

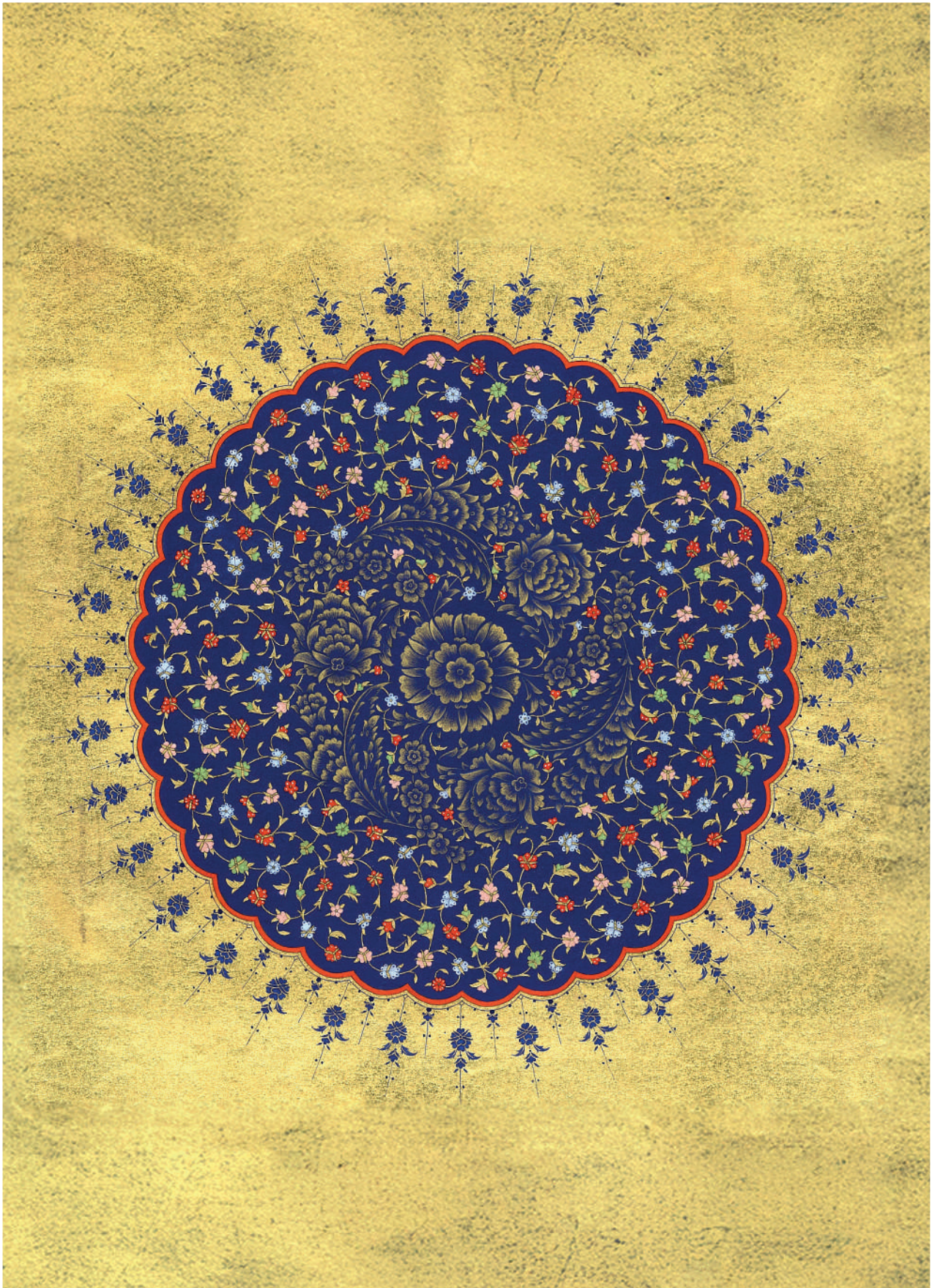
Diyanet Journal

ISSUE 13 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

THE MAGNIFICENT BALANCE IN THE UNIVERSE

| The Battle of Uhud: Before and After | Al-Bari | Islam in Ethiopia | Can Jinn Be Seen? | Al-İdrisi |





Editorial

The question of creation stands as one of the most fundamental inquiries at the heart of the relationship between humanity and existence. Throughout history, human beings have sought to comprehend the order of the universe they inhabit, the meaning of their own existence, and the wisdom that underlies it all. The Holy Qur'an invites the human being to this journey of contemplation and declares, "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason." (Al-i 'Imran, 3:190). Thus, it reminds us that the order within the universe is a clear proof of divine power.

The universe created by Allah the Almighty, who is the Creator and Sovereign of all existence, is at the same time a collection of signs pointing to His existence. Indeed, the Qur'an declares, "Travel throughout the land and see how He originated the creation..." (Ankabut, 29:20), thereby directing humankind toward observation, reflection, and contemplation. This divine call activates the human intellect, heart, and conscience, reminding the human being of the responsibility to comprehend the meaning of existence.

In Islamic thought, one of the fundamental concepts in understanding creation is sunnatullah. The universe is neither abandoned nor purposeless; rather, everything continues its existence within the measure and laws determined by divine wisdom. In the Holy Qur'an, it is declared, "Indeed, We have created everything, perfectly preordained." (Qamar, 54:49), clearly expressing this divine balance. In this respect, the realm of existence has been presented to human observation; thus, the universe has become a great book of contemplation that must be read.

This perspective not only leads the human being to a sense of awe before the universe, but also calls him to responsibility. For the human being is entrusted with preserving balance upon the earth that has been given to him as a trust. This outlook, shaped under the guidance of the Qur'an, transforms the understanding of creation into more than a mere matter of knowledge; it becomes an inseparable part of faith and the consciousness of responsibility.

In this issue of Diyanet Journal, we are pleased to present our special feature entitled "The Magnificent Balance in the Universe." Prof. Dr. Soner Gunduzoz addresses our main theme in his article, "Existence from Chaos to Cosmos: What Qur'anic Knowledge Tells Us and the Possibility of a Theistic Science." In the Muslims of the World section, Yasar Cuhadar discusses Ethiopia's encounter with Islam and its historical journey. Our guest for this issue's interview, Prof. Dr. Necdet Cagil, emphasizes that reflecting upon the unique order and harmony of the universe represents a form of worshipful consciousness that draws human beings closer to the Creator.

We present this issue, featuring many esteemed articles and distinguished contributors, to you, our valued readers, and wish you an enjoyable and beneficial reading experience.

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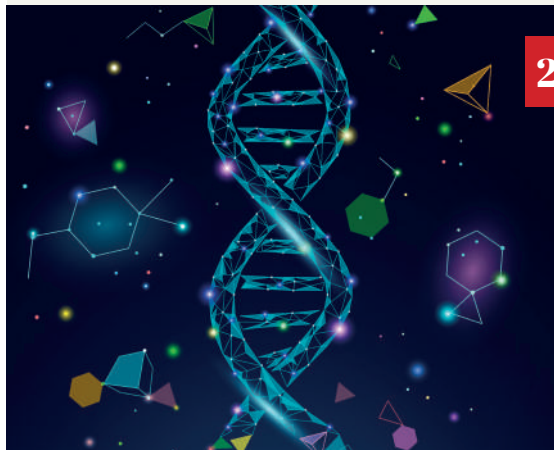
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

THE MAGNIFICENT BALANCE IN THE UNIVERSE



Prof. Dr. Safi ARPAGUS

The President
Presidency of Religious Affairs

The universe is a manifestation of the attribute of “Takwin” of Allah the Almighty. Allah, the Absolute Creator of all things, has brought the entire realm of existence into being in a delicate balance through His boundless knowledge, infinite power, and unrestricted will. The noble verse, “Indeed, We have created everything, perfectly preordained”

(Qamar, 54:49), informs us that all beings have been created within a specific measure, balance, and harmony. As emphasized in the noble verse, “He is the One’ Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate. So, look again: do you see any flaws? Then look again and again—your sight will return frustrated and weary” (Mulk, 67:3-4). There exists neither defect, nor distortion, nor disorder in the creation of Allah the Almighty.

Every being, created uniquely by Allah the Almighty, continues its existence through His continual act of re-creation at every moment (Zumar, 39:62; Rahman, 55:29). This process unfolds within the framework of a divine law expressed in the Noble Qur’an by the concept of “sunnatullah.” The movements of the sun, the moon, and the stars; the succession of night and day; the course of the planets in their orbits; the occurrence of months, years, and seasons in a determined cycle; and the entire process of change and transformation in nature—from the birth of living beings to their death—all take place in accordance with this divine law.

The Noble Qur’an reminds us that this universe, which operates within the framework of an unchanging divine law, is a great blessing bestowed upon humankind (Jathiyah, 45:12-13). This reminder is

also noteworthy in that it points to the human being's responsibility toward creation. Undoubtedly, every blessing is at the same time a trust, and a trust entails responsibility. The human being, described as the essence of the universe and placed at the center of the realm of existence, has been granted numerous blessings; yet, in proportion to these blessings, corresponding responsibilities have likewise been entrusted to them.

Human beings, created with distinguished faculties such as intellect, will, and discernment, certainly possess the means and potential to fulfill their responsibilities. Indeed, as expressed in the verse, "Indeed, We have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures" (Isra', 17:70), human beings—endowed with qualities that distinguish them from other creatures—have the potential to exercise authority over the realm of existence. For this reason, Allah the Almighty has connected the continuity and preservation of the magnificent balance in creation to the human will. He has required humankind to employ this potential within the equilibrium of intellect and heart, matter and spirit, and world

and hereafter, and to safeguard the balance and harmony inherent in creation by refraining from all forms of excess and imbalance. Drawing attention in numerous verses to the flawless order of the universe, Allah the Almighty warns all humanity with the verse "so that you do not defraud the scales" (Rahman, 55:8). In this regard, every person endowed with intellect is obliged to conduct their relationship with the realm of existence in accordance with sunnatullah, guided by revelation and by the proper exercise of their will.

For humankind to fulfill the responsibility of preserving both their own fitrah and the order within the universe, the most essential value they must adopt in their relationship with the environment is the consciousness of trust. The consciousness of trust means recognizing that the sole Owner of everything in the universe is Allah the Almighty. It entails conducting one's relationships with all realms of existence—animate and inanimate—within the limits and measures established by Allah the Almighty. This consciousness is not only the guarantee of law, justice, and virtuous moral conduct on earth, but it is also of vital importance in the construction of a world that is livable for all living beings.

When the realm of existence is not approached with the consciousness of trust, it becomes inevitable that environmental problems will envelop human life. For when people distance themselves from this awareness of trust, they begin to act with a sense of absolute ownership, perceiving for themselves an unlimited right of disposal over their surroundings. This, in turn, drives them after unending ambitions and selfish interests, distancing them from truth, justice, law, and moral integrity. Indeed, today humanity faces numerous adversities—ranging from food insecurity to climate crises, from global disasters to psychological distress—many of which have emerged as consequences of personal greed and unchecked desire. Especially in the past century, despite colossal problems increasingly surrounding human life, regrettably, the pressure exerted by humankind upon the environment continues to intensify with each passing day. The greatest harm from this situation, however, is again borne by humanity itself. As our Lord draws attention to this reality in the verse, "Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people's hands have done, so that Allah may

cause them to taste (the consequences of) some of their deeds and perhaps they might return 'to the Right Path'." (Rum, 30:41)

In order to halt this negative course, human beings must, without fail, align their will with the will of Allah the Almighty and establish their relationship with the environment upon the consciousness of trust. The protection of the rights and dignity of other living beings who share this world, and the preservation of the earth as a livable place for all, depend upon this. Undoubtedly, this is possible only through the consciousness of servitude. For the awareness of servitude is the most essential factor that gives meaning to life within the balance of matter and spirit, world and hereafter, and that provides the foundation for regulating their relationship with their Lord, with themselves, and with their environment accordingly. Strengthening the consciousness of servitude will ensure that people conduct all their relationships within the framework of revelatory and creational laws, and thus refrain from attitudes and behaviors that corrupt nature. In this way, individual, social, and environmental crises—manifesting largely as a result of human factors and rendering life increasingly unlivable—will, to a great extent, be averted.



EXISTENCE FROM CHAOS TO COSMOS:

WHAT QUR'ANIC KNOWLEDGE TELLS US AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A THEISTIC SCIENCE

Prof. Dr. Soner GUNDUZUZ

Belief in Allah is not merely a theoretical affirmation for human beings; it is a profound existential necessity and a spiritual need. The Noble Qur'an directs human attention to numerous signs that support this belief. The order observed in the universe; the harmony and balance among beings (Ghashiyah, 88:17-20), the coherent and interrelated functioning of cosmic systems (Mulk, 67:30), the conscientious and intuitive inclination present within the inner world of the human being (Rum, 30:30), and the line of inner (anfusi) and outer (afaqi) contemplation extending from the microcosm to the macrocosm (Al-i 'Imran, 3:191) stand out as fundamental



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epistemic grounds that lead the human being to a Creator. Appealing to the testimony of science, proceeding with the vision granted by revelation, and ultimately engaging in a profound inner self-reckoning emerge as the core dynamics of the path that leads to Allah.

In this context, the concept of uluhiyyah expresses Allah's absolute dominion and sovereignty over the universe. Allah exercises this sovereignty through His attributes such as knowledge, creation, will, and speech. Uluhiyyah provides an ontological and epistemological framework that explains the relationship between the Divine Essence

and the cosmos. The concept of rububiyyah refers to Allah's acts of creating beings, providing sustenance, protecting, and overseeing them. The concept of wahdaniyyah, which must be considered alongside uluhiyyah and rububiyyah, expresses the oneness of Allah and constitutes an essential condition for a true conception of the Divine. Without the notion of wahdaniyyah, a complete understanding of deity is not possible. Polytheistic approaches diminish the concept of deity from its rightful ontological position, and for this reason, such views are characterized as shirk in Islamic thought.

The Qur'an explicitly states that polytheism is incompatible with the order of the universe: "Had there been other gods besides Allah in the heavens or the earth, both 'realms' would have surely been corrupted." (Anbiya, 21:22). This verse demonstrates that the belief in multiple deities at a metaphysical level would necessarily produce chaos in the cosmic order. The Qur'anic expression of bringing forth from darkness into light also serves as a striking depiction of the transition from chaos to cosmos. The universe is not without purpose or order; rather, it operates within a system governed by unchanging divine laws known as *sunnatullah*. Numerous phenomena, from the structure of the atmosphere to the layered heavens, and from the material universe to the multiplicity of cosmic systems, have been interpreted throughout history in light of both the *tafsir* tradition and scientific findings. Figures such as Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Molla Jami, Aristotle, and Ptolemy have shaped these cosmogonic discussions; at the same time, astronomers like Eratosthenes and Hipparchus contributed to the evolving understanding of the structure of the universe. With the advancement of modern science, the idea



THE PRECISE ORBITS OF THE PLANETS, THE BALANCED STRUCTURE OF THE ECOSYSTEM, THE ORDERLY CYCLE OF THE SEASONS, AND THE EARTH'S IDEAL DISTANCE FROM THE SUN ALL POINT TO THE PRESENCE OF FINE-TUNING.

that the cosmos operates according to a systematic unity and set of laws has become even more firmly established.

When the manner in which the system operates is taken into account, it becomes evident that the universe could not have come into existence on its own; therefore, it necessarily requires a Creator. That Creator is Allah. If one were to claim that the universe was brought into existence by something other

than Allah, it would necessitate belief in an endless chain of creators. Such a belief leads to an infinite regress—a vicious circle with no resolution. (Topaloglu, *Ateizm ve Eleştirisi*, p. 94.) In Islamic thought, the existence of Allah is established through the testimony of cosmic signs (*ayat kawniyyah*) and through the arguments presented in the Qur'an, including the proofs from origination (*huduth*), invention (*ikhtira*), providence (*inayah*), and order (*nizam*). Even the formation of proteins within a living cell reveals an extraordinary level of mathematical and biochemical precision. The existence of billions of species, plants, oceans, celestial bodies, and the intricate structure of the human mind render the claim of coincidence intellectually indefensible (Karlîga, *Nicîn Allah'a İnaniyoruz?*, 4/22).

There is nothing more natural than a system of such immense complexity and scope having a conscious planner behind it. The Qur'an affirms that within human creation and within their very souls lie signs pointing to the existence of Allah. Nature is one of the most fundamental realms of revelation, conveying knowledge about the Creator. Allah has made all beings in the universe signs (*ayah*) and symbols, and He has endowed

human beings with the intellect capable of reading, interpreting, and transcending these signs. This relationship between the human being and nature is made possible by the meaning ascribed to both. This semantic coherence must be reexamined, particularly by younger generations, when faced with modern ideologies such as atheism and deism.

The universe, as a whole, points to the absolute oneness of Allah. While secular tendencies portray the world as an ontologically deficient and flawed realm, Islamic thought maintains that the world has been created in the most perfect manner among all possible worlds. The Qur'an affirms this truth with the verse: "You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate." (Mulk, 67:3) The introspective (*anfusi*) and external (*afaqi*) signs complement one another on both micro and macro levels, forming evidence for the existence of Allah. The continuity of this order clearly demonstrates that the universe is governed with wisdom and will by a single deity. The Qur'an supports this perspective with numerous verses that emphasize the importance of contemplating the universe (Ghashiyah, 88:17–19; Ankabut, 29:20; Nahl, 16:66; Dhariyat, 51:21).

It becomes clearly evident from an objective standpoint that the universe did not come into existence by chance. The precise orbits of the planets, the balanced structure of the ecosystem, the orderly cycle of the seasons, and the Earth's ideal distance from the Sun all point to the presence of fine-tuning. This system requires a level of intricate planning that even the most advanced technologies cannot replicate. Such a level of design naturally points to a Creator endowed with infinite knowledge and power. The Qur'an's emphasis on the cycle of life (Nur, 24:43) draws attention to the continuity of this order.

Science still has vast realms of the universe left to discover. Yet with each discovery, rather than negating the power of Allah, His might becomes even more apparent. The cosmic imagery presented in Surah al-Nazi'at, from the creation of the heavens to the ordering of the earth (Nazi'at, 79:27–33), draws human attention both to the vastness of outer space and the intricate balance on Earth. The Qur'an employs a rich cosmological language through terms such as seven heavens, kawkab (star), misbah (star), takwir (wrapping), tibat (layers), and samk (structure)—each pointing to different dimensions of the universe.



The mechanistic conception of the universe that emerged in Western thought after the Enlightenment presented religion and science as opposing realms. Influenced by figures such as Auguste Comte, J. Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, atheistic and deistic discourses became widespread (Oguk, Yeni Ateistlerin Yanilgilari, pp. 70–71). Today, this perspective is being reproduced through Darwinian evolution and natural selection (Dawkins, The God Delusion, pp. 112–113). Approaches that frame certain biological traits in humans as flaws overlook the holistic and purposeful design of creation (Lents, Human Errors). Similarly, the claim that God cannot be empirically proven points to a significant flaw in reasoning (Krauss, A Universe from Nothing).

It must not be forgotten that scientists, too, are susceptible to error

due to biases, societal conditioning, and conceptual limitations. The NOMA approach—Non-Overlapping Magisteria—which advocates for the complete separation of science and religion (Strobel, Hani Tanri Olmuştur?, pp. 102–103), overlooks the dimension of meaning within the universe. Yet the universe possesses a depth of meaning that cannot be fully explained by the data provided through empirical science alone.

Modern cosmology has revealed that an extraordinarily delicate balance among the four fundamental forces of nature is required for life to emerge. The formation of elements such as carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen depends on the internal structure of stars and the initial conditions of the universe. This fine-tuning strongly supports a theistic explanation (Golshani, Theistic Science, pp. 215–216; Swinburne, p. 228).

In conclusion, the human being must observe phenomena, evaluate them through rational inference, and approach reason through revelation, and science through wisdom. Verses in the Qur'an, such as the Ratq–Fatq phenomenon (Anbiya, 21:30) in comparison with the Big Bang theory, the expansion of the heavens (Dhariyat 51:47), and the verse describing the Divine Throne (Kursi) encompassing the heavens and the earth (Baqarah 2:255), invite a renewed exploration of the relationship between religion and science. Likewise, reflections on the end of the universe within the context of eschatological imagery (Ibrahim, 14:48) deepen contemplation. All of this indicates that a theistic science, one that aligns with the grandeur of the cosmos, is possible, coherent, and also necessary.



CHOOSING THE SPOUSE: DECIDING THE LIFE PARTNER

Our Prophet pointed out that it was a natural necessity to laugh and have fun within marriage, which is supposed to be a physical and spiritual union. To have a compatible and sustainable marriage, it is important to strive to find a perfect fit as much as the conditions allow. Although the Messenger of Allah (saw) appears to address only males, his advice and warnings are universal and apply to both sexes.

Our Prophet, by saying, “Be selective regarding the person you will marry; and

marry (your daughters) to compatible ones,” (IM1968, Ibn Majah, Nikah, 46) indicates that compatibility and harmony between spouses are important factors for sustaining a marriage. Compatibility can depend on the level of social status, family, education, and financial well-being of the spouses. Compatibility in marriage is recommended, assuming that it provides the necessary background for a tranquil and harmonious family environment. For example, if one of the spouses had grown up in an affluent

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family and obtained a good education, and the other partner had grown up in a poor family, did not receive a good education, and began to work for a livelihood at an early age, that might create some resentment among the couple.

In order to have respect, trust, and acceptance in marriage, it is necessary to take the compatibility and equality of the spouses into consideration. This is because our Prophet, in his Farewell Pilgrimage, said: “O people! Beware! Your Lord Allah is one.

Your father is one. There is no superiority of Arabs to non-Arabs, whites to blacks, or blacks to white. The superiority is about piety.” (HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411)

Our beloved Prophet warned those who leave aside essential values and are attracted by transient features in choosing a spouse as follows: “Don’t marry women due to their beauty. Their beauty could be the reason for their destruction (may lead them to go astray). Don’t marry them due to their wealth either. Their wealth may lead them to commit sin. But marry them because of their piety. A pious black concubine whose nose is cut and ear is pierced, for example, can be more virtuous than the others.” (IM1859, Ibn Majah, Nikah, 6) The same is true for men’s piety. One day, our Prophet said to the Companions, “When someone whose piety and morality you like comes to ask the hand of your daughter for marriage, marry her to him. If you do not do so, sedition and corruption would prevail on the earth.” When those who were present said, “O Messenger of Allah! What if that person is not equal to the girl?” Our Prophet repeated three times, “When someone whose piety and morality you like comes to ask the hand of your daughter



IN CHOOSING A SPOUSE, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL DECISIONS IN ONE’S LIFE, ONE NEEDS TO PRIORITIZE PIETY AND MORAL VIRTUE. THIS IS BECAUSE A MARRIAGE THAT PRIORITIZES PIETY AND GOOD MORALITY WILL BRING PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO THE COUPLE, NOT ONLY IN THIS LIFE BUT ALSO IN THE HEREAFTER.

for marriage, marry her to him,” (T1085, Tirmidhi, Nikah, 3) and indicated that the criterion of piety was essential, and the other characteristics could become significant with piety.

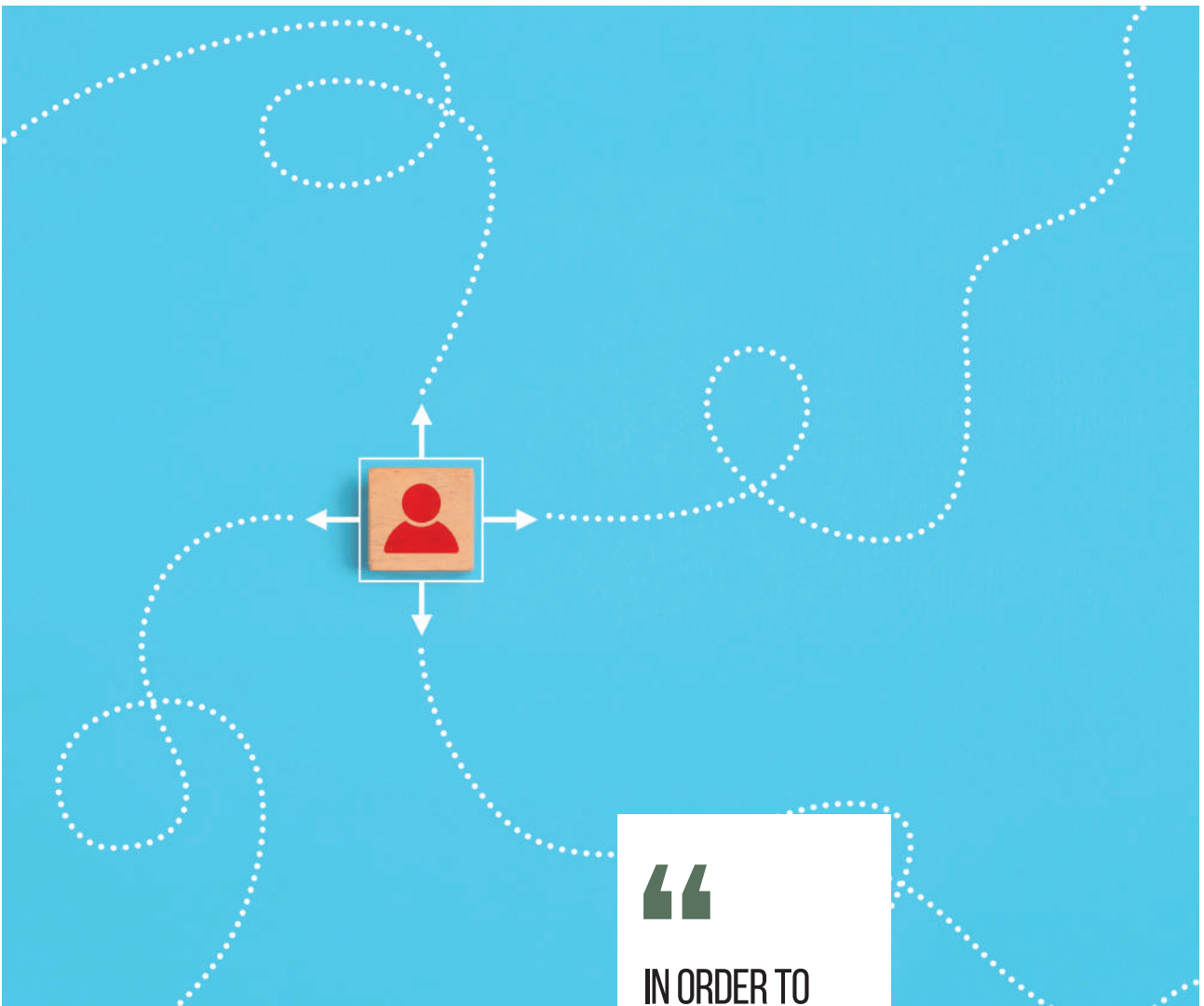
The verse of the Noble Qur’an, “Wicked women are for wicked men, and wicked men are for wicked women. And virtuous women are for virtuous men, and virtuous men are for virtuous women.” (Nur, 24:26) indicates that good morality and clean life are essential in marriage, and that people could be equal on those grounds. In like manner, the verse “A male fornicator would only marry a female fornicator or idolatress. And a female fornicator would only be married to a fornicator or idolater. This is (all) forbidden to the believers.” (Nur, 24:3) emphasizes that dignity and morality are essentials of marriage.

In the verse, “Do not marry polytheistic women until they believe; for a believing slave-woman is better than a free polytheist, even though she may look pleasant to you. And do not marry your women to polytheistic men until they believe, for a believing slave-man is better than a free polytheist, even though he may look pleasant to you. They invite (you) to the Fire while Allah invites (you) to

Paradise and forgiveness by His grace. He makes His revelations clear to the people so perhaps they will be mindful.” (Baqarah 2:221), it is repeatedly emphasized that it is not permissible to marry them as long as they do not believe in Allah (swt), even if they possess high social status, great wealth, or extraordinary beauty. On the question of marrying women of the People of the Book (ahl al-kitab), the Holy Qur’an says, “Today all good, pure foods have been made lawful for you. Similarly, the food of the People of the Book is permissible for you and yours is permissible for them. And (permissible for you in marriage) are chaste believing women as well as chaste women of those given the Scripture before you—as long as you pay them their dowries in wedlock, neither fornicating nor taking them as mistresses.”

(Ma’idah, 5:5) Therefore, as with Muslim women, it is obvious that dignity is also the most important criterion for Jewish and Christian women.

Allah the Exalted, with the verse, “And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for



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people who reflect.” (Rum, 30:21) states that having a spouse is a natural need, and a marriage that satisfies this need should be built upon love and compassion. Our Prophet encouraged marriage as reflected in his statements to ‘Ali, “O ‘Ali! Don’t postpone three things: prayer when the time comes; burial of the dead when the corpse is ready; and marriage of a woman when he finds her a good fit.” (T1075, Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 73)

Everyone needs compassion and love, and wants to have a wife with whom he wants to overcome the challenges of life and share its beauties. Sometimes one chooses a wife for her beauty, sometimes for her career, sometimes for her fame, and sometimes for her piety and good morality. There is no doubt that these are all important features. Everyone has their own taste, preference, and ideals, and makes their decisions accordingly, in different stages of their

life. However, in choosing a spouse, which is one of the most critical decisions in one’s life, one needs to prioritize piety and moral virtue. This is because a marriage that prioritizes piety and good morality will bring peace and tranquility to the couple, not only in this life but also in the hereafter. The Holy Qur’an refers to those who are happy in Paradise as follows: “They and their spouses will be in (cool) shade, reclining on (canopied) couches.” (Ya-Sin, 36:56)

THE MORALITY OF INFAQ

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bayram KOSEOGLU

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

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ
حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ
وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the
cause of Allah is that of a grain that sprouts into seven
ears, each bearing one hundred grains. And Allah
multiplies ‘the reward even more’ to whoever He wills.
For Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing.”

(Baqarah, 2:261)

Allah the Almighty, in His wisdom, has created human beings in diverse forms. Just as the languages, colors, and cultures of societies differ from one another, so too do individuals vary in terms of their abilities and material means. In this context, it becomes evident that, as social beings, humans must live in coexistence with others in order to sustain their existence. Allah the Almighty has established a balance and order in the universe and has bestowed different resources and blessings upon various regions and geographies. As stated in the verse, “...We (alone) have distributed their (very) livelihood among them in this worldly life and raised some of them in rank above others so that some may employ others in service....” (al-Zukhruf, 43:32), this divine truth encompasses numerous instances of wisdom (Maturidi, Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunnah, 9/162–163; Zamakhshari, al-Kashshaf, 4/248–249.). This truth also places a responsibility upon human beings. In order to maintain balance among people in the world and to ensure the continuation of peace and happiness, it is essential to keep alive the values of sharing, mutual assistance, generosity, and charitable giving (infaq). Given the reality that human beings will not be on the same level in every aspect of worldly life—some being wealthy while others are poor—it becomes obligatory that when the blessings Allah the Almighty bestows upon an individual, a society, or a region exceed their needs, this surplus must be transferred to those in need and shared with the less fortunate. Otherwise, social, cultural, and economic disparities will arise among people; these differences will give rise to various desires, and if these desires are not fulfilled, negative consequences such as anger, enmity, hatred, oppression, and war, which disrupt peace and happiness, may emerge (Kur’an Yolu, vol. 1, p. 419).

The Holy Qur’an contains numerous verses that encourage helping those in need, doing good, and engaging in acts of sharing. In addition, concepts such as infaq, zakat, and sadaqah are all directed toward promoting mutual assistance, encouraging generosity, and establishing a balance between the rich and the poor. Alongside the obligatory zakat that eligible Muslims are required to give, the Qur’an also advises believers to give sadaqah voluntarily at every opportunity and to spend in the way of Allah (infaq). Furthermore, the Qur’an points to how infaq should be carried out, offering us guidance in this regard and teaching us the ethics of charitable giving.

First and foremost, with the verse “and that each person will only have what they endeavored towards...” (Najm, 53:39), the Qur’an emphasizes the importance of a person’s effort and striving. However, it is also a reality that there are individuals who are either unable to work due to certain obstacles or, despite their efforts, are unable to succeed. In such cases, it becomes both a religious and moral responsibility for those who are able to extend a helping hand to those in need to offer assistance and to give in charity (tasadduq). The Qur’an also teaches that, in fulfilling this duty, one must act responsibly and observe certain principles. Accordingly, infaq and tasadduq performed with the intention of worship must be done solely for the sake of Allah’s pleasure, not to gain the approval or admiration of others. In this regard, Allah the Almighty presents the example of a garden that yields double produce after receiving abundant rain to describe those who spend in His cause sincerely (Baqarah, 2:265), thus pointing to the reward and blessings that come from giving in charity with pure intentions.

Another important matter to be observed in infaq is that acts of kindness must not be followed by reproach or hurtful behavior. Allah the Almighty warns us in this regard as well

(Baqarah, 2:262). Indeed, such actions not only wound and humiliate the people in need, offending their dignity, but also nullify the reward and blessings of the good deed and assistance rendered. The Qur’an highlights that giving sadaqah in secret is more virtuous (Baqarah, 2:271), drawing attention to an important point: this protects the recipient from feeling embarrassed and prevents the giver from falling into the temptation of showing off. Another key principle in infaq is that what is given should be of good quality, not something undesirable. The Qur’anic counsel that we should not attempt to give in charity that which we ourselves would not accept except with reluctance (Baqarah, 2:267) teaches us an important principle of the ethics of infaq. One of the key points to be observed in this matter is to avoid wastefulness. Acting with the awareness that something surplus to our needs may be a necessity for someone else, and maintaining balance in our spending, just as in every other aspect of life, is a command from the Qur’an (Isra, 17:29). Just as miserliness does not befit a Muslim, neither does extravagance, unnecessary spending, or squandering resources.

Another important point related to this matter is that infaq, acts of goodness and charity, and the giving of sadaqah bring about

great benefits both in this world and the hereafter (Kur’an Yolu, vol. 1, pp. 418–419.). Indeed, Allah the Almighty states that the good deeds we perform are ultimately for our own benefit and gives glad tidings that their reward will be given in full (Baqarah, 2:272, 274). While the reward for most good deeds is generally tenfold, the verse referenced above (Baqarah, 2:261) states that the reward for spending in the way of Allah is seven hundredfold. This is profoundly significant glad tidings, highlighting the immense value and importance of this act of worship, and indicating



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that its reward will be multiplied many times OVER (Nasafi, Madarik al-Tanzil, 1/216–217; Kur’an Yolu, vol. 1, p. 420.). Although it may appear that giving sadaqah or performing good deeds reduces one’s wealth, the reality is quite the opposite. As stated in the Qur’an, Allah the Almighty increases and blesses the wealth of those who give in charity (Baqarah, 2:276). When we consider that spending in the way of Allah brings abundance and goodness to one’s earnings, serves as an expression of gratitude for the blessings granted to us, and, through sadaqah al-jariyah, becomes a means for our book of deeds to remain open continuously, it becomes clear that such acts cannot be measured by any material standard. As stated in the Qur’an, “You will never achieve righteousness until you donate some of what you cherish” (Al-i ‘Imran, 3:92), the beloved servants of Allah act with a sense of ithar, selfless altruism, by offering food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive even when they themselves are in need (Insan, 76:8). Moreover, they do so purely for the sake of Allah, without seeking any worldly benefit or return (Insan, 76:9). Undoubtedly, all of these acts become means for fostering social unity, solidarity, mutual support, and cohesion within the community.

THE MOST FAITHFUL COMPANION: RIGHTEOUS DEEDS

Dr. Ahmet OGUZ

Religious Affairs Attaché of Jeddah

The word “amal,” which in the lexicon carries meanings such as work, act, and effort, is defined as an action performed with a specific purpose. In religious literature, it refers to conduct that is subject to commands, recommendations, or prohibitions and that ultimately entails either punishment or reward. (Suleyman Uludag, “Amel,” DIA, 3/13–16.) Righteous deeds, on the other hand, mean believing in Allah the Almighty, worshipping and serving Him, and carrying out beneficial acts for the good of creation. Accordingly, every halal and legitimate action may be regarded as a righteous deed, provided that it is performed properly and soundly with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah. In many verses and hadiths, the concept of amal is often used to refer to various acts of worship performed in order to

attain greater reward. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the concept of righteous deeds has a broader scope. Allah (swt) states in many noble verses, “those who believe and do good...”, thereby mentioning faith and righteous action together (Baqarah, 2:25, 62, 82, 277). The expression “those who do good” found in these verses encompasses all positive and beneficial actions and works, foremost among them acts of worship. Moreover, just as beneficial actions are called righteous deeds, the person who performs them is also described as a righteous person (Islam through Hadiths, 3/35–36).

About righteous deeds, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated, “All that is good is a sadaqah” (Bukhari, Adab, 33 (6021)). By this statement, he broadened the scope of both charity and righteous deeds.

Moreover, with his saying, “Allah the Almighty is pleased when one of you performs a task and does it with excellence,” (Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, 7/234 (4931)), he indicated that, alongside sincerity and devotion, quality and excellence in one’s work are also of great importance. Faith and righteous deeds are likewise two essential criteria that determine a person’s worth in the sight of Allah. This matter is expressed in the noble verse as follows: “It is not your wealth or children that bring you closer to Us. But those who believe and do good—it is they who will have a multiplied reward for what they did...” (Saba, 34:37). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) summarized this message in these words: “Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces, but He looks to your hearts.” (Muslim, Birr, 34 (25647))

One day, as our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) was entering the city from the region of Aliyah, one of the elevated areas of Madina, he passed by the marketplace. People were gathered around him. He then came across a dead young goat with small ears. Reaching out, he took it by the ear and said: “Which of you would like to buy this for one dirham?” The noble companions replied, “We would not buy it even for less than a dirham. What would we do with it?” He then asked, “Would you want it if it were given to you for free?” They answered, “By Allah, even if it were alive, it would be defective because its ears are small. So what would we do with it when it is dead?” Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “By Allah, in the sight of Allah the Almighty, this world is more worthless than this dead goat before you.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 2 (2957)). The only

يَتَّبِعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلَاثَةٌ، فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ: يَتَّبِعُهُ أَهْلُهُ
وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ، فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ

“When carried to his grave, a dead person is followed by three, two of which return (after his burial) and one remains with him: his relative, his property, and his deeds follow him; relatives and his property go back while his deeds remain with him.”

(Bukhari, Riqaq, 42 (6514); Muslim, Zuhd, 5 (2960).)

capital that will save us in this world and the hereafter is our deeds. While striving for our fleeting worldly life, we must not neglect performing lasting righteous deeds for the hereafter, our eternal abode. It should not be forgotten that possessing wealth and property in this world is different from attaching excessive value to them and turning them almost into an ultimate goal. Certainly, a Muslim should possess lawful wealth and property and spend them in accordance with the pleasure of Allah. However, if a person is unwilling to give zakat and sadaqah, or if his hand, as it were, trembles while giving them, this indicates that he attaches excessive value to worldly possessions. Such behavior does not befit a Muslim.

The well-known proverb “The shroud has no pockets” is often cited to

warn those who become excessively attached to worldly wealth. This expression means, “No matter how wealthy you are, you will take nothing with you when you die.” This reality is beautifully expressed in the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saw): “When carried to his grave, a dead person is followed by three, two of which return (after his burial) and one remains with him: his relative, his property, and his deeds follow him; relatives and his property go back while his deeds remain with him.”

(Bukhari, Riqaq, 42 (6514); Muslim, Zuhd, 5 (2960)).

The reality of death is the greatest lesson for one who seeks to take heed. Death reminds us that worldly life is temporary and that all the possessions we hold are merely means of trial. This matter is explained in the Qur’an as follows: “Every soul will taste death.

And you will only receive your full reward on the Day of Judgment. Whoever is spared from the Fire and is admitted into Paradise will (indeed) triumph, whereas the life of this world is no more than the delusion of enjoyment.” (Al-i ‘Imran, 3:185). Therefore, wealth, property, status, and fame should not deceive us. Indeed, Allah the Almighty warns us in this regard as follows: “Know that this worldly life is no more than play, amusement, luxury, mutual boasting, and competition in wealth and children...” (Hadid, 57:20).

While good deeds bring happiness to their doer, evil deeds will cause him regret. One day, our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) said to his companions, “Every person who dies will surely feel regret.” The noble Companions asked, “Why will he feel regret?” He replied, “The one who does good will regret not having

done more good during his lifetime, and the one who does evil will regret not having abandoned his evil deeds while he was alive.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 58 (2403)). Since this world is transient and the hereafter is eternal, each should be given its due value in proportion to the time one will remain there, and preparation should be made accordingly. Indeed, regarding preparation for the hereafter, Allah the Almighty says: “O believers! Be mindful of Allah and let every soul look to what (deeds) it has sent forth for tomorrow (the hereafter).” (Hashr, 59:18) Our Beloved Prophet (saw) also warned in this regard, saying: “The wise person is the one who calls himself to account and works for what comes after death, whereas the helpless person is the one who follows his desires and yet entertains hopes of forgiveness from Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 25 (2459))

Prof. Dr. Necdet CAGIL:
“Attaining insight into the
magnificent order of the universe
leads to the discovery of its
creator.”



Interview by:
Zeynep Feyza TAYFUR

Prof. Dr. Necdet Cagil, born in 1956 in Erzurum, is a theologian, academic, and professor of tafsir. He graduated in 1992 from the Faculty of Theology at Ataturk University and began his academic career at the same faculty as a research assistant in the field of Qira'at. He completed his master's degree with a study entitled "The Qira'at of the Imams of Basra and Their Evidences" and earned his doctorate with his dissertation titled "The Qira'at in Terms of the Eloquence and Phonetics of the Qur'an." Continuing his academic career at Ataturk University, Cagil attained the titles of associate professor and subsequently professor at the same institution.

How should we understand the frequent attention drawn in the Noble Qur'an to the heavens, the earth, and the order within the universe? How do these emphases shape the believer's perspective on the cosmos?

In the Qur'an, frequent emphasis is placed upon the entirety of the cosmic order and its operation within an unerring and precise system. In this context, numerous subjects grounded in reflection, knowledge, and observation are addressed—ranging from the distinctive animals of the geographical region that constituted the text's first audience, to the heavens and celestial bodies, light and darkness, night and day, mountains and seas, and even to the geological and topographical structure of the earth. There are two principal reasons for this: first, to attain insight into the mysteries of the divine power and wisdom that prevail throughout the entire universe; and second, through this awareness, to learn the art of living in harmony with the cosmos, to advance on the path of becoming a balanced and exemplary human being, and to acquire the consciousness of servitude to Allah the Almighty. Human beings come to know Allah more profoundly in proportion to what they learn and

understand, and they develop a deep reverence toward Him: "Of all of Allah's servants, only the knowledgeable (of His might) are 'truly' in awe of Him." (Fatir, 35:28) The frequent emphasis on the subtleties of creation and the vivid depiction of scenes serve to enable believing individuals to observe the universe with a contemplative and analytical gaze. The verse, "And you (O Prophet) may see them facing towards you, but they cannot see" (A'raf, 7:198), draws attention to the profound distinction between merely "looking" and truly "seeing". Not everyone who looks is able to see; yet everyone who truly sees is indeed looking. Just as the white light of the sun, when refracted through a prism, transforms into multicolored secondary rays, so too, when believers observe the universe through the prism of reflection in light of the verses that speak of the majesty of the cosmic order, their gaze is transformed into countless rays of wisdom, enabling them to discover more fully the mysteries of existence. Indeed, the Qur'an states that in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for people of sound intellect; and that this distinguished group remembers Allah while standing, sitting,

and lying down (in every state), reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and the earth, and ultimately supplicating, "Our Lord! You have not created (all of) this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire" (Al-i 'Imran 3:190–191). Thus, attaining insight into the magnificent order of the universe leads to the discovery of its Creator, and that discovery, in turn, directs one toward exalting and glorifying Him.

Allah the Almighty has established certain laws governing everything from atoms to the states and motions of stars, planets, and the heavens: "So He formed the heaven into seven heavens in two Days, assigning to each its mandate." (Fussilat, 41:12) When the verses that indicate the universe was created according to order and measure are considered together with contemporary scientific data, what do they convey to us?

Although the Qur'an is not a book of "science" in the technical sense, it contains striking statements that shed light on scientific reflection. One of these is its depiction of the transition of the universe from chaos to cosmos: "Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were (once) one mass then We split them apart? And We

created from water every living thing." (Anbiya 21:30) In a manner consistent with the conclusions of contemporary astrophysicists, the verse offers an expression that evokes the Big Bang theory, suggesting that the universe was initially an indistinct unified whole, a "mass of gas" or nebula, which was subsequently separated and gave rise to the celestial bodies, including our own world. The verb "fataqna" ("We split them apart forcefully") appearing in the verse contains as its third letter the consonant qaf, which produces an explosive sound when pronounced. The medical term "fitq" (hernia), known in medical literature and referring in essence to the protrusion or rupture of tissue, is derived as a verbal noun from the same root. The word "ratqan," which appears immediately before the verb and describes the universe's initial state as a joined, single mass, likewise contains the same qaf sound, in addition to the emphatic consonant ta'. Through this phonetic structure, it evokes the image of a firm and compact union—one that would require a forceful and intense separation. Similarly, the verse, "We built the universe with (great) might, and We are certainly expanding (it)." (Dhariyat 51:47), particularly in light of interpretations

that ascribe the act of expansion specifically to the heaven, evokes the theory of cosmic expansion. In this respect, it reflects a perspective consistent with the views of contemporary astronomers such as Edwin Hubble (d. 1953) and Georges Lemaître (d. 1966), both of whom articulated what is known as the theory of expansion. The matter referenced in your question, namely, the statement in the Surah Fussilat (41:12) that the heavens were arranged and completed as seven layers within “two days,” requires clarification. As described in the preceding verse (Fussilat, 41:11), the heaven was still in a state of smoke/vapor/nebular matter. At the stage presented in the 12th verse of the Surah Fussilat, when it was fashioned into seven heavens, the celestial bodies, foremost among them the sun and the moon, had not yet entered into their established cosmic order; therefore, the familiar twenty-four-hour “day” as we know it did not yet exist. In this case, it is highly probable that the expression “two days” refers to two distinct phases, epochs, or periods of cosmic development, the precise duration of which is not definitively known. According to the explanations of exegetes, the expression “Seven Heavens” refers

to the heavenly spheres represented by the seven planets identified in the astronomy attributed to Pythagoras (d. 495 BCE): the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. If this interpretation is sound, it is likely that at the time the Qur’an was revealed, the Pythagorean cosmological model was still regarded as valid, and this was the prevailing understanding among the people of that era. Since the primary aim of the Qur’an is guidance, it may be inferred that it did not employ a different numerical expression that would have conflicted with the commonly accepted cosmological framework of its first audience. Moreover, the Qur’an does not deny the possibility of realities beyond the number seven. On this basis, it cannot be claimed that the Qur’an is unaware of the actual number of planets, new ones of which continue to be discovered. As for the statement that Allah inspired each heaven with its function, this signifies that the planets, stars, and galaxies fulfill their cosmogenic roles in preserving the cosmic order without deviation, in accordance with the divine ordinance established by Allah the Almighty.

Within all of this balance, order, and measure, what, in your view, is the place of the human being in the universe? Is the human being merely an

observer of this order, or a responsible agent charged with its preservation?

Some atheist philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell (d. 1970), argue that if God truly values the human race, one should question why, according to Genesis 1:26, He did not create human beings at the very outset but rather at a later stage (Russell, *Religion and Science*, p. 19). On the contrary, however, it may be said that precisely because human beings are the most valuable element of the universe, their creation was left to the final stage. What ought truly to be questioned is how a philosopher could fail to consider how human beings might survive in a completely barren world devoid of plants and living creatures. As you have also indicated in your question, human beings are not merely passive observers of the cosmic order. While contemplating this magnificent system with both wonder and analytical insight, they are at the same time called to seek ways to preserve it. For human beings are responsible agents, entrusted with safeguarding this unique order that has been placed in their service. Two Qur’anic passages are particularly noteworthy in this regard: “As for the sky, He raised it (high), and set the balance (of justice) so that you do not defraud the scales.” (Rahman 55:7–8); and

“Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order.” (A’raf 7:56) In the first verse, it is conveyed that Allah the Almighty has instituted the law of “balance” within the universe—that among all beings and processes there prevails a comprehensive cosmic equilibrium which ensures that the universe functions within a determined system. In the second verse, similarly, it is emphasized that the earth, having been originally ordered according to a cosmic measure and having been arranged such that the interests of all created beings were most suitably provided for, must be preserved and not corrupted. The law of gravity on our planet is itself a consequence of this general cosmic balance, and the regular functioning of weighing instruments is likewise a result of that very law.

At which points does the Qur’anic conception of the Creator converge with the universe paradigm set forth by modern science, and at which points does it diverge?

In the Qur’anic conception of the “Creator,” three fundamental principles are set forth: A) Allah is the Creator of all things. B) There is no place for chance in the universe. C) Everything has been created within a framework of order,

measure, and wisdom. "Say, 'Allah is the Creator of all things'" (Ra'd 13:16); "He has created everything, ordaining it precisely." (Furqan, 25:2); "Or were they created by nothing, or are they (their own) creators?" (Tur, 52:35) Among the philosophers of Antiquity, figures such as Anaxagoras (d. 428 BCE), Plato (d. 348 BCE), and Aristotle (d. 322 BCE) regarded God as the "First Mover" (al-Muharrrik al-Awwal) and architect of the universe. According to these philosophers, the "mover" and the "moved" must necessarily be distinct from one another, for two entities of the same kind cannot cause motion in one another. Plato likewise affirms that there is no place for chance in the universe (Timaeus, p. 37). Philosophers of the medieval and early modern periods who adopted the views of these thinkers generally embraced an optimistic perspective, accepting God as the Creator of the universe. According to the law of motion formulated by the renowned physicist, philosopher, and theologian Isaac Newton (d. 1727), nobody can pass from rest to motion, nor from motion to rest, without the influence of an external force; and if in motion, neither its speed nor its direction changes unless acted upon by such a force. He maintained that God created everything in due measure and asserted that,

aside from all other proofs, even the thumb alone is sufficient evidence to believe in God.

The universe paradigm advanced by modern science has given rise to two distinct philosophical trajectories. According to one, the origin of the universe necessitates the design argument; according to the other, it does not. The rejection of design carries two different meanings. The first entails the acceptance of atheism; the second affirms theism, yet denies the existence of a divine plan. For a "plan," that is, prior design, would imply that a work attains perfection only through such pre-arrangement, which in turn suggests deficiency and incapacity. Allah the Almighty is exalted above all deficiency. This represents the approach of the Ash'arite theologians. The atheistic view that rejects the design argument maintains that the universe came into existence spontaneously, attributing this to the eternal nature of matter and energy.

It is frequently asserted that there is an inevitable conflict between science and religion. In your view, which underlying misconceptions form the basis of this perception?

The alleged conflict between science and religion is nothing but a naturalist and positivist

slander, arising from the sacralization and idolization of science, coupled with hostility toward religion. For religion is by no means opposed to science or scientific inquiry; on the contrary, the Qur'an in numerous passages encourages its addressee toward knowledge, reflection, and the discovery of the mysteries of the universe: "Say, (O Prophet) 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?'" (Zumar, 39:9) The omission of the object (ma'ful) in the verse indicates that everything which can be the subject of



ALTHOUGH THE QUR'AN IS NOT A BOOK OF "SCIENCE" IN THE TECHNICAL SENSE, IT CONTAINS STRIKING STATEMENTS THAT SHED LIGHT ON SCIENTIFIC REFLECTION.

knowledge and learning is intended. "Have they ever reflected on the wonders of the heavens and the earth, and everything Allah has created, and that perhaps their end is near?" (A'raf, 7:185); "Say, (O Prophet,) 'Consider all that is in the heavens and the earth!'" (Yunus, 10:101) Both verses recommend that the entirety of the cosmic system be made the subject of examination and investigation. When the paths of a preacher and a chemist cross, whether in a mosque or in a laboratory, one would not expect a conflict to arise between them. For their fields are distinct, and both are real and indispensable. If any tension is to occur, it would stem not from mutual acceptance or rejection, but from the differing natures of the two domains. The reason lies in the fact that science is open to experimentation and empirical observation, whereas religious values pertain primarily to faith and affirmation. Although religion does address inward experiences such as unveiling and inspiration, it is evident that such experiences are binding only upon the one who undergoes them. For this reason, inspiration, for example, has not been included among the three principal sources of knowledge—namely, reason, the five senses, and authentic report.

CLONING:

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TRANSCENDENT ESSENCE IN HUMAN BEINGS

Prof. Dr. Bilal SAMBUR

Technological developments recorded in the fields of medicine, biology, and genetics have reached a level at which they shape the entirety of the human being's biological and spiritual constitution, including human genetics itself. Perhaps the most fundamental question of science, philosophy, art, literature, and religion is the problem and inquiry of what it means to be human. The attainment of a technological stage at which the existential nature of the human being can be altered and regulated by technology renders it impossible to respond to the question of

what it means to be human through conventional discourses any longer. One of the most significant developments attempting to shape and design the biological existence of the human being is the phenomenon known as cloning. Cloning refers to the exact copying and creation of the biological structure, particularly the genetics of a human or another living creature, as a separate entity. Today, efforts are being made to clone our genes, our cells, and our entire organism. Through cloning technology, it is possible to reach the depths of the human being; all biological elements,

including genetics, can be intervened upon, and genes can be extracted, altered, corrected, or shaped. Cloning virtually eliminates the individuality and genetic uniqueness of the human being.

Cloning signifies that the human being can no longer control the interior and exterior of their biology and has lost the opportunity to have a say or make decisions regarding their own biological existence. Cloning means that we have entered a new era where our status as unique and singular beings is lost, and where many identical versions or likenesses of ourselves

exist. As a development that eliminates our unique individual humanity, cloning essentially renders the very question of what it means to be human meaningless and obsolete. Cloning eliminates the common fitrah and existential individuality of humanity. By erasing our original individual humanity, cloning gives rise to a destructive and deeply troubling question: what does it mean not to be human?

The elimination of our original individual humanity through cloning, in fact, brings to the fore the danger of the emergence of a standardized, herd-like



humanity by which all human beings will be measured and evaluated. The cloning of human beings according to specific standards and criteria may pave the way for the cloning, determination, and design of everything about the human being, including sexuality, marriage, education, and political and social preferences. Cloning is not merely an intervention directed at our biology, our bodies, and our genetics. It signifies a radical intervention into our sexuality, our relationships, our sociality, our culture, and our psychology.

All human beings are equal individuals endowed with dignity, freedom, and rights. All human beings, with their bodies and souls, are honorable and perfect beings. Cloning undermines the human being's position as a dignified, free, rights-bearing, equal, and honorable entity, reducing them to the status of a very low-level object. The cloned human being is no longer the former dignified, original, and free individual. Rather, the cloned human being faces the danger of being understood and perceived as a mere imitation and repetition, a human draft, whose dignity, freedom, and legal standing have been stripped away, and

who has been reduced to the condition of a debased and oppressed creature.

The protection, development, and renewal of the human being's biological, spiritual, and social existence is a condition desired and pursued by all fields of human experience, foremost among them philosophy, science, art, and morality. Religion approaches scientific and technological interventions into the human being's biological and spiritual existence and creation with caution. Technologies that alter the human biological existence are, in fact, interventions and manipulations directed at human existence and creation itself. Religion is concerned that cloning technology may reduce the human being to a distorted and inferior level of existence. For this reason, it defends the preservation of the human being's perfect creation, transcendent essence, and human dignity against all initiatives and technologies that corrupt the human being.

The cloning of human beings and other living creatures means that those individuals and cliques who hold technology and science in their hands are overstepping the limits and bounds proper to human beings. Altering human biological creation

and imitating it as another being is not a human activity; it is an act of creation that belongs to God. Insofar as cloning involves the human attempt to recreate the human being, it represents an initiative and activity that demonstrates the blurring of the boundaries between the human and God, and the human being's attempt to wield new, superhuman powers. The attempt by human beings to recreate human beings is an endeavor that no one should ever undertake. Such states of transgression, in which human beings exceed their limits, as in cloning, produce no result other than the squandering of human knowledge, labor, talent, and power. Humanity must abandon this deviation and obsession. To protect the biological, psychological, and social well-being and health of the human being, humanity must distance itself from and purify itself of initiatives such as cloning.

The human being is endowed with magnificent biology. Behind this biology lies the soul, which possesses a profound existential foundation and realm. Attempting to recreate and imitate a person's external self, the body, and their internal self as a second being through cloning does not bring happiness, serenity,

peace, or well-being to the human being. Initiatives such as cloning, in which human beings overstep their limits, drive humanity toward deep anxieties, fears, and concerns regarding their existence and future.

Through initiatives such as cloning, the human being's attempt to play god in fact means the violation of the primordial promise and covenant of living in peace and balance with nature and other living beings. Cloning can give rise to certain delusions by creating the illusion that human beings possess complete control over themselves and other living creatures. Yet the fact that human beings have no absolute control over any living being, including their own body and genetics, stands before us as a stark reality.

There is a profound and natural relationship between the human being and other living creatures. Cloning is, in fact, the human being's detachment from themselves and from other living beings, and their alienation from them. A human being cannot establish the same warm, emotional, attentive, and intimate relationship with a being that is copied and imitated from themselves as the relationship they establish with themselves. A sheep produced through cloning, such as Dolly,

has no emotional or imaginative counterpart in human memory and experience. The cloning of the sheep named Dolly is frequently cited as a great technological achievement. Human beings establish very special relationships with animals and other living creatures. In works such as La Fontaine's Fables, human beings narrate and construct their own world by projecting it onto the animal world. In a world of cloned beings, however, there is no fable, story, literature, philosophy, art, music, or spirituality through which human beings can relate to themselves. The fact that cloning abolishes the human being's innate relationship with other human beings and with other living creatures constitutes an existential distress and a profound problem.

Cloning may be interpreted as an indication that certain powers are attempting, by using technology, biology, and medicine, to create a rivalry and conflict between God and the human being. There is no need for the human being to compete with or enter into conflict with other human beings or with nature. Humanity has no need for such displays of power or for initiatives of this kind. The fundamental need of the human being

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is to be human. Humanity does not need initiatives such as cloning that are capable of stripping the human being of their humanity.

It is by no means forbidden for human beings to work, produce, and expend effort in order to protect, develop, and complete both themselves and nature. Yet, human beings must protect human health, to struggle against diseases, and to engage continuously in scientific and technological activities and productions for the preservation of biological diversity in nature. Science and technology are not a game for human beings. An activity such as cloning has gone beyond being a legitimate scientific and technological undertaking. The instrumentalization of science and technology to play dangerous games such as cloning opens the door to a destructive process of domination by human beings over both other human beings and other living creatures. Attempting to reproduce and imitate the biological existence of human beings and other living creatures as another being is not work or labor, but a destructive game. In the face of the phenomenon of cloning, humanity needs to recall and comprehend once again this fundamental reality: creation and the act of

creating are not a game!

Human beings are responsible for actively participating in the formation of nature and history and for protecting them. Cloning, rather than being an activity that constructively contributes to the course of history and nature, possesses the potential to lead humanity and nature toward destruction. Human beings must carry out their scientific and technological contributions to nature and life within a moral, legal, natural, and spiritual framework, guided by a sense of responsibility. Cloning technology, which aims to control human beings, other living creatures, and nature, and to establish domination over them, lacks a moral, legal, natural, and spiritual framework. Seeking to control human beings, living creatures, and nature, and instrumentalizing them for the satisfaction of our desires for wealth, lust, and domination, are not genuine human values or needs. The transformation of cloning technology into an initiative conducted without moral and legal dimensions, and pursued in an unlimited manner over genes, cells, and organisms, gives rise to profound concerns regarding what kind of future awaits humanity, nature, and the world.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD: BEFORE AND AFTER

Prof. Dr. Eyup BAS

Religious Services Counselor in Copenhagen

The Quraysh in pursuit of revenge: the Battle of Uhud

Thirteen months had passed since the Prophet Muhammad (saw) had prevailed over the polytheists of Quraysh at Badr. During this intervening period, he devoted himself to restoring the normal rhythm of daily life in Madina and to ensuring that the Muslims were educated and brought together in accordance with the Islamic way of life.

The Meccan notables who had lost their close relatives at Badr were, however, consumed by a burning desire for revenge and were watching for an opportunity to preserve their social and political honor. On the other hand, their prosperity and security were tied to their prestige. In order to maintain their

existing power and status, they had to put an end to the Prophet Muhammad's control over the northbound trade routes. Moreover, after the expulsion of the Banu Qaynuqa from Madina for violating the Constitution of Madina, the provocations of the other Jews on this matter further intensified their desire for vengeance. They therefore agreed to unite their forces and launch an attack against the Prophet Muhammad.

In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was expecting such an attack sooner or later, and because he attached great importance to intelligence, he was soon informed of the developments through Anas and Mu'nis, the sons

of Fudalah, whom he had assigned for this task. He immediately convened a council of war. Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the Khazraj tribe, who was experienced in the defense of the city, along with some prominent figures of Madina, stated that it would be appropriate to remain within the city and wage a defensive battle. The city consisted of districts made up of scattered yet internally compact buildings, which forced the enemy both to lay siege and to engage in street fighting. Enemies who were unable to carry out both of these operations simultaneously had, up to

that time, never succeeded in capturing the city. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) found these experience-based views very sensible. However, the Meccan polytheists must also have been aware of this experience, for instead of attacking the city, they chose to establish their camp at the foothills of Mount Uhud, located approximately five kilometers north of Madina. They attempted to harass and provoke the Muslims by damaging all the cultivated lands and plantations they could find in that area. At the



same time, they began spreading throughout the city the notion that the Muslims were afraid of them. This situation led to the proposal of an alternative view regarding the strategy of war. A group of young men who had been unable to participate in the Battle of Badr, together with the Prophet's uncle Hamza, argued that the enemy should be confronted outside the city in order to prove that the Muslims were not fearful. The majority supported this opinion, and the Prophet Muhammad (saw) respected the will of the majority. Preparations were made swiftly. A medical unit was formed to treat the wounded, consisting of fourteen women, among whom were the Prophet's daughter Fatimah, Umm Ayman, Hamnah bint Jahsh,

and Umm 'Umarah. That same week, following the Friday prayer, the army set out.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) set out with approximately one thousand men, appointing Abd Allah ibn Umm Maktum, a blind Companion who was one of his muadhdhins, as his deputy in Madina. However, Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, unable to accept that his advice had not been heeded, withdrew from the army together with the forces loyal to him and returned to Madina. As a result, the Prophet Muhammad was left with only seven hundred men to confront the Meccan army of nearly three thousand, two hundred of whom were cavalry and six hundred heavily armored, most of them mercenaries. At that



IN FACT, THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) WAS EXPECTING SUCH AN ATTACK SOONER OR LATER, AND BECAUSE HE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO INTELLIGENCE, HE WAS SOON INFORMED OF THE DEVELOPMENTS.



point, regardless of what the outcome might be, it was no longer possible to turn back from the decision to wage war.

When the Prophet Muhammad (saw) reached Mount Uhud, he identified the most suitable position for battle. He stationed his men in one of the mountain passes that had no outlet, thus facing Madina while having his back to the mountain. The position occupied by the Muslims was such that it enabled them to withstand an enemy force nearly five times their number. In particular, it was essential to secure the pass to the rear. For this reason, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) placed fifty archers under the command of Abd Allah ibn Jubayr at the pass between Mount Uhud and the hill of Aynayn, in order to prevent an enemy attack from the rear and to keep



their cavalry at a distance. He strictly instructed them not to abandon their positions under any circumstances until they received a further command from him.

The battle, which took place in Shawwal of the 3rd year after the hijrah, began in accordance with Arab custom with single combat, known as mubarazah.

Two Meccan warriors who stepped forward were killed by Hamza and Ali ibn Abi Talib. The fighting soon intensified. The Quraysh women who had lost their husbands, fathers, and sons at the Battle of Badr, led by Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, sought to incite their men by beating drums and chanting poetry. However, faced with the fierce assault of the Muslims, the enemy quickly began to scatter and flee after suffering around twenty casualties. Thanks to the arrows of the archers holding the pass on the hill of Aynayn, many horses were wounded, leading to a sudden withdrawal on the opposing side. When the Muslims on the battlefield began pursuing the enemy on the one hand and collecting spoils on the other, the majority of the archers abandoned their positions, assuming that the battle had already been won. Although their commander, Abdullah ibn Jubayr, attempted to call them back, he was unable to prevent them. After a short while, the situation

was completely reversed. Khalid ibn al-Walid, the commander of the Quraysh cavalry, maneuvered with a group of horsemen around the rear of the hill of Aynayn. After killing the small number of archers who remained, he attacked the Muslim soldiers from



THIRTEEN MONTHS HAD PASSED SINCE THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) HAD PREVAILED OVER THE POLYTHEISTS OF QURAYSH AT BADR. DURING THIS INTERVENING PERIOD, HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO RESTORING THE NORMAL RHYTHM OF DAILY LIFE IN MEDINA.

behind as they were preoccupied with collecting spoils. Seeing this, the Quraysh army regrouped and returned to the attack against the Muslims. Caught between assaults from two directions, the Muslim ranks fell into confusion. During this phase of the battle, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle Hamza was killed. At times, the psychological and tactical dimensions of the battle also came to the fore. On top of the confusion experienced by the Muslims, a rumor spread that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) had been killed. Although this was intended to cause the forces loyal to the Prophet Muhammad to disperse, the Prophet Muhammad himself, despite being wounded, was placed under close protection by everyone, foremost among them Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Together with them, the Prophet Muhammad withdrew to a secure position on the slope of Mount Uhud. Since the Meccan forces under the command of Abu Sufyan kept this area under siege for a short while, the Prophet Muhammad and those with him remained on the mountain for some time, defending themselves. Believing that they had avenged Badr by inflicting around seventy casualties upon the Muslims, the Quraysh army lifted the siege. Although it appeared to be a significant

opportunity, they did not dare to attack Madina, as they did not know how large an armed force might confront them (7 or 11 Shawwal 3 / 23 or 27 March 625).

Before leaving the battlefield, Abu Sufyan issued a threat, declaring that they would meet again at Badr one year later. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), through the powerful voice of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, conveyed his acceptance of Abu Sufyan's threat and challenge. After the Quraysh army withdrew, the Prophet Muhammad buried the martyrs and returned to Madina the same day. While some of the Muslims remained on guard against a possible attack by the Quraysh army, others withdrew to their homes and began tending to their wounds. The Prophet Muhammad himself was wounded, and toward dawn the following day, he received news that the Quraysh army intended to launch a raid on Madina. In order both to prevent a surprise attack by the enemy and to demonstrate that the Muslims had not been weakened, he decided to pursue the Quraysh army. Setting out with a force of five hundred men, he advanced as far as Hamra al-Asad, located approximately 13 kilometers from Madina, and camped there for five days. Realizing that they were being pursued, the exhausted polytheist army abandoned

any thought of turning back and continued on their way toward Mecca.

**Difficult times in Medina after Uhud:
The hypocrites and the tragedies of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah**

When all the Muslims gathered in the mosque on the first Friday after the battle, Abd Allah ibn Ubayy rose to speak. He began his address with words of praise for the Prophet Muhammad (saw), expressing his joy and gratitude that the Prophet's life had been spared. He then could not refrain from voicing his opinions regarding the decision to engage the Meccan army in battle. "If my brothers had listened to me," he declared, "they would not have been killed today." His speech was not one that appealed to the minds or hearts of people who were still mourning their dead and tending to their wounds. At that moment, a group stepped forward and accused him of cowardice, even of treachery. Declaring him an enemy of Allah, they said that after what he had done, he no longer had the right to speak there.

While efforts were underway in Madina to clearly distinguish loyalties and positions, approximately three to four months had passed since the Battle of Uhud when Khalid ibn Sufyan, the chief of the Banu Lahyan, a branch of the

Banu Hudhayl, began preparations to attack Madina, gathering fighters from neighboring tribes. Upon learning of this situation, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) assigned Abdullah ibn Unais al-Juhani with the task of eliminating Khalid ibn Sufyan. Abdullah ambushed and killed Khalid in the valley of Uranah, thereby eliminating the threat of an attack on Madina. This incident further intensified the hostility of the Banu Lihyan toward the Muslims. Some members of the tribe went to their relatives from the Adal and Qarah tribes and, together with them, devised a plan to take revenge on the Muslims. According to this plan, Adal and Qarah would send a delegation to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), requesting that individuals be sent to teach them Islam. They would then kill some of these men to avenge Khalid, and sell the others to the Meccan polytheists whose relatives had been killed at Badr and Uhud. One month after the killing of Khalid, a delegation of six or seven men from the tribes of Adal and Qarah came to Madina. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) accepted their request and, in the month of Safar of the 4th year after the Hijrah (July 625), sent with them a group consisting of six, seven, or ten men. This delegation was to teach Islam to these tribes who had declared that they had

embraced Islam, to collect zakat from them, and also to proceed as far as the vicinity of Mecca in order to gather intelligence about the Quraysh polytheists.

When the delegation led by Mirsad ibn Abi Mirsad (or Asim ibn Thabit) halted by the water of al-Raji' in the Hada region belonging to the Hudhayl tribe, they were attacked by a group of one hundred men. All but two were martyred in the fighting. Those two were sold to the Meccans who sought to avenge relatives killed at Badr. There, in front of a large crowd of onlookers, they were offered their freedom on the condition that they renounce Islam. Even under these severe circumstances, both men once again affirmed their loyalty to Islam and to the Prophet Muhammad, demonstrating that they did not fear death in the path of Allah and His Messenger. As a result, they were tortured and martyred by the polytheists. This incident plunged the Prophet Muhammad and the believers into deep sorrow. For a long period thereafter, curses were made in the mosque after the Fajr prayer against those responsible for this tragedy.

Shortly after the Incident of al-Raji', in the same month (Safar 4 / July 625), this time Abu Bara' Amir ibn Malik, the chief of the Banu Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah tribe, came to Madina and visited the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

He received information from him about Islam. Although he did not embrace Islam, he requested that the Prophet Muhammad send some people to his tribe to convey Islam to them. However, due to the recent events, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was concerned that the envoys who would be sent might face danger. Abu Bara', on the other hand, guaranteed their safety. Thereupon, after some time, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) appointed approximately seventy (or forty) individuals, most of them from the Ansar and the Ahl al Suffah, to introduce Islam to the people of the Banu Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah and to teach them the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) appointed Mundhir ibn Amr al-Khazraji from among the Ansar as the leader of this delegation. He also wrote a letter addressed to the tribal leaders. However, when the delegation reached the lands of the Banu Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah, they were attacked by Abu Bara's nephew and the men he incited. No one survived this attack except Ka'b ibn Zayd al-Najjar, who was left wounded because he was presumed dead, and Mundhir ibn Muhammad and 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri, who, at the time of the incident, were grazing the caravan's camels. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the Muslims were once again shaken by this tragic event.

THOMAS SIBILLE:
“ISLAM IS NOT A SPRINT;
IT IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY.”



Could you briefly tell us about yourself? When did you begin to question your beliefs? Was there a particular moment or experience that triggered this process?

My name is Thomas Sibille. I was born into a Catholic family. My father was responsible for organizing and leading activities in the place of worship, and my mother taught catechism. Faith has always been extremely important in my life. I prayed regularly, especially at night before going to sleep.

Around the age of 18, I began to question certain aspects of my faith because of a passage from the Gospel that deeply struck me. I started researching the meaning of the word ‘paraclete’ as it is used in the Gospel of John. I consulted books of exegesis and learned that Paraclete refers to the Holy Spirit. However, in the biblical text, it says, “It is necessary that I leave so that he may come.” Yet the Holy Spirit had already come before. So, the explanation did not seem convincing to me. I discussed this with my father, who confirmed that it referred to the Holy Spirit, but I was still not satisfied. I then searched online and discovered that Muslims say that the Paraclete means “Ahmad,” the name by which Muhammad is referred to in the Qur’an

in connection with the biblical reference to him.

That was when I began to take an interest in Islam, a religion I knew almost nothing about, since I did not have any Muslim friends. I discovered that Muslims believe in Jesus, believe in Moses, believe in Abraham, and recognize all the prophets. This was something entirely new to me, because for me, believing in Allah was like believing in Buddha — it seemed like a completely different god. I came to realize that Muslims believe in the same God I believed in and recognize the same prophets, but they say that Jesus is a prophet and not the Son of God. I then decided to obtain a copy of the Qur’an. Every evening, I would read one page of the Qur’an and one page of the Bible. As I continued my readings, I began to

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WHEN I CONVERTED TO ISLAM, I DEVELOPED A DEEP PASSION FOR READING BECAUSE I WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RELIGION.

see that the Bible pointed in the same direction as the Qur’an, toward monotheism. I noticed that the Trinity is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible and that Jesus consistently presents himself as a human being and a prophet, never as God or the Son of God.

After some time, I stopped praying to Jesus and began praying to God alone. I became convinced of pure monotheism. But I still needed to determine whether Muhammad was truly a prophet. To answer that question, I read a biography written by a French Muslim convert named Étienne Dinet. When I discovered the life of the Prophet, I was deeply moved. At that point, I wanted to convert to Islam. I hesitated for a few months because I was afraid of the unknown and worried that my parents



might resent me. But eventually, I took the step, and I became a Muslim in January 2002.

How did you first encounter Islam? At that time, what was your level of knowledge and perception of Islam?

I had absolutely no knowledge of Islam. My perception was neither negative nor positive. I did not have any Muslim friends. I respected Muslims, but I knew nothing about their religion and had no particular interest in it. When, through reading the Bible, I turned to the Qur'an, I was amazed by the beauty of Islam. As someone who was already a believer, my faith grew even stronger when I discovered and truly understood pure monotheism. The awareness of monotheism deepened my conviction in a way I had never experienced before. And the happiness I found in prayer is a happiness I had never known previously in Christianity.

After this decision, how did your family and close circle react? What kinds of changes or transformations did you observe in these relationships over time?

When I decided to convert to Islam, at first, I did not tell my parents because I was afraid of their reaction. After a few



months, I could no longer keep it a secret, and I told them. Their reaction was very harsh. They told me that by doing this, I had broken family ties, and they gave me a few months to leave the family home. I then had to move out. For several months, I was hosted sometimes by one friend, sometimes by another, and at times I even slept in my car.

Despite what might appear from the outside as a very difficult period, it was, in a way, a beautiful time. My faith was at its strongest. I discovered the tranquility of the believer, the gatherings of Muslims, all generous and brotherly with one another, and the joy of going to the mosque. I gradually grew in my

religious practice. At the same time, I always sought to maintain good relations with my parents, since Islam requires preserving family ties. For ten years, my parents turned their backs on me. But after those ten years, they finally came to respect my choice. Since then, we have had a very good relationship, and we see each other regularly. It was very difficult for them. And now that I am a father myself, I fully understand how hard it must have been for them to face such a decision from their son.

How did the idea of establishing your bookstore in Paris come about? For you, is this space merely a bookstore, or does it represent a

broader cultural mission?

When I converted to Islam, I developed a deep passion for reading because I wanted to learn more about the religion. At that time, there was no Muslim bookstore in the suburbs of Paris. The only ones were located in Paris itself. I used to go there very often, but I was saddened to see that people living in working-class neighborhoods did not have access to information or to books. So, together with two friends, we decided to open a Muslim bookstore in order to give Muslims a better understanding of their religion. Through this project, I feel invested not merely with the role of a businessman, but with a cultural mission. The objective of this bookstore is to help Muslims acquire a comprehensive vision of Islam, to know Islam in its entirety. Through reading, our minds can open, our way of thinking can become sound, and our actions can become righteous.

In order to provide Muslims with the tools to understand the world, we have expanded our selection beyond purely religious books. We also offer books on history, sociology, and various other subjects. The goal is to guide Muslims in their intellectual development so that they are not merely shaped by algorithms or

influenced by social media, but become thinking individuals capable of independent reflection.

In your opinion, how influential are media, publishing, and cultural production in shaping or transforming the perception of Islam in the West?

Books, bookstores, and culture are among the most powerful means of transforming society. They encourage individuals to think, to reflect, to build connections with one another, to create bridges between communities, and ultimately to generate peace. Reading is not like screens or videos. It does not primarily stimulate emotion; rather, it develops reflection. It requires time, depth, and intellectual engagement. When we first opened the bookstore, we simply offered the books that were available on the market, without truly considering their impact. But as we gradually became more aware of the importance of books and their influence, we began to be more selective. We chose works that help Muslims better understand Islam in a balanced way, encouraging openness and tolerance. At the same time, we selected books that allow non-Muslims to discover the beauty and gentleness of Islam. To support this mission, we regularly organize literary evenings,

discussions with authors, and gatherings on a wide range of topics. These events allow Muslims and non-Muslims to meet around books, to exchange ideas, and to get to know one another.

Even if the media sometimes conveys a negative image of Islam, everyday actions and local cultural initiatives — through history, literature, and dialogue — can change perceptions. They help Muslims avoid withdrawing into themselves out of fear or isolation, and instead encourage them to engage confidently and positively with society. At the same time, they give those who are not Muslim



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the opportunity to meet Muslims in real life and to discover, through books, the greatness of Islamic civilization. In doing so, people can come to understand that Islam has illuminated humanity and profoundly influenced the Western world.

Finally, based on your own experience, what would you like to say to people who have recently encountered Islam or are considering embracing it?

Based on my own experience, I would advise those who have embraced Islam to practice moderation. Islam is not a sprint; it is a lifelong journey. Reading and knowledge are essential. Rather than looking to group and ideological leaders to follow blindly, one should nourish oneself with the ideas of Islam and continually engage with other ideas found in books. A Muslim should always remember that wherever he or she is, they must shine through their character. They must be a source of goodness in society. They should never withdraw into isolation. No matter how difficult relationships may be — with parents, neighbors, or friends — a Muslim should remain smiling, welcoming, and always extend a hand toward others. I also advise those who have converted, or who are considering conversion,

to show great patience and understanding toward others. If today Islam sometimes has a negative image because of media portrayals or the behavior of certain Muslims, then one must be even more patient, even more resilient, and make even greater efforts through personal conduct to help others recognize the true value of Islam. Islam is a beautiful religion. It is a religion of civilization, of positive change, of blessing — not a religion of harshness, withdrawal, or isolation. A person who embraces Islam should be aware that becoming Muslim and recognizing Islam as the truth is a gift from God. Moreover, that gift should lead them to gratitude toward God, and to kindness and mercy toward others who have not yet received that same gift.

Thomas Sibille is a French bookseller, publisher, and entrepreneur who was born into a Catholic family. Inspired by a comparative reading of the Bible and the Qur'an, he converted to Islam in 2002. Aiming to help Muslims understand and fully embrace Islam, he founded the Al Bayyinah bookstore in 2008 and the Heritage publishing house in 2021.



CAN JINN BE SEEN?

QUESTIONS ON MY MIND

Prof. Dr. Cagfer KARADAS

Some people say that they have seen the jinn and that they have some relations and communication with them. I have been thinking about it, and it is bothering me. Is it possible to see the jinn and establish a relationship and communication in the way they describe?

We need to divide people into two groups on this issue. The first is everyday individuals who say that they see jinn who do something to them and their belongings, and the second group are the people who say that they interact with jinn and are called psychics.

I mean both here. I am concerned about being involved in the first scenario, while I am intrigued by the second.

Both situations appear to be rooted in personal experience. It is impossible for us to fully understand what these individuals observed or the nature of their relationships and communication. Reaching a definitive conclusion regarding the veracity of their accounts is challenging. In fact, these experiences are inherently personal, much like dreams. Just as it is impossible to directly perceive someone else's dream and assess its reality, so too is it difficult to ascertain the truth of what these individuals report.

So, isn't it possible to say anything about it?

Of course it is. We cannot perceive this through our five senses and typical understanding, so we are dealing with what we call 'ghaib'(unseen). Therefore, we cannot base any conclusions on personal experience. Accurate knowledge of such matters, which are beyond human comprehension, is limited to only what Allah has revealed to us and what the Prophet has informed us. We call this "knowledge of the Book and the sunnah". We can only

speak on this matter in this context. Anything we say beyond these is nothing but speculation. First and foremost, we must accept the existence of the jinn—this is indisputable. We have been informed about their existence by Allah the Almighty in the Qur'an and the compassionate Prophet in his Sunnah. However, we have also been informed that they will not be visible under normal conditions and to ordinary people... People just baffle me. Allah (swt) states that they are invisible, but such people insist on seeing them.

But Prophet Solomon saw the jinns and even employed them for certain tasks, which is mentioned in the Qur'an.

The moon split into two with a sign of the Prophet of Mercy. It wasn't something he did. This was how Allah the Almighty created such a miracle to confirm and support His Blessed Prophet. Now, can a person come out and say, "I'll split the moon in two with a sign"?

This is a miracle specific to the Prophet, who can say such a thing?

Well, if this does not happen, how will others see the jinns, which is the miracle of Prophet Solomon, and make them work for them as he did? Moreover, the issue of whether the Prophet Muhammad (saw), saw the jinn has been disputed since the companions. As a matter of fact, Abdullah b. Abbas, the Prophet's

uncle's son and a scholar companion, said, "The Prophet neither saw the jinn nor met them face to face." However, Abdullah b. Mas'ud narrates that the Messenger of Allah left him in a place by drawing a circle around him and gave strict orders not to go out of this circle, and then he met the jinn, but he himself did not see them (Ezraqi, II, 201). Even if we take this second information as a basis, we see that the Prophet did not allow anyone from the companions to see the jinn except himself. It is not possible that he did this by himself. It had to be Allah's command to do so. This is because he is a prophet. Seeing the jinn is a miracle like the miracle of Prophet Solomon. Are those who claim to have seen jinn today higher than the companions? Additionally, Allah stated in the Qur'an that, "Surely he and his soldiers watch you from where you cannot see them." (A'raf, 7:27) Imam Maturidi interpreted this verse as "We cannot see them, but they see us."

Well, there is Surah al-Jinn. How do we explain it?

Well, my dear, as it is mentioned in the chapters of Ahqaf and Jinn, our Prophet rested in a place called Batn al Nakhla or Hajun on his return from Taif, where he performed the fajr prayer. At that time, a group of jinn directed by Allah the Almighty came and listened to the Qur'an he was reciting. They communicated the

knowledge they received to their tribes. The Prophet neither saw the jinn nor met with them during this time, according to what we know. Indeed, the verses were revealed after this event. The Holy Prophet became aware of this event with the revelation of the verses.

Why can't we see an already existing entity?

Is it just the jinn we can't see?

No, there are many beings that we cannot see. First of all, we cannot see Allah the Almighty.

While Allah willed us to see some beings, He did not will us to see others. He did not hold us responsible for seeing them. Is there a verse or hadith that suggests you need to see jinn?

Then why were the jinn created?

Allah (swt) states in the Qur'an: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Dhariyat, 51:56) This is the wisdom stated to us. Apart from that, it certainly has many other benefits because our Lord does not create anything without wisdom. But this is all we know. Allah the Almighty also states: "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge." (Isra, 17:36) So, we will not gain anything by chasing things like this that we cannot grasp with our senses and minds. Even if we do, we cannot learn anything.

Well, there is a reality called "karamat". Can't they be seen through karamat?

Our predecessors said that karamat is true. We believe that. However, we are not in a position to fully grasp what a karamat is and what it is not. This is because karamats are also personal experiences. That's why our predecessors said that one cannot act according to inspirations, dreams, and miracles, and no judgment is built on them.

When people say they see a jinn, they describe them with their feet upside down, their eyebrows under their eyes, their nose up, their ears pointing backwards, one eye on their forehead, the other on the back of their head, and hair all over them... Actually, people are describing something similar to themselves. Only the places and positions of the organs are changed. Did the jinn that Prophet Solomon employed match these descriptions?

It is rather difficult to say anything about it. We have no knowledge of the shapes of the jinn under the order of Prophet Solomon. The reliable sources suggest that there is no information about the shapes of jinn. It is necessary to pay attention to the warning of Imam Maturidi: "One should be very careful when reading the stories in the Qur'an. It should be accepted as it is mentioned in the Qur'an. Making some additions or deletions to what is stated may lead a person to say something that is not true." As a result, the jinn exist. Allah knows the rest...

AL-BARI:

THE CREATOR WITHOUT EXAMPLE OR MODEL

Fatma BAYRAM

From the smallest particle to the largest sphere, the astonishing perfection of the magnificence inherent in the very structure of every single being within the created universe, and the order and harmony manifested in the ceaseless flow and motion of these innumerable individuals—all known and unknown forms of existence—moving in perfect accord with one another... He is al-Bari' Who brings this entire system into existence from nothing, without the need for any example or model.

In the final verses of Surah al-Hashr, wherein fifteen of the Asma al-Husna are mentioned, the names al-Khaliq, al-Bari', and al-Musawwir are cited consecutively. The name al-Khaliq signifies the One Who measures, determines, and ordains with precise calculation before bringing creation into existence. It denotes determining the proportions, limits, and decrees of all things before their actual creation. Al-Bari', in accordance with

this measurement and determination, refers to the One Who brings into existence—especially living beings—from nothing, without relying upon any model to observe or imitate. There are differing scholarly opinions regarding the root from which this name is derived. According to each of these possibilities, it has acquired distinct shades of meaning and thus possesses a rich semantic depth. As a result of this richness, the name al-Bari' conveys meanings such as: the One Who creates; the One Who invents beings without any foundational substance or pre-existing model; the One Who is utterly free from being created Himself; the One Who brings all entities in the universe into existence in perfect harmony and order despite their many differences; and the One Who is under no obligation or liability, bestowing whatever He gives purely as an act of grace. Accordingly, the entirety of these unique stages of design and creation—and

the continuing bestowals and favors that follow—are all from the grace of our Lord. No person and no power can compel Him to do or not to do anything; yet He has prescribed mercy, grace, and beneficence upon Himself (An'am, 6:12).

Our Lord, through His knowledge and power—whose true extent the human being is incapable of comprehending—designed the realm of existence, and thereafter brought it into being with a unique act of creation, without looking to any model, in accordance with the measure and order determined within that design. Just as all the elements constituting the existence of each created being have been fashioned in harmony with one another to ensure its continuation, so too—despite the immense differences among them—the functions and benefits that all beings perform within the universe have been created in accordance with a universal harmony.

So much so that it is as though, within the cosmos, everything exists for one thing, and one thing exists for everything. Observing this magnificent harmony and order within the universe guides us to establish a reflection of that same harmony in our own affairs. Just as every being in the cosmos has been designed and created in such a manner as to contribute—both to its own continuity and to the orderly persistence of the entire universe, near and far—so too must servants, as a part of this realm of existence, design their relationship with the Creator, with themselves, and with other created beings in a way that does not transgress this order, lest they fall into existential confusion and distress. This order must be observed not only in ontological relationships, but even in the most ordinary organizations of daily life. The scattering of goals leads to the scattering of actions, and that in turn results in arriving nowhere in life.



By taking this law of creation as an example, human beings must utilize all the qualities bestowed upon them in their proper place and in accordance with their intended purpose, and must not squander themselves and their potential by straying beyond the aim of their creation. In the Surah al- Baqarah (2:54), it is related how the Children of Israel wronged themselves by setting up the calf statue as a deity in place of Allah. They are called to repent to the true Creator, and in contrast to their imagined, conjectural notion of a creator, emphasis is placed upon the unique and flawless

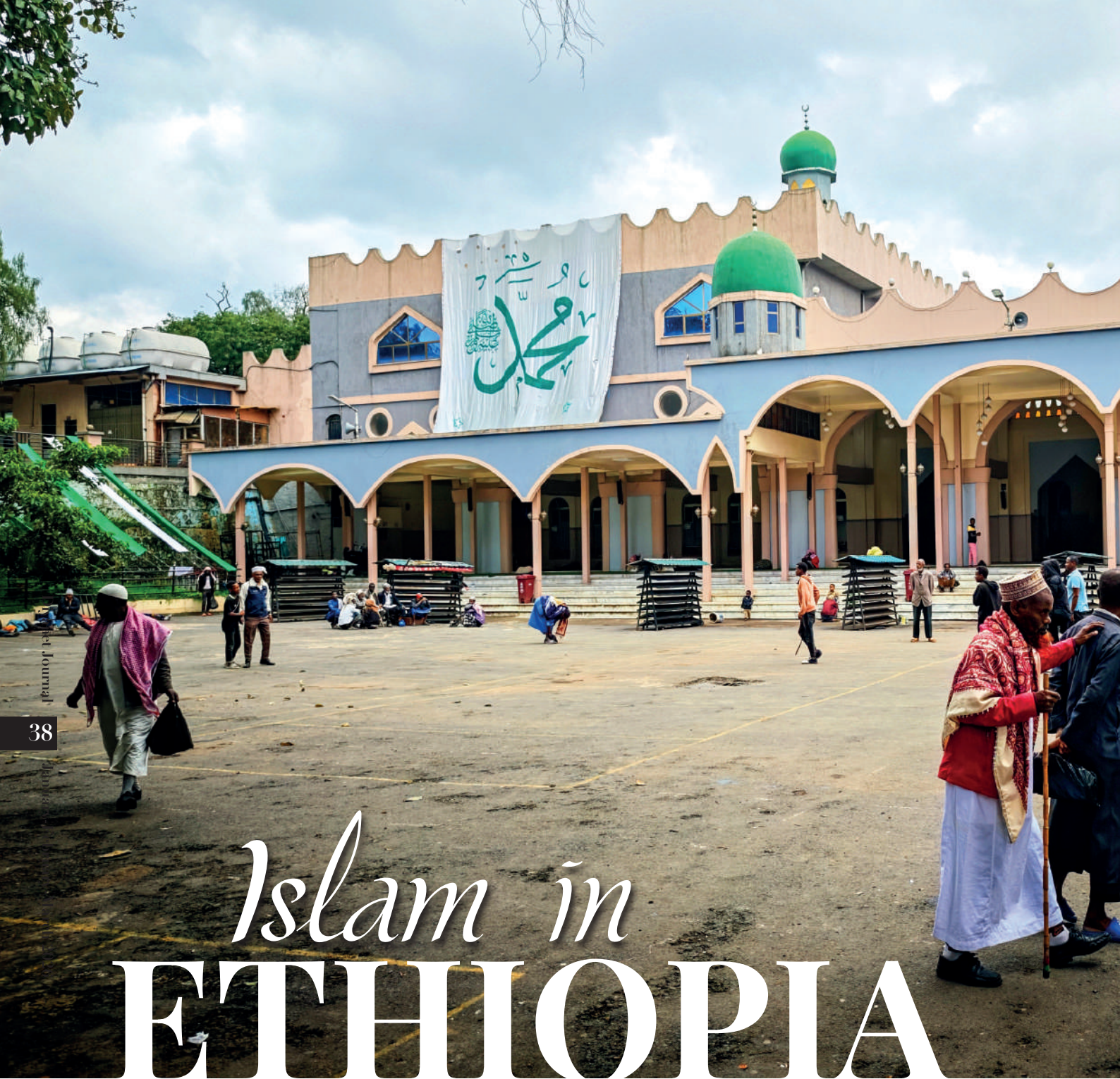
creation of Allah the Almighty. In this context, Allah the Almighty refers to His own Essence with the name al-Bari'.

For those who know the Names of our Lord to the extent of their capacity and believe in them in accordance with the meanings they contain, two fundamental outcomes arise: On the one hand, this knowledge and faith protect them from falling into false assumptions about Allah and from the danger of associating partners with Him (shirk). On the other hand, by adorning them with the character traits required by these names, they

cultivate and enrich the believers' character, and assist them in attaining a state that is pleasing to Allah the Almighty.

Thus, sincere faith and complete submission to the divine name al-Bāri' in all its dimensions safeguard the believer from the misconception that any being other than Allah possesses the power of creation ex nihilo, and from falling into servitude to created entities. On the other hand, it keeps alive within their consciousness the awareness that the true Creator of every event that occurs in the universe is Allah. It frees them from being negatively

overwhelmed by events and from falling into excessive sorrow. At the same time, those who are adorned with the character required by this name do not become blind imitators in their own affairs, nor do they become captives of their surroundings; rather, through their perspective, interpretations, and manner of conduct, they consistently succeed in finding new paths. According to Ibn 'Arabi, by virtue of this name, the believing servant not only becomes free from being controlled by beings and events, but moreover becomes one who guides others in accordance with the will of his Lord.



Islam in ETHIOPIA

Yasar CUHADAR

Religious Services Counselor in Addis Ababa

Situated at the heart of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia occupies a distinctive place in the Islamic world from both historical and cultural perspectives. Regarded

as the land where Islam first set foot on the African continent, this country is the realm of the Abyssinian king Najashi, who gave refuge to the companions

who migrated at the behest of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). In this respect, Ethiopia has become a symbol of justice, tolerance, and interreligious respect

in Islamic history. Today, millions of Muslims live in Ethiopia, and Islamic identity constitutes an important component of the country's social fabric.



Addis Abeba Mosque, Ethiopia

The introduction of Islam to Ethiopia

The introduction of Islam to Ethiopia took place around 615 CE, approximately five years before the hijrah. During a period when Muslims were subjected to severe

persecution in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) advised some of his companions to migrate to Abyssinia. This was because the ruler of Abyssinia at the time, Najashi Ashama (Ashama bin Abjar), was known as a just, compassionate king

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who respected religion. Following this counsel, the first Muslim group, consisting of fifteen individuals, eleven men and four women, among them Uthman ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayyah bint Muhammad (saw), sought refuge in Abyssinia.

Najashi summoned the Muslim emigrants to his court to learn about their beliefs. When Ja'far ibn Abi Talib recited Surah Maryam, Najashi was deeply moved. He realized that the Muslims' faith held the Prophet Isa and Maryam in great reverence, and he placed the Muslims under his protection within his realm. This event became known in history as the "first hijrah" and stands as one of the earliest examples in Islamic history of tolerance shown by a non-Muslim ruler toward Muslims. Thus, Islam was carried beyond the Arabian Peninsula for the first time onto the lands of Abyssinia.

The process of the spread of Islam

Following the first migration, Islam continued to spread in Abyssinia in a quiet yet steady manner. During that period, the number of Muslims increased through trade, marriage, and social relations among the local population, and Islamic culture took root, particularly in the northern and eastern regions. From the tenth century onward, Muslim sultanates were established in the eastern parts of Ethiopia and along the border of present-day Somalia. Among the most well-known of these were the Ifat Sultanate and the Adal Sultanate. These sultanates became



Al Nejashi Mosque in Tigray, Ethiopia

pioneers of Islam's enduring religious and political influence in the Horn of Africa.

During the period of the Adal Sultanate, under the leadership of the renowned commander Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (Ahmad Gurey), Muslims became influential across a large part of Ethiopia in the sixteenth century, and Islamic culture consequently spread widely. This era is regarded as one of the periods in Ethiopian history during which Muslims attained the greatest level of political power.

Contemporary Islamic life in Ethiopia

Today, Ethiopia is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with an estimated population of around 120 million.

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According to official figures, approximately 35–40 percent of the population is Muslim. However, unofficial sources suggest that this ratio may be as high as 60 percent. The Muslim population is concentrated primarily in the eastern parts of the country, particularly in the Somali Region, Afar Region, and Harar areas. There is also a significant Muslim community in the capital city, Addis Ababa.

In Harar, Muslims continue to preserve a deeply rooted Islamic culture in Ethiopia. Harar is known as the “Fourth Holy City of Africa,” and it is home to centuries-old mosques, tekkes, and madrasahs. Another feature that gives Harar particular significance from the perspective of Türkiye is that it was the city where the Ottoman

Empire opened its first consulate in Africa during the Ottoman period. The consulate building was restored by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) and transferred to the Maarif Foundation, and it currently hosts educational activities. The city is surrounded by walls, and the five entrance gates, symbolizing the five pillars of Islam, still exist today.

Today, although Islam is not the official state religion in Ethiopia, it constitutes an important element of social life. Muslims are able to establish their own religious institutions, educational centers, and civil society organizations. The Ethiopian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs coordinates religious activities as the official representative body of Muslims in the country. In addition, with the support of Türkiye, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and several other countries, numerous mosques, Qur'an courses, and charitable initiatives are being established and sustained.

Education and religious institutions

Islamic education in Ethiopia has developed across a broad spectrum, ranging from traditional madrasahs and mosques to private Islamic schools. Particularly in recent

years, there has been a significant revival in the field of Qur'an education. Hifz centers for both male and female students have been established in cities such as Harar, Dire Dawa, Jijiga, and Addis Ababa. In addition, private institutes offering instruction in Islamic sciences, the Arabic language, and hadith studies are actively operating.

Since the early 2000s, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has been renovating mosques and educational institutions throughout Ethiopia, while also working to enhance the religious awareness of the local population. Through the water wells it has constructed in various regions of the country, its proxy sacrificial offerings (qurban) program, food package distributions during the month of Ramadan, projects aimed at empowering orphan families, the construction of madrasahs, and humanitarian assistance provided to refugee camps, the Foundation has made substantial contributions to the strengthening of both religious life and social solidarity.

In recent years, efforts have been undertaken to revive many sacred sites and structures that left a lasting mark on Islamic history. Within this framework, the tomb of Najashi, who welcomed the Companions that migrated



to Abyssinia upon the command of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), as well as the graves of fourteen of the noble companions, were restored and opened to visitors by TİKA.

Social life and Islamic identity

Among Ethiopian Muslims, religious occasions such as the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Adha, and Mawlid al-Nabi are celebrated with great enthusiasm, and these days are officially recognized by the state as public holidays in Ethiopia. Mosques function not only as places of worship but also as centers of social solidarity. The participation of Muslim women in social life is also steadily increasing, with women assuming active roles in education and charitable activities.

The presence of Islam in Ethiopia also stands as a powerful example of the possibility of different religions coexisting side by side. Although certain periods of tension have occurred throughout history between Muslims and Christians in the country, an overall atmosphere of mutual respect and peace has generally been maintained. Despite processes such as modernization, urbanization, and globalization, Islamic values continue to shape the country's spiritual fabric and instill hope in future generations.

A SCHOLAR WHO TAUGHT CARTOGRAPHY TO THE WORLD: AL-IDRISI

Koray SERBETCI



In the civilization of Islam during the Middle Ages, studies in the field of geography held a special place. At the heart of this significance lies both the divine command of the Qur'an encouraging people to travel across the earth and reflect, and the practical necessities arising from the vast expanse of the Islamic State, which stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the heartlands of Central Asia. One of the foremost scholars who made significant contributions in this field was al-Idrisi. His full name was Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn Idris al-Sharif al-Sabti. Al-Idrisi is recognized not only in the history of Islam but also as one of the foremost geographers in the history of global science.

Yet, historical sources remain largely silent about the life of this great Muslim scholar. From the limited information available, it is known that this distinguished geographer, a descendant of Idris I, the founder of the Idrisi dynasty, was born in the year 1100 in the city of Sabtah, located on the African side of the Strait of Gibraltar. He completed his education in Córdoba, the cultural capital of al-Andalus. When we examine the historical

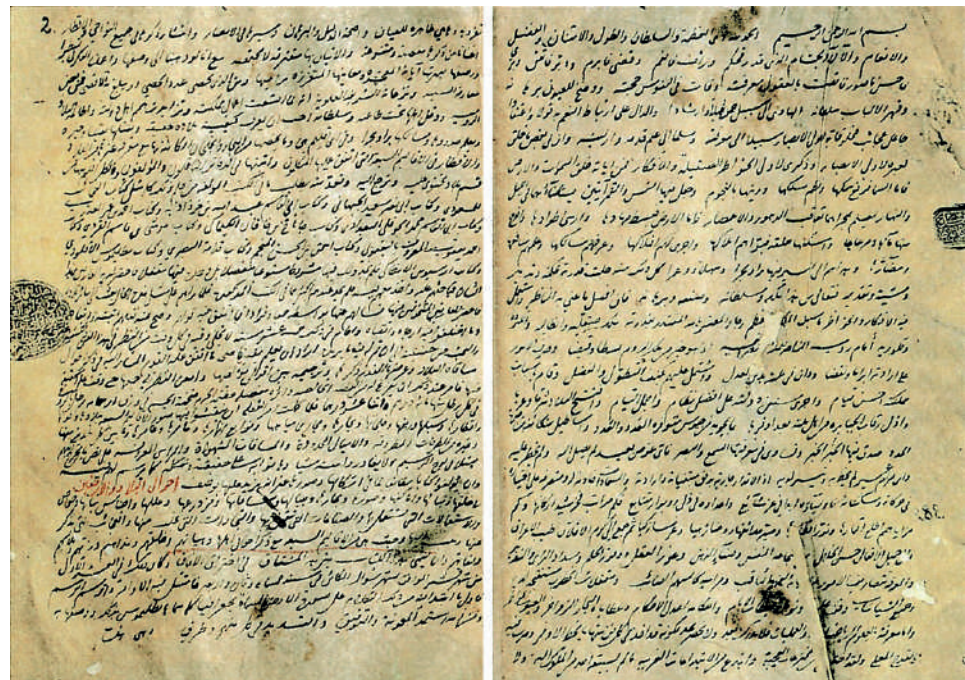
AL- IDRISI'S BOOK WAS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GEOGRAPHICAL WORK WRITTEN IN THE MIDDLE AGES. IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE WORK, HE DIVIDED THE WORLD INTO SEVEN CLIMATIC ZONES AND INCLUDED A WORLD MAP ALONG WITH IT.

records, it becomes clear that al-Idrisi was not merely a desk-bound scholar but one who gained his geographical knowledge in the field. Driven by a passion for exploration, al-Idrisi undertook long journeys across Spain and North Africa. Eventually, he settled in the city of Palermo, located in Sicily, where he continued his scientific work. It was also there that he passed away in the year 1166.

In the medieval world, Muslim scholars were particularly known for their boundless intellectual pursuits. It was entirely common during that era to see Muslim scholars travel in search of knowledge to major cultural and educational centers across the Islamic lands, studying

under various teachers along the way. One such scholar was al-Idrisi, who, notably, carried out his work in the court of a Christian king, Roger II, known for his interest in science and philosophy. However, what deserves special attention here is the context of 12th-century Sicily, to which al-Idrisi was invited by royal decree to serve in the court of a Christian monarch.

Muslim rule began on the island of Sicily, located in southern Italy, in the 9th century and lasted until the end of the 11th century. Although Muslim governance came to an end in 1090, Islamic culture and civilization continued to thrive and make significant advancements in Sicily. Compared to the rest of medieval Europe,



The first two pages of Idris's work entitled *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq*.

Sicily possessed a highly advanced cultural and scientific atmosphere. The Christian kings who later took control of the island preserved the administrative and intellectual order established by the Muslims without disrupting it. One such ruler was the Norman King Roger II.

Al-Idrisi was received with great respect by Roger II, who provided him with every means necessary to carry out his scholarly work. Under these favorable conditions, al-Idrisi produced the work that would earn him lasting fame in the history of geography. This work, prepared for King Roger II, was titled *al-Kitab al-Rujari*, also known by its full name *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq* (Pleasant Journeys into Faraway Lands). Al-Idrisi's book was the most authoritative geographical work written in the Middle Ages. In this comprehensive work, he divided the world into seven climatic zones and included a world map along with it. Furthermore, for each of the seven regions, he drew individual maps. The book offered detailed information on the geographical features, climates, mountains, and rivers of the known world at that time. In producing his scientific work,



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WHO MADE
DISCOVERIES
IN THE FIELDS
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AND GEOLOGY.**

al-Idrisi benefited from the contributions of earlier Muslim geographers as well as those of ancient geographers. However, he went beyond merely compiling existing knowledge—through his own observations and conclusions, he identified the inaccuracies in earlier works and produced what was considered the most accurate and comprehensive depiction of the world in his time.

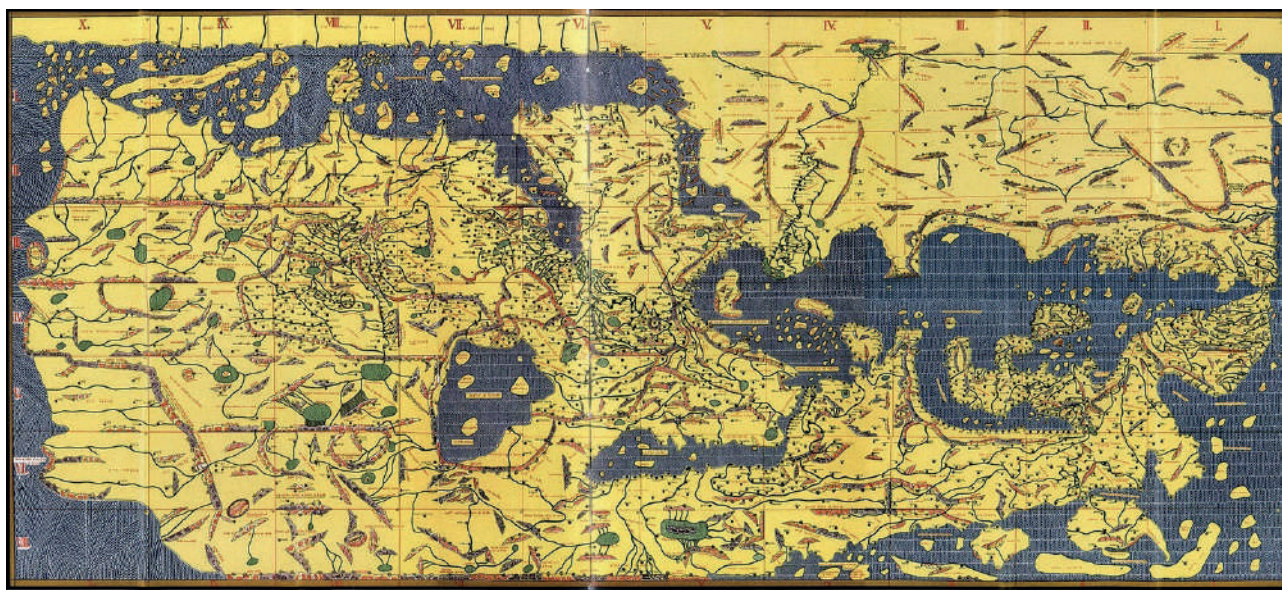
This book is regarded as the most comprehensive geographical work of its time. What is particularly noteworthy is that al-Idrisi addressed, in a scientific manner, the issue of the Earth's sphericity—an idea that would remain forbidden even to be discussed in medieval Europe for centuries. Long before the emergence of such theories in European

scientific circles, the Muslim geographer developed well-founded arguments asserting that the Earth was spherical. According to al-Idrisi, the Earth was shaped like a sphere, and as one moved away from the poles, both climate and vegetation changed accordingly. As he continued to update and expand his knowledge, he also authored another important work as a supplement to his main book, titled *Uns al-Muhaj wa Rawd al-Furaj*.

However, another of al-Idrisi's contributions that transcended the boundaries of his era in the history of science was his spherical world map. This work, commissioned by King Roger II, who had extended his patronage to al-Idrisi, followed a fascinating method. The map was crafted in the form of an inlaid engraving on silver and was circular in shape. In the West, this magnificent work became known as the *Tabula Rogeriana*. Unfortunately, the original map has not survived to the present day—it was destroyed during a rebellion amid political turmoil in the region of Sicily. However, fragments of another map created by al-Idrisi have reached the present day. Although this rectangular world map was preserved in the 20th century by reassembling its fragments, it had suffered such



*Al-Idrisi's
Round World
Map*



The map drawn by al-Idrisi in 1154 for King Roger II of Sicily.

significant damage that it could not fully reflect its original value. Despite its damaged condition, the map remains a valuable historical document in the field of human geography, as it reflects the settlements and regional distributions of the period. All of these works produced by al-Idrisi, especially in the 12th century, during the medieval era, eventually paved the way for the advancement of cartographic studies in Europe.

In addition to his contributions to geography, al-Idrisi's significance was not limited to that field alone. Remarkably, he also authored a work related to botany and pharmacology. His book, *Kitab al-Mufradat*, dealt with subjects such as botany, zoology, and pharmacy. The book's

detailed discussion of numerous plants and fruits used in medicine at the time served as an enlightening resource for the pharmacologists of the era who were engaged in the preparation of medicinal remedies.

In addition to his prominent identity as a geographer, this Muslim scholar was also deeply engaged in the field of geology. His studies and discoveries in geology earned him recognition as one of the most respected scholars of his time. Al-Idrisi's life was, in every sense, devoted to science. From a young age, he traveled extensively through Spain, Portugal, the Atlantic coasts of France, southern England, North Africa, and Anatolia. As a result of these research journeys, he gathered valuable



IN ADDITION TO HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEOGRAPHY, AL-IDRISI'S SIGNIFICANCE WAS NOT LIMITED TO THAT FIELD ALONE. REMARKABLY, HE ALSO AUTHORED A WORK RELATED TO BOTANY AND PHARMACOLOGY.

information that would later serve as a foundation for his geographical studies.

His scientific legacy continued to live on even after his death. His books and works became important reference sources for future generations. Written with a scientific methodology, his works served as a guide for many scholars who made discoveries in the fields of geography and geology.

In conclusion, al-Idrisi, a scholar nurtured in the intellectual climate of Islamic civilization, made a profound impact on the scientific pursuits of his era through both his work and his ideas. His legacy remains influential today, and his contributions to scientific thought continue to be celebrated with great appreciation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



May one fast to welcome Ramadan?

It is known that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) would observe more nafl fasting in the months of Rajab and Shaban than in the other months (Bukhari, Sawm, 52; Muslim, Siyam, 173-179). However, considering this practice of the Prophet (saw) as welcoming Ramadan is not correct. There is no religious basis for fasting to welcome Ramadan. It is makruh to fast one or two days before Ramadan as a precaution in case Ramadan has started. As a religious term, this day is called “yawm al-shakk” (the day of doubt). Yet, one may fast on the day of doubt without the intention of welcoming Ramadan. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: “None of you should fast a day or two before the month of Ramadan unless he has the habit of fasting (Nawafil) (and if his fasting coincides with that day) then he can fast that day.”

(Bukhari, Sawm, 14; Muslim, Siyam, 21)

What is imsak? When does it start? May one continue to eat and drink for a short while when the adhan for Fajr prayer starts to be recited?

Imsak, which literally means “to refrain, restrain, resign and abstain from”, as a religious term, means to refrain and abstain from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and other things that invalidate fasting from dawn (fajr al-sadiq) until sunset (the time of iftar). Iftar is the opposite of imsak. Among the people, “imsak” is used to mean the time when fasting begins. In this regard, imsak is the time to begin fasting.

The time to begin and finish fasting is described in the Qur’an as: “(You may) eat and drink until you see the light of dawn breaking the darkness of night, then complete the fast until nightfall.” (Baqarah, 2:187)

The imsak time shown on calendars describes the time to begin fasting. Imsak is also the moment when the night ends, the time for ‘isha prayer ends, and that of fajr prayer begins. The adhan starts to be recited with the beginning of imsak time. Therefore, one needs to stop eating and drinking at the beginning of adhan. Yet, one may swallow the piece in the mouth when the adhan starts to be recited.

Is it a must to observe the crescent to start fasting in Ramadan?

The beginning and end of lunar months are determined according to the movements of the moon. To begin fasting, the beginning of the month of Ramadan needs to be determined, and Ramadan changes every year according to the lunar calendar. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “When you see the crescent (of the month of Ramadan), start fasting, and when you see the crescent (of the month of Shawwal), stop fasting; and if the sky is overcast (and you can’t see it) then regard the month of Ramadan as of 30 days.”

(Bukhari, Sawm, 5, 11; Muslim, Siyam, 3-4, 7-9)

At first glance, this hadith leads to the opinion that one may not begin to fast and observe the Eid until seeing the crescent with bare eyes. Evaluating the other hadiths regarding the matter, it is understood that these hadiths aim to teach the most appropriate practice of the conditions of the day. As a matter of fact, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this, i.e. sometimes of 29 days and sometimes of thirty days.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 13; Muslim, Siyam, 15; Abu Dawud, Sawm, 4) and indicated that calculating may be used as the method to determine the beginning of lunar months.

The moon continues in its usual movements regardless of being seen with the bare eyes or not. It is stated in the Holy Qur’an that the sun and the moon move according to a certain order (Rahman, 55:5); that they were created also as a calculation system apart from the other functions (An’am, 6:96); phases were determined for the Moon for us to know the number of years and the count of time (Yunus, 10:5); when skies and earth were created, an order was assigned as twelve months (Tawbah, 9:36); it is a time measurement for people and hajj that the moon begins to be seen as a crescent from the earth and later seen in different forms gradually (Baqarah, 2:189).

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (saw) advised seeing the moon with bare eyes to determine the start of lunar months, probably because it was the most reliable way for the time, not because it is the only way to use. The purpose of watching the crescent is to determine whether the month of Ramadan has started or not. For this reason, it is possible to benefit from other methods to serve the purpose apart from watching the moon with the bare eyes.

Today’s technological advancement makes it possible to watch even the slightest movements of the moon in detail. Today, it is even possible to prepare calendars with prayer times for several years ahead by detailed astronomical calculations. Therefore, it is legitimate to determine the beginnings of lunar months by calculation method.

What is Dawud’s fasting?

“Dawud’s Fasting” means fasting every other day; one day you perform, and the other day you do not. It is called as such because Prophet Dawud (as) fasted this way. This fasting was named by Prophet Muhammad himself, and he stated its importance as: “The best fasting is the one Dawud performed; He fasted one day and gave up fasting for a day.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 56; Muslim, Siyam, 181) Also, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: “The most beloved fast to Allah is the one Dawud performed.” (Bukhari,

Tahajjud, 7)

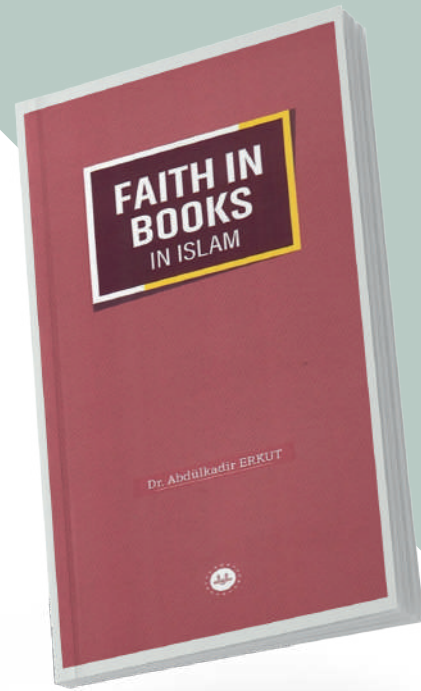
When is the fasting of ayyam al-beed (white days) and what is its importance?

Ayyam al-beed (the White Days) are the 13th, 14th, and 15th nights of the hijri months when the moon is brightest (Bukhari, Sawm, 60). This name was given because the moon is seen as full on these nights and brightens the night more than usual. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) advised to fast on these days in every month (Abu Dawud, Sawm, 69; Tirmidhi, Sawm, 54) and stated that fasting on these days is considered like fasting for the whole year

(Ibn Majah, Siyam, 29).

FAITH IN BOOKS IN ISLAM

Meryem KILIC



Prophets invite people to the inherent goodness and cleanliness. To fulfill this duty, Allah (swt) has given the prophets special knowledge. This knowledge constitutes the divine books. To be a true believer, one must affirm that Allah (swt) has revealed divine scriptures to humanity through His prophets. This faith includes believing both in the books revealed to the prophets before the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the Qur'an that was revealed to Him.

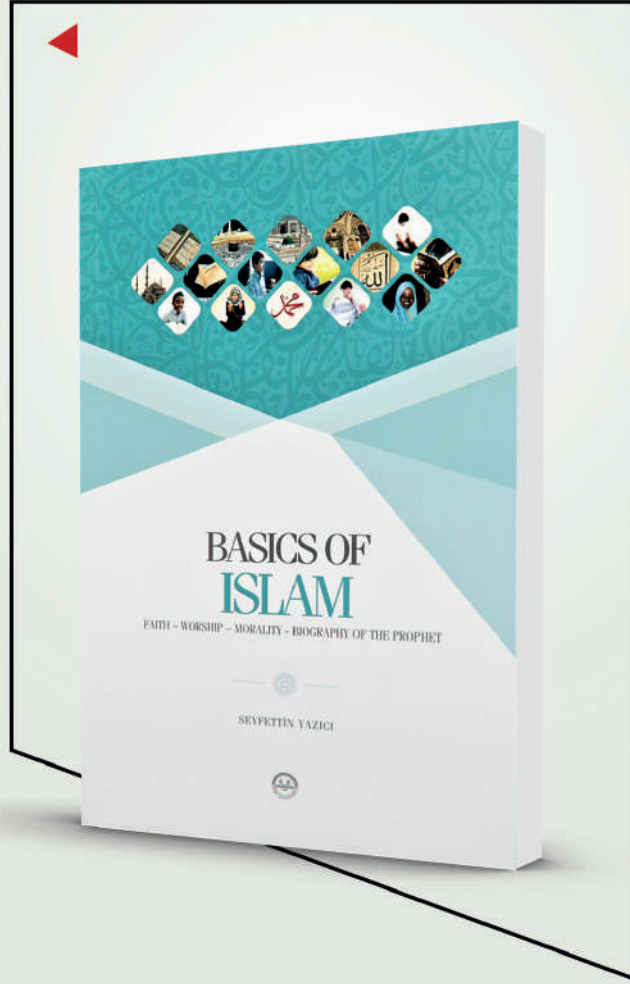
The book 'Faith in the Books in Islam', published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, explains that belief in the revealed scriptures is one of the fundamental tenets of faith. Written by Associate Professor Dr. Abdülkadir Erkut, it opens with the question, 'What does it mean to have faith in the divine books?' It then

addresses the topic under the heading, 'Why Must We Have Faith in the Divine Books?' and goes on to explain the role and significance of the revealed scriptures in both individual and social life. Furthermore, to present the historical process of revelation, the work first addresses the subject of the pages (suhuf), providing information from Qur'anic and hadith sources about the pages said to have been given to the prophets Seth, Idris, Abraham, and Moses. It then examines the previous divine books under the headings of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel. The section on the Torah states that God gave Moses the Torah, written on tablets, on Mount Tur in the Sinai Desert. Furthermore, the issue of distortion that occurred throughout history is discussed, and

it is emphasized that the only criterion for determining how much and which parts of the divine books have been distorted is the Qur'an. The Psalms section states that this book, given to the Prophet David, consists of prayers, praise, and glorification. It does not contain rulings on halal or haram, or commands and prohibitions. Finally, the Gospel section evaluates issues such as the distortion of the Gospel revealed to Jesus and the belief in the Trinity from a Qur'anic perspective.

One of the largest sections of the work is the chapter on the Qur'an. Here, the book emphasizes the Qur'an's status as the final divine scripture,

its universality, and its preservation. The Qur'an is considered the most perfect and comprehensive of all books and was sent to confirm all previous scriptures. At the same time, the Qur'an corrects the flaws in sacred books such as the Torah and the Gospel, confirming their true origins and presenting them to humanity in new forms of expression. Belief in the divine scriptures that preceded the Qur'an entails affirming their original, unaltered revelations. We are pleased to present this valuable work to our esteemed readers, as it explores the significance of faith in the revealed books in a clear and accessible style.



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**“Indeed, We have created everything,
perfectly preordained.”**

(Qamar, 54:49)

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