, Archimedes, the Banu Musa brothers, al-Khwarizmi, and Ridwan are among the



WE WOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN IF WE SAID THAT AL-JAZARI MADE EFFORTS TO REFLECT SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES INTO TECHNICAL DEVICES TO BE USED IN PRACTICE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING.

notable scientists who worked in this field. What elevated al-Jazari to the pinnacle of innovation was his meticulous and serious study of these predecessors and his ability to harness his own intellectual brilliance to build upon their work, creating entirely new inventions. The renowned scholar's book, commonly referred to as *Kitab al-Hiyal*, was written in Arabic, the scientific language of the time. The book provides explanations, supported by illustrations, of eighty-three devices or machines. These include water-powered clocks, robots (automata), bloodletting devices, candle clocks, locks and doors, fountains, and various irrigation and water-raising mechanisms.

*A miniaturised page from Kitab al-Hiyal*



Among al-Jazari's most thoroughly examined marvels today are his water clocks, designed to measure time. While only some of these clocks used water as an energy source, in all of them, the flow of water was employed as a timing mechanism. Al-Jazari's timing mechanisms were not only used to measure time but also to trigger specific mechanical actions at set intervals. His devices measured time through three main methods: based on the time it took for a submerged vessel

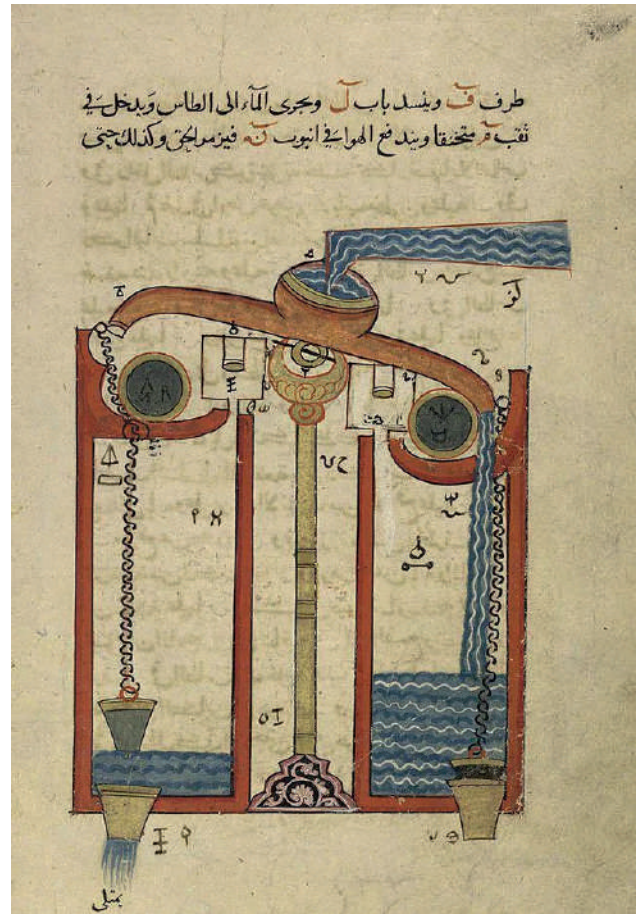


to sink, the time for a full water tank to empty, and the time for an empty vessel to fill. However, al-Jazari did not only design remarkable clocks. His book also includes suitable vessels and figures for feasts. It features various cups, containers, ewers, and depictions of human-shaped automata intended for use during meals with large gatherings of guests.

We would not be mistaken if we said that al-Jazari made efforts to reflect scientific discoveries into technical devices to be used in practice, in accordance with contemporary understanding. The

construction of his ewers, bloodletting instruments, and ablution basins serves as excellent evidence of this. Notably, the ewers capable of dispensing hot, cold, and lukewarm water, various automata, instruments that indicate the amount of blood drawn from patients, ablution basins, fountains that change shape, and devices for continuously playing flutes, as well as mechanisms for drawing water from shallow lakes and rivers, are truly dazzling, especially when considering the technology of his time.

Moreover, al-Jazari's mastery in achieving



An automatic vocalising water machine.



A beverage machine.

precise balance in these devices has also been recognized by scholars, who have noted that he designed extraordinary instruments using the principle of balance. He applied this principle through the use of water and candles, creating highly sensitive mechanisms that demonstrate his advanced understanding of these concepts.

However, it is unfortunate that Muslims later failed to build upon the genius of al-Jazari's work, and many of his contributions were forgotten. Notably,

some of the inventions he introduced were effectively rediscovered in Europe centuries later. For instance, it is a painful truth that Leonardo da Vinci is often recognized as the first to mention conical valves, and a device similar to the level control device mechanism in water clocks was patented in England in 1784 for use in steam boilers.

Al-Jazari, a source of pride not only for Muslims but for all humanity, passed on at the age of eighty in his birthplace, Cizre, after a life rich in knowledge and labor.



# THE JOURNEY OF GENIUS IN STONE: THE SELIMIYE MOSQUE

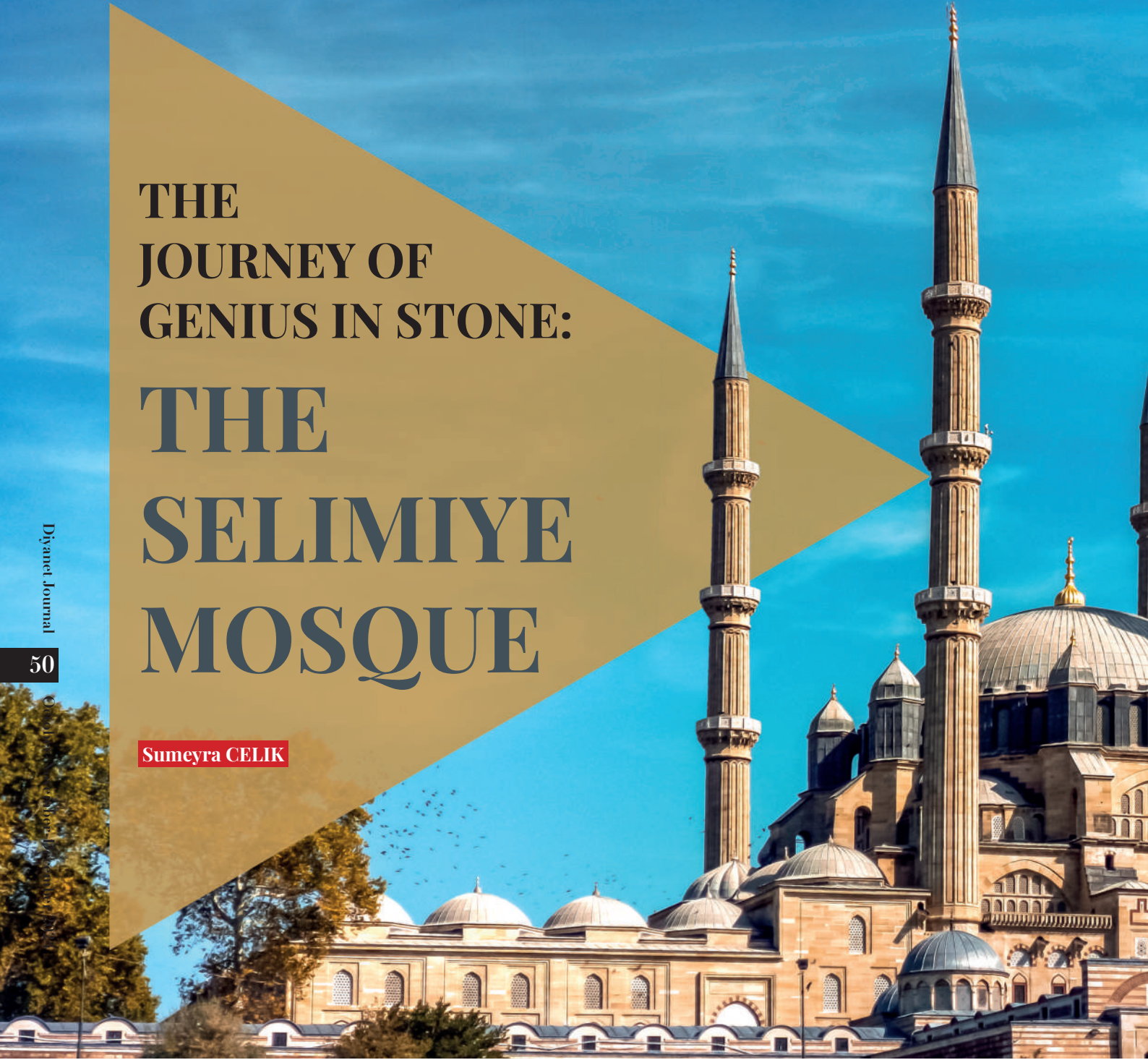
Sumeyra CELIK

In the 16th century, a mosque was constructed that had a fundamental influence on the history of architecture and art worldwide. A genius architect, at the age of eighty, created a masterpiece featuring a

2,000-ton, monolithic dome, standing 43 meters high and covering an area of 2,475 square meters, in Edirne, a frontier city of the Ottoman Empire. This work, which stood solid for five centuries and shone like a star in the heart

of Edirne, visible from every corner of the city, was referred to by Mimar Sinan as his “masterpiece”. Mimar Sinan, who completed 477 works during his career, 107 of which were mosques, crafted his masterpiece,

the Selimiye Mosque, in his later years. Commissioned by Sultan Selim II, this grand mosque was built as a complex and surrounded by the Dar al-Sibyan (elementary school), Dar al-Qurra (Qur’an school), Dar al-Hadith (school of







hadith), a timekeeping room (muvakkithane), a library, and a marketplace. Approaching Edirne from 10 to 15 kilometers away, one would first see the elegant minarets, then the majestic dome, followed by the full splendor of

the mosque. This visual spectacle highlights Mimar Sinan's meticulous attention to detail and architectural genius in positioning the mosque. According to legend, Mimar Sinan presented himself before the Sultan

and expressed his desire to build a mosque greater than Hagia Sophia. The Sultan agreed to this request and granted his permission. Sinan searched for a suitable location for a long time, but could not find a place that fully satisfied him. Meanwhile, Sultan Selim had a dream in which the Prophet Muhammad instructed him to build the mosque in Edirne. This marked the beginning of the story of the Selimiye Mosque. Some also suggest that Edirne was chosen because there was no available space in Istanbul for a new imperial mosque. Despite being 80 years old, Mimar Sinan completed his masterpiece in just six short years.

The Selimiye Mosque, considered the pinnacle of Ottoman architecture, was constructed on a rectangular foundation. Despite its colossal size and the limited resources of the period, the mosque's construction, which began in 1568, was completed in a relatively short time. However, Sultan Selim II did not live to see its opening. The mosque was opened for worship by Sultan Murad III a year after Selim's death. Drawing attention with its monumental appearance, the mosque's four minarets each with three balconies adorned with muqarnas transitions rank it among the world's most notable structures. The

minarets, crafted with an elegance akin to a delicate pen, have a diameter of only 3.5 meters. These slender yet towering minarets, with proportions that were ahead of their time and seemingly defying the future, are the most distinguished features of Selimiye. Two of the minarets are especially remarkable, each containing three staircases that never intersect. The first staircase leads to the third balcony, the second to the first and second balconies, and the third to all three balconies, allowing three individuals to ascend simultaneously without ever seeing one another. It is said that these staircases and the twelve balconies were designed so that the adhan, performed at the same time during each of the five daily prayers, could be heard from all parts of the city. Standing approximately 85 meters tall, including their finials, the minarets proclaim the grandeur of the Selimiye Mosque to the world. Furthermore, no matter from which angle one views the mosque, only two of the four minarets are visible at a time a result of Mimar Sinan's architectural genius. The minarets, placed at the corners of the structure, not only enhance its symmetry but also add strength to the rectangular form of the building.



In particular, the dimensions of Selimiye Mosque's dome represent majestic spatial integrity, and its monolithic structure represents the belief in tawhid. Standing 42.30 meters tall with a diameter of 31.30 meters, its massive dome surpasses all other imperial mosques. The dome resting on an eight-column drum is covered with a single dome, a technique never seen before in any mosque. This method, which involved distributing the weight across smaller, more numerous columns, is a testament to Mimar Sinan's unparalleled mastery. Moreover, the repeated emphasis on the number eight in the mosque's design is symbolic of the eight gates of paradise. By connecting the mosque's technical features with Islamic symbols, Sinan demonstrated that his works were not just buildings they embodied a world of meaning and values.

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**WITH ITS PERFECT SYMMETRY AND REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN ART AND ENGINEERING, THIS MASTERPIECE CONTINUES TO STAND AS A BEACON IN THE HISTORY OF WORLD ARCHITECTURE.**

From an engineering perspective, this dome pushed the boundaries of architectural limits, adding both exterior and interior grandeur and depth to the space. The dome was designed to represent the dominance of a single dome from both inside and outside, reaching the pinnacle of dome architecture. While Sinan had previously experimented with this form in the Rustem Pasha Mosque, the dome of Selimiye is twelve times larger. It is this accomplishment that cemented Mimar Sinan's place in the history of world art.

The massive dome of Selimiye Mosque, adorned with the inscription of Surah al-Ikhlâs, is complemented by the muadhdhin's platform (mahfil) positioned directly beneath it. This platform, designed with parallel reflective geometry, ensures that even those at the farthest points can hear the sound clearly. Furthermore, a noteworthy feature is the reverse tulip motif engraved on one of the platform's columns, which carries an interesting story. According to legend, a portion of the land on which the mosque was to be built belonged to a woman named Leyla Hanim, who initially refused to sell her land and

created some difficulties. Eventually, she was persuaded but requested that a symbol of her be included in the structure. Thus, the tulip design was engraved on the column. However, to symbolize the trouble she had caused, the tulip was depicted upside down. It is said that Leyla Hanim's land corresponds to the area where the muadhdhin's platform now stands.

The Selimiye Mosque holds a significant place in the world of art, with its pioneering design, unparalleled architectural features, and its exquisite use of stone, marble, tile, woodwork, hand-painted decorations, and mother-of-pearl inlays. The mihrab and minbar, crafted with remarkable marble workmanship, stand as the mosque's masterpieces. The minbar, in particular, is regarded as the finest example of marble craftsmanship among its peers. The twin panels on the right and left corners of the mihrab wall preserve the artistic elegance, design sophistication, and technical excellence of their time, showcasing magnificent motifs that have survived to this day. The muadhdhin's platform, featuring 12 marble columns and standing 2 meters tall, is a prime example of classical period decoration, adorned with



gold leaf embellishments. The wooden ceiling and borders of the platform are decorated with unparalleled engravings from the era. The mosque's artistic value is elevated further by the use of meticulously crafted relief-lined tiles produced in Iznik, which bring its artistic splendor to a global level. Mimar Sinan personally designed 101 different tulip motifs used throughout the mosque's decoration. By the order of Sultan Selim II, the lower section of the mosque up to the windows was adorned with tiles, while the upper section, including the windows, was embellished with the Surah al-Fatihah in tile



work, providing visitors with a visual feast. The 99 windows of the mosque allow for perfect lighting of the interior, and it is noteworthy that an underfloor heating system was used in the mosque as early as the 16th century, a remarkable feature of its time.

The Selimiye Mosque and Complex in Edirne was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011. With its perfect symmetry and remarkable achievements in art and engineering, this masterpiece continues to stand as a beacon in the history of world architecture, originating from Edirne.





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



## Does passing in front of a person who is praying invalidate their prayer?

One should not pass in front of a person who is praying, whether indoors or outdoors unless it is necessary. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said that it would have been better to wait for 40 years, rather than pass in front of a person who is performing prayer (Muslim, Salat, 261). A person who is about to perform prayer should also take precautions, such as standing in a suitable place or placing an object (sutrah) in front of them, in order to prevent people from passing directly in front of them. This is because the Prophet (saw) advised those who perform prayer in places where there is the possibility of humans or animals passing in front of them to place a sutrah (a stick or some other object) in front of themselves (Muslim, Salat, 241, 242). Therefore, in this case, it is regarded as makruh not to use a sutrah. However, during prayers performed in congregation, it is sufficient for only the imam to have a sutrah; the others do not need to place a sutrah (Bukhari, Salat, 90). Passing in front of the sutrah does not pose a problem and the prayer of the person is not invalidated if someone passes in front of them, although the person who passes becomes responsible for their action. In large mosques, it is permissible to pass at a long distance from those who are praying (Kasani, Bada'i, I, 217).

## What are the makruh times for performing prayer, and what is the reason for this rule?

It is makruh to perform prayer from the rise of the sun until it has fully risen when the sun is at its zenith, and when the sun sets. Islam prohibits worshipping anyone other than Allah, as well as all attitudes and behaviors that may lead to it. The fact that it is makruh or prohibited to perform prayer during certain specified times should be understood in this context. In fact, the three times mentioned are the times of worship for Zoroastrians. Performing prayer during these times is prohibited or limited to prevent Muslims from resembling fire-worshippers by coinciding with their times of worship. In this way, the aim is to foster a sense of identity and devotion among Muslims. Moreover, it is stated that these times have qualities that prevent one from performing prayer in a perfect manner (Nasa'i, Mawaqit, 29; Ibn Majah, Iqamat al-salati was-sunan, 148; Zaylai, Tabyin, I, 85; Ibn Abidin, Radd al-Muhtar, II, 384). Nevertheless, according to the Shafi'i school, it is makruh to perform only nafl prayers during sunrise, when the sun is at its meridian, and at sunset. They showed as evidence the following hadith: "Do not establish prayer after fajr prayer until the sun rises, and after 'asr prayer until the sun sets." (Muwatta, Qur'an, 48). During these times, one may perform fardh (obligatory) prayers, qada (missed) prayers, rawatib sunnahs (regular sunnah prayers), and tahiyyat al-masjid (greeting the mosque) prayers. Moreover, it is makruh tanzih (mildly discouraged) to perform nafl (voluntary) prayers after the 'Asr prayer, from the time the sun begins to turn yellow until it sets (Nawawi, Rawda, I, 192-195).

## Do mistakes in recitation invalidate the prayer?

Scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have established criteria to determine whether mistakes in qiraat (recitation) made during prayer invalidate the prayer or not. These criteria may be summarized as follows: Prayer is invalidated if the Qur'an is deliberately recited incorrectly in a way that changes its meaning. In the event that it is recited incorrectly by error or by forgetfulness: a) If the mistake is in the harakat (vowel markings) of letters, the prayer is not invalidated, even if it results in a change in meaning. b) If the mistake occurs in the places of pause, meaning a person continues when they should stop or stops when they should continue, the prayer is not invalidated, regardless of any change in meaning. c) In the case of a mistake occurring where one letter is pronounced instead of another, the validity depends on whether the meaning changes or not. Accordingly, if a letter is changed but the meaning of the word does not change after this mistake, and if a similar word takes place in the Qur'an, then the prayer is not invalidated. If the meaning of the word does not change after the mistake in a letter but a similar word does not take place in the Qur'an, Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Muhammad say that the prayer is invalidated although Imam Abu Yusuf says that it is not invalidated. If the meaning changes by the mistake in the letter and there is not a similar word found in the Qur'an, the prayer is invalidated. However, the prayer is not invalidated by skipping a few or many verses during the prayer. If a person makes a mistake in their qiraat (recitation) to the extent that it invalidates their prayer but then corrects the mistake by going back and reciting properly, their prayer becomes valid again (al-Fatawa al-Hindiyyah, I, 87 ff.; Ibn Abidin, Radd al-Muhtar, II, 393-396).

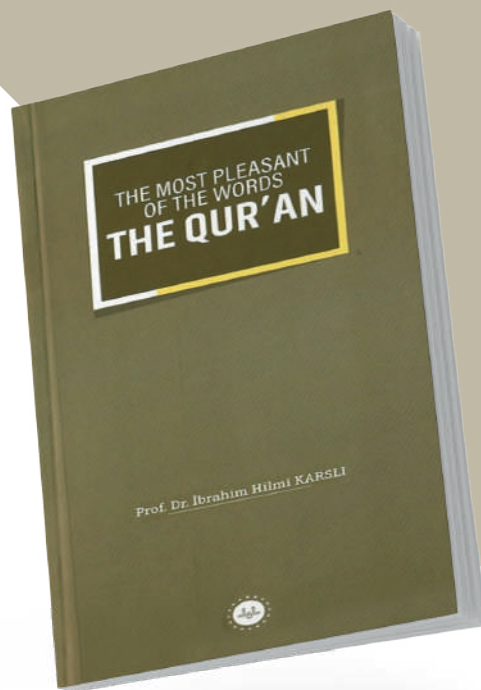
## Does having worldly thoughts while performing prayer invalidate it?

Thinking about worldly issues during prayer is something that many people experience. However, it is important that the person performing the prayer be in a state of peace (Mu'minin, 23:2). Therefore, we should focus on the prayer as much as possible. In order to ensure this, one needs to perform worship as if she/he sees Allah (Bukhari, Iman, 37) and turn to Him (swt) by thinking it as if it is his/her last prayer (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said regarding unrelated thoughts in prayer, "When the adhan is pronounced Satan takes to his heels and passes wind with noise during his flight in order not to hear the adhan. When the adhan is completed he comes back and again takes to his heels when the Iqama is pronounced and after its completion, he returns till he whispers into the heart of the person (to divert his attention from his prayer) and makes him remember things which he does not recall to his mind before the prayer and that causes him to forget how much he has prayed. So, one of you who cannot tell how many rakats, three or four, he established should establish two sujud (sajdah al-sahw) while sitting." (Bukhari, Adhan, 4; Sahw, 6, 7; al-Amal fi's-Salat, 18) Based on this hadith, Islamic scholars state that the thoughts that occur in one's mind during prayer do not invalidate the prayer (Kasani, Bada'i, I, 215; Shawkani, Naylu'l-awtar, III, 392). However, it is important that the person performing the prayer avoid engaging with such worldly thoughts. This is because if a person make an effort to free themselves from such thoughts and continue to focus on them, it will decrease both the power of prayer to prevent them from committing unpleasant deeds and the rewards they will receive. Therefore, one should not follow the unrelated thoughts that come to mind during prayer, but rather remember that they are in the presence of Allah and strive gather their thoughts.



# THE MOST PLEASANT OF THE WORDS THE QUR'AN

Meryem KILIC



Allah the Almighty sent prophets and books to guide humankind. The last book revealed to humanity through the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is the Holy Qur'an. In the following verse, Allah has expressed that He will protect the Qur'an, the final divine message for all people, until the Day of Judgment: "It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it." (Hijr, 19:9)

The Holy Qur'an is a call to humanity, urging reflection on life in this world and the hereafter. Its message is a profound and decisive statement that distinguishes between right and wrong. The Holy Qur'an invites all of humankind to guidance

and eternal salvation; it reminds us of our duties and responsibilities towards our Lord, our environment, and the entire universe.

The work entitled "The Most Pleasant of the Words of the Qur'an", published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, explains the importance of the last divine word, the Qur'an, for humanity. This valuable work, authored by Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hilmi Karsli, delves into the role of divine revelation in humanity's quest for meaning. In this world, where human beings have been created with countless blessings and beauties, endowed with intelligence and the ability to learn naturally creates the need to acquire knowledge. Revelation

provides answers to all of humanity's questions about the universe, life, and the afterlife. The book "The Most Pleasant of the Words of the Qur'an" highlights the significance of revelation, the immunity of the Qur'an as the final link in the revelation chain, proofs of the Qur'an's sacredness, some names of the Qur'an, some textual features of the Qur'an, some topics covered by the Qur'an, the recitation and understanding of the Qur'an, and key points to consider while reading the Qur'an. In addition, the importance of commentaries and translation is also emphasized, particularly in addressing the differences in understanding of the Holy Qur'an that have emerged over generations.

Moreover, commentaries also provide information about the events during which the verses were revealed, as well as their locations and timing. This context and information is essential for a correct understanding of the verses.

Human life gains meaning and purpose through the revitalizing relationship established with the Qur'an. It is extremely important for a person to benefit from the guidance of the Holy Qur'an as a guide to life. With this in mind, we present this valuable work, written in a simple and accessible style, to demonstrate that the Holy Qur'an serves as a guide for all humanity. We offer it to our esteemed readers, hoping it will bring benefit to all of humanity.



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**“We have sent you (O Prophet)  
only as a mercy for the whole world.”**

**(Anbiya, 21:107)**