

Diyanet Journal

ISSUE 7 | JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

THE PERSONALITY OF MUSLIM

| Islam's Call for Revival | A New Name A New Life | Kosovo's Islamic Journey | Sidi 'Uqba Mosque |



Binding

The term “binding” describes the protective cover designed to keep the leaves of a collection or book together without disintegrating and disrupting the order in which they are arranged. The earliest known bindings, which were works of art, were created by the Copts in Egypt and the Uighurs in Central Asia in the eighth and ninth centuries. The oldest examples of Islamic bookbinding art were discovered in Egypt and Tunisia and are believed to date from the Tulunid period (868–905). The art of bookbinding developed alongside the invention of paper in Central Asia and became a distinct branch of art.



Editorial

Islam is a religion that constructs people with their personality. It molds a person's emotions, thoughts, and actions while fostering the growth of their personality. All of the principles and values set forth by Islam are directed towards the development of character and the preservation of human nature. From the very first day of his prophethood, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not discriminate between people and defended Islam's peace-oriented approach against any attack that could harm their personalities. In this way, the social status norms of the pre-Islamic society, such as lineage, wealth, and gender, were eliminated; people were accepted as free, equal, and valuable solely because they were humans.

The Qur'an presents the prophets as exemplary models for Muslim character development. It highlights their moral conduct, virtues, understanding of justice, patience, and submission as inspiring examples for Muslims. In this sense, the Muslim personality finds its source in the Qur'an. Through the knowledge and piety acquired from the Qur'an, Muslims become balanced individuals, characterized by firmness, personality, consistency, integrity, and uprightness, avoiding both extravagance and inadequacy. It is thanks to these individuals that the religion of Islam spread rapidly throughout the world, incorporating numerous nations and regions into the Muslim ummah.

In our seventh issue, we present to you the topic of "The Personality of Muslim." This issue features articles by Prof. Dr. Enbiya Yıldırım on "The Prophet Muhammad's Guidance in Character Development"; Bunyamin Albayrak on "Kosovo's Islamic Journey and the Structure of the Kosovo Islamic Union"; and Koray Serbetci on "A Genius Raised in the Palace of Mahmud of Ghazni: Al-Biruni". Our guest for the interview is Prof. Dr. Murteza Bedir, who stated that servitude is the most fundamental quality that the Qur'an expects from humans. In the "Revert Stories" column, Dr. Katherine Bullock shared her story of embracing Islam.

As I leave you to delve into our journal, I pray to Allah the Almighty to grant us the consciousness befitting the Muslim personality and to swiftly end the oppression in Palestine and I pay my respects to our martyrs with gratitude and reverence.

I wish you a pleasant time reading.

Dr. Lamia LEVENT ABUL

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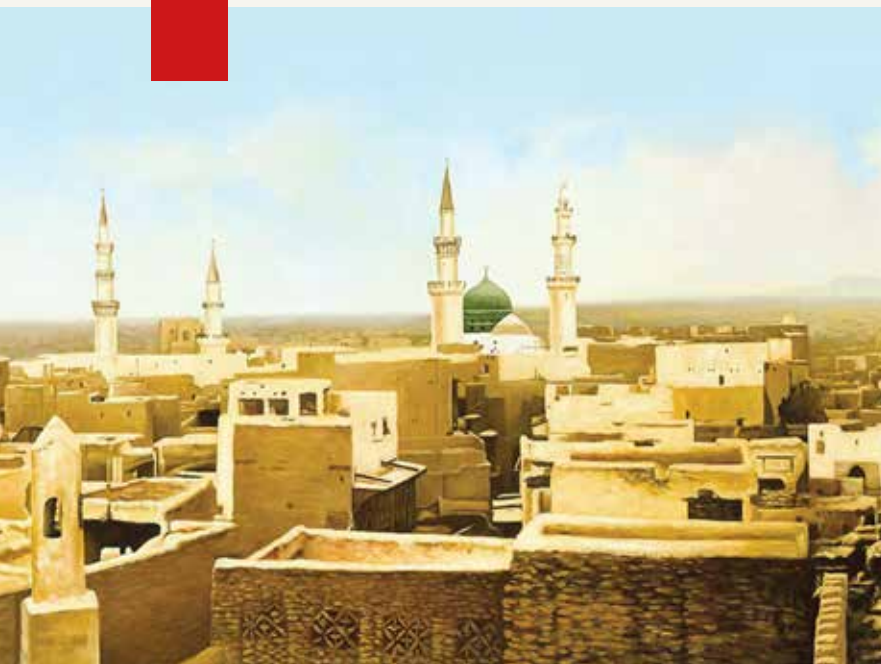
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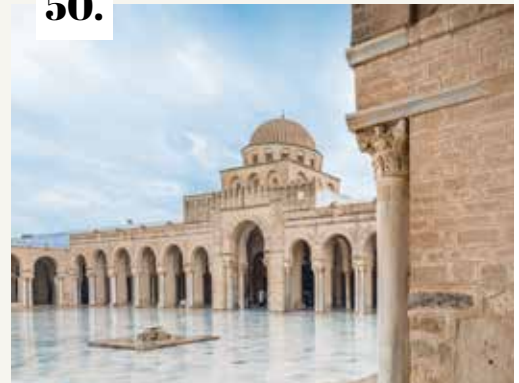
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

ISLAM IS THE HIGHEST IDENTITY FOR MUSLIMS



Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAS

The President
Presidency of Religious Affairs

The human beings, created in the most beautiful way by Allah the Almighty, were sent to the world as precious and unique beings, but also as beings burdened with various weaknesses and vulnerabilities. This is the reason for both the intellectual orientations and the actual behaviors that they exhibit in different aspects of their lives in this world. What makes human beings important and meaningful in the world of existence is that they fulfill the requirements of their pure nature in their relations with things, nature, the universe, and other people without falling prey to weaknesses

and deviations. The way to achieve this is to meet with the universal truths of Islam, our sublime religion. Islam provides clear answers to all questions about the meaning and purpose of life that the intellect and senses have difficulty in answering with its universal truths. The answers that Islam offers to human beings are also the basic elements that give life and sustain the Muslim personality that the revelation aims to build. These elements give human beings a solid philosophy of life and an overarching identity and teach them to look at the whole of life within a holistic world of values.

There are some indispensable elements in the correct understanding and transformation of the revelation, which gives Muslims a personality with its principles of belief and morality, into a life lived in the best way. The indispensable ones are ma'rifatullah, which is the name of fully comprehending the Creator with His essence and attributes; makhafatullah, which is the awareness of all the qualities of servitude to Him; and dhikrullah, which is the most blessed way of communicating with Him at every moment. The aforementioned dimensions are instrumental in bringing the will of Muslims together with the will of Allah (swt), ensuring the realization of the greatest ideal of Allah's consent and ultimately attaining divine blessing and mercy. The primary prerequisite for achieving this unique reward is the state of consciousness that manifests itself as the state of being aware of what Islam contributes and promises to Muslims in every condition and situation. This state gains

value with istiqamah, which is the natural result of the effort to know what Allah the Almighty wants from us and to transform it into behavior, and gives Muslims a noble stance, a firm idea, and an effective action.

Islam is undoubtedly the main element that makes Muslims have a personality, reinforces their consciousness, and draws a path and direction for them. Islam, which is the highest identity for Muslims and determines and regulates their relationship with their other sub-affiliations, guides human beings in all matters with its values such as rights, law, justice, and mercy that give meaning to life. In this respect, Islam, as an order of good morals, is the most reliable basis for Muslims who embrace the values that emerge from its structure, which will be a beacon for them to walk with confident steps in the life of the world. The Prophet Muhammad is the only center of hope and horizon that removes the barriers in front of the identity and consciousness of servitude of Muslims,

who encounter foggy and turbulent processes from time to time in the climate of Islamic identity, self, and consciousness. Allah the Almighty commends him with the following verse in the Holy Qur'an: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often." (Ahzab, 33:21) In addition to this, the Prophet, who expressed compassion for the creatures, absolute submission and obedience to the Creator in all its dimensions, and was the epitome of goodness and beauty, is also the universal guide of the Muslim identity enshrined in the following verse: "... (It is Allah) Who named you 'the ones who submit' in the earlier '-Scriptures and in this Qur'an, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over humanity..." (Hajj, 22:78)

From this point of view, let us state that modern times, in which humanity is subjected to weaknesses and drifts in terms of existence, knowledge, meaning, purpose, value,

morality, and law; in which it struggles to create a sphere of existence with greed, vanity, boasting, consumption, and accumulation; and in which it is lost in the abyss of worldliness, are recklessly corroding the Muslim personality and distancing it from its firm orbit and ideal destination. Today, we are witnessing a period in which all humanity needs the mercy that Islam offers to the world, the love and compassion that it does not withhold from anyone, the call for peace that brings life together with tranquility, and the invitation that unites minds and hearts with consideration, contemplation, and reflection. For this reason, it is our most important responsibility to revive all our values that are included in the name of Muslims, to renew our ideas and thoughts that have lost their functionality, to reform the aspects that will cause corruption, and to make maximum efforts to build and replace thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions centered on good morals.

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S GUIDANCE IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Prof. Dr. Enbiya YILDIRIM



The Last Messenger of Allah's (saw) remarkable transformation of the region he inhabited within a mere twenty-three years is a universally acclaimed achievement, admired by all regardless of their religion. Comparing the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic societal life would be highly beneficial in fully comprehending this remarkable achievement. By doing so, the underlying reasons for the Prophet's (saw) success would be unveiled, enabling contemporary Muslims to draw inspiration and chart their own course.

Making the Qur'an prevail in life

Every divine command and prohibition of Allah in the holy book can clearly be seen in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Every Qur'anic verse enjoining acts such as performing ritual prayer, giving zakat, and honesty was meticulously embodied in the life of the Messenger of Allah. Likewise, all the verses that warned against backbiting, fornication, drinking, and other evils were outside his life. The Prophet Muhammad meticulously aligned his life with the Qur'an's commands and prohibitions. Had he acted otherwise, the Arabs would have undoubtedly objected to his contradictory behavior.

This phenomenon serves as the most compelling evidence of his role as a living tafsir of the Qur'an, practically implementing its teachings and guiding those around him through his exemplary conduct. By observing his personality, people witnessed the feasibility of translating Qur'anic injunctions, both prescriptive and prohibitive, into real-world actions and the possibility for a Muslim to effortlessly embrace a Qur'anic lifestyle.

This situation carries a significant message for those who aspire to convey Islam to the world. It underscores the paramount importance for those striving to propagate Islam to first embody its principles in their own lives. When those propagating Islam embody its principles in their own lives, their message will resonate far more positively with those they seek to reach. Conversely, the words of an individual whose actions contradict their teachings will have a negative impact, as listeners observe not only the message but also the messenger's conduct.

Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate the Prophet Muhammad's dedication to educating and guiding his ummah by the Qur'an's commands. The prominent ones are as follows:



THE QUR'AN OUTLINES THE FUNDAMENTAL MORAL PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN THE BOND OF ISLAMIC BROTHERHOOD.

Molding life with worship

Islam extends beyond a mere belief system; it necessitates the fulfillment of specific acts of worship by its adherents. Therefore, the Qur'an places a strong emphasis on acts of worship that the servant is obligated to perform at specific intervals, particularly ritual prayer and fasting. Notably, the Qur'an contains approximately one hundred verses about ritual prayer, which is a daily obligation. We observe that the Prophet Muhammad, recognizing its status as a duty of servitude, also devoted special attention to this practice with the dual purpose of both demonstrating its significance and endearing it to the believers around him. Moreover, we observe that the Prophet Muhammad placed exceptional importance on the mosque as the designated place for performing obligatory prayers. By utilizing the mosque as a common gathering space, he facilitated the dissemination of knowledge by enabling him to respond to inquiries and share his insights with a wider audience. Indeed, as a blessing of this approach, a significant portion of the Prophet's teachings was meticulously transmitted by his Companions who

listened to him in the mosque. Moreover, the mosque catalyzed fostering unity and strengthening bonds among all Muslims. Of paramount importance, Prophet Muhammad demonstrated the practical performance of worship. In this way, the Prophet, whom Allah appointed as a guide for the ummah, served as a mentor to his companions in terms of the significance and proper execution of worship. In light of this, it would be no exaggeration to assert that the Prophet Muhammad placed the mosque at the center of his life, reaching the hearts of many through it and instilling in them a love for worship.

Making moral values prevail in life

On various occasions, the Qur'an outlines the fundamental moral principles for interpersonal relationships to strengthen the bond of Islamic brotherhood. It urges believers to heed these principles. As the messenger entrusted with conveying these verses to humanity, Prophet Muhammad also embodied the Qur'an's commandments in his own life. Consequently, a Muslim looking upon the Prophet Muhammad could witness within him the very moral values that the Qur'an prescribes for all

individuals. Undoubtedly, this situation served as a tangible manifestation of the Messenger of Allah's role as a guide for the ummah. Indeed, through observing his actions, Muslims not only gained a clear understanding of how to live as true Muslims but were also inspired to emulate his exemplary conduct. For this very reason, all companions, both men and women, emulated the Messenger of Allah's noble character, and after his demise, they continued to guide subsequent generations on how to live as true Muslims. 'A'isha's (ra) statement, "The character of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the Qur'an." (Muslim, Musafirin, 139) essentially summarizes this situation.



**IN THE
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VALUES WILL
INEVITABLY
CRUMBLE.**

Justice and merit

The Qur'an places a strong emphasis on upholding social order through justice within the context of moral values, encompassing numerous verses dedicated to this principle. Indeed, it is self-evident that, in the absence of justice, all societal values will inevitably crumble. Prophet Muhammad (saw) always observed justice in both administrative governance and legal matters. The governance style he established, which was in harmony with the religion he conveyed, played a highly significant role in Islam taking root in the hearts of people. Indeed, injustice was among the primary grievances of the people during the Age of Ignorance.

Tending to the needs of the underprivileged

Within the context of social solidarity, the Qur'an places the greatest emphasis on the worship of zakat and sadaqah. In this regard, the verses in the Qur'an instruct those who extend assistance to those in need to refrain from arrogance stemming from their charitable acts, to remain humble, and to perform their charitable acts with the love of worship. Undoubtedly, it is a significant challenge for an individual to willingly

share a portion of their hard-earned wealth with someone who has not contributed to it. The Qur'an's inculcation of this trait among believers and its encouragement of giving, emphasizing that it will not diminish one's wealth but rather bring blessings, (Baqarah, 2:276) is an exceptional practice from the perspective of the fraternal bond it aims to establish among Muslims.

Examining the Prophet Muhammad's practices related to zakat and sadaqah, both as a prophet guided by the Qur'an's commandments and as a community leader, we observe his unwavering concern for the underprivileged, even prioritizing the poor over his own needs. A remarkable aspect of his leadership was his consideration of not only the needy in Medina but also those in other cities when distributing war spoils. Undoubtedly, his unwavering commitment to giving, prioritizing his Muslim brethren over the accumulation of worldly possessions, served as an inspiration for the believers who witnessed his actions, encouraging them to engage in acts of charity themselves.

Respecting human dignity

Ali (ra), describing the Prophet's treatment of people, said: "Allah's

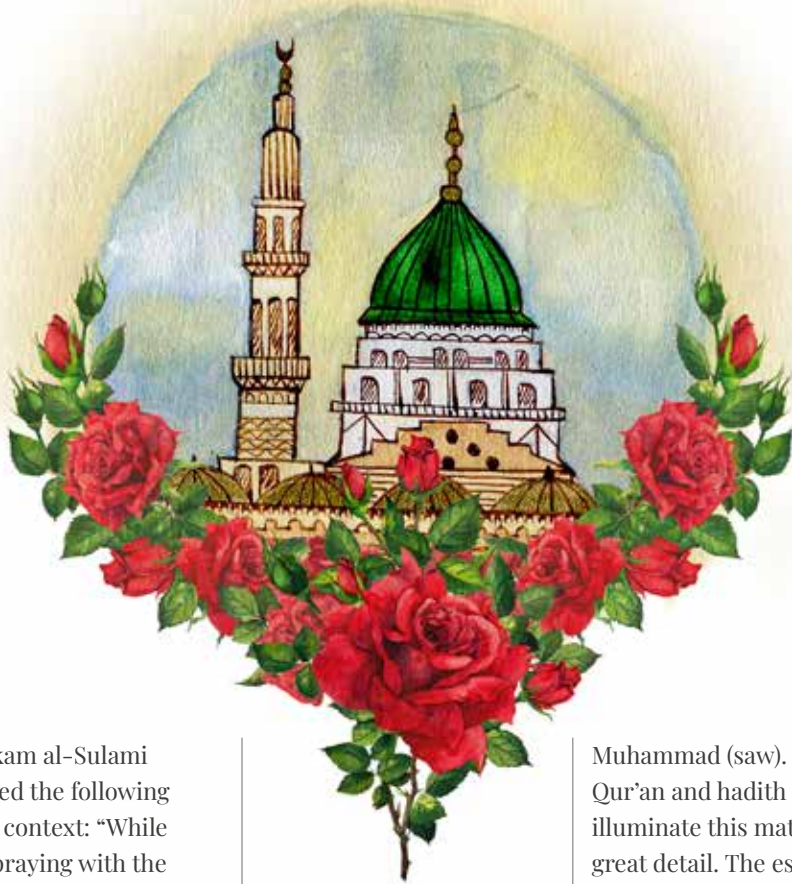
Messenger (saw) was always good-humored, easy-going, mild-mannered, neither rude nor coarse, nor boisterous, nor obscene, nor slanderous, nor avaricious. He would take no interest in what he did not desire, he would not leave anyone who pleaded with him hopeless or disappointed.” (Tirmidhi, Shama'il, p. 199) When Ali said this, it was as if he was interpreting this verse: “Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned YOU.” (Al-i 'Imran, 3:159)

Examining just two examples of his practices in fostering relationships among believers, or, in other words, his art of winning people's hearts, the greatness of the final messenger, guided by the Qur'an, becomes even more evident.

1. When the Prophet Muhammad learned of a mistake that required correction, he would issue a general admonition without naming the individual, allowing those who had committed similar errors to rectify their actions (Musnad, 12065). Through this approach, he preserved the dignity of the wrongdoer and avoided alienating them.

2. His graceful manner of correcting those who erred in his presence serves as a valuable lesson for us all. Muawiyah ibn

al-Hakam al-Sulami narrated the following in this context: “While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (saw), a man in the company sneezed. I said: ‘Yarhamuk Allah!’ The people stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said: ‘Woe be upon me, why is it that you stare at me?’ They began to strike their hands on their thighs, and when I saw them urging me to observe silence but I said nothing. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) had said the prayer (and I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than he for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom). I swear that



he did not scold, beat or revile me but said: ‘Talking to persons is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness. And recitation of the Qur'an or words to that effect.’” (Muslim, 537) The Messenger of Allah (saw) also stated that it is not appropriate to look left and right during prayer (Bukhari, 751; Tirmidhi, 589).

It is time to put words into action

There is much to be said about the exemplary conduct of the Prophet

Muhammad (saw). The Qur'an and hadith books illuminate this matter in great detail. The essence lies in letting actions precede words. The words of the late Islamic scholar Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut should be our benchmark: “While we certainly hope that everyone embraces Islam, we do not compel or require anyone to convert. With over 1.6 billion adherents worldwide, Islam has already established a significant presence. Our primary focus should be on ensuring that the Islamic world adheres to the principles and teachings of Allah and His Messenger. By doing so, we will naturally attract others to the faith.”

A NEW NAME A NEW LIFE

Why do we recite the adhan and iqamah in the ears of our newborn babies while naming them? What is the wisdom behind making the words of takbir and shahadah accompany the baby's name on the first days of their life? Is this voice, giving them glad tidings that they were born as a Muslim, inviting them to faith, goodness, and hidayah throughout their life?

When newborn babies hear their names for the first time, they also meet for the first time the culture in which they will live. The name that is given to the child is an instrument that binds them to their family, to the past and the present context in which they live. Constant repetition of the name will shape the character of the child. The name is like a du'a for the child. Therefore, the Prophet

(saw) was meticulous while picking names. He preferred naming babies or changing names to the ones related to goodness, beauty, righteousness, and virtue with the expectation of seeing those qualities in the person who was named. The example of Ali, who wanted to name his children with names associated with war, is an instructive one. In place of those names, the Prophet (saw) gave his grandchildren the names "Hasan" and "Husayn," meaning "goodness" and "beauty" (Ibn Hanbal, I, 119; Bukhari, Adab al-Mufrad, 286.)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) also recommended using names that recall our servanthood to Allah. That's why he said, "The most beautiful names in the eyes of Allah are 'Abd Allah and 'Abd al-Rahman." (Muslim, Adab, 2; T2833, Tirmidhi, Adab, 64) He



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named the first child who was born after the hijrah to Medina (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45; M5617, Muslim, Adab, 26) 'Abd Allah (Hakim, Mustadrak, VI, 2267 (3/548). In time, the name 'Abd Allah became one of the most common names among the companions. Referring to names beginning with "'Abd" (servant), the Prophet (saw) said, "The names associated with servanthood are the most pleasing ones in the eyes of Allah." (Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Awsat, I, 214) The Prophet (saw) changed the name of a man from Qayyum to 'Abd al-Qayyum because Qayyum was one of the names of Allah, meaning to shelter and protect (Abu Nu'aym, Ma'rifat al-Sahaba, V, 2980). He changed the name of another Companion from 'Abd al-'Amr to 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf (ra), after he converted to Islam (Hakim, Mustadrak, V, 1976 (3/306). It is important to





note that the names “‘Abd Allah” (Jinn, 72:19) and “‘Abd al-Rahman” (Furqan, 25:63) are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as well.

The Prophet (saw) also preferred the names of the prophets sent to spread truth and justice, as well as names beginning with “‘Abd.” When a son was born to him, he said, “A son was born to me tonight, and I named him after my ancestor, Abraham.” (Muslim, Fadh’a’il, 62; D3126, Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 23–24) He held the son of ‘Abd Allah b. Salam (ra) in his lap, stroked his head, prayed for his blessing, and gave him the beautiful name of Yusuf (Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Kabir, XXII, 285; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 35).

Muhammad and Ahmad were the most important prophetic names for children. The Prophet (saw), by saying “Name

“
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yourselves by my name, but do not call yourselves by my nickname,” (Bukhari, Adab, 106) allowed Muslims to use his name. The reason he did not allow the use of his nickname was to prevent confusion. On one occasion a man called to his friend, “Abu al-Qasim!” When the Prophet (saw) heard his nickname, he turned and looked at him. When he realized it wasn’t him who was being addressed, he said that it was fine to use his name for children, but not his nickname (Bukhari, Buyu’, 49; Muslim, Adab, 1). On another occasion, he asked those who used his name not to use his nickname, and those who used his nickname not to use his name. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 67) Based on ‘Ali’s report, however, it is understood that after a while the Prophet (saw) allowed

Muslims to use both his name and nickname. “I said to the Prophet (saw), ‘If I have a child that comes into this world after you, I will give him both your name and your nickname.’ And the Prophet (saw) said, ‘Yes, (you could).’” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 68) It is also reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) named the son of Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah (ra) with one of his nicknames, Abu al-Qasim (Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Kabir, XXV, 187; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, X, 573).

There were names that the Prophet (saw) wanted to be changed and names that he did not want to be used because he wanted to encourage people along the right path. The main names that he disliked were those that were contrary to monotheism. For example, he changed names such as “‘Abd al-

Ka'ba" (the servant of the Ka'bah) (Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, I, 126), and "Abd al-Hajar" (the servant of stone), (Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Adab, 90) because a man could only be the servant of Allah.

The Prophet (saw), while preserving cultural elements of society that did not conflict with the unity of Allah, took advantage of the power of the new names that reflected belief, morality, and culture. The Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered that a newborn child be given a name on the seventh day, that they be cleaned by having their head shaved, and that a sacrifice be performed for him (Tirmidhi, Adab, 63; Abu Dawud, Dahaya, 20-21). The companions brought their children to the Prophet (saw) for him to name them and pray for them (Bukhari, 'Aqiqa, 1; M5613, Muslim, Adab, 23). He first recited the adhan in the child's ear, (Abu Dawud, Adab, 106-107; Tirmidhi, Adab, 16) then thoroughly chewed a sweet morsel, such as a date, put it in their mouth, and named them (Muslim, Adab, 22; D4951, Abu Dawud, Adab, 61). By reciting the adhan, he wished for their life to stay always in the right direction; and by putting the date in their mouth, he wished that the child should have a sweet life. By giving them a beautiful name, he was praying for



THE NAME THAT IS GIVEN TO THE CHILD IS AN INSTRUMENT THAT BINDS THEM TO THEIR FAMILY, TO THE PAST AND THE PRESENT CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

them to have an abundant life (Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, XXII, 285).

To give a name is to have the owner of that name pleased with its meaning. Giving nicknames to people who do not like them, or calling them by these names would adversely affect the relationship. During the time of the Prophet (saw), one person could have two or three names, but that person might not have liked one of those names. That's why Allah,

after emphasizing the brotherhood of believers, said, "Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames." (Hujurat, 49:11) and forbade calling people names they didn't like. It pleased the Prophet (saw) when people called each other by the most agreeable names and nicknames (Bukhari, Adab al-Mufrad, 285).

While names reflect the beliefs, morality, and culture of a person, they also create positive or negative associations in the mind of the person who hears them. Because

of that the Prophet (saw) changed names that bore traces of the Jahiliyya and carried associations of arrogance, excessive pride, and negativity. He preferred to use names that called to mind Allah's servants, prophets, and virtuous people, and names that had beautiful and blessed meanings. In this way, the Prophet (saw) wanted to make sure that correct belief, culture, and morality were remembered, and goodness and beauty were established in the minds of people.



ISLAM'S CALL FOR REVIVAL

Dr. Abdulkadir ERKUT

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

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا
دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ
الْمَرءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

“O believers! Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a person and their heart, and that to Him you will all be gathered.”

(Anfal, 8:24)

In the Battle of Badr, the Muslims won a resounding victory over the polytheists. However, after the battle, they disagreed over the division of the bounty, as there were yet no rules established regarding the matter. The verses revealed on this occasion commanded the believers to be mindful of Allah and to obey the judgment of Allah and His Messenger (Anfal, 8:1-2). Indeed, before the Battle of Badr, they did not want to meet the enemy but rather to reach the caravan; but when they chose obedience to the Messenger of Allah and fought the enemy, they attained the blessing of this obedience and divine help. The importance of obedience to Allah and His Messenger is emphasized on several occasions in Surah al-Anfal, one of which is the following verse: “O believers! Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a person and their heart, and that to Him you will all be gathered.” (Anfal, 8:24)

The verse imposes on all Muslims the responsibility to act in obedience to Allah and His Messenger, to act swiftly when they receive the word of Allah or His Messenger on a religious matter, and to abandon any opinion that is contrary to it. The necessity of obedience to what the Prophet invites is expressed in the statement, “Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you.” This emphasis on the call of the Prophet also implies that obedience to him is like obedience to Allah (Nasafi, Madarik al-Tanzil, I, 639). The call of the Prophet includes both coming to him when he summoned while he was alive and responding to and obeying his invitation (Bukhari, Tafsir, 8).

Believers should respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger because it is a call that will give them life. Since it is out of the question to resurrect a person who is alive, it is understood that the expression “giving life” in the verse is used outside its literal meaning. There are various views as to what is “life-giving”. To summarize, the first and foremost of these is faith, as faith is what keeps the heart alive while disbelief leads it to its end. While a heart with disbelief is as good as dead, Allah revives one with faith. According to the second interpretation, it is the Qur’an that will give life. For those who respond to its call, there is salvation, security, eternal life and

eternal blessings. It is also the source of knowledge and knowledge is life. According to the third interpretation, what gives life is truth and reality. The interpretation of what gives life as truth and reality is a view that encompasses other views, especially faith and the Qur'an (Razi, Mafatih al-Ghayb, XV, 472).

There are also consequences of disobeying the call of the Messenger of Allah, which are stated as follows: "And know that Allah stands between a person and their heart". Allah's standing between a person and his heart is interpreted in relation to His attributes. Because Allah is transcendent from space. His (swt) attribute of knowledge pertains to knowing what a person conceals, and His attribute of power pertains to allowing or preventing a person from doing what he is determined to do. Just as an obstacle comes between two things, so the knowledge of Allah comes between a person and his heart. For He is closer to His servant than his jugular vein (Qaf, 50:16). Attention is drawn to the thoughts that come into one's mind with the emphasis placed on the fact that Allah intervenes between a person and his heart, and with this believers are warned against thoughts such as laxity in responding to

the Prophet's invitation, avoiding the responsibility of obeying him, or concealing their opposition to him. If a person follows the call of the Messenger of Allah, Allah will make him victorious over his nafs and put a barrier between him and what his nafs calls him to. But if he refrains from obeying this

call, He will make his nafs a barrier between him and what his heart is calling for (Maturidi, Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah, V, 178; Ibn Ashur, al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, IX, 315).

The consequence of disobeying the call of the Messenger of Allah is expressed in the next sentence more vehemently, as follows:

"And that to Him you will all be gathered."

Indeed, death may arrive unexpectedly, precluding the possibility of heeding this call, therefore, one must act promptly and not delay in fulfilling the command.

There are also worldly consequences to not following the call of the Messenger of Allah, which is mentioned in the following verse (Anfal, 8:25). When Muslims collectively fail to heed the Prophet's call, they become prone to numerous disagreements and conflicts. As an effect these disagreements, over time, can escalate into full-blown confrontations. The disintegration of social order and a deterioration of conditions follows this. If societal leaders fail to intervene and halt this downward spiral, the flames of discord will spread far and wide, burning all in their path, regardless of virtue or wrongdoing.

Islam is the true religion; it is a call for humanity's revival. He who responds to this call overcomes the

darkness of heedlessness and ignorance and gets rid of laziness and sloth. In this world, he attains a happy life that is enhanced by faith and righteous deeds, and in the Hereafter, he attains an eternal life whose beauty is unimaginable. However, this call for the revival of Islam is not fully echoed in the bosom of the century we live in. Some wrong practices of Muslims, the opportunism of exploitative groups, and the perversions of terrorist organizations can prevent the realities of Islam from being recognized. However, the truth of Islam will be revealed when Muslims get rid of the weight of human weaknesses and worldly ambitions and run to the call of Islam together when they open their hearts, with all their purity, to Allah and His Messenger. And through such a mobilization, they will be able to be key players in the revival of others while elevating their revival. The following description of those who responded to the call of Islam and revived and illuminated their surroundings with the beacon of revival and those who deprived themselves of it is a concise expression of this truth: "Can those who had been dead, to whom We gave life and a light with which they can walk among people, be compared to those in complete darkness from which they can never emerge?" (An'am, 6:122)



**FAITH IS
WHAT KEEPS
THE HEART
ALIVE WHILE
DISBELIEF
LEADS IT TO
ITS END.**

ISLAM IS A RELIGION OF EASE; DO NOT MAKE IT DIFFICULT

Halil KILIC

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

Considered one of the earliest Muslims, Abu Barza al-Aslami dismounted from his horse and stood for prayer when the time for prayer took place during a journey. Since he had not tied his horse to anything, the horse began to wander away while he was praying. Upon witnessing this incident, Abu Barza promptly interrupted his prayer, pursued his steed, and successfully retrieved his horse. He subsequently returned and resumed his prayer. One of the witnesses to this incident, upon observing Abu Barza's actions, remarked, "Look at this old man! He abandoned his prayer for his horse!" Upon hearing these remarks, Abu Barza turned to him after completing his prayer and said, "Since the time I left the Prophet (saw), no one has ever treated me

with such disrespect. My destination lies far ahead. If I had disregarded my horse's departure and completed the prayer, I would not have reached my family until nightfall." Following these remarks, Abu Barza declared that he was one of the Prophet's companions and had always been granted leniency by him (Bukhari, Adab, 80).

Abu Barza's remarks constitute a significant incident that corroborates and contributes to the comprehension of the aforementioned hadith. Although this hadith of the Prophet is considered as a "last advice" to those he appointed as rulers, Abu Barza's narration clearly shows that the ruling of the hadith is valid in all times and places. Consequently, this hadith stands as one of those encapsulating the essence

of the Islamic faith, providing guidance for the practice, sustaining, and propagation of Islam.

Be tolerant; facilitate

Human nature inclines towards favoring the easy and shying away from the difficult. Islam, the religion chosen by Allah the Almighty for the salvation of humanity in this world and the Hereafter, is a religion that aligns with human nature in its ease and practicability. These verses clearly demonstrate the simplicity and practicality of Islam: "He (Who) has chosen you, and laid upon you no hardship in the religion." (Hajj, 22:78), "Allah intends ease for you, not hardship." (Baqarah, 2:185), "So, surely with hardship comes ease." (Sharh, 94:5). Similarly, the Prophet (saw) said, "Indeed, this religion is easy, and no one will ever overburden

himself in religion, except that it will overcome him..." (Nasa'i, Iman, 28) and (as reported by 'A'isha) when he had to choose between two options, he preferred the easiest one if it was not a sin. (Bukhari, Adab, 80) Even while leading prayers, for the sake of convenience, he asked that the prayers should not be long, and he had to warn those who violated this order (Bukhari, Ilm, 29). The Prophet Muhammad's teachings and practices regarding facilitation extend beyond matters of faith and worship. For example, he (saw) wanted his ummah to adopt a facilitative attitude in all aspects of life by praying, "May Allah have mercy on a person who is lenient when he sells, lenient when he buys, and lenient when he asks for payment." (Ibn Majah, Tijarat, 28) In line with this principle, all

«يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا»

Facilitate things to people (concerning religious matters), and do not make it difficult for them and give them good tidings and do not make them run away (from Islam).

(Bukhari, Ilm, 11)

Muslims, particularly those in positions of guidance and propagation of the faith, should be tolerant and understanding in the application of religious precepts and in all aspects of life, extending the necessary leniency to others. Accordingly, it is a prophetic methodology that all individuals, including merchants engaged in commerce, prospective spouses and their families, public servants, administrators, and indeed everyone, should adopt a facilitative approach towards those they interact with, both in religious and worldly matters.

Be merciful; do not make it difficult

The hadith goes beyond merely commanding “facilitate”; it specifically emphasizes “do not make it difficult.” An individual

who generally adopts a facilitative approach in most matters of life yet introduces difficulties in specific circumstances would be acting in contravention of the principles enshrined in this hadith. Those who park their cars on the sidewalks cause difficulties for all pedestrians, especially for disabled people; those who occupy the safety lane in traffic cause difficulties for public vehicles such as ambulances, fire engines, and police; and those who impose excessive expenses upon couples on the eve of marriage cause difficulties for young people getting married. This and similar attitudes should never be found in the ummah of the Prophet, who said, “... Allah did not send me to be harsh or cause harm, but He has sent me to teach and make things

easy.” (Muslim, Talaq, 29). Therefore, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to exert their utmost effort to avoid making life difficult for those they live with, particularly their family members.

Perceive and present matters positively; give good tidings

The Arabic word “abshiru” encompasses a rich spectrum of meanings, ranging from conveying good tidings, fostering affection, and inducing joy to executing tasks with excellence and elegance, perceiving and presenting matters in a positive light, and adopting an optimistic outlook. Accordingly, it is not an overstatement to declare that a true Muslim is an individual who radiates positive energy, whose presence and words bring joy to others, and who adds value to both

their own life and the lives of those around them. In this contemporary era, where some individuals’ connection to faith hangs by a thread, it is imperative to diligently emphasize Islam’s essence of love, compassion, and mercy with utmost wisdom, kindness, and a warm smile.

Do not be rude and try to disincline others; do not make people run away

Islam is a religion of peace and mercy. The prophet of this religion was sent as a mercy to the worlds. While presenting such a perfect religion that will ensure the salvation of humankind both in this world and in the Hereafter, behaviours that will overshadow this perfection should be abstained; all kinds of words and behaviours that will distance people from Islam should be avoided.

Prof. Dr. Murteza Bedir:
“Servitude is the most fundamental
quality that the Qur’an expects from
humanity.”



Interview by:
Mahir KILINC

He graduated from Marmara University Faculty of Theology (1992), then completed his master's degree in the Department of Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (1996) and his PhD in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Manchester with his thesis titled "Early Development of Hanafi Usul al-fiqh (Legal Theory)". In 2005, he was promoted to associate professor and in 2011 to professor. He served as a visiting professor at Harvard University Law School (2007-2008). He was elected as the Turkish representative of the International Fiqh Academy of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (2015). He served as a member of the High Board of Religious Affairs of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (2015-2020). He served as the director of Istanbul University Institute of Islamic Studies (2022-2023). In 2023, he retired from Istanbul University and moved to Istanbul 29 Mayıs University to continue his academic studies. He is still the president of the Center for Islamic Studies of the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (ISAM). His academic studies have focused on fiqh and usul al-fiqh, especially on Hanafi fiqh. In this field, he has written numerous copyrighted and translated works, book chapters, articles in international and national publications, and encyclopedia articles.

Dear Professor, as you know, Allah the Almighty has created man as the most honorable creation and equipped them with superior qualities. First of all, let us talk about the sublime purposes for which Allah the Almighty created mankind.

In the modern world, one of the issues that we need to think about again and again is the special place of the human being among other beings, as Allah does not use the same terms for any other being as He uses for man. For example, Allah says of man, "I breathed into him from my spirit". He also describes him as "the most honorable of creatures" in Surah at-Tin. But He also gives him the potential to be the worst of creation. There is the potential of it going both ways. Perhaps we need to go back to the statements in the verses that tell the story of the creation of man. In Surah al-Baqarah, in our Lord's dialog with the angels, our Lord says, "I will create a caliph". But the angels were surprised. They say, "O Lord, we glorify you, we sanctify you from all kinds of deficiencies, we worship you, we recognize only you as Lord." They have no choice, or free will as it is, therefore they just serve. But here our Lord is talking about a being who will serve by choice. The angels wonder, "Lord, what need is there to serve by choice, maybe they will

do evil on earth." Because when they choose, they may choose something else, not servitude. Our Lord points to a wisdom there by saying "I know what you do not know". So we understand that humans becoming a caliph points to the fact that he is a very special being. I think the secret is to leave the human being free. I mean, of course, we are not referring to absolute freedom. Absolute destiny belongs to Allah. Ultimately, everything is according to the discretion and measure of our Lord. But unlike other beings, human beings are given a limited will and freedom of choice. Human beings already use that ability to choose gradually from childhood. From the age of seven, they start to gradually distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong. When they reach a certain maturity, which we define as the age of maturity, they are able to make their own decisions and choices. The real secret of human existence is that they are free-willed, this is what makes human beings unique.

Can we say that this feature elevates human beings to a sublime level?

Of course, mankind rises because he chooses to serve his Lord. There is a difference between choice and compulsion. Human can rebel, whereas other



THEREFORE, A MUSLIM PERSONALITY WOULD EQUATE TO A GOOD SERVANT, A GOOD HUMAN BEING. THIS IS POSSIBLE BY ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL AND THE NATURE CREATED BY ALLAH.

beings cannot. Again, we can say that human freedom is also related to knowing and knowledge. When Allah the Almighty says, "Prostrate before Adam" (Baqarah, 2:34), He attributes the wisdom of prostration to his knowledge. The verse says, "He taught Adam the names of all things" (Baqarah, 2:31). Allah the Almighty then asks the

angels, "Do you know these?" The ability to know is also closely related to human freedom. A human is a being who can first accumulate knowledge and then produce knowledge himself. In other words, he takes the data, the names and the language he has learned from his Lord, and then he produces knowledge from it. Therefore, mankind is different from other beings in this sense. For this reason, the wisdom of human's existence in this world is to serve by choice. Not just any servitude, but servitude by choice with his free will.

There are characteristics that human beings should have in order to live a life in accordance with the purpose of their creation. When we look at the Qur'an, how does our Lord define a Muslim, what are the personality traits that a Muslim should have?

It is a difficult question, a very comprehensive question. It is necessary to summarize it by underlining some very basic things. Of course, first of all, a Muslim servant means a servant who has submitted. A Muslim servant has surrendered to his Lord. Allah the Almighty defines the prophets as the most superior human beings and when we look at their supplications, the most basic point they

emphasize is to surrender to Allah. Servitude is the most fundamental quality that the Qur'an expects from humanity. And all the other qualities are, in my opinion, superfluous. The main thing is that man chooses submission, chooses servitude with his free will. You cannot be a good person in this world without being a servant, hence the condition of being a good human being is to be a good servant. Being a good servant means a person who is aware of the wisdom of behind Allah creating human beings on earth, who recognizes Allah, and turns towards Him. At this point, I do not separate the Muslim personality from the human being. So the Muslim person actually means a human being. Therefore, a Muslim personality would equate to a good servant, a good human being. This is possible by acting in accordance with the will and the nature created by Allah.

But besides that, it is possible to deduce the Muslim personality from the verses of the Holy Qur'an. For example, Allah does not like wrongdoers who make mischief on the earth, who create sedition, who do wrong things, who do injustice to others, and who oppress people. So here we can deduce what Allah likes from what He dislikes. The one who is just, who does not

oppress, who does not sow sedition, who does not do injustice to others, who does not violate the rights of others, is a believer. In other words, in addition to the consciousness of servitude, a second consciousness is the consciousness of not being unjust. This consciousness is also frequently highlighted in the Holy Qur'an.

What then are the personality traits that a Muslim should have?

They are also related to these. First of all, we have to look at the Prophet (saw). He was the living



THE REAL SECRET OF HUMAN EXISTENCE IS THAT THEY ARE FREE-WILLED, THIS IS WHAT MAKES HUMAN BEINGS UNIQUE.

Qur'an. The believer needs to be in a role that never offends the people around him, that is always restorative, more of a reformer. In other words, the consciousness of worship needs to infuse his heart. We need to create a personality in which our behavior with people and our duty towards Allah are intertwined. Therefore, the things that Allah the Almighty wants and does not want in the personality of the believer, which are emphasized in the verses, need to be integrated with worship. If a person prays, at the same time he should not do injustice to anyone, he should not create sedition, he should not act in a way that disrupts the affairs of others, he should not try to gain wealth through the rights of others.

Allah the Almighty describes the Prophet as "uswatun hasanah", meaning "the model of excellent conduct". Could you tell us about the noble personality of our Prophet, who is a guide and role model for all humanity?

When we talk about the Prophet, we must state very clearly that he was the epitome of morality. Some of the people of Mecca were the greatest enemies of the Prophet (saw), yet they still entrusted their property to him. The Qur'an also states that he was trustworthy and

of high morals. The fact that he was someone who was consulted when an arbitrator was needed and that he was fair, all these are prominent characteristics. One of the most important characteristics of our Prophet is that he had a consciousness of worship that encompassed the whole of his life with the consciousness of servitude. When they said, "O Messenger of Allah, your past and future sins have been forgiven, why are you working so hard for worship?", the Prophet replied, "Should not I be a servant who repents?" This is what is expected of all believers; to love servitude, to internalize servitude. Our Prophet does this very well. He lives the consciousness of servitude at its peak, but at the same time his relationship with people is very good, he can be very fair even to his enemies.

The modern age we live in is described by many as "the age of pleasure and speed". How do you think we can preserve our Muslim identity in this era of dizzying developments?

The industrial society that emerged with the industrial revolution, scientific revolutions, technological developments, and the transformation of the world into urbanized structures have built a society in which human



beings isolate and secure themselves in many areas from health to security. Perhaps for the first time in human history, something like this is happening. In the past, only a small part of human societies used to live like this, and they used to build their cities and create a space there with the means to achieve complete security. Today, people have expanded this area a lot. They have gathered in cities, they have created safe spaces and no one thinks of being a servant anymore. We have created such a world that we have forgotten why we exist in this world. We have forgotten how short the life of this world is and why we came to this world. We cling to this world as

if we are going to stay in it forever. I think this kind of environment has caused some damage to our constitution. I mean, this artificial world that we have created has turned into a space that makes us think that we are going to live forever and that we are going to stay young. Instead, we feel like we are in a false paradise, like "it's all over, I exist in this world on my own". I think our biggest problem is that in the modern age, this space of security has spread too far. Human beings are increasing these safe spaces with the idea of eternalizing their existence in this world. These false safety zones are taking people away from religion, away from serving Allah. The Holy Qur'an mentions

this. When man becomes comfortable, he always forgets his servitude, this is what the verses tell us.

Modern lives have created such false security and we have forgotten our servitude here. We need to carry out some actions in this world to remind us of our servitude. For example, we should not give up *amr bil ma'ruf wa nahy an al munkar*. We have given up on this, this is one of the biggest diseases of modern societies. In other words, we should not have stopped advising each other, reminding each other of servitude, reminding each other to turn towards Allah, and calling each other to the truth. We need to remind each other of Allah's commands and

prohibitions, we should not give up on this. We must not lose this consciousness. This is one of the most important aspects of preserving our Muslim identity. Of course, we should remind ourselves of this before telling others. This can be done through education. Maybe we need to come together with this consciousness much more. Human beings are social beings after all. We should come together with this concern and read the Qur'an. The purpose of the Qur'an is for us to live the values it says. We need to come together to listen to the message of the Qur'an. We should read it to ourselves, we should read it to receive the message. And for this purpose, we need to support each other.

Demonstration in support of Palestine in Paris



A demonstration in support of Palestine was held in Paris, the capital of France. Palestine supporters gathered at the symbolic Republic Square in Paris in response to Israel's attacks on Gaza, which have been ongoing for months. The demonstrators called on the Tel Aviv government to stop its attacks on Gaza. During the demonstration, banners reading "Boycott the occupying Israel", "Genocide Olympics" and "Long live the resistance of the Palestinian people" were unfurled. The demonstrators wore keffiyeh and carried Palestinian flags.



Haniyeh's funeral held in Tehran

A funeral ceremony was held in Tehran, the capital of Iran, for Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Hamas Political Bureau, who was martyred by assassination. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and senior civilian and military officials attended the ceremony in the capital. Iranian leader Ali Khamenei led the funeral prayer at the Tehran University campus. Due to the limited number of people admitted to the prayer area, there was a large crowd of thousands waiting at the university gate.





President of Religious Affairs Erbas spoke at the 9th Conference of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministers

According to the statement released by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, President Erbas attended the 9th Conference of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministers. In his speech, Erbas highlighted the ongoing genocide and persecution in Palestine. He called for unity among Muslims to stop the killing of Palestinian children and innocent civilians in Gaza and to strive for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.



Kosovo Prinaz Mosque and Mahmut Pasha Mosque were reopened for worship

The Prinaz Mosque, which dates back to the 15th century in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, and the Mahmut Pasha Mosque in the city of Cakova were reopened for worship with prayers with the participation of Minister of Culture and Tourism of Türkiye Mehmet Nuri Ersoy and President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbas. In his remarks on the restoration of the mosque, Ersoy stated, "We have undertaken a comprehensive and diligent restoration of this invaluable historical asset."



UNRWA: Following the issuance of an evacuation order by Israeli authorities, more than 75,000 Palestinians have been displaced from southern Gaza

The Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, has stated that over 75,000 Palestinians have been displaced from southern Gaza as a result of an evacuation order issued by Israeli authorities. The Israeli evacuation order, which has been described as “murderous”, has prompted many Gazan families to migrate from the eastern parts of Gaza city to the western areas.

Lazzarini drew attention to the ongoing displacement of the Palestinian people and their history of enduring wars and conflicts for decades. He also shared a photo on social media depicting Palestinians relocating from the east to the west in Khan Younis. The recent evacuation order has resulted in a significant number of people being compelled to leave their homes in southern Gaza.



‘Justice and international law’ was discussed at a conference organized at Bogazici University



A ‘Justice and International Law’ session was held at the ‘Rethinking International Law after Gaza’ conference, organized by Bogazici University Faculty of Law.

In his speech at the session, Prof. Richard Falk, an expert on international law at Princeton University and former the United Nations Human Rights Rapporteur, strongly criticized Israel’s actions in Gaza and highlighted the failure of international law to effectively address the crisis in Gaza. He stated, “The genocide in Gaza continues, and the threat of a wider destructive war in the region directly linked to Gaza is a growing concern.”

Balakrishnan Rajagopal, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to housing, also highlighted the impact of the systematic destruction of housing in Gaza and other conflict zones in his speech. In his remarks on the lack of international legal action regarding the Gaza crisis, he stated, “It appears that international law is not effectively addressing the situation in Gaza.”

The Summer Festival in DITIB

The Youth Summer Festival, held at the Horst Mevlana Mosque of the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) in Gelsenkirchen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, proved a great success, with children and young people enjoying the activities on offer. Mayor of Gelsenkirchen Karin Welge also attended the festival, which was organized in the mosque courtyard. Mayor Welge, who shared the excitement of children, young people, and women, visited the activity and entertainment stands in the area.



THE FUTURE OF ETHICS AND ETHICS IN THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE

Prof. Dr. Hasan OCAK

Ethics encompasses a concept and its content that aims to define and pass judgment on human behaviors through the notions of “good” and “bad”. Moral philosophy, on the other hand, is a discipline dedicated to exploring questions such as “What is morality?”, “What constitutes moral good or evil?”, “What is the source of morality?”, and “What are the criteria for determining whether an action is morally good or bad?” Throughout the history of thought, humanity has sought answers to these and similar questions in almost every age, and has tried and continues to try to find a solution to the problem of morality.

Ethics and moral philosophy have primarily focused on human behavior throughout history. When examining human behaviors, ethics primarily focuses on those actions that are outwardly observable (eating, drinking, speaking, sitting and standing, and interactions between individuals, etc.). In recent times, however, the scope of ethics has begun to encompass intangible phenomena that are imperceptible to the eye and cannot be directly classified as behaviors. Today, with the widespread use of the internet, the introduction of the social media factor into our lives, some of the work we do on social media, situations such as advertisements,

announcements, etc. that we have to encounter against our will, and various stimuli that suddenly appear before us can be given as examples. While these stimuli may bear a resemblance to human actions, their origins diverge from classical human behaviors in several respects, thus potentially falling outside the purview of traditional ethical descriptions when examined from the perspective of moral philosophy.

Do ethics change? Indeed, change is an inevitable reality for humankind. Correspondingly, humanity’s moral comprehension is also susceptible to transformation. All

organisms in nature are universally recognized as entities that inherently exist in harmony with the natural world. Asserting that organisms actively intervene in the natural world beyond the confines of sustenance and shelter proves to be rather difficult. Among these living beings, humans stand out as an entity capable of altering their surroundings for a multitude of purposes, including mere change itself. Transformations undertaken solely for the sake of change often contravene the inherent nature (fitrah) of humanity, ultimately leading to outcomes that deviate from the intrinsic essence of their surroundings.



Human beings are in a relationship with all spheres of existence, especially with their own existence. The realm of nature and natural entities, the sphere of social beings, and the domain of metaphysical entities encompass humanity, encircling it from all sides. Human beings establish an interaction with nature in three ways: First of all, humanity harbours a desire to exert dominion over the natural world, striving to mold it into a reflection of its own mental constructs and classifications. Secondly, human beings seek to change or transform themselves, to put themselves into the forms of their own minds. This is best exemplified by the fact that the masses of human beings, left as crowds in their natural environment, try to attribute a meaning to the events or phenomena that they, as mere biological singular beings, infer. Unlike animal herds, human beings, through the sciences of religion, morality and law, politics, and management organization, make sense of biological human events as events constituted by cultural individuals, transforming them into rational actions of individuals instead of the instinctive movements of living beings. The final mode of interaction delves into the cognitive and intellectual aspects

of humanity. At this stage, people train and artificialize their emotions, moods, and behaviors. Just as in other realms of fictional entities and, consequently, in artificial natures, humanity's actions give rise to a human-like nature within the domain of spiritual existence.

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So, why does humankind not leave all these natures to their own devices but imposes its own scenario on them? In other words, why do they reconstruct them with the forms in their minds through some scientific means when there are already the real beings and states of these natures? Why do they create artificial natures? Will ethics also take its share from all these artificialities and will an artificial ethics be created?

The question of whether the artificiality of intelligence will lead to the artificiality of humans and ultimately to the artificiality of ethics raises concerns about the end of humankind. Cognitive functions such as the ability to reason, gather data, and analyze information have been successfully transferred to artificial intelligence. However; it is widely acknowledged that emotions and thoughts share a complex and interconnected relationship. If the predictions come true, artificial intelligence will not only be limited to thought and knowledge, but will also become a mathematical modeling of emotions and feelings, of the self and personality, resulting in the creation of artificial human beings. As a matter of fact, the fact that those working on artificial intelligence have not succeeded in

transferring even the simplest intellectual functions to robots as a result of nearly one hundred and fifty years of intensive work, let alone giving them human-like emotions, shows that the human mind has been taken too lightly.

Moral principles have consistently held a position of paramount importance in human existence. At its core, the concept of morality is founded upon the distinction between good and evil, encompassing notions such as free will, responsibility, conscience, virtue, happiness, and duty. For this reason, many thinkers have articulated diverse perspectives on the subject. For instance, the basis of the good is sought by Socrates in “virtue”; Plato in “the idea of the good”; Kant in “a good will or volition based on duty”; Bentham and Mill in “utility”; and Islamic thinkers in “ensuring happiness”. As is evident, morality has, throughout the ages, been fundamentally grounded in the distinction between good and evil. In this context, the aforementioned ideas are rooted in the concept of natural human ethics. So, can terms such as good, evil, intention, virtue, responsibility, freedom, happiness, duty, etc. belonging to natural ethics continue to live in the world of the future, or will

they be affected by change with the digital world as artificial morality?

Within the realm of academic literature, three primary approaches have been identified regarding the application of ethical values in the digital sphere. The first approach entails the articulation of specific ethical values or the application of normative ethical principles derived from traditional moral philosophy to the new world. These normative rules should be carefully selected to minimize ambiguity and eliminate opportunities for debate regarding their application to modern human behavior. From the perspective of traditional philosophy, utilitarianism and deontology serve as illustrative examples of this approach.

As can be seen, human beings seem to be at the mercy of the artificial intelligence that they have created and are developing. In the history of philosophy, the philosophy of human beings has not yet completed a century of questioning the totality of human existence. In other words, throughout the vast expanse of philosophical and scientific inquiry, humanity has dedicated centuries to unraveling the mysteries of the external world, while the exploration of its own essence has only



ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE AIMED AT BUILDING A WORLD THAT WILL CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF REALITY.

commenced within the past century. Paradoxically, within this brief period, humanity has diverted its attention away from its own exploration and instead fixated upon the very machines it has brought into existence, effectively placing a pause on its own self-discovery. This phenomenon starkly underscores the irony of prioritizing artificial digital happiness over humans.

Furthermore, the sheer diversity of scenarios surrounding the ascent of

digital life has served to amplify, among scientists as well as the general populace, the uncertainty regarding the timing and ultimate consequences of this phenomenon, whether for better or for worse. While some thinkers anticipate that such an ascent will usher in an era of hardship, others argue that it would be much better for humanity.

It is also claimed that the era of transhumanism will come with the realization of artificial super life in the near future. Transhumanism is a concept that aims to improve people's cognitive abilities, eliminate defects such as aging, and live a life in which the possibilities of technology and science are more utilized. This transformative ideology, poised to revolutionize human existence, is centered on three primary objectives: enhanced quality of life, extended longevity, and the attainment of super-intelligence.

Transhumanists, who advocate for the transformation and recreation of humanity through the application of science and technology, further posit the universal proliferation of digital life and the comprehensive renewal of the world, facilitated by the powerful possibilities of technology. All these developments

are aimed at building a world that will change the perception of reality. For some, the notion of the universe attaining perfection through evolutionary processes evokes anxiety. For others, these concerns do not warrant apprehension. Proponents of this ideology assert that there is no need for apprehension regarding the advent of perfect digital capabilities or the emergence of a superior human in the future. This phase, heralding a fundamental transformation of humanity, signifies the elevation of human intelligence to a higher level, distinct from its current state. The exponential advancement of knowledge and the transformation of technology render the universe's transformation an inevitable reality. The current state of technological advancement serves as a harbinger of the future transformation of human intelligence, elevating it to a superior structure distinct from its present form. The superhuman, who will be the ultimate invention of technological developments, will be the most important instrument of change in the new world order as a superior intelligence. At this juncture, humans will continue to uphold their status as humans and represent their civilization.

FIRST YEARS IN MEDINA AFTER THE HIJRAH

Prof. Dr. Eyup BAS

Religious Services Counselor in Copenhagen



When the Prophet Muhammad migrated to Medina, the city was not so much a city more so a collection of small villages, farms, and fortresses scattered across an oasis, or perhaps a fertile region of approximately 20 square miles, surrounded by hills, rocks, and stony ground, not all of which were arable. It had a pleasant climate, fertile soil suitable for agriculture, and abundant date palm groves.

With a rather dispersed settlement pattern, the city's population was predominantly composed of Arabs and Jews. Among the Arabs, there were two major tribes, the Banu Aws and the Banu Khazraj, and among the Jews, there were three major tribes,

namely, Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir and Banu Qurayza.

The city was first settled by a group of Jews who had migrated from various parts of the Arabian Peninsula after the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II's (605–562 BC) conquest of al-Quds and destruction of Solomon's Temple (Temple of Sulayman) in 586 BC. The Banu Aws and Banu Khazraj belonged to the Azd branch of the Qahtanites who left the region and settled in the vicinity of Yathrib after the flood called "sayl al-'arim" in Yemen in the second century AD.

Over time, the Banu Aws and Banu Khazraj tribes gained dominance

over the Jews and established control over the city. Having lost their dominance to the Banu Aws and Banu Khazraj tribes, the Jews maintained their existence by aligning themselves with either tribe during their disputes. For instance, in the Battle of Bu'ath (Yawm Bu'ath), which occurred in 617, five years before the Hijrah, and which was one of a series of conflicts spanning approximately 120 years, the Banu Qurayza and Banu Nadir tribes allied with the Banu Aws tribe, while the Banu Qaynuqa tribe allied with the Banu Khazraj tribe. The battle ended in a defeat for the Banu Khazraj. On the other hand, there were also various disputes and conflicts between the

Banu Qaynuqa tribe and the other Jewish tribes. In short, there was rivalry and conflict between the Banu Aws and the Banu Khazraj, as well as between the Arabs and the Jews. This situation seemed likely to cause considerable concern for the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims regarding peace and security in the region.

Upon his arrival in Medina, the Prophet Muhammad immediately gathered with the Muslim emigrants (muhajirun) who had fled Mecca and the Medinan Muslims (ansar), who had welcomed and sheltered them. He engaged in conversation with them and inquired about their circumstances.



The muhajirun consisted of 186 families (Maqrizi, *Imta' al-asma*, I, 50) which amounted to approximately 1,500 individuals. With their arrival, Medina's population exceeded 10,000. There is limited historical data regarding Medina's population prior to the hijrah. However, the city's population experienced consistent growth following the hijrah. Until the arrival of the Prophet, some of the migrants had sought shelter with relatives, while others were accommodated in tents erected for them. Their basic needs were met by the Medinan Muslims. However, this arrangement was unsustainable. The Prophet Muhammad decided to implement a new regulation shortly thereafter. In fact, he considered implementing the practice of "mu'akhat," a concept of brotherhood that was not foreign to the Arabs. Regarding this matter, he consulted at length with the leaders of the muhajirun and ansar. This was due to the fact that the proposed arrangement would necessitate interventions in the established Arab customs and traditions pertaining to property, land, and familial ties.

The Messenger of Allah was not hasty in implementing his plans. In order to mature his idea of brotherhood,

he first sought to create an environment that would bring both parties together. This environment would serve as both a place of worship and a frequent meeting place for the muhajirun and ansar. In this way,



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they would collectively undergo training under his guidance and develop readiness for the actions to be undertaken. As a result, the Prophet Muhammad's first undertaking was the construction of a mosque. He initiated the construction during the first month of his hijrah and personally led the work.

While the construction of the mosque continued, the completed sections were put into use. The Prophet Muhammad sought to unite and educate the muhajirun and ansar through his speeches during prayer times when they gathered. Meanwhile, he was closely observing all the details of the general social structure in Medina and making a concerted effort to get to know each group intimately. As a result, the mosque, from the very beginning, was evolving into a kind of administrative center for social life.

The city was finally settling into place, developing a stable and harmonious fabric. In order to further strengthen this situation, the Prophet put into practice the practice of "mu'akhat (brotherhood)", which he had planned (Rajab 1/ January 623). The Prophet Muhammad established a brotherhood between the muhajirun and the Muslims of the Banu Aws and Banu Khazraj tribes.

This arrangement provided a significant opportunity to foster unity within the Islamic community and to meet the material and spiritual needs of the muhajirun, who had left all their possessions behind in Mecca. Following the pledge they made to the Prophet Muhammad at the Treaty of 'Aqabah, the Muslims of Medina accepted the muhajirun as their brothers and shared their resources and homes with them. Although the people of Medina offered to share their palm groves and other possessions, including property rights, the muhajirun, expressing their gratitude, politely declined. The Prophet Muhammad issued a ruling stating that the muhajirun would be entitled to a share of the produce as compensation for their labor, while ownership of the land would continue to belong to the Medinans. This arrangement ensured that the fruits of their collaborative efforts were equitably distributed. This practice is explicitly praised in the following verse: "Those who believed, emigrated, and strived with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave them shelter and help—they are truly guardians of one another." (Anfal, 8:72)

By establishing this bond of brotherhood, the Prophet Muhammad not only met the needs of

the struggling muhajirun but also replaced the tribal-based concept of brotherhood with a faith-based one. Through the collaborative efforts of the ansar and muhajirun within the framework of the mu'akhat, Muslims began to gain influence in the economic life of Medina and achieve economic independence. Assessing this situation, the Prophet Muhammad ordered the establishment of a marketplace, thus providing an opportunity to implement the economic and commercial principles of Islam. The economic influence previously held by the Jews in Medina began to decline.

The deliberate alliance was shifting the balance of power in Medina. The Prophet Muhammad, recognizing Medina as a city fraught with sociological and demographic challenges, determined that the next step would be to establish conditions for a peaceful and secure life. He gathered representatives of the Jewish tribes and non-Muslim Arabs at the house of Anas ibn Malik. He persuaded all groups to organize themselves into a city-state. He also ensured that the agreed-upon matters were put into written form. The agreement stipulated that the Prophet Muhammad would be recognized as a religious prophet and a



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political arbitrator among the various factions of Medina.

This document, referred to in historical sources as the “kitab” or “sahifah,” and described by some modern scholars as the

“first written constitution,” has survived to the present day. According to this citizenship charter, known as the “Constitution of Medina” or the “Covenant of Medina”,

- The rules pertaining to blood money and ransoms shall remain unchanged.
- Jews shall be free to practice their religion.
- Muslims and Jews shall live together in peace.
- If either party goes to war with a third party, the other party shall provide assistance.
- Neither party shall establish friendly relations with the Quraysh or grant them protection.
- In the event of an external attack, Medina shall be defended jointly.
- If either party makes peace with a third party, the other party shall recognize this peace.
- In any dispute that may arise between Muslims and Jews, the Prophet Muhammad shall be the arbitrator.

Furthermore, under the clause in the Constitution stating that “the valley of Yathrib is inviolable (sacred) for those whose names are mentioned in this document,” the Prophet Muhammad tasked Ka'b ibn Malik with delineating the boundaries of Medina, with the newly constructed Masjid al-Nabi at its center.

Subsequent political and military activities were conducted in accordance with the established boundaries. During this same period, the Prophet Muhammad established a permanent marketplace where Muslims had begun conducting their commercial activities, and he designated the area of Baqi' as a cemetery (Ramadan 1/March 623).

Approximately one month after these events, the construction of the mosque was completed. The Messenger of Allah then left the home of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, where he had been a guest for seven months. He moved into the room that had been allocated to him and his family within the mosque. Meanwhile, an area covered with palm branches known as the suffah, was built at the rear of the mosque to provide shelter for orphaned Muslims and companions who desired to pursue Islamic studies. Those who resided and studied in this place eventually became known as the ahl al-suffah or ashab al-suffah.

With the completion of the mosque, the first example of an urban plan centered around a mosque, which would later serve as a model for the Islamic world, came into being, complete with a marketplace, cemetery, and residential neighborhoods.

DR. KATHERINE BULLOCK:
“THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
CHANGE IS THE SATISFACTION
OF THE HEART.”



Dr. Katherine, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, please?

I was born in North Fremantle in Western Australia, a city close to the capital of the state, Perth. I grew up in the 70s attending the local state primary school. For high school, I attended a private all-girls school, Presbyterian Ladies College. This school imparted many good values that are also part of Islamic values, such as the importance of family, honesty, integrity, working hard, discipline, friendship, and so on. As an all-girls school, we were focused on our studies.

We know that you were raised in Australia as an Anglican Church of England. How was your life regarding faith back then?

I used to attend Church and Sunday school with my family each week. At my high school, we had weekly religious services and religion classes. Our school employed a reverend who was part of our school life. I began to have doubts about Christianity around grade 3, but when you are that young, and surrounded by Christians, even secularized Christians, these thoughts and feelings just stay in

the background. I was confirmed when I was 12. In high school, I enjoyed the weekly church service and always ignored my friends who sat next to me whispering while the reverend spoke. Yet, once I started university, I found it difficult to be a person of faith. Our philosophy of religion class showed arguments against the existence of God, and political science emphasized Marx's notion of religion as the "opium of the people." Feminism emphasized the idea of religion as patriarchal and anti-woman. All this made it easy to become agnostic and then an atheist.

We'd love to know what your views were on Islam and Muslims before your conversion. Did you have any prejudices?

I hadn't learned anything about Islam growing up. Well, we had a world religions class in high school, but I remember little of it. I remember a focus on cults, as there was a concern about girls being susceptible to cults. I had a vague impression of a famous singer, Cat Stevens, joining a cult. I later learned that he'd become Muslim. At university, I had a Muslim friend and a Muslim professor. But they were so quiet and guarded about "being Muslim" that I had



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no idea what it meant. We never talked about religion, and they seemed "normal" Aussies to me, except my professor, who always wore shalwar kameez. I don't remember ever seeing a Muslim woman in hijab on campus.

In this state, I arrived in Canada to do a Master's degree. Here was where I met many Muslims for the first time in my life. We were all international students hanging around the International Student Centre at the university. I felt scared when I met a Muslim guy from Libya. I thought the women were oppressed. I asked the Muslim women what they were doing here. And when they told me, about medicine, and engineering, I said, "No. I mean at University, I thought your culture oppressed women and didn't let you be educated."

Thank God these young Muslims were patient and kind to me! It was that helped me see that I was unconsciously biased against Muslims. It was that opened my eyes to wanting to know more about Islam as a religion.

How did you first hear about Islam?

As I just said, it was these encounters with Muslims in the International Student Centre that I first

started learning about Islam. I was still an atheist (or so I thought), and not too interested in religion, but the Muslim students organized lectures on social justice issues that interested me. Along the way, I started to wonder why I was an atheist. I started asking everyone around me if they believed in God. I was surprised by how many MA and PhD students, in engineering, history, and political science, answered yes.

Everyone has their unique story of embracing Islam, how was your story started?

In the midst of what became a gripping three-year intellectual journey to embracing Islam, I got engaged to a Muslim. I had to leave Canada because my visa expired, but he gave me a copy of the Qur'an to take with me. Later he came to my city in Australia for the marriage and honeymoon. We returned to Canada where I started my PhD. The first thing I had to study was whether or not I believed God existed. In some ways, this was the hardest part of my journey. I spent time reading works by lay physicists where they make the case for the "Intelligent

Design" of the Universe. They mostly do not call the Designer "God," and they do not follow organized religion. Once I was convinced by their arguments, I didn't find it hard to call the Designer, God. I asked myself, OK, so which religion? I looked at Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. Islam always shone as the religion that best matched the notion of the "Intelligent Designer." Unexpectedly the Qur'an was answering questions I had had since third grade. I was drawn to Islam, but scared of the

consequences (losing my family, and friends, not being able to find a PhD supervisor, leaving my culture, etc). For about six months I had a daily battle with myself. It was very intense. Every hour I would change my mind... convert...not convert... convert...not convert. Exhausting! Finally, someone sat me down and said, "If you die while believing you should have become Muslim, what will you tell God on the Day of Judgment?" So, on July 1, 1994, I went down to the local mosque to say my shahadah. And, the mosque was closed!



My husband said I didn't need an imam to become Muslim. He led me to the shahadah, standing outside the mosque on the pavement. We went home and he showed me how to make wudu and led me in my first prayer. The next day we attended an Islamic conference at the University. By then some of my husband's friends knew. One of them told the organizer and I was brought up on stage where I did my shahadah again. After I stepped off the stage a crowd rushed to congratulate me. I was given a hijab and an exquisite prayer mat that became my favorite. Of course, all the hugging, gifts, and good words made me feel embraced by the community. It was a wonderful feeling.

Your husband was already a Muslim, he most probably felt very happy for you. What about your close circle? How did they react to this decision?

My close PhD circle took my conversion in stride. They continued to be good friends and strong supports for me. I found new Muslim friends in a weekly halaqa run by a local Egyptian woman for converts. That first year was very intense. I don't think I would have survived as a Muslim were it not for that group. Some



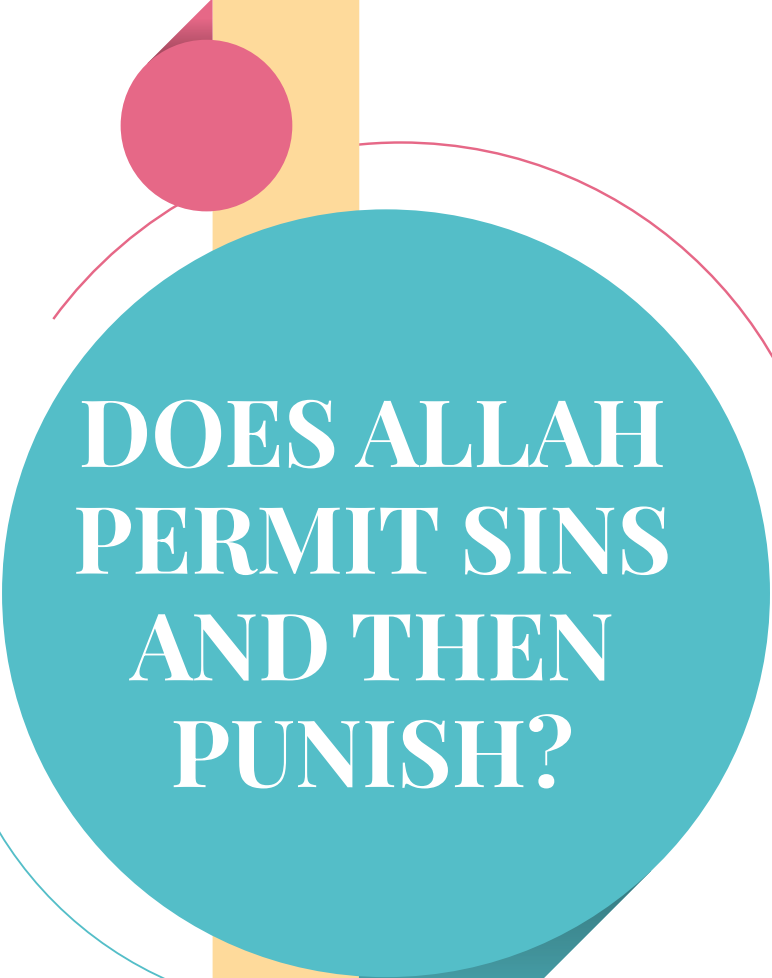
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of my former friends in Australia dropped me. I think it was hard to communicate all this via letters, email, and phone calls. It might have been easier if I'd still been there, as they would have been with me through the journey. Alhamdulillah, my family, childhood friends, and cousins have stuck by me.

What aspect of your life has changed the most since you converted to Islam?

There are internal and external changes. The most impactful external change has probably been wearing hijab and adapting to the modesty aspects of religion. The most significant change is internal – the satisfaction of the heart, as the Qur'an calls it – through remembrance of God. Knowing one's purpose on earth, what to prepare for (the afterlife), guidance for healthy living, and good character, all these are aspects of my life that have changed the most since becoming Muslim. One has a feeling of a solid foundation, or, to use another metaphor, of being wrapped in a comforting, protective coat.

Dr. Katherine Bullock, an Australian-born convert to Islam in 1994, is a lecturer in Islamic politics in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto, Mississauga. Her research focuses on Muslims in Canada, their history, contemporary lived experiences, political and civic engagement, and media representations of Islam and Muslims. Her books include Muslim Women Activists in North America: Speaking for Ourselves and Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes, which has been translated into several languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, and Turkish. Over the past few years, she has co-founded and served on the boards of several grassroots and academic organizations.



DOES ALLAH PERMIT SINS AND THEN PUNISH?

QUESTIONS ON MY MIND

Prof. Dr. Cagfer KARADAS

The question that haunts me is, "If Allah loves us, why does He allow us to commit sin and then punish us?"

There are three verdicts here. First, Allah loves us, second, He allows us to sin, and third, He punishes us. We can conclude from the divine revelation that Allah loves His servants. The prophets declared in the divine knowledge they brought that Allah is merciful and compassionate towards His servants. But does Allah allow people to commit sin and punish them even though He allows them to do so? There is no divine knowledge about it, and in fact is the contrary. To put it forward in simple terms, Allah does not tolerate any of His servants committing sins and does not want them to be punished unjustly.

But we say that Allah has His wrath along with His mercy.

It is true, that besides the mercy of Allah, there is also His wrath. His wrath is for those who sins His approval. Allah has told His servants not to sin, and ingrained in them that sinning is an evil action. Indeed, when we look at the world, we see many moral norms being put forward and agreed on collectively despite them coming from a variety of different religions, cultures, or regions. No society appreciates murder, adultery, or theft. These are considered as evil and sinful acts in every religion, every region and every culture. Although there are some differences, there is always some extent of a punishments seen in order to

deter one from these sins. Allah the Almighty wants goodness and beauty for His servants. He (swt) expects His servants to realize goodness and beauty with their own free will. He has sets some punishments for those who do not comply however Allah the Almighty does not set traps for anyone. Just as He tells us what beauty and ugliness are, He also informs us about the rewards and punishments with certain actions.

How is this similar to Allah's punishment of the sinner?

When Allah created His servants, He gave them two important characteristics, intelligence, and free will. When people use these two, that is, use these means properly, Allah will not have a sanction against them, on the contrary, there will be many rewards. Indeed, Allah not only gives these two means but also sends prophets as warners due to His mercy and compassion so that His servants do not fall into wrong or sin. In addition, He constantly warns the human mind and will with some signs He puts in nature. Similar to the way the state warned drivers on the road with road signs and their officers. If a servant ignores all these warnings and acts out of spite, they will inevitably be subject

to some punishment. The state's punishment for the wrongdoer is not just for the sake of punishment, but it is for preventing the wrongdoer and others from making the same mistake again. Otherwise, the good driver and the bad driver can't be distinguished. Not punishing the wrongdoing leads to greater disasters and suffering. Therefore the punishment imposed by the state is to ensure justice among the citizens. Allah the Almighty will also ordain punishment in the next world for the sins committed in this world to establish justice.

But wouldn't it be better if Allah prevented them?

This proposal is similar to saying that cars and roads should be banned in its totality to eradicate any chance of accidents and suffering. We would not like it if the state banned cars and roads similarly if Allah the Almighty ignored our minds and restricted our will, it would be the same. This offer means to say that Allah should take our minds and free will away from us. It is a serious contradiction to ask to be both smart and wilful and then demand restrictions. You cannot have both. Allah has given us two beautiful blessings that are reason and free will, prepared the conditions, set the rules, informed and warned us

of them. It makes no sense to say "We must have all kinds of freedom but no sanctions." This conclusion would then be alright to mercy but not to justice. If this demand is fulfilled, there will be many crimes committed without any repercussions. Would we be having the same thought process if those crimes were committed against us and harmed us? In this case would we not be calling out for justice and the lack of justice? This is in fact the essence of all human beings. Extremely compassionate towards thieves as long as they are not robbed themselves. They don't care if someone else is robbed and they say, "It's only items and objects which could be replaced." But when they are exposed to this themselves, they could go as far as to demanding the execution of the thief. This is exactly what selfishness looks like in our time. Those who do not want hell are those who have not suffered yet and are living in pleasure. In the meantime they are also afraid of death and the Judgment Day and this is because they enjoy a rather charming and glamorous life. The persecuted, and the afflicted seek justice. They want the perpetrators who cause the suffering to be punished severely.

So it's all relative. Everyone looks at the issues and evaluates them from their perspective.

Exactly. The young, happy, and hopeful person never wants to experience death, and never even thinks about it. Those who are old and suffering can never forget about death. We are happy when a child is born, but we are sad and even rebellious when we face death. However, it is the same Allah who gives life to the newborn and takes life. Nothing changes in the treatment of Allah the Exalted. He changes neither His creation nor His laws nor His promises.

So what changes?

Humans change. Allah the Almighty will never impose a penal sanction on people as long as they don't change themselves, deteriorate their nature, and violate the rules. On the contrary, He gives them rewards more than they expect. He bestows them His paradise and honors them by accepting them into His presence. However, a servant, who loses one's humanity by sinking into evil, loses one's essence, constantly breaks the rules, and does not show any remorse, is of course subject to Allah's justice. As they must and should be. Otherwise, justice won't be served on behalf of the victims and sufferers. Allah ordains a punishment according to the crime of the perpetrator but never punishes them above their crime.

THE ONE WHO GRANTS SECURITY: AL-MU'MIN

Fatma BAYRAM

Cowardice is the root cause of all mental disorders. It does not matter to the coward whether what he fears is something to be feared or not. Cowards fear simply by virtue of their cowardice. They fear everything. Getting sick, being disliked, worrying about sustenance, losing their title, fame, loved ones, power, the list goes on. Indeed, these fears stem from Satan (Al-i 'Imran, 3:175). Those who fall prey to satanic intimidation resort to seeking refuge in unimaginable things. This is the breeding ground for polytheism and those who drag people into polytheism derive their power from these morbid fears.

Those who delve into the nature of human personality inform us that the pursuit of security is a fundamental and essential need, while fear is an incidental state arising from the disruption of psychological integrity. That is why, and thankfully, among the names of our Lord, there is no name that means “the One Who frightens”, but there is the name “al-Mu'min”, which

means “the Granter of Security”.

The name “mu'min”, which expresses the unwavering trust in the essence of our Lord, derives from the root “amn”. The term “amn/amniyah” connotes the state of being secure, free from fear, and at peace. Stemming from this root, the name “mu'min” signifies “one who ensures the security of others, one whose word and promises are trusted”. The manifestation of trust, embodied by this name, is such a fundamental necessity for the continuity of life on Earth that it is said, “The life in this universe, created by the manifestation of Allah’s name al-Khaliq, continues through the manifestation of His name al-Mu'min.”

The cessation of trust inevitably leads to the demise of the will to live, marking the end of life itself.

The name “mu'min” also connotes “one who believes, confirms, and validates”. In this regard, Allah Himself has bestowed upon those who believe in Him and His messengers the name “mu'min” in the Holy Book,

thereby honoring them by designating them with one of His own attributes. In this manner, our Lord, as if by making the desired character traits into our names, instills them within us. He expects believers, as a necessary consequence of bearing this attribute, to be individuals of impeccable integrity, trustworthy in their words and promises, and ethical in their conduct, thereby inspiring trust in those around them. The name “Amin,” given to our Prophet by the people of Mecca even before his prophethood, also derives from the same root and signifies that all people trusted him as a result of his character.

Just as He has created “trust,” our Lord, the Creator of “faith,” has bestowed upon our hearts the capacity to believe, one of the countless manifestations of the name “al-Mu'min.” For this reason, it is impossible for a human being to believe in nothing at all, and even denial constitutes a form of belief. In light of this, Allah invites humanity not merely to believe but to have faith in that

“which originates from Him”. The heart that confirms the knowledge that comes from Allah becomes a mu'min and, as an inevitable consequence of the Creator and the Informer being one and the same, achieves perfect harmony with creation.

For those who possess faith grounded in knowledge from Allah, neither the intricacies of this world, nor the mysteries of the Hereafter, nor the occurrences in between, present themselves as enigmas. Such a heart discerns the position of every entity within the hierarchy of existence, attributing no undue significance to anything. From this very state of mind emerges tranquility, the ultimate goal of life in hearts that have embraced falsehood and error, the places of things and events have been upended, and order has been disrupted. The possessors of such hearts perpetually dwell in a state of anxiety, fear, and panic. They are incapable of trusting anything or anyone. In their eyes, this world offers no one worthy of trust. People



are potential enemies. The insecurity that plagues their inner world is so terrifying that they can only express it by attributing it to others. This terrifying loneliness can only be overcome by invoking the name of Allah, seeking refuge in Him, and placing unwavering trust in Him. When an individual seeks refuge in Allah with awareness and sincerity, rather than mere habit, Allah will not turn him away (Al-i 'Imran, 3:101; Anfal, 8:64). Indeed, one of the meanings of the name "al-Mu'min" is the grantor

of safety to those who seek refuge in Him, taking them under His special protection.

Indeed, every being in creation that we trust and seek refuge in is a manifestation of the security and tranquility embodied in Allah's name, "al-Mu'min." Indeed, all the names of our Lord manifest in the universe through causes. According to psychology, the most crucial factor in fostering a sense of security in a child is the presence of a mother who possesses a calm

and serene disposition, consistently providing care for her offspring regardless of circumstances.

According to Al-Ghazali, individuals who strive to ensure safety and security embody the manifestations of the name "mu'min." Mothers who instill a sense of confidence in their children's view of the world and fathers who provide secure homes are endowed with the manifestations of this name. Individuals who have assumed leadership positions, regardless of the circumstances,

should strive to embody the manifestations of this name by refraining from falsehood, upholding their promises, and safeguarding the confidential information entrusted to them regarding those they govern. Among servants, those who are most worthy of this name are the prophets and those who guide people to the path of Allah, facilitating their salvation from the true source of fear, which is eternal torment.

KOSOVO'S ISLAMIC JOURNEY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE KOSOVO ISLAMIC UNION

Bunyamin ALBAYRAK

Religious Services Counselor in Pristina



It is suggested that the original word Kosovo comes from “kos” meaning “blackbird” in Slavic, Bulgarian, and Czech languages. In Ottoman sources, it is sometimes written as “Kosovo” with the letter “kaf”. Some suggest the word’s origin lies in terms like “kosa” (meaning “scythe”) or “kose-ova” (meaning “barren plain”).

Kosovo is widely recognized as one of the oldest inhabited regions in the Balkans. It has a surface area of 10,877 square meters and a population of about 2.5 million (including the diaspora). Situated in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula, in the southern region of the European continent, Kosovo serves as a bridge between Türkiye and Western European countries. Kosovo is bordered by Serbia to the northeast and east, Sandzak to the northwest, Montenegro and Albania to the west, and North Macedonia to the south.

Pristina (Prishtine) serves as the capital city of Kosovo. The majority of Kosovo’s population is composed of Albanians, with Islam being the predominant religion among a large portion of the populace. Following Albanians in terms of population density are Serbs and Turks, while Bosniaks, Croats, and Romanians also form part of Kosovo’s diverse ethnic tapestry.

Findings gathered from various historical investigations indicate that traces of religion in Kosovo date back to ancient times. Limited research on the beliefs of the Illyrians, considered the ancestors of Albanians and inhabitants of these lands during antiquity, suggests that they adhered to a pagan faith. Initially, the beliefs of the Illyrians centered around various celestial and animal symbols, including the sun and serpents (heliolatry). However, in later periods, the Dardanian Queen emerged as the most prominent religious symbol in the region. A sculpture depicting this aforementioned queen, which has endured through the ages, remains an ancient emblem of Pristina Municipality, the capital of Kosovo.

On the other hand, major powers like Rome and Byzantium, which ruled over this region for centuries, also exerted influence in matters of religion and faith, striving for the spread of their religions. Following the Edict of Milan (Constantinian era) in 313 AD, which granted freedom of religion, and subsequently its recognition as the official religion of the Roman State in 380 AD (during the reign of Theodosius the Great), Christianity began to spread rapidly in the regions under Roman dominion. As a result of

dogmatic disagreements between Christian clergy and factions, the Roman Empire, which had split into Eastern and Western halves in 395 AD, intensified its influence over the Balkans. Consequently, the Balkans became a region where the borders of these two empires intersected and their spheres of influence competed. Consequently, the Western Roman Empire maintained its influence in cities along the western coast of the Balkans, such as Dures and Shkoder,

while the Byzantine Empire established its dominion in the southern, inland, and eastern regions. These political developments and migrations also had a significant impact on the religious landscape of the region.

In the areas under the control of the Western Roman Empire, efforts were made to propagate Western Christianity, namely the Catholic Church, while in the regions dominated by the Byzantine Empire, the Eastern Church, or Orthodoxy, spread. Thus, until the Ottoman era, the Catholic and Orthodox churches remained influential central institutions as the official religions of the two empires in the Balkans. In the region encompassing present-day Kosovo, the vast majority of the indigenous population and nearly all of the Slavic migrants had adopted Christianity as their religion during that era.

With the arrival of the Ottomans in the Balkans, the vast majority of the Kosovar population embraced Islam as their religion. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Croats in the Balkans, along with a small segment of Albanians, adhere to Catholicism. Meanwhile, Eastern Orthodoxy has taken root among populations like Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians. Conversely, the majority



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of Bosniaks and Albanians have embraced Islamic teachings, and these diverse communities have coexisted in the region for centuries. It is also known that Jews lived in Kosovo during the Ottoman period.

As is the case in many parts of the world, present-day Kosovo is home to a diverse array of religious communities, each striving to maintain its presence. In addition to the major religious communities of Muslims, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and Jews, there are also many smaller and distinct religious groups operating in Kosovo. According to the official census conducted in 2011, the population of Kosovo comprises 95% Muslims, 2% Orthodox Christians, 1% Catholics, and 2% adherents of other religions and beliefs. Muslims in Kosovo are primarily composed of individuals from Albanian, Turkish, Bosniak, and Romanian ethnic backgrounds. Catholics are predominantly of Albanian ethnicity, while Orthodox Christians are primarily Serbs and Montenegrins. Although Muslims are the majority in Kosovo, their influence today is less than that of other religions. Especially in the political arena, Muslims remain in the background. Adherents of other faiths enjoy certain privileges. Following the recent war, Christians have been brought to the forefront, partly due to

the influence of various organizations from the Western world.

History and administrative structure of the Kosovo Islamic Union

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Kosovo is a secular state and is neutral in matters of religion and conscience. It states that no religious group shall be granted

privileges or subjected to discrimination. According to the constitution, religious communities are free to independently regulate their internal organization and conduct religious activities and ceremonies.

Established in 1948 and recognized as the sole authority on Islam by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Islamic Union (KIU) is an autonomous institution that operates independently from the state in providing religious services.

It is reasonable to acknowledge that the establishment of Islamic life and institutions in Kosovo began with the region's incorporation into the Ottoman Empire.

During the Ottoman era, as was the case in other regions under the authority of the Ottoman Empire, the religious affairs of Muslims in Kosovo were administered by regional muftiships affiliated with the Sheikh al-Islam in Istanbul. The withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from Kosovo left Kosovar Muslims without spiritual leadership, and an unfavorable social and political situation emerged in the regions that fell under Slavic occupation.

The administrative institutions of the Islamic Religious Community began to be established in 1919, under the orders of

the Ministry of Religious Affairs, during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. According to the circular, a Muslim community could be formed in a settlement if there were at least 100 Muslim households in the village or neighborhood.

In 1920, there were 14 regional muftiships in Kosovo, with the main muftiate located in Pristina. During this period, the institutional organization of Muslims was divided into two. Muslims in Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia were affiliated with the Ra'is al-Ulema, headquartered in Sarajevo, while Muslims in Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro were affiliated with the Grand Mufti, headquartered in Belgrade.

After the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on January 6, 1929, there was a change in the Islamic Religious Community. Until that time, the institutions affiliated with the former Grand Muftiate, which was headquartered in Belgrade, were connected to the newly established Majlis al-Ulama in Skopje, including Kosovo.

During the years 1941-1944, the Islamic Religious Community in Kosovo was affiliated with the Muslim Community headquartered in Tirana, along with the Chief Muftis of Prizren and Pristina.

With the conclusion of World War II, Kosovo was



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separated from Albania and placed under the dominion of Yugoslavia. This political separation also triggered a religious divide. The headquarters of the Kosovo Islamic Religious Community, which had been affiliated with Albania until that time, had to be relocated from Tirana to Sarajevo. Consequently, from 1945 to 1990, it was affiliated with the Religious Union of the Yugoslav Federation, headquartered in Sarajevo.

The early 1990s marked a new era of significant transformations for the people of Kosovo. The revocation of Kosovo's autonomy by Slobodan Milosevic during the Yugoslav era triggered widespread outrage among Albanians and ignited their efforts for secession from Serbia. During this period, on July 2, 1990, the Kosovar regional assembly declared Kosovo's independence. The religious sphere mirrored the separation efforts initiated in the political arena, and on December 11, 1993, the Kosovo Islamic Union Assembly declared its independence, breaking away from the previous presidency. Thus, a new era dawned for the Kosovo Islamic Union.

Today, the Kosovo Islamic Union is an independent institution serving the Muslim communities of Kosovo, including those residing in the Preševo Valley within Serbia's

borders, as well as the Kosovar diaspora living abroad. The Kosovo Islamic Union has its headquarters in Pristina and possesses its own unique symbols, flag, emblem, and seal. The Kosovo Islamic Union's mission is to plan, organize, coordinate, supervise, and ensure the implementation of religious life in the region. Through its organs and institutions, the Union is tasked with ensuring that Muslims live in accordance with Islamic principles, preserving Islamic religious consciousness, and promoting the social, economic, scientific, cultural, and spiritual development of Muslims. To further advance its mission, KIU has established within its structure educational institutions such as the Hafiz Institute (institute for Qur'an memorization), madrasah, and the Faculty of Islamic Sciences.

The Faculty of Islamic Sciences, madrasahs, and other institutions have autonomy in educational, academic, administrative, and financial matters and are governed by individuals appointed by the Presidency of the Islamic Union. The monitoring of operations and the expenses of the institutions are covered through the Islamic Union, the Islamic Union Councils, and the Bayt al-Mal.

The structure of the organs of the Islamic

Union of the Republic of Kosovo is established within the framework of its constitution, drafted in 1947, and subsequently restructured and finalized in 1949. The aforementioned constitution has undergone amendments over the years. The constitution currently in effect is the one that was finalized with some amendments made at the meeting of the Kosovo Islamic Union Assembly in September 2013. Accordingly, the structure of the Islamic Union operating in Kosovo consists of the Congregation Council (in each mosque), the Local Islamic Union Council (municipal muftiates), the Islamic Union Assembly (in the center), and the Islamic Union Presidency (center).

The Kosovo Islamic Union is divided into eight regions. Seven of these regions are located in Kosovo (Pristina, Gjlani, Mitrovica, Prizren, Peja, Ferizaj, and Gjakova), while the other is located in the Preševo Valley (Albanian Presevo, Bujanovac, and Medveda). Within each region, there are the councils of the Islamic Union operating in that region. The Islamic Union's councils are composed of the following regional councils: Pristina Region: Pristina, Podujevo, Lipjan, Gllgoc (Drenas), Fushe Kosova, and Obilic; Gjlani Region: Gjlani, Kamenica, and Viti; Mitrovica Region: Mitrovica, Vushtrri,

and Skenderaj; Prizren Region: Prizren, Dragash, Suhareka, and Gora; Peja Region: Peja, Istog, Dečan, and Klina; Ferizaj Region: Ferizaj, Kaçanik, Hani i Elezit, and Shtime; Gjakova Region: Gjakova, Rahovec, and Malisheva; Preševo Region: Preševo, Bujanovac, and Medveda.

The establishment of close ties between the Kosovo Islamic Union, the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye, and the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has revitalized the centuries-old customs, traditions, and historical ties of Muslims in Kosovo.

The Islamic Union of the Republic of Kosovo, which has adopted the task of contributing to the social, economic, scientific, cultural, and spiritual development of the Kosovar Muslims, continues to strengthen its administrative structure and bodies day by day and continues to serve both in its central organization and regional boards, as well as in its affiliated units and institutions. Through its mosques, schools, madrasahs, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, and hafiz institutions, the Islamic Union of the Republic of Kosovo contributes to equipping Muslims with religious education, transmitting traditional Islamic teachings that align with the fabric of society, and fostering an authentic understanding of Islam.

A GENIUS RAISED IN THE PALACE OF MAHMUD OF GHAZNI: AL-BIRUNI

Koray SERBETCI



As the calendars recorded the 10th century, a child was born near the city of Kath, within the present-day borders of Uzbekistan. Little did anyone know that this child, through his unparalleled works, would propel Islamic civilization to its prime in the 11th century. By demonstrating an insatiable thirst for knowledge in a wide range of subjects this child, al-Biruni, had already captured the attention of those around him at a very young age. From a young age, al-Biruni came under the patronage of the Khwarazmian dynasty and received a royal court education. The renowned mathematician Abu Nasr Ibn Iraq, whom he revered as his mentor, was the main figure who had a significant influence on him in his bringing up.

A Muslim genius

Al-Biruni is a perfect example of an Islamic scholar in every aspect. He had a versatile field of study in accordance with his time. We can describe him as a philosopher, traveler, historian, geographer, linguist, mathematician, astronomer, poet, and physicist.

In contrast to the present era, during the 10th and 11th centuries, it was common for accomplished

scholars to engage in research and produce works across multiple fields of study. He conducted research in all these fields of study and produced important works. In this regard, al-Biruni would become a revered Muslim scholar, even for Leonardo da Vinci, centuries later in Europe.

In the palace of Mahmud of Ghazni

The pivotal event that shaped al-Biruni's life was his recognition by the Turkish ruler Mahmud of Ghazni. The great ruler requests that he be informed of the prominent poets and philosophers in Khwarazm. Upon hearing their names, the ruler summons renowned scholars like al-Biruni and Ibn Sina to his court. In response to the request of the Ghaznavid sultan, the Khwarazmian ruler instructed the scholars to depart for the Ghaznavid court. Accordingly, al-Biruni settled in the court of Mahmud of Ghazni, the conqueror of India, and with this accompanied him on his expeditions to India.

An intriguing incident occurred during al-Biruni's time at the Ghaznavid court. When an envoy from a country in the north of Asia told Mahmud of Ghazni that he

had not seen that the sun set for months, on hearing such a thing, the sultan initially thought that the envoy was mocking him and was about to order an imprisonment when al-Biruni came to the rescue and saved the envoy by explaining to Mahmud of Ghazni that this incident could be in fact, true.

Indian lands

This incident opened new doors for al-Biruni as now he was to join Mahmud of Ghazni's expeditions to India. Al-Biruni embarked on this journey to explore the language, customs, and traditions of this land. Upon his return from India, he wrote down his observations and research, and in 1030 he published his masterpiece, titled Tahqiq al-Hind. In his magnum opus, al-Biruni dedicated forty chapters to Indian astronomical studies and eleven chapters to Indian religion. Al-Biruni engaged in a comparative analysis of the philosophy of the Hindu sacred text, "the Vedas", with the views of Sufi mystics and compared the works of Indian thinkers to those of Greek philosophers.

In his work, he made significant analyses, such as the fact that India never produced a Socrates-like figure due to the influence of mythology on Indian



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thought. Despite this critique, he undertook an endeavor in the scientific realm by translating numerous Sanskrit works from ancient India into Arabic.

Another important work of al-Biruni is al-Athar al-Baqiyah. This work is a comprehensive examination of the calendars and festivals of Iran, Syria, Greece, Judaism, Christian Saba, and Arabia and written in an objective point of view. While preparing

this work, al-Biruni worked as a true scholar, devoted himself to research, and scientifically analyzed various texts and traditions, including the Gospel.

Master of mathematics and astronomy

Al-Biruni also translated Euclid's ancient Greek civilization works "Element" and Ptolemy's into Sanskrit, facilitating the exchange of scientific knowledge between civilizations.



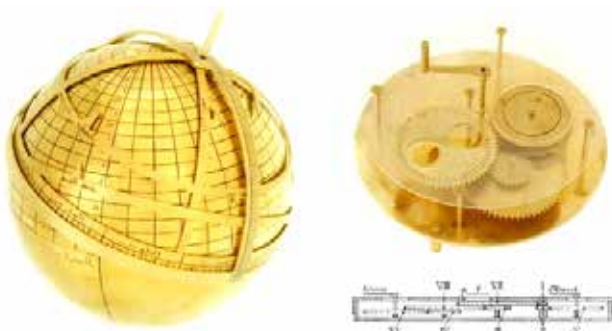
THE PIVOTAL EVENT THAT SHAPED AL-BIRUNI'S LIFE WAS HIS RECOGNITION BY THE TURKISH RULER MAHMUD OF GHAZNI.

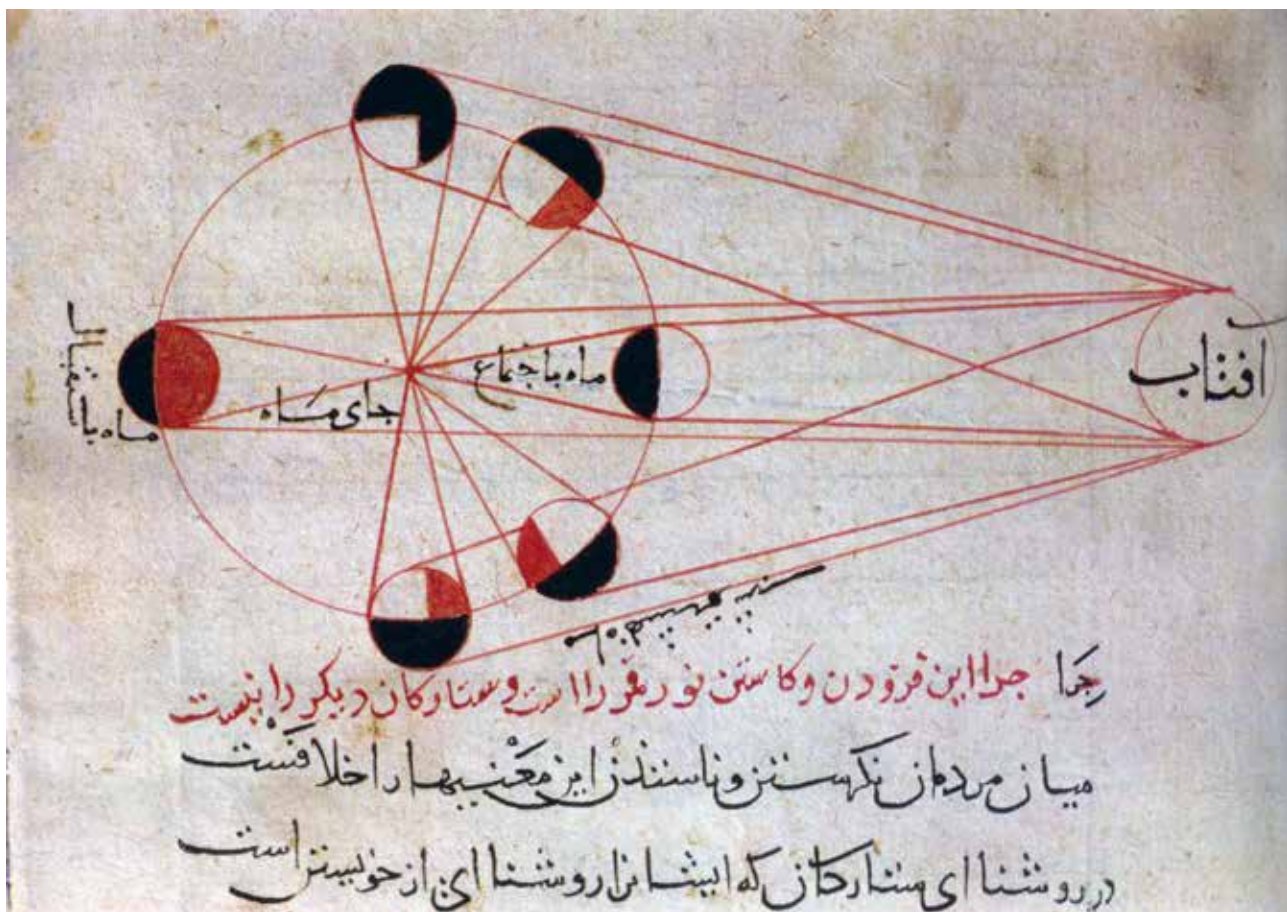
Al-Biruni was a polymath who dived into virtually every field of knowledge in his era. However, his most notable contribution was undoubtedly in the realm of mathematics, particularly his groundbreaking work on Indian numerals. In addition to this, he also wrote works on astrolabes, planispheres and spheres which showed the movements of the stars, that were then used in the astronomical studies.

Al-Biruni continued to be shown the same respect at the Ghaznavid court during the reign of Sultan Mas'ud, the son of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, who ascended to the throne after his father's passing. He prepared astronomical tables for Sultan Mas'ud. In recognition of this valuable work, Sultan Mas'ud bestowed precious gifts upon al-Biruni. However, the great scholar would often take only what he needed and return the rest to the treasury.

Long before the Westerners

While its expression was prohibited by the Catholic Church in Europe at the time, al-Biruni, as a Muslim scholar, was aware of and articulated a scientific truth in his works: the roundness of the Earth. Indeed, this





Al-Biruni's models showing different lunar states

alone is a highly significant point for determining the state of science in the Islamic Middle Ages. He was also the first to articulate the idea of a force that pulls everything towards the center of the Earth. Centuries would have to pass before Isaac Newton would articulate this concept in Europe.

Again, al-Biruni, as a Muslim scholar, also argued that astronomical data would still be accurate if it were assumed that the Earth rotates on its axis once a day and around the Sun once a year. In line with these observations,

he drew attention to the possibility that the Indus River Valley was once a seabed, and he studied various rocks from the perspective of nature, medicine, and commerce.

In addition to all this, al-Biruni conducted research on stones, determined the specific gravity of eighteen precious stones, and reached the conclusion that the specific gravity of an object is equal to the volume of water it overflows.

In his mathematical work, he developed a method

for doubling a number continuously without the need for repeated additions. It was al-Biruni himself who introduced the proof of theorems to geometry.

Furthermore, in his astronomical encyclopedia, he authored summaries of geography and mathematics. Utilizing the principle of hydrostatics, he provided a scientific explanation for the functioning of springs and artesian wells. With his contributions to the natural sciences, al-Biruni was also a prominent researcher in the field

of social sciences. For instance, he delved into the history of the Ghaznavids, Sabuktigin, and Khwarazm and wrote a book about them.

This Muslim scholar, who dedicated his life to knowledge, never gave up on research until his last moments. Even shortly before his passing, while ill and well into his eighties, he discussed scholarly matters with an old friend who came to visit him. His scholarly endeavors, spanning a lifetime, only came to an end when he breathed his last in the city of Ghazni.

THE STAR OF KAIROUAN: SIDI ‘UQBA MOSQUE

Sumeyra CELIK

Historical structures play a crucial role in leaving a mark, a color, and a voice for the future. They reflect every aspect of the atmosphere of the period in which they were built with their walls, decorations, and style. They bear the traces of their masters, their founders, and the rulers of the era who initiated their construction. Places of worship, in particular,

assume primary and prior responsibility in this matter compared to other structures. Humanity's need to construct places of worship throughout its journey on Earth began with altars and has continued in various forms. Most of the monumental works of the Islamic world are places of worship. Reflecting the world and the universe, the concept of tawhid, and

the spirit of their era in numerous ways, mosques have adorned landscapes from east to west, serving as a hallmark of Islamic lands.

Tunisia, known as Ifriqiya during the Phoenician and Roman periods and boasting a rich history spanning three millennia, is home to an important place of worship that bears the marks of the past. Kairouan, the first Islamic

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city in North Africa, is another city where this rich cultural heritage is evident. The construction of the Sidi 'Uqba Mosque in Kairouan, which was conquered during the caliphate of Uthman, marked the beginning of the establishment of a magnificent city. Kairouan, a center for carpet weaving, handicrafts, tourism, and grain trade, is one of Tunisia's most important cities. Located in the heart of the desert and strategically positioned far from any maritime threats, Kairouan was established in a remarkably short period of five years. Situated

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near the north and in the heart of the Sahara, where local identities and traditional atmospheres are better preserved, the city is seen as the gateway to North Africa for Muslims and is considered the fourth-holiest city. Derived from the word “karwan” (caravan), the name “Kairouan” acquired its meaning as a “military camp” or “headquarters” after the conquest, due to the establishment of a military base there to ensure the region's security. Kairouan, having hosted numerous students from Ifriqiya, the Maghreb, and Andalusia, has made its historical mark as

a center of learning, homing many scholars, writers, poets, physicians, and philosophers. In a city dominated by local elements, the belief that the water continuously drawn from the 20-meter Barutta Well by a blindfolded camel is connected to zamzam water and that those who drink it will return to Kairouan persists. Having been designated the Islamic Culture Capital in 2009, Kairouan has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The most magnificent structure in Kairouan, the cultural capital of Tunisia, is the fortress-

like Sidi 'Uqba Mosque. According to legends, the location of the mosque was determined by a dream of the commander of the conquest, and its minaret was the first part to be constructed. Founded in 670, the mosque is also known as the Great Mosque of Kairouan or the Jami' al-Kabir. The mosque, which was damaged during the Berber invasion, has been destroyed and rebuilt numerous times. Despite these destructions, the original mihrab from the early period has been preserved, and restoration and expansion efforts have been carried out based on this mihrab. With the change in political leadership, subsequent additions and expansions have been carefully carried out with a focus on preserving the original mihrab. The mosque, which also bears traces of Roman architectural influence, is supported by 365 columns. The prayer hall consists of seven arched bays and seventeen aisles. Tunis, conquered by Hayreddin Barbarossa in 1534, came under Ottoman rule. A sundial was added to the mosque during a restoration in 1624. Each wall of this majestic place of worship, whose floor is covered with marble, remains alive to this day as a work of art of Islamic aesthetics that has found its expression in the West. Through a comprehensive



restoration project completed in 1972, the Sidi 'Uqba Mosque was brought to its present state.

When viewed from the outside, the mosque resembles a fortress with its tall buttresses, and its square body and irregular quadrilateral plan bear the marks of history. One can enter the mosque through eight gates, referring to the eight gates of heaven. Its courtyard is surrounded on four sides by double porticoes and marble columns with horseshoe arches and decorated with geometric and floral compositions.

The arches are designed to be tall, maximizing the amount of natural light that enters the interior space. The Kufic inscriptions, decorations, and plant motifs, inscribed on stone and wood, reflect the aesthetic of early Islamic art in the mosque's ornamentation. These decorations, serving as examples for the ornamentation of Maghreb mosques, are simple in design. Located in the northwest corner of the mosque, the minaret is approximately ten meters wide and thirty-two meters tall, consisting of three tiers.

The square minaret holds symbolic significance as it is considered as one of the earliest minarets in the Islamic world and the place where the first adhan in North Africa is believed to have been recited. Moreover, it serves as a precursor for the minaret form that would become prevalent in North African and Andalusian architecture.

The decorations intensifies in front of and around the mihrab. While the minaret is primarily adorned with geometric motifs, the mihrab features grape vine branches and leaves, grape clusters, pomegranates, date palm branches, and various floral patterns. The mihrab's ornamentation is like a seal that proclaims the mosque as a work of art. Located in the center of the qibla wall, the mihrab's niche is adorned with painted wooden decorations of grape vine branches and leaves. Except for the domes over the mihrab and the entrance to the central courtyard, the mosque has a flat roof, reminiscent of the Qiblah masjid in Masjid al-Aqsa. The original minbar of the Sidi 'Uqba Mosque, likely dating back to the Abbasid era, has survived from the 9th century. This mosque, one of the monumental sanctuaries of the Islamic world, is like an oasis in the desert, connecting the past to the present.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



How is tayammum performed?

Tayammum is the cleansing ritual performed in the form of wiping the face and both arms with clean soil or something of the type of soil to remove the state of ritual impurity in which there is no water or it is not possible to use the water available. It is performed by touching hands on clean soil or something of the type of soil and wiping over face and both arms with these hands. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "But if you are ill, on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or been intimate with your wives and cannot find water, then purify yourselves with clean earth, wiping your faces and hands." (Nisa, 4:43; Ma'idah, 5:6). The person who is going to perform tayammum makes intention for which type of ritual purification he will perform tayammum (for minor ablution or ghusl). He strikes his hands on a clean soil or something of the type of soil as his fingers are separated from each other, moves his hands back and forth, raises and shakes them off smoothly. He wipes over his entire face with their palms once. Then he strikes his hands on soil again and wipes over right lower arm to the elbow by using the palm of his left hand; then he wipes over his left lower arm to the elbow similarly by using the palm of his right hand.

What are the things that invalidate tayammum?

The things that invalidate ablution also invalidate tayammum. Moreover, tayammum is invalidated when the excuses that allow one to perform tayammum, such as finding enough water for ablution or ghusl, recovery from a disease, and having the possibility to use water, end (Mawsili, al-Ikhtiyar, I, 86).

How should we perform ablution?

Wudu or minor ablution is explained as “the practice of washing certain organs with water and applying masah over some others with a wet hand by following a procedure” (Marghinani, al-Hidayah, I, 93-94).

The statement in the Holy Qur'an on ablution is as follows, “O believers! When you rise up for prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of impurity, then take a full bath. But if you are ill, on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or have been intimate with your wives and cannot find water, then purify yourselves with clean earth by wiping your faces and hands.” (Ma'idah, 5:6) Prophet Muhammad (saw) practically showed Muslims how to perform ablution (Marghinani, al-Hidayah, I, 102) and also stated that no prayer established without ablution would be accepted in the presence of Allah (Bukhari, Wudu, 2; Ibn Majah, Taharah, 47).

In accordance with its sunnah and recommended acts, minor ablution is performed as follows: (Bukhari, Wudu, 7; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 50) Firstly ablution by intending to perform ablution and reciting Basmalah, start by washing your hands three times up to the wrists by rubbing the spaces between your fingers. Rinse your mouth and draw water into your nose three times with your right hand and blow it out with the help of your left hand. Wash your face three times. Then, wash your right and left lower arms up to and including the elbows three times. Wipe over your head once by wetting your right hand and using palm and inner part of your fingers. Wet your hands again and wipe back of your ear by your thumbs and inside of your ears by index finger or little finger, after that, wipe over on the neck by the back of the both hands together. Wash right foot first, then wash left one up to the ankles starting from fingertips, including ankle bones. Take due care for washing the space between fingers

(Kasani, Bada'i, I, 23-25).

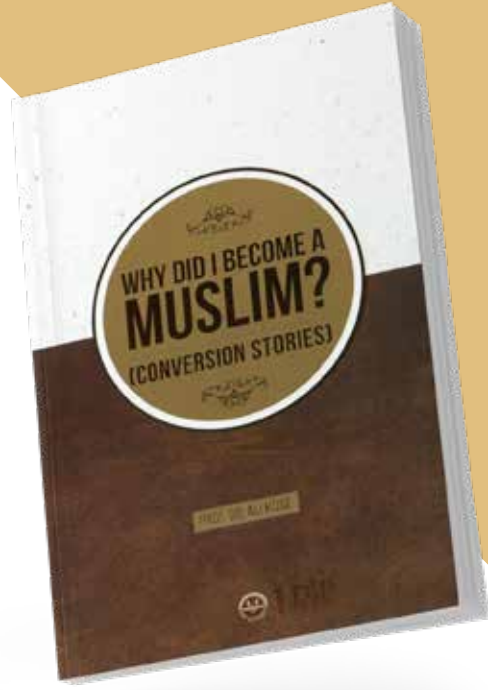
In which situations tayammum can be performed instead of ablution?

Tayammum is an exceptional practice that substitutes ablution and ghusl under certain circumstances; however, it can only be practiced if there is a certain excuse. Tayammum is performed in place of both minor ablution and ghusl if one cannot find enough water to perform these or he finds the water but cannot use it. The fact that tayammum may be performed when one cannot find water is clearly stated in verses (Nisa, 4:43; Ma'idah, 5:6). Also the hadiths about tayammum confirm the ruling of the Qur'an to perform tayammum when a person cannot find water. Tayammum is performed in the following circumstances:

a) If one cannot find enough water for ablution or ghusl, b) Lack of access to water even though there is water, c) If the water cannot be used due to some obstacles such as extremely cold weather or not finding a place to have a bath, d) If it poses a risk to use water due to health conditions, e) If one will get sick, his sickness will exacerbate, or his recovery period will be extended in the event that he has a bath or washes the organs of ablution, f) If one is unable to wash half or more of his body or organs of ablution due to wounds, burns, etc. A person less than half of whose organs are wounded washes his healthy organs and wipes over the wounded ones.

WHY DID I BECOME A MUSLIM?

Meryem KILIC



The religion of Islam shows all humanity a way that ensures salvation in this world and the Hereafter. Its aim is to establish peace, security, and tranquillity on earth through the revelation of the goodness in human creation. The Holy Qur'an, the source of Islam, provides guidance and prescriptions for all humanity to develop a vision of life in this direction. Many people research Islam and become Muslims, influenced by the life-giving messages of the Holy Quran and our sublime religion.

Published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the book "Why Did I Become a Muslim?" tells the conversion stories of various people. The work

prepared by Prof. Dr. Ali Kose comprises the biographical accounts of numerous individuals who have converted to Islam, focusing on those from Europe and America. These accounts elucidate the motivations underlying their decision to embrace Islam and the factors that led them to pursue this religious choice. One of the key points of interest in the book is that individuals who opt to embrace Islam do so as a result of being influenced by the teachings of the Holy Quran. In this regard, the guidance and convincing answers provided by the Holy Quran form the basis of many of the stories presented in the book. In addition to explaining

how the Holy Quran should be believed in and utilized, its explanations pertaining to the existence of the universe and the order of life constituted a significant factor in the conversion of individuals to Islam. These individuals, who have engaged in a lifelong pursuit of meaning, attest to the profound transformation they underwent upon acquiring knowledge about the life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the tenets of Islam. Furthermore, they assert that Islam fulfilled every aspect of their lives and guides them towards virtuous conduct.

The diverse life stories presented in this book offer numerous instances where

the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the principles of Islam are exemplified. These narratives illustrate the universality and practical applicability of Islamic teachings, providing insights into the diverse experiences and perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds. We are pleased to present this valuable work, which offers insights into the experiences of reverts before and after becoming Muslims, as well as the impact of Islam on human life. We hope that our esteemed readers will find this information beneficial and that it will contribute to a better understanding of Islam and its place in society.



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**“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent
example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last
Day, and remembers Allah often.”**

(Ahzab, 33:21)