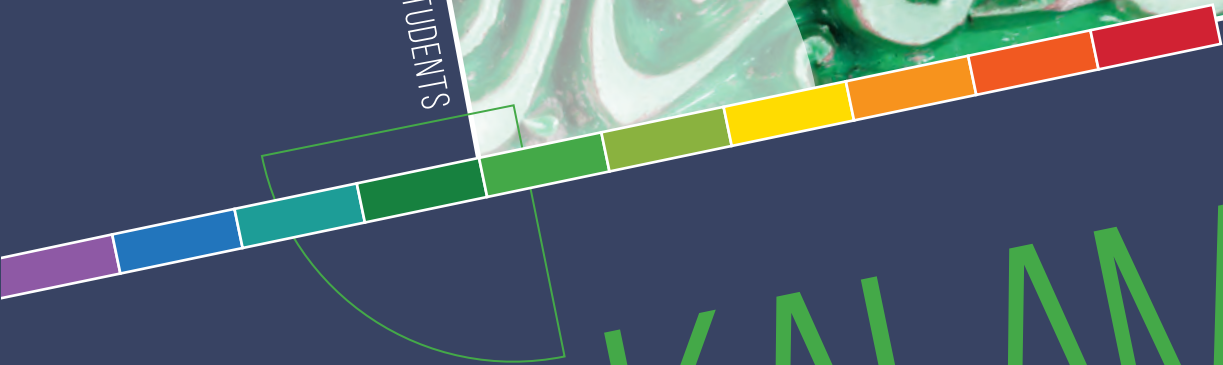
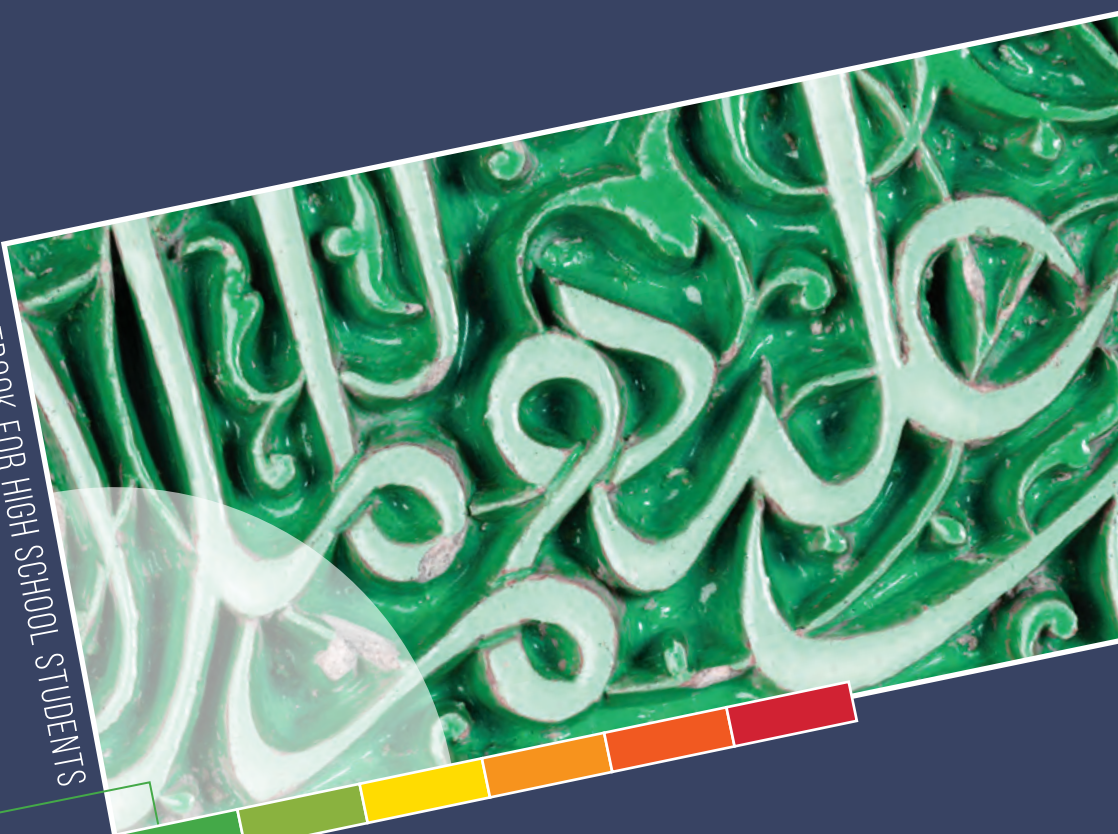


A TEXTBOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



# KALAM

ISLAMIC THEOLOGY



PUBLICATIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

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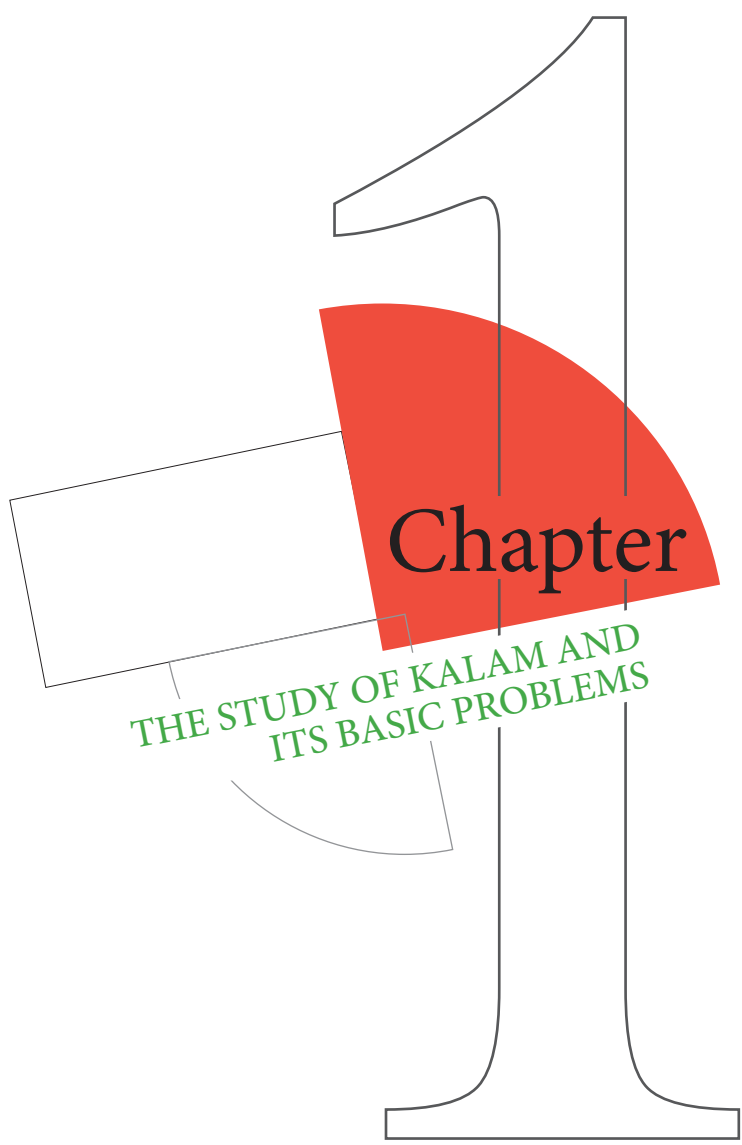
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Chapter

THE STUDY OF KALAM AND  
ITS BASIC PROBLEMS



## THE STUDY OF KALAM AND ITS BASIC PROBLEMS

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

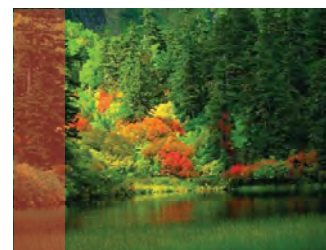
1. What other terms are used in order to express the study of kalam? Research.
2. What do you understand from the statement “He who has no reason has no religion”? Explain it.
3. Read the 72nd verse from Surah al-Ahzab (33). What could be meant by the word “trust (amanah)” mentioned in this verse? Read the interpretation of this verse from a book of Qur’anic exegesis.
4. Read the meanings of “Knowledge, Value, and Faith” from a dictionary of philosophical terms.
5. Which idea is emphasized in the following statement?: “Religion without science is blind, science without religion is lame.” Talk with your friends.

### 1. Definition, Subject and Goal of the Study of Kalam

The word *kalam* literally means speech, word, and expression. For example, *Kalamullah* means the word of Allah (jj).<sup>1</sup> This is why the Holy Qur’an is also called “the word of Allah (*Kalamullah*)”. In terms of the science of *kalam*, speech means to talk meaningfully about Allah, the universe, and human beings after thinking and searching in accordance with the principles of the revelation.

In Islamic theology, the order and harmony of the universe are accepted as evidence proving the existence of Allah.

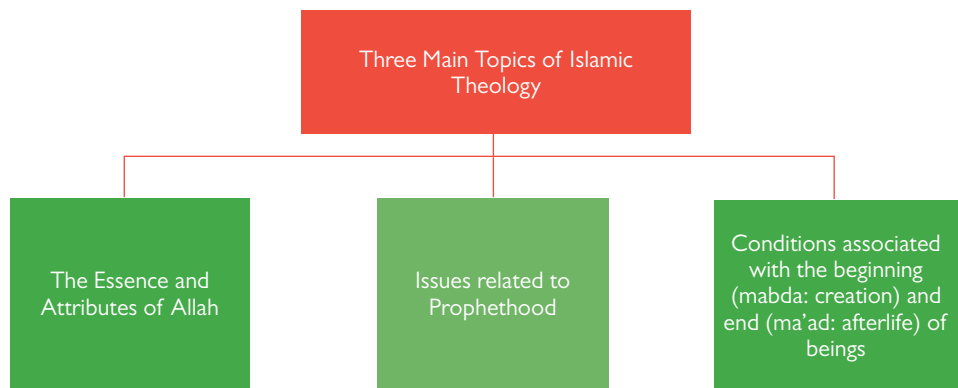
As a scholarly discipline, *kalam* can be translated as Islamic theology and has been defined from various perspectives. From the aspect of its goal, it is



<sup>1</sup> Jalla Jalaluhu: His Glory is great.

defined as a scholarly discipline that dispels doubts about issues related to Islamic faith by using definite evidence, and strengthens the arguments of the basic principles of Islamic faith.

The basic principles of faith in Islam are belief in Allah, His messengers, and the Hereafter. Therefore, the study of *kalam* makes rational explanations about these basic principles within the framework of knowledge provided by the revelation. In other words, from the perspective of its subject, *kalam* is defined as a scholarly discipline that speaks about the essence and attributes of Allah; issues related to prophethood; the beginning (*mabda*: creation) and end (*ma'ad*: afterlife) of the creation in light of the revelation.



Islamic theology deals in particular with the proofs of the existence of Allah, the oneness of Allah, His attributes and His actions. It addresses several issues related to the attributes of Allah; for example, that He is One, and there is nothing like Him, that He is Omnipresent, the Creator, All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and All-Hearing. Islamic theology proves the existence of Allah, sometimes based on the verses of the Qur'an, sometimes based on the characteristics of human beings, and sometimes based on nature, which is accepted as a sign of Allah. The sub-topics of theology are filled with the explanations of His signs in nature, which lead us to prove His existence. Thus, the order in the universe, variety and harmony of the beings in the universe are accepted as the strongest sign of God's existence and oneness. This is why the Qur'an calls people to contemplate the universe in several verses like the following one:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

“It is these who commemorate God while standing, sitting, or resting on their sides and who think about the creation of the heavens and the earth and say, ‘Lord, you have not created all this without reason. Glory be to you. Lord, save us from the torment of the fire.’”<sup>2</sup>

As stated in the Qur’an, in order to be a Muslim, one should first of all believe in the existence and oneness of Allah. Faith should be manifested not only by words but also by affirmation of the heart, which can be attained through contemplation and questioning. As expressed in the following verse, “**There are signs in the heavens and earth for those who believe.**”<sup>3</sup> people are asked to think about the existence and actions of Allah through contemplating the signs in the universe. It is expected for a person to be aware, to think, and to question what he or she believes. In this respect, Islamic theology (*kalam*) differs from the studies of *aqaid* (tenets of faith) or *usul ad-din* (foundations / principles of religion).

The second main topic of Islamic theology is *nubuwwah* (or prophethood), which consists of the belief in prophets. Allah sends His messages to His prophets through the channel of revelation. People reach these messages through Holy books delivered to them by the prophets. Therefore, *nubuwwah* is a broad subject, and includes topics that range from the possibility of prophethood, revelation, and holy books to proving the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad, and the prophethood of other prophets.

The third issue of Islamic theology is the belief in the hereafter. *Kalam* tries to prove the existence of the hereafter and its stages as described in the Qur’an. Moreover, theology reminds the believers to have moral integrity and to be aware of their responsibilities about what to do and not to do in this world.

Although Allah, prophethood, and the hereafter are the basic topics of theology, theological topics have experienced some changes from age to age and from one society to another. The spread of Islam, the encountering of Muslims with different cultures, the problems faced because of social and cultural differences of the time – such as the problems experienced in the

## LET'S STATE

By taking its subjects and goals into consideration, state the role of Islamic theology in explaining and defending the principles of faith.

<sup>2</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 191

<sup>3</sup> Jathiyah, 45: 3



contemporary age – have led to the expansion of theological matters. This is why some theologians have stated that just like philosophy, theology deals with virtually every existing being (*mawjud*), and thus all knowable beings (*malum*) have become the subject of this scholarly discipline.

The purpose of theology is to explain all of the principles of faith, which are stated in the Qur'an. These include proving the existence and oneness of Allah, the prophethood, and the belief in the hereafter. In fact, accurately establishing all the details of these beliefs are part of Islamic theology's purpose.

Throughout history, human beings, who by their nature need to believe in a Supreme Being, have turned to spirits, ancestral culture, totems, animate and inanimate idols, in addition to Allah, who is the true Creator. Humans tried to satisfy their need to believe in a creator by considering these other creatures a God or a divine being. Such beliefs were described in the Qur'an through the statements of Prophet Abraham. **“Consider when Abraham asked his father, Azar, ‘Why do you believe idols to be your gods? I find you and your people in absolute error.’”**<sup>4</sup> Correcting such beliefs caused by ignorance is possible with the help of the right information about faith. The study of theology aims to protect humans from false beliefs by providing them with the right knowledge, so that humans can base the correct beliefs upon knowledge. Muslim scholars have pointed out that faith has a dimension of knowledge, besides its dimension of confirmation in the heart. The Qur'an states that polytheists do not have clear evidence about their belief in God. **“Our people have taken gods besides Him; why do they not produce any clear authority in their support? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah?”**<sup>5</sup> The study of theology, on the other hand, wants believers to have a solid knowledge, a clear consciousness about Allah, and to be in such an understanding of faith that it gives them peace of mind.

Theology aims to save the believers from the darkness of imitative (*taqlidi*) faith and to raise them to the light of the confirmatory (*tahqiqi*) faith, which they reach by contemplating and searching. In order to achieve this, theology describes the evidence of the principles of faith, its causes, and results. While doing this, it takes for itself the Qur'anic method of criticism as an example against the false beliefs formed as a result of blind imitation, especially under the influence of parents, grandparents, or ancestors. While explaining how the correct faith should be, theology also introduces, examines, and discusses the

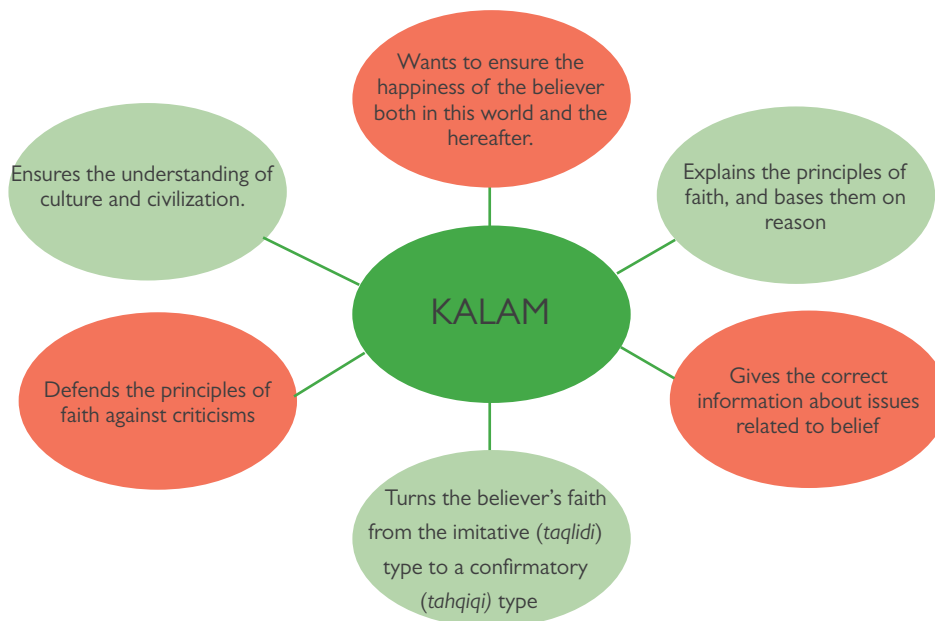
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<sup>4</sup> An'am, 6: 74

<sup>5</sup> Kahf, 18: 15

false beliefs. In this way people become familiar with the beliefs that are not in accordance with Islam, and thus are able to save themselves from superstitions and false beliefs.

One of the aims of theology is to answer the criticisms against Islam, its principles of faith, and to invalidate such criticisms. For example, theology tries to prove the existence of Allah by refuting the position of those who deny Allah's existence. In this way, it aims to prevent the negative effects of false beliefs upon Muslim societies.



Beliefs constitute the foundations of culture and civilization. When beliefs are ignored, it becomes impossible to understand the material and spiritual products of one nation's culture and civilization. This is why knowing belief systems is important to understand past cultures. What is more important is to reevaluate, interpret, and establish the basis of the beliefs in light of the conditions of the time from the perspective of social change. Theology which does not follow social change, would be unable to fulfill the task of explaining the principles of faith and defend against criticism directed at them. Therefore, theology helps Muslims, who have adopted these beliefs, to make their lives more meaningful by dealing with the principles of beliefs in accordance with the conditions of the time.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In order to show coherence between sound intellect and revelation based on sound transmission (the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad), Ibn Taymiyyah wrote a book titled "*Bayanu muwafaqat Sahih al-Manqul li Sarih al-Ma'qul*", which means "*Explanation of the Coherence Between Accurate Revelation and Sound Reason*".

**LET'S THINK AND DISCUSS**

When you observe the world in which we live, what makes you think about Allah's creation?

Discuss.

**2. The Method of the Study of Kalam**

The principles of faith dealt by theology were established by revelation. Human intellect, at this stage, has no role in determining the content and origin of faith. However, according to theology, there is no other way but to use human reason and the senses to understand and interpret the revelation, and establish the basis of the principles of faith. Thus, Islamic theology explains its subject matters in accordance with the principles of logic based on rational methods.

With respect to issues related to the physical world, Islamic theology grounds its principles on data provided by the senses; with respect to the issues related to human reason, it bases its principles on rational rules; and finally with respect to matters related to the imperceptible world beyond this physical realm, it bases its principles on the revelation. On the other hand, theology relies on rational principles when explaining and laying down the principles of faith. In this way, it supports the principles of faith by achieving a harmony between revelation and human reason. Theologians who emphasized the importance of the harmony between revelation and reason state that an authentic revelation and sound intellect are consistent with each other. But in case of conflict, they say that reason can be used for the interpretation of revelation. Reason is the main condition for the requirement of a person to obey all kinds of religious commands and prohibitions. So the one who is deprived of reason is not charged with any religious, moral or legal responsibilities.

Verses in the Qur'an that mention Allah's act of creating and the wonders of creation lead us to general conclusions about the created nature of the universe. This method is a type of reasoning called "induction" and tries to reach general conclusions from the observation of particular ones. Theologians who use this method, for example, reason from the order and perfection of the universe to conclude the existence of Allah.

It is stated in the Qur'an that Prophet Muhammad (saw)\* responded to polytheists who asked how God would resurrect people in the hereafter saying: "**Say, 'He will give them life as he created them for the first time.'**"<sup>6</sup> As presented in this verse, to give a ruling on one matter to another based on a common feature is called the method of representation or analogy (*qiyas*).

\* Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam: Peace be upon him, from now on will be abbreviated as saw.

<sup>6</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 78-79

The method of representation, which is proving the unseen by basing it on the visible or reaching the knowledge of unknowable things by using the knowable ones, is one of the most commonly used methods of reasoning in Islamic theology. This method, which can be defined as “inference of the things which cannot be directly perceived from indirect inferences made on the basis of directly perceptible thing” is called “analogy of the imperceptible (*ghaib*) to the perceptible (*shahid*)” in Islamic theology.

### LET'S READ AND FIND

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, and thereby giving life to the earth after its lifelessness, and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.”

(Baqarah, 2: 164.)

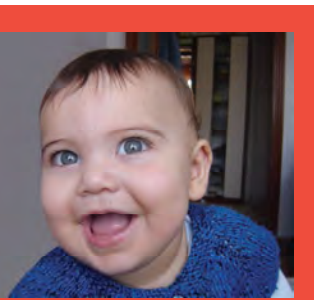
“Then do they not look at the camels – how they are created and at the sky how it is raised, and at the mountains how they are erected, And at the earth – how it is spread out?!”

(Ghashiyah, 88: 17-20)

Which issues do these verses call us to contemplate based on which realities?

The verses of the Qur'an are miracles of Allah. The Qur'an also defines everything in the perceptible universe as proofs, verses, or signs for the existence of God. Muslim theologians show the existence of Allah by examining the verses in nature pointing out the existence of a creator God as well as the verses in the Qur'an stating His existence. Nature is a book of symbols displaying the existence, attributes and actions of Allah. Trying to prove the existence of the imperceptible Supreme Being based on visible symbols, which are indicative of Him, is another one of the methods used by Islamic theology.

The “reasoning” process itself can be given as one of the best methods used by Muslim theologians to prove the existence of Allah. Muslim theologians who examine the process of human creation, which is also presented as an example in the Qur'an, use the following method of reasoning. Human beings go through a process of biological development similar to other living organisms.



Humans can reach knowledge about the One Creator by thinking about periods of human biological development

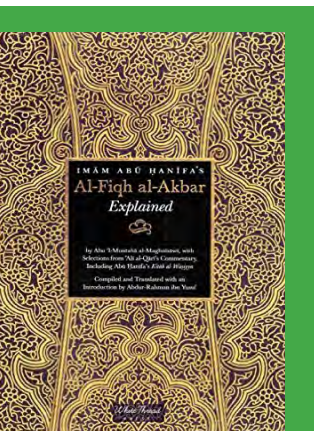
However, there are many characteristics of humans that make them superior to other organisms. Of these, the essential ones include possessing reason and free will. Despite all such superior features, we know that if left alone, human beings cannot even create their smallest of limbs. Therefore, by using the method of reasoning, one reaches the conclusion that there is an Omnipotent Supreme Being who creates humans from a drop of water and turns them into competent beings. Therefore, theology reaches a conclusion about the imperceptible based on an event whose development can be observed by the senses.

### 3. The Emergence and Development of the Study of Kalam

The foundations of the religion of Islam were completed while the Prophet was alive. Our prophet delivered the revelations that he received from Allah, and answered some of the problems that occupied people's minds. After the death of the Prophet, Muslims found themselves alone with the Qur'an and their own thoughts, and thus, a new period began. In that period, Muslims needed to interpret the Qur'an, to take the Prophet's life as an example, and to use their intellect to solve all kinds of faith-related problems. Thus, the period of the emergence of all religious sciences, including theology, began.

The encounter with different cultures as a result of the spread of Islam, and the necessities caused by socio-cultural changes, led to the development of new thoughts among Muslims. This encouraged some debates and novel interpretations about issues related to faith. Questions like the state of the grave sinner, the relationship between practice and faith, or the limits of human free will, all of which emerged due to political incidents experienced after the Prophet's death, accelerated this process. Therefore, prominent scholars of the generation of successors such as Hasan al-Basri and Ibrahim al-Nahai started to freely present their opinions about these problems. This period consisting of the first century A.H is the period of "the first intellectual movements", which provided the background for the birth of Islamic theology.

The most important work about the doctrines of Islamic Creed of that period was a treatise named "*Fiqh al-Akbar*" attributed to al-Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767). The word *fiqh* in the title of book does not refer to Islamic law dealing with the acts of worship (*ibadat*) and daily transactions (*mu'amalat*). Rather, Abu Hanifa defined the word *fiqh*, which literally means



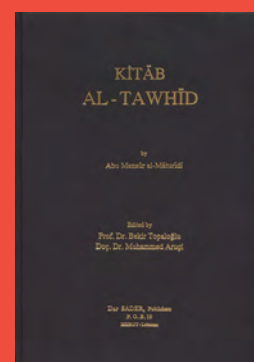
The cover of the book *Fiqh al-Akbar*, which contains issues related to Islamic creed.

deep understanding, “like the knowledge of what is against and for a person on his path to eternal happiness.” In other words this definition covers everything related to faith, worship and morality. Therefore, according to Abu Hanifa’s understanding “*Fiqh al-Akbar*” became the title of a science, which also contains the issues of faith.

After the 2nd century of Hijrah, intellectual divisions increased in Muslim society and political and theological sects started to emerge. In that period, the sect of *Mu’tazila* applied reason in the interpretation of revelation by defending the concepts of *adalah* (justice) and *tawhid* (oneness of Allah) in terms of faith. Under the influence of the translation of the philosophical works from Persian, Greek and Indian cultures, the *Mu’tazila* often used the method based on rational justification to solve problems about faith and in defending the essence of faith against foreign cultures. So *Mu’tazila*’s interpretation of the verses related to faith in light of principles of reason is called *the method of kalam* or *theological method*. Issues like the situation of the grave sinner, leadership in the Muslim community (*Imamah*), the problem of whether the Qur’an was created or not, seeing Allah in the hereafter, attributes of Allah, and the issue of fate became the main topics of discussion in “the period of the birth of the study of *kalam*”.

The major movements in the field of faith emerged in the 3rd century A.H and these movements defended their views by using their own methods. In that century, the thought of Ahl al-Sunnah (people of the tradition of the Prophet), which represents the majority of Muslims in the world, started to support matters of Islamic creed with rational methods. In this context, efforts by Ibn Kullab (d. 240/854) and Haris al-Muhasibi (d. 243/857) are accepted as the signs for the emergence of the thought of Ahl al-Sunnah, which was systematized soon after their works.

The thought of Ahl-al-Sunnah was systematized in the 4th century A.H by Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (d. 324/935) and Imam Maturidi (d. 333/944). Maturidi’s views, which he formed following Abu Hanifa’s views and his interpretations showing the harmony between reason and revelation, were defended in his book titled “*Kitab al-Tawhid* (The Book of Unity of Allah).” This book shows that *the study of kalam* was called *the study of tawhid* during that period. As a result of the efforts of Ashari and Maturidi, Ahl al-Sunnah accepted the role of reason in matters of Islamic creed. Therefore, when necessary, they used the theological method in explaining and supporting the issues of faith by



The cover of the translation of Maturidi’s *The Book of Tawhid*

## LET'S EXPRESS

Bring *Kitab al-Tawhid* to the classroom and analyze its contents. Then express what subjects it covers.

using the method of reasoning and applying the interpretation. Baqillani, (d. 403/1013) who developed the views of Imam Ashari, Juwayni (d. 478/1085), and Abu'l Muin al-Nasafi, who advanced the commentaries of Imam Maturidi, are some of the famous theologians of that period, which is called the classical period (*mutaqaddimin*) of Islamic theology.

After this period, Imam Ghazali (d. 555/1111) criticized philosophical thought on the one hand, while incorporating the science of logic into theology on the other hand. Fakhraddin al-Razi (d. 606/1210) also wrote books based on this new method. This period in which theology and philosophy were intertwined was called the post-classical period (*mutaakhhirin*). Amidi (d. 631/1233), Baydawi (d. 685/1286), Taftazani (d. 793/1391), and Jurjani (d. 816/1413) can be listed among the theologians of the post-classical period.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. The Place of Kalam among other Islamic Sciences

##### LET'S READ AND INTERPRET

"Theology is the most comprehensive of the Islamic sciences. Other Islamic sciences like Jurisprudence, Methodology of Jurisprudence, Hadith, and Tafsir are minor ones. ... Theologians' method of study and investigation primarily starts from the existing beings and then focuses on details. In these details, theology presents its principles in order to prove the other religious sciences, the Book (the Qur'an), Sunnah, and the Prophet.

"After this point, the exegete of the Qur'an (*mufasssir*) takes a specific one, namely the Book (the Qur'an), from among the topics within the area of theology and works on its interpretation. The *muhaddith*, a scholar of the science of hadith, also takes a specific one, namely the traditions of Prophet, and investigates the ways of proving its authenticity. The Muslim jurist (*faqih*) also takes a specific topic, namely the actions of the responsible believers and defines their rules. ... Therefore, the science of theology carries the burden of proving the principles of all the religious sciences."

(Ghazali, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 5-7)

Interpret the relationship between theology and the other Islamic sciences based on the text given above.

<sup>7</sup> Bekir Topaloglu, *Kelam İlmî (Giriş)*, p. 20,

The religion of Islam can be examined from various perspectives such as belief, worship, and ethics. However, all of these were based on the belief in the unity of Allah, which is expressed with *kalimah al-tawhid* (the Word of Tawhid). Theologians' grounding of the principles of faith such as existence of Allah, prophethood, and belief in the hereafter upon strong bases are important for all Islamic sciences. Belief in angels, the prophets, the revealed books, and the hereafter can be dealt with after accepting the existence and oneness of Allah. All other principles and applications related to religion can gain meaning only with the existence of Allah.

Discussions and explanations of Islamic theology have been used in the science of *Tafsir*, especially in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to belief. The science of *Tafsir*, which interprets the Qur'an, becomes meaningful after accepting the existence of Allah and the truthfulness of the Holy Books. The science of Hadith, which deals with the actions and sayings of our Prophet as well as the narratives and interpretations about them, would not mean anything unless the validity of prophethood is proven. So, Islamic theology, which proves the existence of Allah, angels, the prophets, Holy books, and the hereafter, is regarded as a theoretical basis for the Islamic sciences.

Various connections also exist between Islamic theology and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). For example, theologians prove that people act by their own free will while jurists explain the rulings of those actions. Moreover, some of the relations between theology and jurisprudence focus on theoretical issues, such as whether jurisprudential rulings can be interpreted through reason or not.

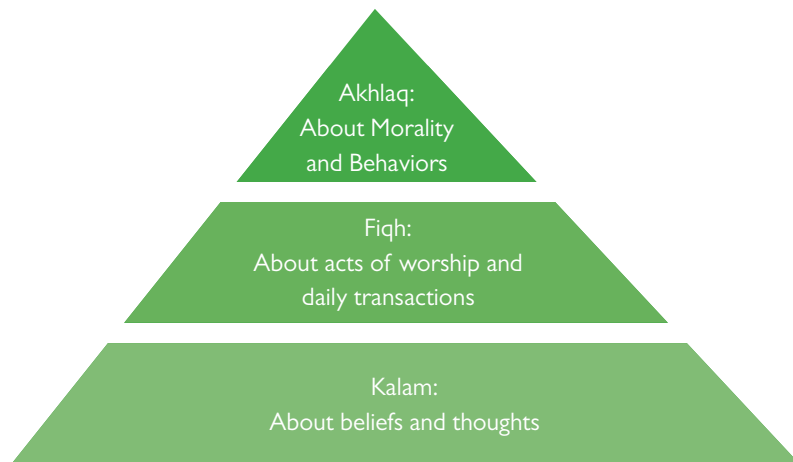
The history of Islamic denominations is one of the scholarly disciplines closest to theology. While theology deals with issues of Islamic creed, the history of Islamic sects tries to explain the social and political background of these sects, and the opinions of these sects based on their own resources.

When Muslim scholars classified the scholarly disciplines, they expressed that kalam's main feature was being the basis of the Islamic sciences. Due to that, they called the study of kalam "*usul al-din*", which means "foundations of religion". Other sciences, like jurisprudence, deal with secondary issues and details of religion attached to these main principles.

Although Islamic theology constitutes the foundation of all Islamic sciences, each of the various Islamic sciences is important and all of their functions are different. When examined as a whole, all Islamic sciences have a specific role



in the understanding of Allah's message, its interpretation, and application. With regard to its subject area, theology deals with the existence and oneness of Allah. As regards its aim, it establishes and defends the foundations of matters related to belief. In terms of its methodology, it uses both revelation and reason as its basis. This is why it is accepted as a science that constitutes the basis of other Islamic sciences.



## 5. The Relationship between Kalam and Philosophy

Philosophy is a collection of systematic intellectual activities that study and prepare the foundations for solving questions related to existence, knowledge, and values by using rational and critical methods. While philosophy searches for the truth, it has to make rational justifications. Philosophy questions, argues, and criticizes the beliefs accepted as truth by everyone in daily life. This inquiry is directed to all beings, to the Creator of beings, to humans and sometimes to the religion itself, and questions whether these beliefs are consistent or not. Philosophy may present some evidence about the existence of a supreme being but it does this depending on rational principles rather than on a holy scripture.

Theology deals with the concepts of existence, knowledge, and values as well. It presents ideas related to the meaning of existence and especially the question of why things are created. While doing this, theology may benefit from the works of philosophers. Theology takes the principles of intellect into account

in searching for issues related to existence and knowledge. However, unlike philosophy, theology accepts revelation both as a source of knowledge and a measure for the evaluation of knowledge. Although theology uses rational justification just as philosophy does, it has some other tasks like defending Islam and presenting the proofs of Islamic beliefs.

**LET'S COMPARE**

Some of the subjects, methods, and purposes of theology and philosophy and their common features are given below. Find some other differences and similarities between theology and philosophy and fill in the blanks.

KALAM	COMMON FEATURES	PHILOSOPHY
Its subject .....	Both of them are based on reason in the justification of knowledge.	Its subject..... Establishes the principles of social and natural sciences.
Establishes the principles of Islamic sciences.	Reason and senses are common sources of knowledge in theology and philosophy.	Its method ..... .....
Its purpose ..... ..... It depends on faith.		It does not depend on belief.
Its source ..... .....		It may explain Allah and ethics based on reason.

The relationship between theology and philosophy has always maintained its vitality. In the early days after its emergence, theology was influenced by philosophy in regards to the rational justification, and then it added logic into its method. In the history of the development of theology, al-Ghazali

and Fakhraddin al-Razi in particular played important roles in improving the relationship between theology and philosophy.

## 6. The Question of Existence

Allah is the Everlasting, Eternal, and Necessary being, because His existence does not need nor depend on the existence of another. All beings except Him are limited and possible beings. In the Qur'an it is clearly and constantly explained that Allah is creator and other beings are creature. **“Praise belongs to Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and brought into being the darkness and the light.”**<sup>8</sup>

Existence is divided into two universes: The first is the universe of objects (universe of *shahadat*) that can be perceived by our senses. The second is the universe of the unseen (universe of *ghaib*) that is beyond our senses. Perceptible things are signs for the existence of Allah. In this regard, the Qur'an says, **“In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding.”**<sup>9</sup> This is why theologians try to find evidence that leads people to the existence of Allah by thinking about the creation of the universe, meaning of materials and life, and the purpose of the creation of human beings.

### 6.1 The Relationship between Allah and the Universe

People live in an environment formed from living and inanimate beings. Mountains and rocks, numerous kinds of plants, various kinds of animals, millions of planets and stars in the depths of space surround people. According to theologians, the term universe encompasses all beings except Allah, and incidents that can be perceived and whose existence can be thought by the senses and mind. In short, every *“mawjud”* or “being that exists other than” Allah is a part of the universe.

The relationship between Allah and the universe is one of the most important subjects of theology. Throughout history, philosophy and the natural sciences have examined the universe and its features from different perspectives, through various questions such as how the universe exists and what elements constitute the universe. For example, while physics deals with matter in the

<sup>8</sup> An'am, 6: 1

<sup>9</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 190

universe and the relations among types of matter, theology deals with the creation of the universe as signs showing the existence of one Creator.

### LET'S INTERPRET

“Surely, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then He settled Himself firmly on the Throne. He makes the night cover the day, which it pursues swiftly, And He created the sun and the moon and the stars - all made subservient by His command. Verily, His is the creation and the command.”  
Blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(A'raf, 7: 54)

“Allah is He who has made for you the earth a resting-place and the heaven a structure for protection, and has given you shapes and made your shapes perfect, and has provided you with pure things. Such is Allah, your Lord. So blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

(Mu'min, 40: 64)

Interpret the verses given above in relation to the relationship between Allah and the universe.

In the Qur'an many verses draw attention to Allah's existence based on the order of the universe and the extraordinary beauties of the creation of the earth and sky. So Islamic theology tries to prove the existence of Allah by using these signs. According to theology, the universe is in a constant formation. Something that exists in a specific moment becomes nonexistent in another, and something which does not exist becomes an existent being. In other words, things are in continuous change. No being except Allah is eternal and the existence of things is not necessary. In this sense, theology uses the term “*wajib*” for the being whose existence is necessary and eternal. It also uses the term “*wajib al-wujud*” in order to refer to the self-existence, eternity, and necessity of Allah's existence. The universe is, on the other hand, formed from beings that did not exist before and then came into being, and from things that exist now but will vanish. This is why theologians use the term “*hadith*” for every created being that forms this universe. This universe's coming into existence from nonexistence shows that it has a Creator.

The expression “*Rabb al-Alamin*, i.e. Lord of the Universes” is frequently mentioned in the Qur'an. This expression emphasizes that Allah is the God of all animate and inanimate beings. Allah has created this universe in the most beautiful way, bestowed harmony on it, and predetermined the fate of all beings. Due to that, in Qur'an it says: “**Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom**

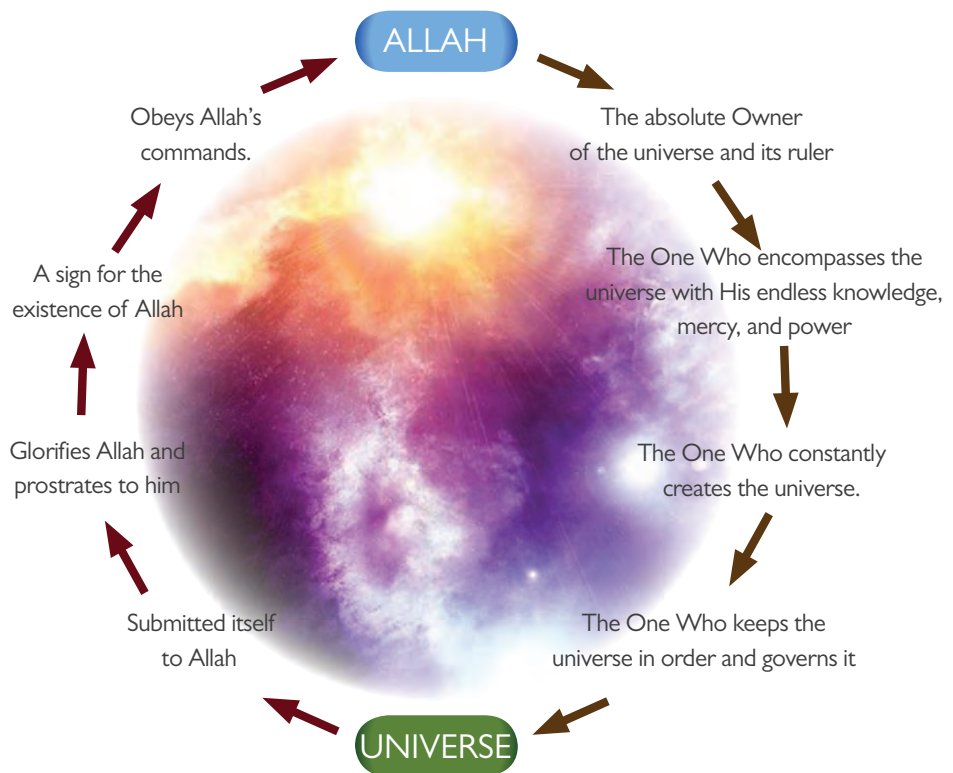
## LET'S SEARCH AND TALK

Baqarah, 2: 116;  
Mu'min, 40: 64;  
Jathiyah, 45: 36;  
Baqarah, 2: 107;  
Ra'd, 13: 13 and 15;  
Hajj, 22: 18; Yunus,  
10: 6.

Find and read the translations of the above-mentioned verses and talk about them.

of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper.”<sup>10</sup>

The science of theology tries to explain the everlasting order in the universe by looking at the universe itself in light of the guidance of the Qur'an. For theologians, to see the submission of all beings in the universe, their obedience to Allah's orders and their glorifying Allah are signs of Allah's infinite mercy and everlasting power.



*"Allah is the Creator as "Rabb al-Alamin" and the Universe is a sign for Allah's presence."*

## 6.2. Matter

The nature of matter is one of the problems that have occupied the minds of the philosophers and natural scientists the most. Since the times of ancient Greece, philosophers searched for the ultimate matter that formed the universe. They claimed that it was either one of the four basic elements – i.e. water,

<sup>10</sup> Baqarah, 2: 107

fire, air, and earth – or was a combination of them. For example, Democritus, from ancient Greece, argued that matter is composed of atoms, which are the indivisible and the smallest building blocks of beings. Plato, Aristo, and Avicenna, who considered such an explanation about the nature of beings based just on matter insufficient, tried to explain the being outside of matter by using terms like “idea, form, soul, and purpose”.

Unlike the science of physics, theology does not deal with the nature of matter and its smallest building blocks. Matter has been the subject of theology in relation to its being created and finite. Theologians called the part of matter that constitutes its essence *jawhar* and called its changeable qualities such as color, smell, taste, and length *araz*. Based on the term “*araz*”, they explained that Allah constantly creates the universe and that matter has a beginning and an end and therefore it needs a Creator.

In consequence of the developments in the natural sciences and the spread of positivist and materialist thought, some intellectuals argued that there was no being in the universe outside the world of matter based on the principles of strict determinism, which depends on the law of causality. According to them, matter is the source of all beings including the animate and inanimate. Existence is the product of matter and coincidence. They reject the concepts of “God, soul, and purpose”, given that these are not perceptible in the outside world. However, according to theology, “matter” can be explained by different theories and can be evidence of Creation. In other words, theology opposes reducing all beings and life to “matter” by itself and does not accept matter as the power creating life. This is why many contemporary theologians try to demonstrate the error of theories that reject certain realities such as “God, purpose, and soul”. Modern physics also shows that the idea of strict materialism cannot be defended.

Modern physics has criticized the mechanical understanding of classical physics and has developed the theory of relativity by arguing that classical physics’ determinist understanding, which is based on the law of causality, is not valid in either the micro or macro universe. On the other hand, the argument about the indivisibility of atoms, which was claimed by classical physicists, has been experimentally refuted. Moreover, the Quantum theory, which states that the atom is formed by subatomic particles, has become the established theory in science. Modern physics, which is based on the theories of relativity and quantum and the idea of a finite universe, presents new

findings for theology. Based on these findings, the idea of strict materialism and determinism can be easily rejected, and the idea that finite matter is the creator of everything can be refuted.

The point reached by scientific thought is, of course, not the last point. Scientific theories are constantly changing and developing. To explain matter will continue to be the basic purpose of scientists. However, theology is not interested in how the nature of matter is explained but rather is interested in the aspect of its being a sign for the existence of Allah. Based on new findings, it will continue to demonstrate Allah's endless power. The magnificent vitality and life in the universe shows that it was created by an Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator. It is significant to see that the pioneering scientists of our age who have contributed to the development of science through new theories speak about the existence of Allah, as opposed to the positivist and materialist scientists who denied the existence of Allah half a century ago.

### 6.3. Life

Life is one of the most significant distinguishing features among the earth's creation. While plants, animals, and humans have life, stones and metals are inanimate. Because of this, the source of life has been an issue contemplated by all societies. While the same issue is a problem that occupies scientists' minds, it has also become an issue addressed by religions.

Materialist understanding considers life and vitality features originating from matter. According to this understanding, matter is the essence of all life on earth. Some early philosophers, especially the naturalist ones, did not accept the concept of the soul or any spiritual element that is beyond the world of matter as the essence of life. In opposition to this, some philosophers such as Aristo and Avicenna accepted *nafs* (soul) as the source of human vitality. In the Old and New Testament, the terms "soul" and "*nafs*" are mentioned as the source of life, and it is stated that Allah is the one who gives life.

It is stated in the Qur'an that Allah is the ever-living (*al-Hayy*) and the one who resurrects and gives life (*al-Muhyi*).<sup>11</sup> According to the Qur'an, Allah is the reason for life.<sup>12</sup> While Allah revives the dead land with water, which he brings down from the sky and gives life to all living beings by means of water.<sup>13</sup> He also gives life to human beings when they are non-living beings. He is the



The source of life in the universe is Allah, Who is the life-giving al-Muhyi.

<sup>11</sup> Baqarah, 2: 255; Rum, 30: 50

<sup>12</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 27; An'am, 6: 95; Yunus, 10: 31; Rum, 30: 19

<sup>13</sup> Hajj, 22: 66; Qaf, 50: 11; Anbiya, 21: 30

One who will resurrect humans after death.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, as in the examples of Adam and Jesus, Allah used the human body and had it give birth.<sup>15</sup> In short, according to the Qur'an, the real actor in reviving or giving life is Allah. It is by means of His attributes of Al-Hayy and Al-Muhyi that the divine breath enters the human body.

### LET'S TALK

"Who has created death and life that He might try you - which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving." (Mulk, 67: 2)

"Say. Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds;" (An'am, 6: 162)

According to the above-mentioned verses, what is the purpose of life? Discuss.

### LET'S TALK

Search for the meaning of the following names of Allah: al-Khaliq, al-Barii, al-Musawwir, al-Razzaq, al-Mukhyi, al-Mumit, and al-Hayy. Then talk about Allah's power to create and give life in the context of what you have learned so far.

Based on the Qur'an, theology believes that life is biologically dependent on Allah who is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and the real Owner of life. It argues that it would be impossible to imagine life from a biological perspective by denying that Allah is the One who gives life. Therefore, theology deals with the question of the source of life independent from matter. Life is mostly explained in terms of soul and *nafs*. But while explaining life, theology does not consider the body and soul as independent and completely detached from each other, because the human is a whole being and there is a relationship between his emotional, mental and physical actions. In this respect, every living being necessarily derives its life from matter. For that reason, every living being is born, grows, gets old, and dies.

While theology states that Allah is the one and only source of life, it also calls attention to another principle, which is related to the purpose of life and the basis of morality. According to the Qur'an, life and death have been created to test which people will perform better deeds. Life in this world is temporary and is essentially a kind of test. In the face of the reality of death, people should know that real and eternal life is in the hereafter. Therefore, people should devote their life and death to Allah, who is the Lord of the universes and has no partner.

<sup>14</sup> Baqarah, 2: 28; Hajj, 22: 66; Rum, 30: 40; Jathiyah, 45: 26

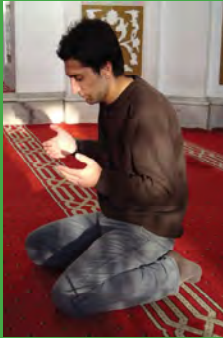
<sup>15</sup> Hijr, 15: 26; Sad, 38: 72; Nisa, 4: 171; Anbiya, 21: 91; Tahrir, 66: 12



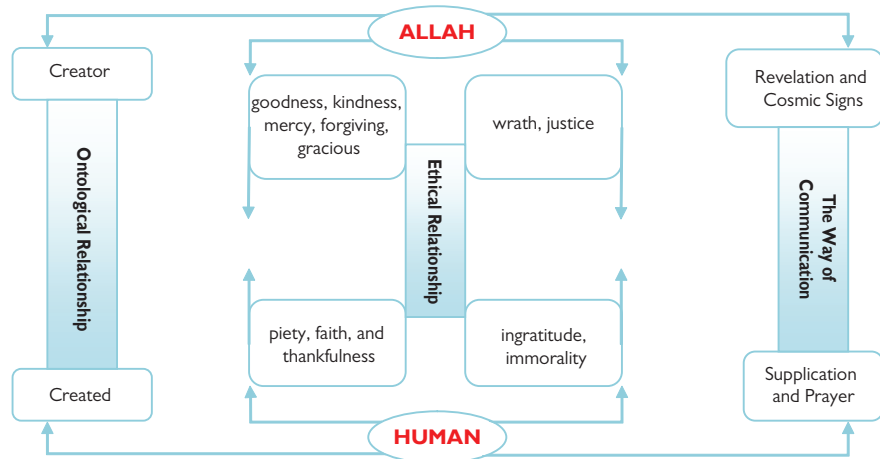
### 6.4 Human Being

The Qur’an states that Allah has created human beings in the best form, and created an order in the universe for people to live in. Allah sends down rain from the sky through his mercy and creates blessings for people’s nourishment and development. Furthermore, Allah has endowed people with the ability to think and to choose with their free will. He also sent revelations and prophets to help them to make the right choices by using their intelligence and free will. He is Allmighty, Omnipotent, Oft-Forgiving, All-Merciful and All-Gracious.

Blessings that have been bestowed upon people require them to be entrusted with certain responsibilities. The main one is the responsibility to know the Oneness of one’s Creator and to live in this world in accordance with the principles of morality and justice.<sup>16</sup> People fulfill their responsibilities by means of revelations received from Allah, reason, free will, natural inclination, and sense of morality. Then, they worship and perform prayers for Allah and attain happiness both in this world and in the hereafter if they become pious and grateful servants of Allah.



Prayer is one of the ways of communication between Allah and His servants.



*Kalam also deals with the relationship between Allah and people, which is mentioned in the Qur’an, from different perspectives.*

Human nature has the characteristics of goodness and justice, which enable people to use their free will. They also possess negative feelings such as an

<sup>16</sup> Mulk, 67: 2; An’am, 6: 32; Ankabut, 29: 64; Jathiyah, 45: 21

inclination to evil, cruelty, arrogance, ignorance, ingratitude, and stinginess. Those who deny their Creator follow in Satan's footsteps. They forget the real world and focus on this world; they disrupt the social order, and do not fulfill their ethical and social responsibilities and will. Therefore they are held accountable for what they have done and face their punishment. It is, however, possible to be forgiven by Allah and be purified from all sins by means of sincere repentance, because Allah forgives all penitents. At the same time, He embodies wrath, glory, power and justice.

Based on people's responsibilities, which have been given to them by the Qur'an, theology explains the damage caused by ideas that deny Allah, idolize humans, and deny all ethical responsibilities. According to theology, such ideas deny the creator in order to glorify humans. They prevent people from fulfilling their responsibilities and leave them aimless while attempting to ensure their freedom. On the one hand, theology emphasizes people's ethical responsibilities due to free will; on the other, it opposes an understanding of freedom which is aimless and devoid of all moral values. Theology states that total authority over the earth and heavens belongs to Allah, who has the absolute will and power.

## 7. The Question of Knowledge

True understanding of the Qur'anic verses about Allah, the universe, and humanity depends on knowledge. This is why theology deals with the essence of knowledge and its sources. Moreover, it deals with the subject of whether or not it is possible to acquire knowledge about the invisible world, which is beyond the perceptible power of the senses.

## 7.1 Definition of Knowledge

### LET'S READ AND ARGUE

The Maturidi theologian Umar al-Nasafi started his treatise titled *Aqaid*, with the following sentences criticizing sophists:

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ حَقَائِقُ الْأَشْيَاءِ ثَابِتَةٌ وَالْعِلْمُ بِهَا مُتَحَقِّقٌ خِلَافًا لِلشُّوْفِسْطَائِيَّةِ  
وَأَسْبَابُ الْعِلْمِ لِلْخَلْقِ ثَلَاثَةٌ: الْحَوَاسِ السَّلِيمَةُ، وَالْخَبْرُ الصَّادِقُ، وَالْعَقْلُ...  
وَالْإِلْهَامُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَسْبَابِ الْمَعْرِفَةِ بِصِحَّةِ الشَّيْءِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ

“The people of truth expressed that the reality of things is real and knowledge about them can be achieved. There are three ways of human’s knowledge: sound senses, true news, and reason ... According to people of the truth, intuition is not one of the ways to know the accuracy of something.”

(Nasafi, *Aqaid al-Nasafi*, p. 1)

Why did Nasafi start his book criticizing sophistic thought, which argues that acquiring knowledge is not possible? Argue in light of the text given above.

In the Qur’an, the term *al-ilm* is used not in the literal meaning of knowledge but refers to the knowledge Allah sent to people, i.e. revelation. The knowledge of revelation is certain because it comes from Allah and is referred to as the opposite meaning of the pagans’ ignorance, which depended on their desires.

In order to establish a theoretical framework for subjects, theologians start their books with the definition of knowledge. The first book dealing with the definition of knowledge as an independent subject is Maturidi’s “*Kitab al-Tawhid*”. According to Maturidi, knowledge is “the relationship between the knowing man and the things known by him.” This bond between the knower and the known is real, and knowledge acquired as a result of this relationship is also real. Since a subject is not virtual, it has a kind of reality. People can reach the knowledge of Allah through revelation and through the cosmos they perceive through their senses.

Theologians define knowledge as “knowing a thing that is the subject of knowledge as it is.” The term “*thing*” stated in the definition includes all kinds of beings that are possible to be known. Some things that we know are concrete such as a table or chair, while others are abstract like mathematical statements.

Theologians call all subjects of knowledge including concrete and abstract beings “*malum*” (knowable). The word *malum* refers to the knowable things, which can be defined as “existent beings”. In definition, the expression “as it is” signifies that people’s knowledge about the objects should be in accordance with reality.

Maturidi and subsequent theologians who dealt with the issue of knowledge presented various views against the sophists who argued that having knowledge about Allah and objects is not possible, because sophists asserted that to obtain information is itself impossible. Moreover, they insisted that the knowledge about objects is relative; in other words it changes from one person to another.

With the statement “the reality of objects is valid”, theologians mean that things that are the subject of knowledge have reality in themselves. Since an object has its own existence independent from the subject, from the mind that perceives it, and from the subject’s comprehension of it. This is why knowledge is possible, and we can attain knowledge about objects and can learn of the existence of Allah by examining them.

## 7.2 Sources of Knowledge

Allah has bestowed upon human beings the five senses so that they can perceive the environment, and intellect so that they can evaluate the findings of the senses. Knowledge collected by the senses from the environment are then processed in the mind and turned into concepts, and then one reaches various conclusions by making correlations between these concepts. In this way, reason can distinguish good from bad, and the beautiful from the ugly.

In order to make their lives more meaningful, people ask many questions, such as the purpose of their creation and what the afterlife will be like. They seek answers for why, how, and according to what measures they should live. Yet these questions cannot be answered by knowledge acquired through the senses. Rather, it is the revelation that can answer these questions. This is why theology considers the senses as the source for gaining knowledge about the physical universe, and revelation as the source of knowledge for issues of faith. Moreover, the senses charge the intellect with the task of understanding and explaining this knowledge.

### 7.2.1. Reason (Aql)

Reason or intellect is the discretionary power that enables human beings to differentiate right from wrong, good from evil, and thus makes them superior to other beings. Intellect is the reason that makes human beings responsible. Reason, at the same time is the faculty of understanding and thinking. This is why the Qur'an often calls people to use their intellect through expressions like, "Don't you comprehend?"<sup>17</sup>, "Don't you think?"<sup>18</sup>, and "Would you not take heed?"<sup>19</sup>

#### LET'S NOTE

"Shar'i proofs do not contradict the rational principles."  
Shatibi

(Mehmet Erdoğan,  
Akıl Vahiy Dengesi  
Açısından Sünnet,  
p. 41)

According to theology, reason is one of the ways of acquiring knowledge. Imam Maturidi defines reason as "a thing that collects those which have common properties and separates those which have different properties." In this way, he draws attention to the intellectual power of reason that can categorize beings and the knowledge related to them, reach conclusions, and make analogies. Theologians give several definitions of reason, but the common point among them is that all theologians accept reason as a spiritual power that innately exists in human beings.

Reason in theology is the source of two kinds of knowledge. First, it is the source of rational information (*badihi* information: axioms), which is common to all people and is clear in itself. *Badihi* knowledge is not known by the senses or any kind of report, it is something clear and known by itself. For example, knowing the impossibility of combining two opposites or the impossibility of a part of something being bigger than the whole is knowledge that is obvious and known in and of itself.

Secondly, reason is the source of knowledge (aposteriori) that is acquired later by way of reasoning like deduction (*ta'lil*) and induction (*istidlal*). Reason can reach new knowledge by using information from the senses, and this kind of knowledge is called "*istidlali* knowledge" meaning knowledge that is acquired by inferences.

<sup>17</sup> An'am, 6: 32

<sup>18</sup> An'am, 6: 50

<sup>19</sup> An'am, 6: 80

THE ROLE OF REASON ACCORDING TO SOME THEOLOGICAL DENOMINATIONS		
MU'TAZILA	ASH'ARIYYA	MATURIDIYYA
<p>While the majority of the Mu'tazila accepted that people are in need of revelation, which was brought by the prophets, they also saw reason as an absolute source of knowledge and gave reason the role of an infallible arbitrator in relation to revelation. According to them, reason is enough to know of the existence of Allah, His divine attributes, and the nature of the hereafter as well as being able to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly, and good from evil.</p>	<p>Abu'l Hasan Al-Ashari claimed that all religious knowledge including belief in the existence of Allah depends on revelation, not reason. According to him, even if reason attains the knowledge of Allah's existence, or even if reason can distinguish truth from untruth or the ugly from the beautiful, or good from bad, revelation is what makes belief in those facts a requirement. So, the existence of religion is necessary in order for one to be considered religiously responsible.</p>	<p>Reason should be used in order to know the existence of the Creator and to understand the revelation (nass). Belief in Allah is a rational necessity rather than a necessity originating from revelation. Nevertheless, reason cannot come before the nass (or the main sources such as the Qur'an and tradition of Prophet Muhammad) because reason is not sufficient to comprehend all religious realities. Reason may accept beautiful things as ugly or good things as bad or true things as false due to the fact that it can be influenced by emotions, education and teaching, or culture. In short, Allah is known by reason, other religious principles are known by revelation.</p>

### 7.2.2. Revelation (Wahy)

Senses are like people's windows, opening to the external world, while revelation is their window opening to the unseen world of *ghayb*. Revelation connects people to the sublime realm in terms of knowledge and protects people from being alone with their thoughts. According to theology, revelation is one of the sources of knowledge, and the knowledge reported by revelation is definite in terms of truthfulness. Since all revelation collected in the Qur'an is absolutely true in terms of "*thubut*", this means that today the Qur'an was preserved exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah.

**LET'S NOTE**

According to Ibn Hazm, "Every Qur'anic thing is also rational and every rational thing is also Qur'anic."

(Cabiri, *Arap Aklının Oluşumu*, p. 432)

Allah reported to the prophets, by way of revelation, what people have not known. These revelations, collected in the Qur'an, have become a source of knowledge about the unseen world. For example, we learn the divine attributes of Allah, the existence of the hereafter, and belief in angels from the Quran. Such subjects, which are impossible to know by reason, occupy an important place among the subjects that are clarified by revelation. In this context, it is impossible to determine the principles of faith without revelation. The Qur'an stated this as follows: **"And thus did We reveal to you an inspired book by Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor (what) the faith (was), but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants; and most surely you show the way to the right path."**<sup>20</sup>

In order to make their lives meaningful, revelation guides people by highlighting the purpose of life. Answering questions such as who the human is, what the source of life is, what the purpose of life is, and what will happen after death are part of this guidance. The form of proper relationship between Allah and human beings is also explained with revelations. For example, prayer and worship can be learned only through revelation. Even if people believe in Allah's existence, it is impossible to know how they should worship Allah. Also, revelation informs regarding moral values and life in the hereafter. Doomsday, paradise, and hell hold an important place among the subjects related to the hereafter that are reported by revelation.

**LET'S SPECIFY**

"This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Mary in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another."

(*Al-i Imran*, 3: 44)

To which aspect of revelation does the above-mentioned verse draw attention?

Revelation also gives information about some of the events related to the lives of former nations and prophets. By narrating exemplary events of the former prophets, the Qur'an not only informs us about them but also wants us to learn from them. To express this, it is stated in the Qur'an, **"We relate to**

<sup>20</sup> Shura, 42: 52

you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an although you were, before it, among the unaware."<sup>21</sup>

Owing to some metaphysical characteristics of faith, theology puts forward some conditions for naqli (recorded) evidence, which can be accepted as a source of information. To accept one *naqli*-recorded report as a source of knowledge and evidence in the field of theology, its authenticity – *thubut* and its indication – *dalalah* to a certain subject must be absolute. The Qur'an, which came from Allah through revelation, undoubtedly is a *naqli* evidence of theology. Apart from the Qur'an, while the *mutawatir* hadiths, whose authenticity is also certain, are accepted as a source of knowledge, while *al-mashhur* and *ahad* hadiths, as narrations with questionable transmission chains, are not accepted authentic knowledge about theological issues.<sup>22</sup>

#### LET'S NOTE

##### Degrees of True Knowledge

In the history of Islamic thought, degrees of certainty of true knowledge are grouped in three categories as "*ilm al-yaqin*", "*ayn al-yaqin*", and "*haqq al-yaqin*" in light of statements in the Qur'an.

1. *Ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty): It is the knowledge acquired through intellectual sources or revelation; e.g., to know that there is honey in the kitchen by hearing about it or by some other indication.
2. *Ayn al-yaqin* (eye of certainty): It refers to knowledge acquired by means of the senses; e.g., to know that there is honey in the kitchen by seeing it.
3. *Haqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty): It refers to the most certain knowledge by means of inner sense or inner experience; e.g., to know honey is in the kitchen by tasting it.

### 7.2.3. Senses

In the Qur'an, it was stated that the sense organs were created for humans to perceive all aspects of the external world, and the one who does not use these organs correctly will be reprimanded. Thus, it is demanded that people should be thankful to Allah who endowed these organs.<sup>23</sup> One verse in the Qur'an draws attention to this by saying that **"Say: He it is Who brought you into being and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts: little is**

<sup>21</sup> Yusuf, 12: 3

<sup>22</sup> Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmine Giriş*, p. 73

<sup>23</sup> Araf, 7: 179; Yunus, 31; Nahl, 16: 78, 108; Isra, 17: 36; Hajj, 22: 46; Sajdah, 32: 9; Jathiyah, 45: 23.



**it that you give thanks.”<sup>24</sup>** So, the Qur’an states that our senses not only serve as a source of knowledge, but we are also ethically required to be thankful to Allah.<sup>25</sup>

Theology, which uses the perspective presented by the Qur’an regarding our senses, considers that human sense are one of the ways to acquire information. Our sense organs, i.e. our skin, eyes, ears, tongue, and nose, transfer the information they get from the external world to humans. So, these five senses are like windows opening to the outer world. According to Islamic theology, knowledge acquired by means of our senses is in the category of necessary (*dharuri*) information, denial of which is not possible.

According to theologians, in order to accept knowledge acquired through the senses as definite, they should be sound and healthy, because the information gathered by our senses can be misleading for various reasons. Moreover, the capacity of our senses is limited. For example, our eyes can only see light waves within specific ranges, or our ears can only hear sounds within the range of certain frequencies.

Islamic theology considers the senses to be a source of knowledge. However, it states that revelation and reason have important roles in ascertaining the reliability of information gathered by our senses, which are fallible.

## LET’S TALK

Let’s talk about reason, revelation, and the senses, which are the methods of theology in solving religious problems. Then, determine how reason, revelation, and the senses give information, their degree of certainty, and their functions.

### 7.3. The Relationship between Knowledge and Values

People aim to achieve certain purposes with their actions. There is no meaning in actions without purpose. When people make a choice and do something, they act in accordance with certain values. An object is preferred because it is useful or rejected because it is not useful; similarly, a behavior can be chosen or rejected because it is good or bad. Information can be accepted or rejected because of its falsity or truthfulness, or a painting can be admired or disliked because of its beauty or ugliness. Our judgments, such as usefulness, goodness, beauty, and truthfulness about objects, behavior, information, and paintings determine the difference between what should or should not be. For example, cruelty is a kind of behavior that should not be, whereas justice is one that should be; because in terms of values, people qualify justice as good and cruelty as bad.

<sup>24</sup> Mulk, 67: 23

<sup>25</sup> An’am, 6: 46

According to this, we can accept “values” as criteria to measure our actions such as true or false, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Therefore, it is possible to speak about values regarding objects like useful or useless, or aesthetic values such as beautiful or ugly, ethical values like good and bad, and logical values like true or false.

Statements expressing values can be seen frequently in the Qur’an. While some behavior and sayings are described as good, beautiful, and true, others are described as bad, ugly, and false. So the believer wants to act and talk in accordance with the positive values informed by the revelation and to avoid any actions or sayings that are deemed inappropriate by the Qur’an. In that sense, the Qur’an states that **“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.”**<sup>26</sup>

#### LET’S READ AND FIND

“He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge.”

(Nahl, 16: 59)

“Nay! Do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good – that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil it is that they judge. ”

(Jathiyah, 45: 21)

“And they say: There is nothing but our life in this world; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time, and they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture.”

(Jathiyah, 45: 24)

The subjects of the verses above are related to the ugly, the bad, and the false, and some behaviors and thoughts of the pagans. What are these behaviors and thoughts? What are the judgments of the pagans on these issues? Please find.

Through revelation sent to them and the values that they formed by using their reason, people accepted that stealing, lying, being unjust are evil actions and behavior whereas doing good, telling the truth, earning their living

<sup>26</sup> Nahl, 16: 90

through their own labor are considered good deeds. The more frequently a value is accepted and applied, the more widespread it will become and gain objectivity. In order to emphasize the objectivity of a value, Muslim scholars define the term *akhlaq* (morality) as the temperament or the behavior, which people unconsciously and naturally manifest without any external pressure. It is emphasized in the Qur'an that the values of the age of ignorance, which were based on the worldly pleasures of the tribal pagans who ignored the hereafter, cannot be accepted by everyone.

Theologians put forward two different views regarding how values are known. The Ashari scholars argued that there are no values such as good or bad in people's actions in themselves. This is why human reason cannot decide and know what is good and what is bad. In this respect, we need revelation. In other words, good and bad can be known only through revelation. Mutazili and Maturidi scholars, on the other hand, asserted that there are intrinsic ethical values in our actions like good and bad. As these values are not given by human reason, they argue, universal values can be known through reason as well.

Following Mutazili and Maturidi scholars' views, it is possible to say that ethical values have independent realities separate from the subjective feelings of human beings, mainly due to the fact that even if many people have no faith, they can act in accordance with positive ethical values. This is why people, who have free will, should behave in accordance with moral values and should be responsible for the consequences of their deeds. According to the Qur'an, after believing in the Qur'an, if a person lives according to ethical values with his or her free will, not only will that person be rewarded in this world but also in the next. This is because it is stated in the Qur'an, **“Surely Allah loves those who do good.”**<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Baqarah, 2: 195.

**LET'S FIND**

Some ethical, logical, and esthetic values are given below; and the behavior that accords with these values is exemplified in verses from the Qur'an. Find and give similar examples according to the values given below.

Ethical Values		Logical Values		Esthetic Values	
Good	Bad	True	False	Beautiful	Ugly
Generosity (Isra, 17: 29)	Extravagance (Isra, 17: 29)	Telling the truth (Yusuf, 12: 27)	To act based on suspicions and to lie (An'am, 6: 116)	Paradise (Al-Imran, 3: 14) and the names of Allah (A'raf, 7: 180)	Prostitution (Baqarah, 2: 169; Nahl, 16: 90) the voice of donkey (Luqman, 31: 19)

**7.4. The Relationship between Knowledge and Faith**

Human beings are in constant interaction with their environment by means of their senses. This interaction gives them information from their environment, which their minds categorize in various forms and then form abstract concepts. For example, our minds understand the concept of trees based on every single tree perceived in the environment. Reaching certain concepts is not enough for the human mind, so it produces new judgments about beings based on the various relationships among concepts. Concepts formed by the human mind and judgments reached by using concepts can be defined as knowledge.

Belief is different from knowledge in the sense that it is related to things that are beyond experiment, and connected to the imperceptible world. A proposition like "Allah exists and I believe in Him", which is a personal and individual experience in a psychological sense, is a proposition of truthfulness that cannot be logically questioned. In order to express this, theologians argue that faith is not a deed of mind, but rather it is an action and confirmation of the heart, but this does not mean that belief is deprived of knowledge or excludes it.

## LET'S ARGUE

“And when it is said to them, Follow what Allah has revealed, they say: Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon. What! And though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way.” (Baqarah, 2: 170)

“They are naught but names which you have named, you and your fathers; Allah has not sent for them any authority. They follow naught but conjecture and the low desires which (their) souls incline to; and certainly the guidance has come to them from their Lord.” (Najm, 53: 23)

“...Say: Have you any knowledge with you so you should bring it forth to us? You only follow a conjecture and you only tell lies.” (An’am, 6: 148)

Argue why the faith of pagans is criticized in the verses above.

In the Holy Qur’an, the pagans’ false beliefs, which were formed on the basis of their ignorance, are severely criticized. Because they, without knowledge and only based on their desires, associated the jinns as partners of Allah. They attributed sons and daughters to Allah, they worshipped idols, they denied the hereafter, and claimed that their lives were only limited to this world. Because of this, the Qur’an calls people to substantiate their belief by contemplating and by using reason, as stated in the following verse **“Say, ‘This is my way; I call unto Allah standing on sure knowledge, – I and those who follow me’...”**<sup>28</sup> Also the verse **“And follow not that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the ear and the eye and the heart – all these shall be called to account.”**<sup>29</sup> It draws attention to the importance of knowledge in both the affirmation of faith by the mind, as based on the senses, and affirmation of faith by the heart, which is based on faith.

The first verse of the Qur’an “Read” not only refers to reading the verses sent by revelation but it also means to observe and search all beings that indicate Allah’s creation in the universe. In the Qur’an, it is mentioned that **“...Say, ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’”**<sup>30</sup> and **“Only those of His servants who are endowed with knowledge fear Allah.”**<sup>31</sup> Therefore, neither is faith an obstacle before knowledge, nor can faith based on ignorance be away from false beliefs.

<sup>28</sup> Yusuf, 12: 108

<sup>29</sup> Isra, 17: 36

<sup>30</sup> Zumar, 39: 9

<sup>31</sup> Fatir, 35: 28

**LET'S INTERPRET**

“Knowledge should mean a full grasp of knowledge:  
Knowledge means to know yourself, heart and soul.  
If you have failed to understand yourself,  
Then all of your reading has missed its call.”

(Yunus Emre)

According to Yunus Emre, what is the purpose of knowledge as expressed in the above lines? Interpret them.

### LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Define Islamic theology from the aspect of its subject.
2. Which methods does the science of theology use? Please explain briefly.
3. Through which stages in its history has theology passed to become an independent scholarly discipline? Please specify.
4. How does the science of theology relate to the other Islamic sciences? Please give examples.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which of the following is not included among the purposes of the science of theology?

- A. To interpret verses about Islamic beliefs.
- B. To exert effort to provide happiness both in this world and the hereafter.
- C. To defend the principles of Islamic beliefs against criticism.
- D. To explain how acts of worship in Islam are performed and show their practice.
- E. To save one's faith from imitative faith by proving basic Islamic principles by using revelation and the findings provided by reason.

2. (I) Allah, qualifies the universe as the sign of his existence.  
 (II) Every being in this universe acts according to the measures determined by Allah..  
 (III) People show thankfulness for Allah's blessings..

Which of the above is about the relationship between Allah and the universe?

- A) Only I
- B) Only II
- C) I-II
- D) II-III
- E) I-III

3. "Who created death and life that He may try you -- which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving." (Mulk, 67: 2)

To which of following does the above verse primarily draw attention?

- A) Ethical purpose of life
- B) Attributes of Allah
- C) The necessity of worship
- D) Negative characteristics of humans
- E) The necessity of belief in the hereafter

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(revelation, faith, certainty)

1. According to theology, sources of knowledge are senses, reason, and .....

2. According to Islamic theology, knowledge coming from revelation is.....

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

(...) Subjects that are dealt with in theology can be reduced to the subject of the existence and oneness of Allah.

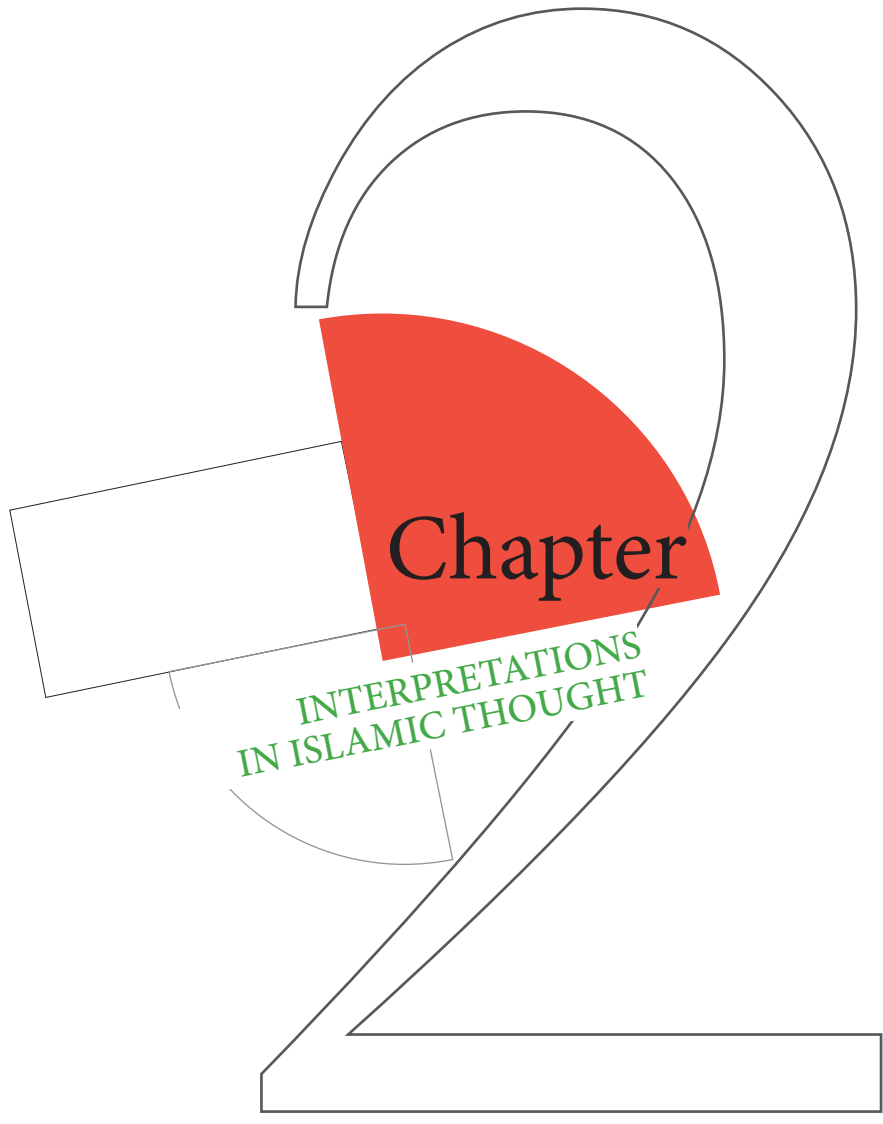
(...) The method of using reason in interpreting the main sources of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah, started with the Mu'tazila.

(...) According to Ashari, one can know religious rulings by reason.

(...) Imam Maturidi argued that one can figure out the existence of Allah through reason.







Chapter

INTERPRETATIONS  
IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT



## INTERPRETATIONS IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT

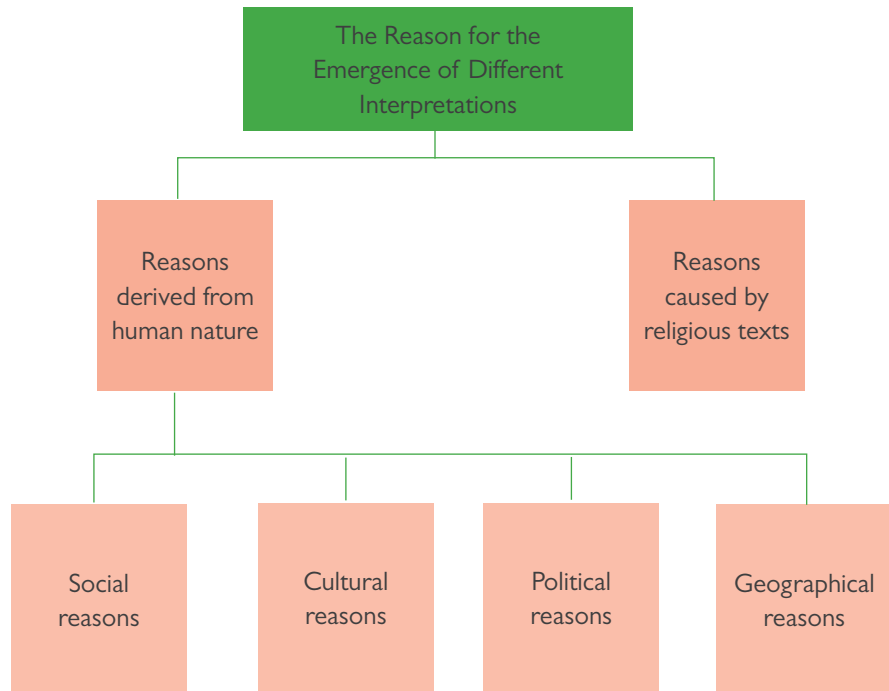
### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Search for the meaning of the terms "*firqa, madhhab, and tariqah.*"
2. Collect information about The Incident of the Arbitrator.
3. Think about the meaning of "the collision of ideas bears the light of the truth" and share your thoughts with your friends.
4. Search for the difference between "understandings of religion" and "religion".
5. Find information about "Alawiyah" and "Bektashism".

### 1. Reasons for the Emergence of Differences in Interpretation

The Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad are the main sources of Islam. Since the Prophet solved all kinds of problems related to faith and worship, there were not any disagreements regarding religious issues among believers during his lifetime. However, after his death, the emergence of various political and religious problems among believers and varying solutions to these problems led to the emergence of different interpretations and understandings. Diverse interpretations of Islamic texts, and resulting denominations are the intellectual and human formations developed with respect to understanding the content of religion.

The emergence of different interpretations in religious issues occurred among believers for several reasons. The most important include social, cultural, political, and geographical differences; the differences of human nature; and the differences in religious texts and the ways to understand them.



**Reasons Arising From Human Nature:** In order to live and understand the religion, its texts should be correctly understood and interpreted. Human beings are rational beings who think, question, and search for causes and results. People’s understanding and thoughts are different from each other, which is the natural result of the variances in their ability of reason, contemplation, and thought bestowed upon them by Allah.

People’s abilities, habits, interests, needs and expectations, views, and perceptions about the world are generally different from each other. For example, people who look at the same painting feel different emotions, or people who read the same book make different comments about it. Feeling different emotions about the same picture or deducing different conclusions from the same book are the result of different approaches to events and phenomena. Therefore, people reflect differences in their nature and in their understanding and explanations of religion, which leads to the emergence of various denominations and schools.

**Social Reasons:** Social life is in a process of constant change, development, and renewal. While universal principles, which are valid in every place and time, maintain their presence, elements with local character lose validity over

time. So it is inevitable that human beings who live in a social environment are in constant change and renewal due to social reasons.

The unique structure of social life influences the emergence of different forms of interpretations in Islamic thought as it does in every other field. For example, the social structure of village life and that of city life differ from each other. Due to this, it is natural to see different ways of living and understanding religion in villages and cities. Wars, natural disasters, political and economic crises, which deeply affect society, are also important reasons for the emergence of varying interpretations because they directly affect social structures.

**Cultural Reasons:** Islam spread from the Arabian Peninsula in a short time after its emergence, and places like Syria, Persia, Iraq, and Egypt became a part of the Muslim territories within a generation after Prophet Muhammed's death. Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Mazdaism were widespread in those areas. Muslims had to live with members of different religions in the conquered lands. As a result, some Muslims adopted different approaches in understanding, interpreting, and living the religion of Islam under the influences of culture, traditions, and customs of the land in which they lived. Since new Muslims could not completely give up their previous religion, culture, and customs, they reflected the remnants of their earlier traditions in their understanding and interpretation of Islam. For example, the issues of *jabr* (force) and *ikhtiyar* (choice), the *Dhati* and *Thubuti* attributes of Allah that had been the topics of discussion since the first century after *Hijrah*, were also discussed by new converts.

Regions in which Muslims lived possessed very different cultural environments. This is why different solutions were suggested for the same problems in different regions; but these different solutions were not related to the unchanging principles of religion.

**Geographical Reasons:** With the conquests, the Muslim world was composed of large territories consisting of different climates, cultures, nations, and members of different religions. Although Islam was born in a hot, dry environment, in a short time, it reached various kinds of climates and geographies. The climate of the Mediterranean coast varies from the climates of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Moreover, the climate of the Indian rain forests has different characteristics from the hot, dry climate of the Arabian Peninsula.

The varying lifestyles of Muslims who live in different regions and their needs are affected by the specific conditions of that region. As a result, diversity in the lifestyles caused by differing geographical conditions became effective through the emergence of varying interpretations and applications of religion. For example, due to geography, variances in the style of clothing, cuisine, traditions, and customs in other aspects of life had a strong influence on interpretations in Islamic thought.

**Political Reasons:** Politics was one of the main reasons for the emergence of different interpretations and showed its influence directly or indirectly on the practice and understanding of religion. Issues such as highlighting a particular religious interpretation, ignoring the others, or legitimizing the weaknesses of a government based on religious interpretations were among such reasons.

Various interpretations of the events that took place during the period of the Prophet Muhammad and four caliphs led to the emergence of various religious denominations. For example, discussions and views about who would be the caliph after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and finding a basis for those views from the verses of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, led to the development of religious denominations. Shiism and Sunnism are the result of differences about the solutions suggested for these problems. The Incident of the Camel, which took place between Ali and Aisha, and the Battle of Siffin, which occurred between Ali and Mu'awiyah b. Abu Sufyan, influenced the emergence of political and religious schools like Kharijism and Shiism. Moreover, discussions about what would be the state of those who were killed and died in these wars in this world and in the hereafter led to the emergence of theological schools like Murji'a and Mu'tazila.

**Reasons Caused by Religious Texts:** The Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, which are the basic sources of Islam, take primacy of interpretative authority as religious texts. Yet, not all verses and hadiths have clear, distinct meanings. While some of them can easily be comprehended, others are difficult to understand and are thus open to interpretation. Some notions and expressions in these texts have influenced the emergence of diverging understandings and interpretations. For example, several allegorical (*mutashabih*) verses in the Qur'an are hard to understand, or contain similar or multiple meanings. These expressions prepared the basis for the divergence

### LET'S THINK AND TALK

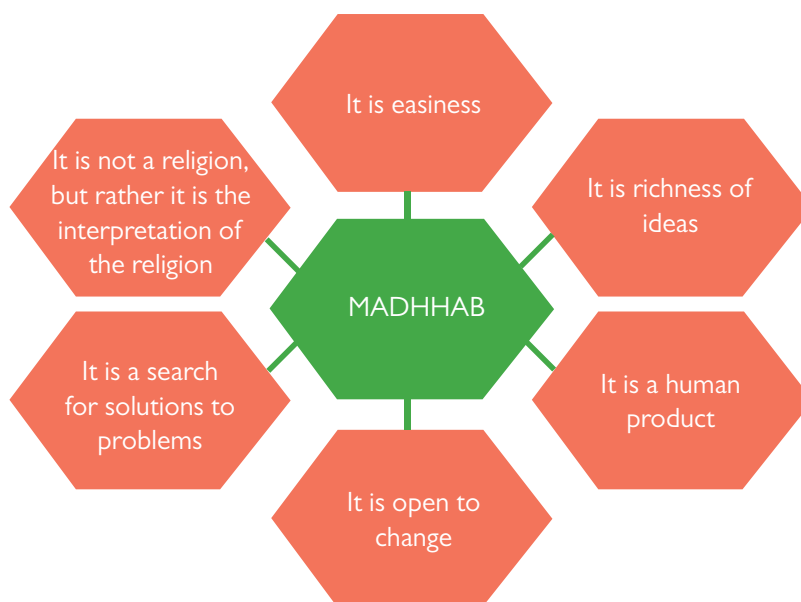
Does the emergence of various interpretations in Islamic thought mean a sort of heresy or cultural richness?

Share your opinions with your friends.

of interpretations. For example, the expressions “yadullah (Allah’s hand)”<sup>1</sup> and “wajhullah (Allah’s face)”<sup>2</sup> in the Qur’an were understood differently. While some scholars refrained from giving any interpretation, others understood these verses in accordance with their literal meanings and claimed that Allah had a hand and face resembling those of human beings; some others interpreted these verses metaphorically and said that they should be understood as “Allah’s power” and “the essence of Allah”.

## 2. Main Theological Denominations

Institutionalization of interpretations suggested as solutions for the political, theological and practical problems led to the emergence of *madhhabs* (denominations / sects). The word *madhhab* (denomination) lexically means opinion, thought, method, and path. Terminologically, it refers to the movements formed around certain ideas and individuals, and it has coherent methods and an established system of thought. In Islamic thought, *madhhabs* are divided into two main categories: theological denominations and *fiqh* schools (schools of Islamic law). While theological sects have focused on subjects related to issues of creed, schools of Islamic law deal with topics related to the application of religion in daily life.



<sup>1</sup> Fath, 48: 1

<sup>2</sup> Qasas, 28: 88



It was natural to experience the emergence of various interpretations and sects, which were the result of freedom of thought and the importance given to reasoning. This is why there have been many opinions and thoughts presented about religious issues among Muslims throughout Islamic history. This richness of interpretation should be seen as efforts contributing to the emergence of the truth. So all *madhhabs* and interpretations that have developed in Islamic thought and do not contradict the main principles of revelation, should be seen as cultural richness and treated with tolerance.

Groups, like the Khawarij, Shi'a, Murji'a, Mu'tazila, Ashariyyah, and Maturidiyya, are the main theological and political sects that put forward different opinions in order to solve the problems that they faced regarding the religious and political issues of Muslims.

## 2.1 Khawarij

The Khawarij is the first theological sect that appeared among Muslims. The group that supported Ali in the war of Siffin withdrew its support and separated after the Incident of *Hakam* (the Arbitrator) that took place at the end of war. Kharijites initially introduced the slogan "*La hukma illa lillah*" (Judgment belong to only Allah) and rejected Caliph Ali for accepting the Incident of the Arbitrator. After a certain period, this group gained a theological dimension. Later, they were divided into many different factions within themselves as a result of disagreements among themselves on many political and theological issues.

According to the Kharijites, the ideal application of Islam was carried out during the periods of caliph of Abu Bakr and Umar. Uthman had fallen into blasphemy because of his incorrect governance during the last six years of his caliphate. According to them, Ali had also sinned because, in his dispute with Muawiya, he accepted to take his rightful position against Muawiya to be decided by an arbitrator. According to Kharijites, there is no such condition that the Caliph should be a member from the tribe of Quraysh, and in fact, every knowledgeable and brave Muslim, even if he is a slave, can be the caliph. Moreover, Kharijites believe that those who committed grave sins are apostates, because, for them, practice and faith constitute one whole and cannot be separated from each other.

The Khawarij could not find many adherents in the Islamic world because of their unusual views and attitudes in many issues, and so they disappeared

in time. The sect of the Ibadiyyah, which is a sub-branch of the Khawarij, has survived until our times. Today, adherents of the Ibadiyyah mostly live in Morocco, Tunis, Algeria, Madagascar, Zanzibar, and the Sultanate of Oman.

## 2.2. Shi'a

Shi'a is the common name used for the people or groups who believe that, following the death of the Prophet, Ali was the rightful leader of the Muslim community. They believe that Ali was appointed by revelation, and that the imamate leadership of Muslims will continue in his lineage until the Day of Judgment. Shiites accept the issue of the *Imamate* (leadership) as one of principles of faith. According to them, the imamate was determined by both Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's last will, both of which were in favor of Ali. Therefore, the governments of all those who came to power before Ali were not legitimate. In time, Shiism has turned into an independent sect and has developed based on its unique views on theological, political, and jurisprudential issues.

In time, Shiism itself has been divided into various branches by adopting differing views and approaches. From these branches, Zaydiyyah, Isma'iliyyah, and Ithna' Ashariyyah have survived until today. Today, when the term Shi'a is used, it is mostly understood as the school of the Imamiyya, which is also called "*Ithna' Ash'ariyya* (twelvers)," because they believe that there are 12 Imams who were appointed by the primary religious texts and the Prophet. The Imamiyyah is considered to be the official *madhhab* in Iran. According to this sect, there are five principles of religion, namely *Tawhid* (unity of Allah), *Nubuwwah* (prophethood), *Imamate* (leadership), *Akhirah* (the hereafter), and *Adalah* (justice). According to belief in the Imamate, which is considered one of the basic principles of faith, the number of Imams is 12 and the twelfth one is still alive. According to Shi'a beliefs, when the time comes, the last Imam will return to his followers and will rule the world with justice.

Zaydiyyah is another important branch of Shiism that considers Zayd, the son of the fourth Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin, to be their Imam. Zaydis, who mostly live in Yemen today, are distinguished from other Shiite sects by their different views about the Imamate. According to them, the Prophet Muhammad did not appoint anyone by name to succeed him as an Imam. If someone from the tribe of the sons of Hashim, who is knowledgeable, brave, and pious enough, revolts and declares his Imamate, he becomes the rightful Imam. According to Zaydi belief, Imams are not innocent and infallible, and their number is not 12.

Another branch of Shiism is the Ismailiyyah, which claimed that after the death of Jafar al-Sadiq, the Imamate succeeded to his son Ismail, and since then, it has become the right of those from Ismail's lineage. Ismaili sect gained strength with the establishment of the Fatimid state of Egypt during the medieval period, but they lost power and weakened after the collapse of this dynasty.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**12 IMAMS OF SHIISM**

1. ALI	2. HASSAN	3. HUSAIN
4. ALI ZAYN AL-ABIDIN	5. MUHAMMAD BAQIR	6. JAFAR AL-SADIQ
7. MUSA QAZIM	8. ALI RIZA	9. MUHAMMAD TAQI
10. ALI NAQI	11. HASSAN ASKARI	12. MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI

### 2.3. Murji'a

Derived from the word *irja*, the term Murji'a means the one who postpones, leaves behind, and delays. Terminologically, Murji'a is the common term used for the group of people who accept that Muslims who commit grave sins become immoral (*fasiq*) believers. Yet, Murji'a believes that we cannot make any judgment about the moral status of these Muslims in this world and in the hereafter, because this decision belongs only to Allah. According to them, a grave sinner does not apostate from Islam and become a disbeliever. The Murji'a, which generally appeared as a reaction against the Kharijites, preferred to keep their silence in the face of those who fought in conflicts among Muslims, and were killed by other Muslims. Murji'a theologians note that, when a person believes and accepts Islam, the sins that he commits do not harm his faith. Faith does not decrease because of sins and does not increase because of good deeds. According to them, Allah is the One Who forgives or punishes.

Murji'a did not consider Uthman, Ali, and the participants of the wars of Siffin and the Camel as infidels. They left their state and the moral judgment

on the grave sinners to Allah, and did not issue any opinion about whether such people would go to heaven or hell.

Political events of that period influenced the context for the emergence of the Murji'a. They defended the unity of the Muslim community against the extreme ideas and violent actions of the Kharijites and the conflict between the Umayyad and Hashimi families. They did not get involved in political arguments and incorporated this attitude into their basic principles by carrying it into the field of theology. The views of the Murji'a appeared in Mecca and Madinah, where supporters of Abu Bakr and Umar densely lived. Later, they spread to Basra, Kufa, and other cities. They especially spread in Khorasan and Central Asia and made important contributions to the Islamization of the Turks. Some of their views also played an important role in the systematization of the Maturidi madhhab.

According to the Murji'a, faith consists of knowledge and confirmation, and it does not increase and decrease. Moreover, committing sins does not harm faith.

## LET'S READ AND UNDERSTAND

### SOME BASIC VIEWS OF THE MURJI'A

1. Muslims do not convert out of faith and fall into blasphemy for any grave sins committed. One is treated as a Muslim in this world but is a *fasiq* (immoral or sinner) because of sins committed. Their situation in the hereafter depends on Allah's will. If He wills, He forgives their sins or punishes them.
2. Conditional and doubtful faith cannot be accepted. Believers should express their faith and confess that they believe without any kind of doubt and should say, "I am truly a believer."
3. Realization of faith can be possible with either confession of the tongue or confirmation by the heart or with both of them. The one who embraces Islam gains the title of Muslim only by saying with the tongue that he or she sincerely believes in the unity of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad.
4. Due to the fact that acts are not part of faith, performing the acts of worship does not increase faith, just as neglecting them or committing sins does not decrease it. Such a person only becomes a sinner and is punished for this mistake, but if that person underestimates his or her sins or denies the sinfulness of those actions, he or she will then lose his faith.
5. All Muslims are equal in terms of their faith. One's faith is not superior to or inferior to that of the other. Differences are only in actions.

(Sönmez Kutlu, *Türklerin İslamlaşma Sürecinde Mürciye ve Tesirleri*, p. 101-147)

## 2.4. Mu'tazila

Mu'tazila is one of the sects that emerged in order to find solutions for the civil war, and the problems caused by internal wars that deeply affected the Muslim community, such as the state of those who were killed by other Muslims in these wars. When the state of a grave sinner and the participants of civil war were discussed in the scholarly circles of Hasan Al-Basri, Wasl b. Ata laid the foundation of the Mu'tazila by proclaiming that grave sinners are neither believers nor disbelievers, and thus they are in a middle state between belief and disbelief. The Umayyads tried to relate everything to Allah's Will in order to base their power on solid foundations, and to break the resistance of opposition movements in society. They claimed that they came to power by Allah's will. Crises in the community and problems in the administration were nothing to do with them, and everything happens according to Allah's will. The negative approaches of the Umayyads and their ignorance of human free will had prepared the ground for the views defended by the Mutazilites.

As a result of the expansion of the Muslim communities' encountering different religions and cultures, and the activities of translation from other civilizations, many religious and philosophical thoughts that seemed to contradict the principles of Islamic belief started to enter Muslim thought, belief, and practice. The Mu'tazila fought against these heretical thoughts and defended the principles of Islamic beliefs and worship against the beliefs that originated from the Iranian and Indian faiths, and other religions like Judaism and Christianity. Increasing its activities in the period of the Abbasids, the Mu'tazila laid the foundations for Islamic theology as a scholarly discipline by using rational and philosophical evidence, as well as textual (*naqli*) evidence. Mutazilite views were systematized through five main principles as *tawhid* (unity of Allah), *al-adl* (justice), *al-wa'd wa'l wa'id* (promise and threat), *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* (middle position of grave sinner), *al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar* (commanding good, forbidding evil). The Mutazilite also argued that a beatific vision of Allah cannot be realized in the hereafter; the Qur'an was a created being; and whether something is good or bad can be known by reason.

## LET'S READ AND INTERPRET

### THE FIVE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE MU'TAZILA

1. Tawhid: Allah is One with His essence, attributes, and actions. Qidam is Allah's most special divine attribute. All His other attributes are the same as His essence. Allah knows, sees, and hears with His essence.
2. Adalah: Allah does not create evil and ugly things. People are free and responsible beings, and the creator of their own actions. If Allah were the creator of people's actions, then it would become meaningless to him to punish people because of actions that are against the Will of Allah. In order to be responsible for our actions, we should have complete freedom to act and willpower. Therefore, human beings have free will, which is not interfered with by Allah. Interference in human free will is not compatible with Allah's justice.
3. Wa'd wa'l Wa'id: Wa'd is Allah's promise that in the hereafter He will reward those who do good deeds and behave well in this world. Wa'id is Allah's threat that He will punish those who commit evil deeds. This is the natural result of Allah's justice. Reward for those who do goodness and punishment for those who commit evil deeds are required by Allah.
4. Al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn: Grave sinners are neither believers nor disbelievers. They are in a middle position between faith and denial.
5. Al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa nahy an al-munkar: Commanding good and forbidding evil are obligatory duties for every Muslim.

## 2.5. Ahl al-Sunnah

Those who follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and adopt the path of his companions are called *Ahl-al Sunnah* (people of the Sunnah). When the Prophet was alive, there were no denominations, including that of *ahl-al-sunnah*. The term Muslim was used for all those who devoted themselves to Islam. In time, because of many cultural, political and social reasons, divisions emerged among believers about religious issues and consequently, different interpretations became established in the community. Some sects like the Khawarij, Murji'a, Mu'tazila, and Shi'a differed from those who constituted the majority and the main body of the community with their thoughts and attitudes. Those who did not belong to any of these groups and tried to maintain the central way that represented the majority of the community were called *Ahl al- Sunnah*.

Hasan Al-Basri made significant contributions in shaping *Ahl al-Sunnah's* views about belief and practice. Although Hasan Al-Basri criticized the Umayyad government, he did not approve of revolting against them and

wanted Muslims not to participate in such revolts. The opinions of Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifa had also been decisive in shaping this school's views about faith. When the views of other madhhabs began to crystallize, scholars who adhered to *Ahl al-Sunnah* made contributions to the continuity of *Ahl al-Sunnah* as a school by identifying certain principles.

### LET'S NOTE

#### SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF AHL AL-SUNNAH

1. Allah exists. He is One and there is nothing like Him. There are various attributes that are specific to Him.
2. Allah is the only Creator who created the entire universe.
3. Faith consists of confessing with the tongue and approving with the heart. Faith and deeds are two separate concepts.
4. People have free will and are responsible for what they do.
5. Messengers were sent in every period of human history. Allah sent Muhammad as the last messenger and Islam as the last religion.
6. The Holy Qur'an is the revelation sent by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad, and it will continue to exist until the Day of Judgment without being corrupted.
7. People will be resurrected after death and they will see the result of their actions in paradise or in hell.
8. The sequence of the first rightly guided caliphs is as follows: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali.
9. A Muslim who commits a sin will not have left the religion because of his sin. Calling him a disbeliever for whatever reason is not permissible.
10. No one who performs prayer turning towards the Ka'bah can be called as infidel.

Although *Ahl al-Sunnah* generally supports the same views about the basic principles of Islamic beliefs, it is divided into two main groups: Ash'arites and Maturidis. This division is due to the fact that they adopted different opinions in interpreting and explaining those basic principles. In addition to these two, there is a group called the Salafiyya, which previously were known as supporters of hadith. The most prominent feature of Salafism is its dependence on the verses and hadith, while making independent reasoning a secondary source for theological beliefs. They refrain from interpreting verses and hadiths whose meanings are not clear, or need to be interpreted, and accept these verses literally.

### 2.5.1. Ash'ariyya

One of the constituent sects of Ahl al-Sunnah is Ash'ariyya. Those who adopted the theological opinions of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari are called Ash'arites. Scholars such as al-Ghazali and Fakhraddin Al-Razi helped to spread this *madhhab* through the works they wrote based on the basic principles of Ash'ariyya.

Imam Ash'ari focused on reason and used rational evidence as well as Qur'anic verses and hadiths to explain theological issues. Here are the basic ideas of Ash'ariyya: Allah is One and unique, there is nothing like Him. There are eternal attributes of Allah that exist alongside His essence. The Holy Qur'an is the Word of Allah and is not created. Muslim believers will see Allah in the hereafter. People's actions are created by Allah.

According to the Ash'ariyya, faith consists of knowledge and confirmation by the heart. Those who commit grave sins will become sinners but will not apostate. Their situation is left to Allah. If He wills, He will punish or forgive them. Those who have not received the message of Islam are not responsible for finding Allah by using their reason and belief in Him. Good and bad, beautiful and ugly are concepts that become known by revelation, not by reason. Something is beautiful because Allah has commanded it, and another thing is bad because Allah has forbidden it. Allah sent those whom He selected from among his servants as prophets to deliver His message. Messengers do not have to be male; there can also be female messengers. Subjects related to life in the hereafter are known only by means of religious texts, and human intellect accepts that these issues are within the range of possibility.

Almost all Malikis, the majority of Shafiis, and some Hanafis adopted the opinions of the Ash'arites in theological issues. Ash'ari views are widespread among Muslims living in the Hejaz, North Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Indonesia.



### INFORMATION BOX

#### WHO IS IMAM AL-ASH'ARI?

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari was born in Basra in 874 and died in Baghdad in 936. Ash'ari was a descendant of a Yemeni companion Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and was educated under the guidance of his mutazili stepfather. Under the influence of his stepfather, he adopted mutazilite views and wrote works defending this sect; but later on, he started to search for new ideas after arguing against his master's opinions, and he started to criticize the basic principles of this sect, and finally left Mu'tazila. After staying for a while with Ahmad b. Hanbal, who is considered the Imam of the Salafiyya, al-Ash'ari started to defend a set of ideas that formed the basis of Ash'ariyya.

Some of His Works:

1. al-Ibana an usul al-Diyanah
2. al-Lum'a fi al-raddi a'la ahl al-zayghi wa' al-bid'a
3. Maqalat al-Islamiyyin

### 2.5.2. Maturidiyya

Another denomination that constituted Ahl al-Sunnah is Maturidiyya, which adopted Imam Maturidi's opinions about Islamic creed. The sect of Maturidiyya preferred a middle path between supporters of hadiths, who gave priority to religious texts, and mutazilites, who gave priority to human reason. For that reason, Maturidi theologians accepted reason as one of the bases of understanding religious matters in the field of *aqaid*, along with the sayings of the Prophet and verses of the Qur'an. By systematizing the opinions of the followers of Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifa, Imam Maturidi formed them into a theological structure that later became famous under the name of Ahl al-Sunnah. Although Maturidi was close to the understanding of mutazilites in giving importance to human reason in religious issues, he managed to establish his own specific balance between reason and religious texts. According to him, faith consists only of confirmation by the heart, and expressing faith orally carries significance in the second degree. Deeds cannot be included in faith, because Almighty Allah has addressed faith and deeds separately in many verses of the Qur'an.

General principles of the Maturidiyya are as follows: Allah exists; He is One and there is nothing like Him. It is possible for people to reach Allah by using their reason because Allah wants people to use their minds, to think, and to

learn. So, reason is independent from knowing Allah, but it is not independent from understanding religious rulings explaining the specific responsibilities of people. Allah has created everything for a reason. He has created nothing in vain. Religion and *Shari'ah* are different from each other. There is only one religion but there is more than one *Shari'ah*. The Holy Qur'an is the Word of Allah. As an attribute of Allah, His word eternally exists along with His essence. The letters and sounds of the Qur'an were created later. People's actions belong to Allah in terms of creation. Yet, in terms of realization (*kasb*), these acts belong to people. Partial willpower has been bestowed on people, and because of that, people are responsible for their actions. When humans want to do something, Allah creates the power (*qudrah*) to perform this action, and humans fulfill it through this power. Committing a grave sin does not cause a Muslim to apostate, because faith and deeds are two separate things. Thus, committing grave sins does not harm a believer's faith.

The system of Maturidi and the interpretation of religion became the source of inspiration for many scholars of following generations. These scholars, the majority of whom were Turkic ethnic background, wrote many books enriching and spreading Maturidiyya. The Maturidi madhhab was first adopted by the majority of Muslims living in Transoxiana and Khurasan and then spread to Afghanistan, East Turkestan, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Caucasus, Russia, Turkey, the Middle East, and the Balkans.

## INFORMATION BOX

### WHO IS IMAM MATURIDI?

Imam Maturidi came from a Turkish family and was born in Samarqand in 852; he died in the same city in 944. The city of Samarqand where Imam Maturidi grew up became the center of knowledge where Abu Hanifa's views were very widespread. Maturidi became the head administrator of the madrasa where he had been educated when young. He produced many works in the fields of theology, the history of denominations, the interpretation of the Qur'an, and jurisprudence; and he became prominent among commentators of the Qur'an with his book titled "*Tawil'at al-Qur'an*". His book, titled "*Kitab al-Tawhid*", has been translated into Turkish. Maturidi lived in a region of political turmoil and had an influence on the majority of newly converted Turkish Muslims and laid the foundations of the Maturidiyya sect, which was named after him.

## SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MATURIDIYYA AND ASH'ARIYYA

SUBJECTS	MATURIDIYYA	ASH'ARIYYA
WILLPOWER (IRADAH)- ACQUISITION (KASB)	Human beings have free and particular willpower. They determine their actions and then Allah creates them.	Humans do not have free will.
REASON (AQL)	Humans can acquire the knowledge of Allah's existence through reason. It is obligatory on the part of every rational being to acquire knowledge of the existence of Allah through reason.	It is a religious obligation to know about the existence of Allah.
GOODNESS – BADNESS (HUSUN - QUBUH)	Good and bad actions can be known by reason. They are inherent in actions. Religion forbids what is inherently bad and commands what is inherently good.	Good and bad actions can only be known through revelation.
FAITH (IMAN)	Faith consists of expressing faith through speech and the confirmation of it in the heart. Faith does not increase or decrease.	Faith consists of knowledge and acceptance by the heart and it can increase or decrease.

### 3. Jurisprudential Interpretations in Islamic Thought

Jurisprudential interpretations in Islamic thought emerged after the beginning of the second century hijrah in which many great jurists were trained with the purpose of finding solutions to problems related to the areas of daily transactions (*mu'amalat*) and acts of worship (*ibadat*) in Islam. Jurisprudential schools are known by the name of mujtahid Imams who were accepted as the founders of Islamic legal schools. Great jurists such as Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafii, Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal, and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq pioneered the formation of the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali, and Jafari Schools, which have survived until today in the Islamic world.

**The Hanafi School** is one of the Sunni jurisprudential schools and is based on the views of Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifa. He evaluated the jurisprudential opinions and narratives of his predecessors by taking the needs and conditions of his era into account. Abu Hanifa took the general principles of Islam into consideration and tried to adopt a balanced path between reason and the reported texts as well as between *hadith* and *ra'y* (personal opinion). When he produced religious knowledge and used his independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) to issue judgments, he applied methods of reasoning and thus expanded the sphere of the authority of reason. This is why he and his followers are also called *ahl al-ra'y* (the people of opinion). His independent reasoning, based on the general principles of religion, customs of the community, and his concerns for the general benefit of the people, enabled the Hanafi school to spread over a wide area. His two most prominent disciples, i.e. Imam Muhammad and Abu Yusuf, made important contributions to the spread and development of this school.

The Hanafi school originated in Iraq and successfully spread in the eastern regions of Muslim lands after the Abbasid period. Today, the Hanafi school is more common among Muslims living in Turkey, the Balkans, India, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Turkic Republics.

### INFORMATION BOX

#### WHO IS IMAM ABU HANIFA?

His original name was Numan b. Thabit. He was born in Kufa in 80/699 and died in 150/767. He became knowledgeable by taking lessons from prominent scholars of Iraq. After the death of his master Hammad b. Abu Sulayman, he took his master's place and started to teach. In a short time, his fame spread in scholarly circles and the number of his students rapidly increased. Abu Hanifa also dealt with trade and taught many students to the level of mujtahid. He was known as Imam al-Azam (the Greatest Imam) because of his jurisprudential knowledge and practical solutions in many subjects. Abu Hanifa spent most of his life learning the religious sciences and teaching students but he would not accept the position of judge despite every pressure.

**The Maliki School** is based on the opinions of Malik b. Anas, who was a scholar of hadith and jurisprudence. He followed the Qur'an, Sunnah, the words of the Companions, and the Successors respectively in issuing his judgments and applications. The most prominent feature of the Maliki school is that it pays more attention to the practice of the people of Madinah than the other legal schools do. The customs of the Madinan people took priority in the interpretation of the religion in the Maliki school. This was due to the fact that the Prophet lived in Madinah for approximately 10 years. During this time, the prophet abrogated some older customs and traditions, which contradicted Islam, and corrected some Madinan customs while preserving some others.

Imam Maliki's views first spread in the Hejaz. Later, through his students, they were transmitted to Egypt, North Africa and Andalusia. For a period of time during the Andalusian Umayyad dynasty, the Maliki school was accepted as the official madhhab of the state. Today, it is most common among Muslims living in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and the Sudan.

**The Shafii School** is based on the religious views and interpretations of Imam Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafii. Imam Shafii visited many centers of science during his time and increased his knowledge about the traditions of those places and re-evaluated some of his judgments according to the conditions of the place in which he lived. Therefore, the phrase "*madhab al-qadim* (the old school)" is used for his judgments issued when he lived in Baghdad and the phrase "*madhhab al-jadid* (the new school)" is used for his judgments issued in Egypt.

**INFORMATION BOX****WHO IS IMAM MALIK?**

In 93/712 Malik b. Anas was born in Madinah where he completed his education. At that time, Madinah was an important center in the areas of the Prophetic hadiths, the views of the Companions and their Successors. Imam Malik, who learned the religious science from prominent scholars of the time, gave lessons and issued judgments in *masjid al-nabawiyya*. Imam Malik became famous as the scholar of Madinan jurisprudence. He died in 179/795 in Madinah. The hadith book titled *al-Muwatta* is his most important work and was compiled from hadiths, Companions' sayings, and Successors' judgments.

The Shafii school, like the other schools, first applied the Qur'an and Sunnah as solutions to problems. If there were a ruling in the Qur'an and Sunnah about a problem, he would not go and check other sources for a solution. If there were not, he would first check the consensus of the scholars and then apply analogy. The Shafii school is widespread among Muslims who live in the regions of eastern and southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Indonesia.

**INFORMATION BOX****WHO IS IMAM AL-SHAFII?**

Imam al-Shafi was born in 150/767 in Gaza, Palestine. He moved to Madinah at a young age where he completed his education. After learning the methods and approaches of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which became the schools of Hejaz and Iraq during his time, he tried to combine the methods of those two schools. Imam al-Shafii was very knowledgeable regarding the methods of *ahl al-ra'y* (people of opinion) and *ahl al-hadith* (people of hadith) and taught many students by establishing his own method. Imam al-Shafii settled in Egypt towards the end of his life and gave up some of his previously issued judgments by taking into consideration the customs of the place where he lived. Thus, he issued new judgments in Egypt in place of older opinions he had in Hejaz. Imam Shafii wrote about the basic principles of the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence in his works titled "*al-Risalah*". He died in Egypt in 204/820.

The **Hanbali School** is based on the jurisprudential interpretations of Imam Ahmad b. al-Hanbal, who was a scholar of Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. Not only did the Hanbali school give importance to narratives but it also did not ignore deduction when deriving rulings from religious texts. The Hanbali school gave priority to religious texts and previous scholars' views in issues of

worship (*ibadat*) and depended on the legal maxim “the origin of all rules is permissibility” in issues of transaction (*mu’amalat*). He adopted the views of his predecessors as a source in his legal rulings, and applied the views of the Companions and the consensus of the scholars in subjects about which there are no rulings in the Qur’an and Sunnah.

The most prominent feature of the Hanbali school is that it relied more on reported textual sources such as verses, hadiths, and sayings of the Companions than using personal opinion and making analogies. Therefore, jurisprudential understanding based on hadiths is dominant in this school. The Hanbali school emerged in Baghdad and spread to other regions of the Hejaz, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt by means of his foremost disciples. It is also the official madhhab in Saudi Arabia.

#### INFORMATION BOX

##### WHO IS IMAM AHMAD B. HANBAL?

Ahmad b. al-Hanbal was born in Baghdad in 164/781. He took lessons at a very young age from prominent scholars of the time such as Imam al-Shafi, Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad. He collected many hadiths by traveling to various regions of the Islamic world and combined them in a hadith book titled “*al-Musnad*”. He was exposed to a lot of pressure in the period of the Abbasids because he argued for the uncreatedness of the Qur’an. Ahmad b. al-Hanbal followed the jurisprudential knowledge and methods of deduction of Imam al-Shafii. He was not satisfied only with narratives and thus he searched for their jurisprudential purposes. He died in 241/855.

**The Jafari School** was formed around the views of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq on issues of belief, acts of worship, and daily transactions. Jafaris accepted the sayings of the 12 Imams, whom they regard as innocent, as a source in religious matters in addition to the Qur’an and Sunnah. People who do not have the authority to issue a judgment about religious subjects are obliged to imitate and follow the guidance of a living mujtahid. Four basic books containing the traditions narrated from the 12 Imams, whose words are accepted as hadiths along with the sayings of the Prophet, constitute the main sources of the Jafari school. Today the Jafari school is followed by believers living in Iran, Iraq, Syria, some Gulf countries, Afghanistan and Palestine, and is also adopted to a lesser degree in some regions of Turkey.

**INFORMATION BOX****WHO IS IMAM JAFAR AL-SADIQ?**

Jafar al-Sadiq was born in Medina. He was the son of Muhammad al-Baqir, or the fifth Imam of *Isna al-Ashariyya*. He was first educated by his father and grandfather. He was considered the sixth Imam of the Shi'a by undertaking the task of Imamate after his father. Regarding the Imamate, all schools of Shi'a except al-Zaydiyya are agreed upon the leadership of Jafar al-Sadiq. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq was a virtuous and pious man, and gained the respect and affection of all Muslims. Jafar al-Sadiq has an important place in the science of jurisprudence and hadith. He met with prominent scholars of his time, such as Abu Hanifa, and had scholarly discussions with them. He died in Medina in 148/765.

**4. Alawiyyah and Bektashism as Sufistic Interpretations**

In addition to theological and jurisprudential interpretations of Islam, there are mystical interpretations. Sufi interpretation aims at the purification of the human spirit by focusing on the moral principles of Islam. Sufi interpretation played an important role in respect to the transmission of the message of Islam to people who belonged to different cultures and civilizations. Sufi thought made important contributions in spreading Islam in Khurasan, India, Turkestan, Persia, Anatolia, the Balkans and North Africa.

Sufi interpretation, which contributed to the spiritual education and improvement of people and societies, also shaped Turkish culture and religious lives. Figures such as Khoja Ahmad Yassawi, Yunus Emre, Hacı Bektash Veli, Mawlana, Ahi Evran, and Hacı Bayram Veli enabled the spread of the culture of affection, respect and tolerance in Anatolia. The most prominent Sufi interpretations that emerged based on the views of these figures are seen in the religious orders of Yassawiyya, Naqshdiyya, Mawlawiyya, and Alawiyyah-Bektashism.

**4.1 The Concepts of Alawiyyah and Bektashism**

The word Alawi means “belonging to Ali, supporters of Ali, the one who loves, respects, and is strongly attached to Ali and the descendants of Ali.”<sup>3</sup> In this sense those who love Ali, respect him, and support him can be called Alawi. Terminologically, Alawiyyah is used for those who see Ali as the superior

<sup>3</sup> Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı, *Çağımızda İtikadi İslam Mezhepleri*, p.233; Sönmez Kutlu, *Alawilik – Bektashilik Yazıları*, p. 16



Companion and believe that he was designated by Allah and the Prophet as the Caliph after the death of Muhammad. Bektashism is the name of the way of those who are connected to Hacı Bektash Veli and follow in his footsteps. Hacı Bektash Veli was an important person who served as the spiritual guide for many people who came after him and who shed light on issues that formed the basis of Bektashism.

### LET'S LEARN

#### Today's Alawis' Definition of Alawiyyah

"Alawiyyah is Islam. It is the term used for the belief that it is the true path of Muhammad and Ali which had matured in the Council of Forty, continued with the Twelve Imams, took Imam Jafar al- Sadiq's measure of intellect as a guide, came to Anatolia with the spiritual help of Khurasan's murshids, came to life with Hazret-i Pir and the hymns of great poets.

(*Türkiye Alawiler Derneği Kurultayı, Sonuç Bildirgesi, 29-30 October 2005, Karacaahmet Sultan Dergahı*)

Hacı Bektash Veli was the leader of communities living in Anatolia under the name of Bektashism. He inspired many Alawi-Bektashi poets and spiritual guides (*murshids*) who came after him.<sup>4</sup> The name Alawiyyah has also been used for the Bektashi and Kizilbash communities living in Anatolia after the mid-19th century. Previously, various names had been given to the religious-social formation that is known today as Alawiyyah. Examples of these names are Kizilbash, Bektashi, Babai, Torlak, Işıklar, Abdallar, and Tahtacılar. Alawi ceremonies, such as *cem*, – *samah* (whirling), orally transmitted *deyiş* (folk songs), *duvaz* and *nefes* (various styles of poetry) all have manifested its mystical bases. This is why as an intertwined Sufi interpretation, Alawiyyah and Bektashism have maintained their existence up until today.

The Alawiyyah-Bektashism order, just like the other Sufi groups, emphasizes the ethical principles of Islam and ensures the dissemination of these principles among people. Basic ethical principles indicating that the way of Alawiyyah-Bektashism is the road of love and friendship are expressed as follows: "Our way is based on love and friendship. There is no place for those who provoke and create mischief in our lodge. Envy, jealousy, self-esteem, arrogance, stubbornness, gossip, blaming others, slander, blasphemy, tyranny, lying, and

<sup>4</sup> Mehmet Yaman, *Alawilik*, p.107

murder are acts prohibited by God. A disciple should cleanse himself from all these evil characteristics and remove them from his heart. A disciple does not speak if it is not necessary and does not take a thing that he did not himself leave. He does not say that ‘I saw’ about a thing that he did not see with his own eyes and ‘I heard’ about a thing that he did not hear with his own ears. ...”<sup>5</sup>

## 4.2. Historical Development

The belief of the Alawiyyah–Bektashism is a mystical interpretation that has made a significant impact on Anatolian and Balkan Muslim culture. The founder of Bektashilik is Hacı Bektaş Veli. He spread the teachings of Khoja Ahmed Yassawi, known as Pir-i Turkestan, which are based on the love of Allah and morality. When the Mongols invaded Khurasan and other Turkish regions, the Turks migrated to Anatolia and adopted it as their homeland. Sufis such as Hacı Bektaş Veli and Mawlana played an important role in establishing the political and economic stability of the Turks who migrated to Anatolia, and developed spiritual bonds, ensuring a life of solidarity and unity. Hacı Bektaş Veli, who grew up under the spiritual guidance of Ahmad Yassawi as a scholar from Khurasan, spread morality, love, and the culture of living together.

Hacı Bektaş Veli became the founder of Sufi understanding, which quickly spread from Anatolia to the Balkans. He rapidly took his place among the spiritual leaders of Anatolia; the people were drawn to him as a Sufi and a man of hearts. “Hacı Bektaş Veli, together with scholars from Khurasan, lit the fires of truth in Anatolia and taught the subtleties of Sufism to people who gathered around him.”<sup>6</sup> Alawi–Bektashi tradition continues today as a Sufi movement that influenced the social life in Anatolia and the Balkans, thanks to figures like Geyikli Baba and Abdal Musa.

## 4.3. Hacı Bektash Veli and Four Doors and 40 Maqams (Stages)

Hacı Bektash Veli’s book titled “Maqalat” had a significant effect in shaping the Alawi–Bektashi thought. In this work, he expresses his opinions about issues of theology, acts of worship, and Islamic ethics. Hacı Bektash Veli explains his views on these subjects based on the principle of “four doors and 40 stages”. According

<sup>5</sup> Bozkurt Fuat ed., *Buyruk*, p. 39

<sup>6</sup> Uthman Eri, *Bektashilikte Tasavvufi Eğitim*, p. 15

to him, these are the things that complete each other. “A shortcoming in one of them causes deficiencies in the others. The believer reaches Allah by passing through 40 maqams (stages) and becomes a friend of Allah. Ten of these 40 maqams are within the Shari’ah, another 10 are within Marifah (gnosis), another 10 are within Tariqah (mystical path), and the last 10 are within Haqiqah (the Divine Truth).”<sup>7</sup> Four doors and 40 degrees consist of the following:<sup>8</sup>

**A. The Door of Shari’ah and its 10 Stages:** 1. To have faith: belief in Allah and His commands, angels, the Qur’an and His other books, the prophets, His friends, and the hereafter. 2. To learn science. 3. To perform prayer, to fast, to give alms, to perform pilgrimage, to do jihad, and to be cleansed from the state of ritual impurities (to perform major ablution *ghusl*). 4. To earn halal money, and to accept that interest is forbidden. 5. To get married. 6. To accept that sexual intercourse is forbidden during the periods of menstruation and post-natal bleeding. 7. To be from the people of Sunnah and Jamaah (community). 8. To be compassionate. 9. To eat from clean dishes and wear clean clothes. 10. To command good and forbid evil.

**B. The Door of Tariqah and its 10 Stages:** 1. To take the hand of a *pir* (guide) and then repent. 2. To be a disciple. 3. To cut one’s hair and pay attention to dress. 4. To overcome one’s struggle against the inner self. 5. To serve people. 6. To fear Allah. 7. To maintain hope for His forgiveness. 8. Cardigan, zenbil (a basket), scissors, prayer rug, prayer beads, needle, and guidance. 9. To be a person of the community, advice, contentment, and affection. 10. Love, pleasure, enjoyment, and poverty.

**C. The Door of Marifah (Gnosis) and its 10 Stages:** 1. Manners. 2. Fear. 3. To be abstinent. 4. Patience and contentment. 5. To be shy. 6. Generosity. 7. Knowledge. 8. Severe poverty. 9. Gnosis. 10. To know oneself.

**D. The Door of Haqiqah (Truth) and its 10 Stages:** 1. To be soil (humble). 2. To see 72 nations in the same way, not to disparage anyone. 3. Un sparingly doing goodness as best as one can. 4. All created beings in the world to be safe in him. 5. To find the light of Muhammad who is the reason of creation. 6. To tell the secrets of the Truth in conversation. 7. Spiritual journey. 8. To keep secret. 9. To make inward supplications to God. 10. To reach and be united with God.

<sup>7</sup> Sönmez Kutlu, *Alawilik – Bektashilik Yazıları*, p.156

<sup>8</sup> Hacı Bektaş Veli, *Makalat*, p. 181-193

## 4.4. Basic Elements in Alawi - Bektashi Thought

The basic elements in Alawi–Bektashi thought are clearly expressed in its classical sources. The main sources of Sufi interpretation called Alawiyyah–Bektashism are the Qur’an, sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, Velayetnames (books about the miracles and advice of Sheikhs), Buyruks (commands), Menakibnames (hagiographies), Erkannames (books about manners), and poems and hymns of the bards who devoted themselves to the Alawi–Bektashi belief, especially the poems of “the Seven Great Bards”.

Subjects such as the love of Allah, the Prophet, and Ahl al-Bayt, Tawalla (loving the Prophet and his family), Tabarra (disassociation with those who oppose God and those who caused harm to and were the enemies of the Prophet Muhammad or his family), the 12 Imams, Musahiblik (brotherhood in this world and in the hereafter), Congregational Ritual (*cem*), and the Three Sunnahs Seven Fardhs are the basic elements of the Alawi–Bektashi belief.

### 4.4.1. Love of Allah

#### THE SLAVE JABBAR SAID:

“That is to say if a slave remembers Allah, the world will fill with light. The world will turn into paradise. Fruits will grow in the vineyards and orchards. The taste of fruits will cover the entire world. The one who remembers Allah sells to everyone from the fruits that he grows. He reaches to Allah and becomes a perfect human being (*insan-i kamil*). He thanks Allah for everything. Allah the Dispenser of graces bestows on him many blessings and removes the curtain from his eyes. There is no curtain left between Allah and his slave. By discovering everything in this world, he realizes their essences. ...”

(*Kitab-ı Cabbar Kulu*, ed. Uthman Eğri, p. 129)

Love of Allah has an important place in the basic written sources of Alawi–Bektashi belief. The issue of the existence and unity of Allah is explained from the perspective of Sufi understanding. People should first get to know themselves in order to know and love Allah. The one who does not know himself or herself cannot know Allah. According to this principle, the person who knows himself will experience Allah inwardly and realize Allah’s greatness. He or she will never forget being in the presence of Allah in every action, behavior, and thought, and will follow the real tawhid by acting in accordance with this consciousness.

The stage of Truth in the Alawi–Bektashi belief is based on the love of Allah, and in order to achieve this stage the only aim should be love of Allah. “Because hearts are one and what they seek is Allah. There is nothing at this stage (*maqam*) except Allah. If there is, then the person is not at the stage of Truth but is at the *maqam* of hypocrisy, and worship and hypocrisy, obedience and polytheism (*shirk*) cannot exist together. His worship will not help him and those who call him the man of Truth are liars. Because Truth is the house of Allah, which contains the truth but not falsities. It is also the house of faith, which does not contain blasphemy. It is also a place of unity where duality never exists because Allah is one and cannot be two.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the belief of *tawhid* and love of Allah are closely associated with each other.

#### 4.4.2. Love of the Prophet

In Alawi–Bektashi Sufi understanding, second place regarding the expression “Haq – Muhammad – Ali” is given to the Prophet Muhammad. He is accepted as a prophet and remembered with respect and love. The invocations of peace and blessings are said upon him and his *ahl al-bayt* (people of his family). The Prophet’s face and its beauty resemble a rose, and so the invocations of peace and blessings are said upon the Messenger’s rose-like face in collective prayers (*Gülbank*). This is why the title “*Ramz-i Muhammadi* or the symbol of Muhammad” is given to the rose.

Many Alawi–Bektashi leaders sang *naats* (eulogies), poems, and hymns about the Prophet because he is the head of *ahl al-bayt* and source of love of *ahl al-bayt*. “For example, when Kaygusuz Abdal went on pilgrimage and visited to the tomb of the Prophet, he penned a poem titled ‘Gevher-name’, that consists of 70 couplets which overflow with love for the Prophet from beginning to end. Hatayi, one of the Alawi–Bektashi poets, put his deep respect, love, and affection for the Prophet into the following words ‘My dear Mustafa! O Muhammad Mustafa, and the light of the world Muhammad Mustafa...’”<sup>10</sup> *Naats* about the Prophet are one of the important elements of Alawi–Bektashi literature. Hilmi Dede Baba expressed his love for the Prophet by saying “with love I sacrificed my body to dear Ahmad / not only my body but also my life is sacrificed to dear Ahmad.” He describes the Prophet in another eulogy as follows:

<sup>9</sup> Doğan Kaplan ed., *Erkname*, p. 181

<sup>10</sup> Sönmez Kutlu, *Alevilik – Bektaşilik Yazıları*, p. 166

“O Muhammad Mustafa! You are the chosen brightest light of the earth  
 O Muhammad Mustafa! You are the mercy for the worlds  
 O Muhammad Mustafa! You are light of the Holy Qur’an  
 All people of the world are in need of your beneficence!”<sup>11</sup>

#### PIR SULTAN ABDAL SAYS:



Muhammad is the mirror of our hearts  
 Let it be light on the voice of the one who sends invocations of peace and blessings  
 upon him  
 He is Mustafa of the eighteen thousand worlds  
 O Muhammad! I came to you for your help

The structure of the Ka’bah is the structure of a building  
 If all the disobedient have faith  
 Ayat al-Kursi would be recited in five times  
 O Muhammad! I came to you for your help.

(*Pir Sultan Abdal Divani*, p. 134)

#### 4.4.3. Love for Ahl al-Bayt

The term *ahl al-bayt* refers to the Prophet’s family and household. Love for ahl al-bayt has an important place in Alawi–Bektashi culture as in all other Sufi formations. Ahl al-Bayt is mentioned in three places in the Qur’an:<sup>12</sup> **“And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from**

<sup>11</sup> Mufid Yuksel, *Bektashilik ve Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebara*, p. 114

<sup>12</sup> Hud, 11: 73; Qassas, 28: 12; Ahzab, 33: 33

**DO YOU KNOW?**

All the children of the Prophet Muhammad except Fatimah passed away before him. His pure generation continued through our mother Fatimah. Descendants of Hasan are called “sharif” and the descendants of Husain are called “sayyid”.

**you, O people of the House (ahl al-bayt)! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.”**<sup>13</sup> In this verse, the term ahl al-bayt refers to the family of the Prophet. This verse was revealed when the Prophet Muhammad was with his wife Ummu Salama, and then the Prophet gathered Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain around him and prayed for them saying that “O Allah, these are the members of my household. Remove their faults and cleanse them.”<sup>14</sup>

In Alawi–Bektashi culture, the names of Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husain are symbolized with a five-fingered hand turned into signs called “Ali’s Claw”. Including the Prophet himself, this sign symbolizes the five people who were covered by the mantle of the Prophet and gathered under it. The term ‘Al-i Aba’ (those who are under the mantle) and the term of ‘Khamsa-i Al-i Aba’ (five people who were under the mantle) have also been used to refer to those five names. According to adherents of Alawi–Bektashi, Ali has a separate place and importance among Ahl al-Bayt. This is why, according to them, the Prophet entrusted the community of Muslims to Ali, married his daughter Fatimah to Ali, and declared Ali his brother (*musahip*).

Due to the love for Ahl al-Bayt in Alawi–Bektashi thought, they also love the descendants of Hasan and Husain. To mourn the martyrdom of Husain, 12 days of fasting are observed in the month of Muharram. During that period, they refrain from certain actions and behaviors normally allowed. Ceremonial gathering (*cem*) is generally performed on the night of the twelfth day, which is the last day of fasting of Muharram.

Ahl al-Bayt and love for them also occupies a significant place in Turkish–Islamic literature. For example, Yusuf Has Hajib, in his work titled *Kutadgu Bilig*, mentioned how governors should treat Ahl al-Bayt as follows: “In addition to the state officials, intellectuals, and people outside the public, the Prophet’s descendants are among those with whom you should keep good relations. If you show them respect, you will find happiness. Love them wholeheartedly. Take care of them and help them. They are from *Ahl al-Bayt*, descendants of the beloved Prophet; because of this, love them in the name of the Prophet.”<sup>15</sup>

#### 4.4.4. Tawalla, Tabarra

Tawalla is an Arabic word meaning to love and to become friends with

<sup>13</sup> Ahzab, 33: 33

<sup>14</sup> Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, p.178

someone. Tawalla in Alawi–Bektashi belief is to know *al-i aba* (those under the mantle of the Prophet), to love them, to seek help and intercession from them, and to accept them as dear friends.<sup>16</sup> Tabarra is, on the other hand, an Arabic word meaning to stay away, dislike, and turn one’s face away from, and to draw away. It is a term used in Alawi–Bektashi culture meaning to dislike the Umayyad’s second ruler Yazid, his descendants, and supporters.<sup>17</sup>

Tawalla is generally to like *ahl al-bayt* from the heart, while Tabarra is to dislike those who are hostile to Ahl al-Bayt and to avoid them. To love and follow Ahl al-Bayt is extremely important for Muslims.

#### 4.4.5. The 12 Imams

The 12 Imams in Alawi–Bektashi belief consist of 12 people beginning with Ali and ending with Imam Mahdi. Their names have titles such as Duvaz, Duvaz-Imam, and Duvazdeh in Alawi–Bektashi poetry and hymns. These poems are recited in *cem* ceremonies and are listened to with deep awe.

Ali is the first of the 12 Imams and all others come from his descendants. Adherents of Alawi–Bektashi understanding believe that the message of Muhammad continued through these 12 Imams. They are seen as guides in religious and ethical issues because they are infallible.<sup>18</sup>

#### LET’S READ AND INTERPRET

A Bektashi bard Dervish Muhammad, who lived in the 17th century, wrote the following poem about duvaz-Imam:

Help Allah, O Muhammad! O Ali!  
Don’t deprive us from your lodge  
My master is Hunkar Hacı Bektash Veli  
Don’t deprive us from your lodge

For the right of my ancestor Adam Safiyyullah  
For the right of the last prophet Muhammad Mustafa  
For the right of the reproach you inflicted upon Ayyub  
Don’t deprive us from your lodge

<sup>16</sup> Mehmet Zeki Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, V 3, p. 482

<sup>17</sup> Mehmet Zeki Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, V 3, p. 430

<sup>18</sup> İhsan Ünlü, *Amevîlik Müslümanlık mı?*, p. 117



I weep for the love of Hasan,  
 Husain is the chief of our religion  
 You, Almighty Allah, are the heart of all worlds.  
 Don't deprive us from your lodge

Many oppressions were inflicted on the body of Zaynal  
 Muhammad Baqir is the secret of Murtaza  
 Imam Jafar, Qazim and Musa-yi Rida  
 Don't deprive us from your lodge

My Muhammad says: O the Richest, Omnipotent  
 Taqi, Naqi, and Asker-i (the soldiers of) my Most Compassionate,  
 This is my request from Muhammad al-Mahdi  
 Don't deprive us from your lodge

(Ismail Özen, *Alawi-Bektashi Şiirleri*, p. 404)



#### 4.4.6. Companionship (Musahiplik)

The term Musahiplik, which literally means to be friends and chat, to accept as a friend or as a brother, refers to a married couple's establishment of companionship with each other. The Prophet declared every Meccan Muslim to be the brother of a Madinan Muslim after the migration from Mecca to Madinah. Within the context of this brotherhood, he declared himself a brother of Ali.

The custom of companionship (Musahiplik) takes place in many Alawi-Bektashi sources especially in the Orders (Buyruk). It has been stated that this has been a tradition since the time of Muhammad and Ali. According to this, after the Prophet's return from Miraj, he met with his Companions and wanted each of them to establish companionship with each other and declared himself

the companion of Ali.<sup>19</sup> Two people who want to be companions should be equal in certain aspects such as their ages, economic conditions, and abode. Those who become *musahip* become brothers and sisters and are responsible for each other. When a companion makes a mistake, the other warns him or her. They establish solidarity by sharing their problems with each other.

Those who want to be companions inform their sheikh (*dede*, lit. means grandfather) about their intention after getting permission from their parents. A special ceremony is organized for this companionship. The Dede (community leader or sheikh) elucidates the responsibilities of the *musahips* and asks them whether they accept the responsibilities or not. When they declare their acceptance, they are inculcated to be careful with their hands, tongues, and waists. In the ceremony of *musahiplik*, 12 services take place, treats are distributed along with saz music, *samah* (whirling), and *irshad* (guidance).<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.4.7. Ayin-i Cem

*Cem* means to gather, to come together. *Ayin* means rule, custom and tradition, and ritual ceremony. In accordance with these meanings, the construct of *Ayin-i Cem* means “custom of *cem*, custom of meeting, the way to come together.”<sup>21</sup>

According to Alawi–Bektashi thought, all *ayins* performed in congregation are called *cem*. The sheikh (*dede*) and fathers (*baba*) lead the *cem* ceremony. Bards recite folk songs, elegies, hymns of *duvaz* Imams, and tawhid, *miraclama* (poems about ascension of the Prophet), and prayers for Muhammad, Ali, Ahl al-Bayt, the 12 Imams and Karbala, to the accompaniment of saz music. In the *cem* ceremony, all those who have argued with each other make peace; messages of love and brotherhood are given; *samah* (whirling) is performed; animals are sacrificed; and treats are offered.

In *Ayin-i Cem*, various *gülbanks*, which begin with the phrase “in the name of Shah, Allah, Allah”, are read. There are 12 services performed by certain people in the ceremony of *cem*. These services are as follows; sheikh (*dede*), father (*baba*), guide, one who keeps order, someone who lights the lamps (*çerağci*), someone who recites the poems (*zakir*), one who plays

<sup>19</sup> İlyas Üzüm, *Tarihsel ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Alawilik*, p. 162

<sup>20</sup> Mehmet Yaman, *Alawilik*, p. 214

<sup>21</sup> Mehmet Eröz, *Türkiye’de Alawilik Bektashilik*, p. 99

some instruments (*ferraş*), the water-bearer (*saka-ibrikdar*), one who sets up the table and slaughters the sacrificial animal (*sofraci-kurbanci*), *Samah* performers, someone who takes the news of the *cem* to the neighbors (*Peyik*), someone who cleans up the place of *cem* (*Iznikci*), and a guard or gate-keeper. In the past, the *cem* ceremony was performed in lodges and places known as square houses. After urbanization, it began to be performed in places called houses of *cem*.

Some ceremonies such as *Cem-i Iqrar* (acknowledgment), *musahiplik* manners, *Görgü* manners, sacrifice of Abdal Musa, *Dardan Indirme* manners, *Düşkünlük* manners, and *Karbala-Muharrem* manners are among the important traditions of the Alawi-Bektashi belief. For example, the question mentioned in the Qur'an "**Am I not your Lord?**"<sup>22</sup> is answered in the *Cem-i Iqrar*, which means to promise, decide, and accept, by saying "Of course, You are our Lord." The statement of acknowledgment, which is expressed in the *Cem-i Iqrar*, is as follows: "I'm the slave of Allah the Almighty. I am from the generation of Adam Safiyullah. I am from the nation of Abraham Halilullah. Our religion is Islam. Our book is the Holy Qur'an. The Ka'bah is our direction of *praÿer*. I am from the community of Muhammad (saw). I am the subject of Shah Mardan-i Murta'za Ali. I am from the one who reached salvation. I am from Imam Jafer al-Sadiq's madhhab. Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, La ilaha illallahu wallahu akbar, Allahu akbar wa lillahil hamd."<sup>23</sup> Also in the ceremony of *cem*, along with the recitation of various *gulbanks*, *salawats* (bringing peace and blessing to the Prophet) are said for the Prophet and his family. One of these is as follows: "The Dede recites the 119th verse from Surah al-Tawbah "**O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful.**" (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ) and he says: "I ask forgiveness for our sins. And I ask forgiveness for our sins committed by our hand, our tongues, our waists. For our disobedience, I ask forgiveness. Then he says "*ber cemali-i Muhammad, Kamal-i Hasan, Husain, Ali ra bulend-i salavat*" and invites all the participants of *cem* to say invocations of peace and blessing for the Prophet and his family, and then the congregation starts saying salawats: "Allahumma salli ala sayyidina Muhammad wa ala al-i Muhammad."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Araf, 7: 172

<sup>23</sup> Cemal Sofuoğlu- Avni İlhan, *Alawilik Bektashilik Tartışmaları*, p. 118

<sup>24</sup> İlyas Üzümlü, *Günümüz Alawiliği*, p. 107

**LET'S NOTE**

Twelve services are fulfilled in the ceremony of *cem* under the supervision of the Dede. These 12 services are carried out by 12 people in a specific order and with specific rules. These 12 services represent the 12 Imams including Ali and the other Imams descended from him. These 12 people and 12 services are as follows:

1. Dede (Grandfather, Sheikh): He governs and supervises the *ayn-i cem*.
2. Rehber (Guide): He helps the participants of *cem*, and in the absence of the Dede, Rehber supervises the ceremony in place of the Dede.
3. Gözcü (Observer): He ensures the order and tranquility of the *cem*.
4. Çerağci: he is responsible for lighting the oil-lamps (or from lighting of the place where *cem* is performed).
5. Zakir (Rememberer): He governs *samah* by singing folk poems, *duvaz*, and *miraclama* (poems about the ascension of the Prophet).
6. Ferraş: Sweeper, helps the guide when it is necessary.
7. Saka (water-bearer): he is also called İbrikdar. He distributes water.
8. Sofracı: He is also called *kurbançı* (one who sacrifices). He takes care of the cooking and sacrifice.
9. Pervane: He is also called *Samahçı*. He leads the *Samah* (whirling).
10. Peyik: He is responsible for announcing the ceremony of *cem* to the people.
11. İznikci: He ensures order in the place where the *cem* is performed.
12. Bekçi (guard): He stands at the gate and controls those who enter and leave the *cem*.

#### 4.4.8. Three Sunnahs and Seven Fardhs

One of the most important issues stated in *Buyruks*, which is one of the main sources of Alawi-Bektashi belief, is the concept of the three sunnahs and seven fardhs. Concepts of sunnah and fardh are used in the meanings of principle, rule, and definite judgment. Even though the sequence of the three sunnahs and seven fardhs are given differently, they are introduced as follows in the *Hacı Bektash* copy of the book titled *Buyruk*:<sup>25</sup>

##### A. Three Sunnahs

1. To remember Allah
2. To keep hostility out of the heart
3. To submit oneself to the path

<sup>25</sup> İlyas Üzüm, *Kültürel Kaynaklarına Göre Alawilik*, p. 127

**B. Seven Fardhs**

1. Not to manifest one's secret
2. To hide what one sees
3. To supplicate with apology
4. To protect the right of the instructor of the path (*mürebbi*)
5. To protect the right of the companions (*musahip*)
6. To make repentance
7. To wear the crown and submit oneself to the master.

**LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER**

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What does madhhab mean? Explain briefly.
2. Explain the reasons for the emergence of different interpretations in Islamic thought.
3. What are the five basic principles of the Mutazilite? Explain briefly.
4. Give information about the Imams of the schools of Islamic law.
5. Explain the concepts of the Alawiyah–Bektashism by briefly describing them.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which of the following is not one of the social reasons that caused differences in interpretation?
  - A. Village life and its social structure
  - B. City life and its social structure
  - C. Economic crises
  - D. Natural disasters and their results
  - E. Human nature
  
2. Which of the following is not one of the schools of Islamic law?
  - A) Hanafi School
  - B) Shafii School
  - C) Maliki School
  - D) Hanbali School
  - E) Maturidiyya

3. Which of the following is not among the views supported by Ahl al-Sunnah?

- A. Faith and practice are different from each other.
- B. To see Allah in the hereafter is not possible.
- C. Sins do not take people out of religion.
- D. Ahl al-Qiblah could not be charged with blasphemy.
- E. Allah is the only one Creator who has created the entire universe.

4. Which of the following is not from among four doors in the Alawi–Bektashi thought?

- A) Shariah
- B) Tariqah
- C) Marifah
- D) Haqiqah
- E) Musahiplik

5. Which of the following terms can be defined as: “It is an Arabic word meaning to love and to become a friend of someone. It means to know Al-i Aba (those who were under the mantle of the Prophet), to love them, to seek help and intercession from them, and to accept them as a dear friend”?

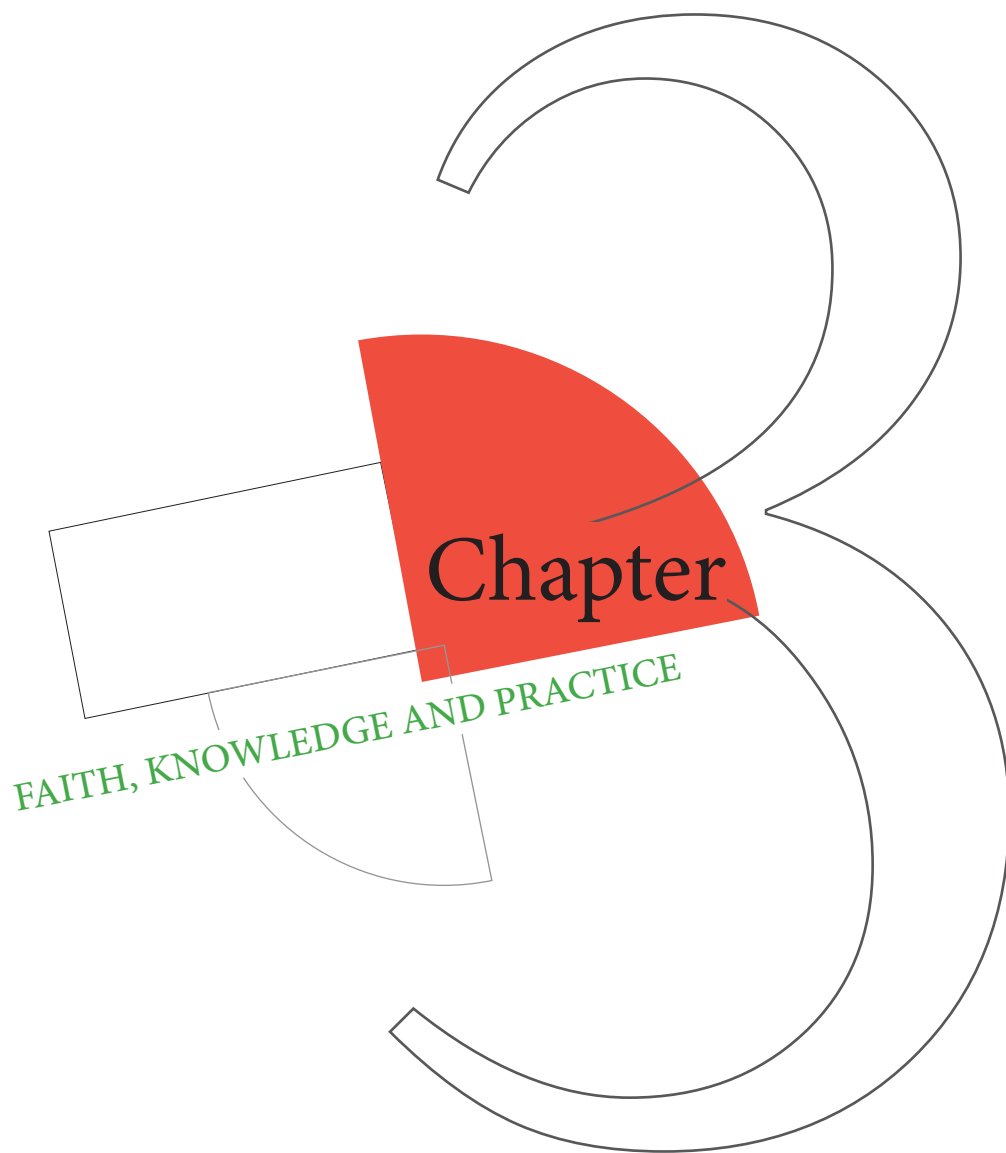
- A) Tabarra
- B) Tawalla
- C) Pervane
- D) Çerağci
- E) Lokmaci

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(wa’ad, wa’id, thought, reason, confirmation, supporters of Ali, Jafar al-Sadiq)

1. Faith is confession with the tongue and .....with heart.
2. Denominations are richness of .....
3. .... is the founder of Jafarism.
4. The word Alawi literally means .....
5. Rewarding those in the hereafter who do good deeds in this world is called .....; punishing those who commit bad deeds is called .....



A large, stylized outline of the number '3' is centered on the page. A red semi-circular shape is placed over the middle of the '3'. The word 'Chapter' is written in a black serif font inside the red shape. Below the red shape, the text 'FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE' is written in a green, sans-serif font, following the curve of the lower part of the '3'.

Chapter

FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE





## FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Search for the meanings of the terms “*Iman*, *Tasdiq*, *Iqrar*, *Marifah*, and *Amal*”.
2. Collect information about the terms “Believer (*Mu'min*), Hypocrite (*munafiq*), Disbeliever (*Kafir*), and Polytheist (*Mushrik*)”.
3. What should be done in order to live in accordance with the requirements of faith?
4. Does faith decrease and increase? Research the topic based on Surah al-Fath (48), 4th verse and Surah al-Baqarah (2) 285th verse.
5. What is the relationship between faith and knowledge? Share your thoughts with your friends.

### 1. Lexical and Terminological Meanings of Iman

The word *iman* lexically means “to confirm a word, to verify, to adopt with peace of mind, to be reliable, to be safe, to sincerely accept without hesitation.”

Terminologically, the word *iman* is defined from different perspectives based on the concepts of “confirmation of the heart, confession of the tongue, knowledge (*marifah*) of the heart, and to act.” The most common definition is that of the Ashari and Maturidi theologians: “*Iman* is to confirm our Prophet, the provisions which he brought from Allah with certainty, to accept what he said without hesitation, and to sincerely believe their truthfulness.”

Establishing faith in the heart by basing it upon knowledge, research, and evidence is called verified faith (*al-Iman al-Tahqiqi*). The essential thing for all Muslims is to achieve this level of faith, which refers to conscientious belief. Allah explains some of the characteristics of the believers who have such faith

in the following verses: **“Those only are believers whose hearts become full of fear when Allah is mentioned, and when His communications are recited to them, they increase them in faith, and in their Lord do they trust. Those who keep up prayer and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them. These are the believers in truth; they shall have from their Lord exalted grades and forgiveness and an honorable sustenance.”**<sup>1</sup>

The kind of faith that is not based on evidence, but only obtained through the inculcations of the environment where one lives, is called imitative faith (*al-iman al-taqlidi*). Having imitative faith is valid, but it should be strengthened with logical and religious evidence in order not to be shaken by doubts and objections from the non-believers.

In order for faith to be valid, it should be a choice based on free will and should not be voiced under pressure, threat, or at the time of death (or in a state of despair).<sup>2</sup> Believers should avoid actions and behavior that deny even one single pillar of faith. They should not lose hope in Allah’s mercy,<sup>3</sup> but should fear His punishment.<sup>4</sup> The dominance of fear directs believers to hopelessness, while too much hope and belief that salvation is guaranteed leads them to laxness in their lives.<sup>5</sup>

### LET’S READ AND LEARN

*Ijmali* faith (condensed faith) means to believe entirely in matters in which belief is required. It means expressing belief in Allah and His messenger, which is mentioned in the statements of *tawhid* and *shahadah*. To testify all belief, worship, transactions (forbidden and permitted), and ethical principles, which our Prophet brought from Allah, is called *tafsili* faith (detailed faith). *Ijmali* faith is enough for a non-Muslim to convert to Islam and to be considered a Muslim. It is, however, obligatory to obey the principles of *tafsili* faith for faith to be rooted and to reach maturity.

## 2. Confirmation and Denial

Faith is realized by the free will of a sane person and confirmation of the heart. According to Ashari and Maturidi theologians, confirmation by the

<sup>1</sup> Anfal, 2-4

<sup>2</sup> Mu’min, 84, 85

<sup>3</sup> Yusuf, 12: 87

<sup>4</sup> Araf, 7: 99; Sajdah, 32: 16

<sup>5</sup> Hülya Alper, *İmanın Psikolojik Yapısı*, p.60

heart is enough for faith. The believer (*mu'min*) is certain in what he or she believes and sincerely accepts the principles of that belief through free will. Allah the Almighty manifests this fact in the following verse: **“...these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him. ...”**<sup>6</sup> The basis for the reward in paradise for the believer and punishment in hell for the disbeliever is the existence or the absence of sincere submission and confirmation.<sup>7</sup>

*One cannot be a mu'min* just by uttering the words of faith without the confirmation of the heart: **“O Messenger! let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening to unbelief from among those who say with their mouths: We believe, and their hearts do not believe, and from among those who are Jews...”**<sup>8</sup> As opposed to this, when people believe with the heart but cannot express their faith because of dumbness or threat, or says things which contradict their faith, they are not going to convert out of faith. In fact, when Ammar b. Yasir could not bear the pagan oppression, he denied his belief with his tongue even though, in his heart, he had faith. In this context, it is stated in the Qur'an: **“He who disbelieves in Allah after having believed, not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith, but he who opens (his) breast to disbelief - on these is the wrath of Allah, and they shall have a grievous chastisement.”**<sup>9</sup>

Hanafi jurists said that faith has two elements including “confession through the spoken word” and “confirmation by the heart”. According to them, if one of them is missing, faith will not be realized.

The sects of Murji'a and Karramiyya believe that confession through the spoken word is enough for faith. If this view were assumed to be correct, hypocrites should be accepted as believers, which contradicts the principles of the Qur'an.<sup>10</sup> Although confirmation of the heart is the essential element of faith, confession of faith through words is enough to be accepted as a Muslim.

The sect of Jahmiyya defined faith as knowing by the heart (*Marifah*) what Allah and His messenger reported without confirmation. Confirmation and knowledge differ from each other, although they are both acts of the heart.

<sup>6</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 41; Mujadilah, 58: 22; An'am, 6: 125; Yusuf, 12: 17; Hujurat, 49: 14.

<sup>7</sup> Bukhari, Iman, 15; Muslim, Iman, 82

<sup>8</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 41; Baqarah, 2: 8

<sup>9</sup> Nahl, 16: 106

<sup>10</sup> Baqarah, 2: 8; Hujurat, 49: 14; Munafiqun, 63: 1

While confirmation takes place as a result of the strong-willed effort of the heart, *marifah* (gnosis) appears in the heart without will or effort. Maturidi theologians argued the inconsistency of this definition by saying that “knowledge is the opposite of ignorance, faith is the opposite of disbelief. So, according to the definition of Jahmiyya, all unlettered people should be faithless and all lettered, knowledgeable people should be believers.”<sup>11</sup>

The sects of Khawarij, Mutazilites, and Zaydiyya as well as the scholars of the predecessors and scholars of hadith see faith as consisting of confirmation of the heart, confession of the tongue, and practice of the basic principles of religion.

To sincerely confirm the requirements of faith ensures obedience to the commandments and prohibitions of religion. This level of faith makes the believer safe and peaceful in both internal and external worlds, and enables him or her to be rewarded with heaven. **“So Allah gave them the reward of this world and better reward of the hereafter, and Allah loves those who do good (to others).”**<sup>12</sup>

The one who does not believe in all the principles of religion with a sincere heart but claims acceptance verbally is called hypocrite (*munafiq*). The hypocrite’s words refute his essence and his essence refutes his words. Allah draws our attention to this in the following verse: **“...Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars...”**<sup>13</sup> The following verses tell us that hypocrites hide their intentions, pray to show off, and don’t help the poor: **“Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allah, ... and when they stand up to prayer they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allah save a little.”**<sup>14</sup> **“...And withhold the necessities of life.”**<sup>15</sup> Hypocrites who pretend to be Muslims in appearance are in fact disbelievers,<sup>16</sup> but they are more dangerous than the disbelievers because they try to secretly disrupt Muslim society. Hypocrites are treated as Muslims in this world because of their confession of faith with their lips. However, they will be punished in the lowest layers of hell in the hereafter.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A. Saim Kilavuz, *İslam Akaidi ve Kelama Giriş*, p. 39,40.

<sup>12</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 148; Ra'd, 13: 29; Yunus, 10: 26

<sup>13</sup> Munafiqun, 63: 1-3

<sup>14</sup> Nisa, 4: 142; Tawbah, 9: 54-56

<sup>15</sup> Ma'un, 107: 7.

<sup>16</sup> Baqarah, 2: 8

<sup>17</sup> Nisa, 4: 145

## LET'S READ AND EVALUATE

“*Tasdiq* (confirmation) means to utter the practice, adoption, verification, confirmation, and proving of a truth. The person who confirms the principles of faith should know what he or she confirmed and should spiritually adopt them as well as carry out and support them with behavior. Therefore, saying “I conform” means “I accept this both in my mind and in reality, in other words, outside my mind.” It means “all my thoughts regarding it, all my behavior regarding it, and all my expressions regarding it are consistent with each other; there is no contradiction between them; it means my inside fits my outside.” Confirmation, which is stated in the definition of faith, expresses the mental aspect of faith, namely the aspect of faith depending on belief and knowledge. It also expresses that truth should be sincerely adopted and internalized and what it necessitates should be done. It expresses that faith should permeate and should direct a person’s life.”

(Hanifi Özcan, *Epistemolojik Açidan İman*, it was adapted from p. 73)

Please evaluate the above text in terms of faith and knowledge.

To explicitly deny, to dislike, to ignore, and to regard as worthless one or more of the religious principles or all of them is considered blasphemy. One who says such things and has such thoughts is called a disbeliever. For example, denying the obligation of prayer, prohibition of interest, or the existence of angels leads one to blasphemy. The term *kufr*, which means “covering”, is used for the disbelievers because they cover the real and true beliefs with false ones. The man who died in disbelief of Allah Who created him, Who keeps him alive with countless blessings and his religion, would be subjected to eternal hell.<sup>18</sup>

The conditions under which someone would apostate is another subject of theology. *Takfir* (accusing of disbelief or attributing disbelief to), means accepting the person of certain beliefs, words, and behavior as a disbeliever, because he or she is regarded as blasphemous according to the Qur’an and Sunnah. The Kharijites used the term *kufr* (disbelief) for the first time in respect of Ali and his supporters because they accepted the Incident of Arbitrator.

<sup>18</sup> Baqarah, 2: 161-162; Nisa, 4: 56; Tawbah, 9: 49 and Zukhruf, 43: 75

## LET'S FIND AND EXAMINE

“Those pious people who believe in the unseen, attend the prayer, give in charity part of what We have granted them. Who have faith in what has been revealed to you and others before you and have strong faith in the life hereafter. It is the pious who follow the guidance of their Lord and gain lasting happiness.” (Baqarah, 2: 3-5)

“Those who deny your message will not believe whether you warn them or not, God has sealed their hearts and hearing and their vision is veiled; a great punishment awaits them.” (Baqarah, 2: 6-7)

“And thus their associates have made fair seeming to most of the polytheists the killing of their children ...” (An'am, 6: 137); “Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary; and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust.” (Ma'idah, 5: 72); “The disbelievers among the People of the Book and the pagans do not like to see anything good revealed to you from your Lord.” (Baqarah, 2: 105)

“Some people say, ‘We believe in God and the Day of Judgment,’ but they are not true believers.”; “They deceive God and the believers. However, they have deceived no one but themselves, a fact of which they are not aware.” (Baqarah, 2: 8-9)

Please identify the basic characteristics of the believer, disbeliever, polytheist, and hypocrite based on above-mentioned verses.

While the Mutazilites argue that Muslims who commit grave sins become partial disbelievers, the Shiites claim that a person who does not accept the institution of Imamah is an unbeliever.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah* base their views on *husn al-dhan* (good supposition) and state that disbelief cannot be attributed to anyone who is from *Ahl al-Qiblah* (people who turn to the Ka'bah for prayer) based on doubts.<sup>20</sup> But disbelief can be attributed to someone who is known for certain to adopt things related to disbelief with the heart or whose actions, words, and behavior leave no room to consider them within the circle of Islam. When someone accuses another believer of blasphemy without evidence, it has severe consequences. For example, accusation of disbelief (*takfir*) causes the accused person to be treated as a non-Muslim, and the accuser is considered as a non-believer because of the baseless accusations. This is why Muslims are commanded not to take this issue lightly. Mistakes made in political and practical issues should not be treated as the problems of faith and should never be used as reasons for

<sup>19</sup> Mustafa Öz, Avni İlhan, “İmamet”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22 p. 202

<sup>20</sup> Nahl, 16: 106; Araf, 7: 33

accusations of blasphemy. In this way, the uniting power of the principle of *tawhid* will not be damaged. A Muslim's renunciation of Islam with free will is called *irtidad* (apostasy), and that person is called *murtad* (apostate).

To believe that Allah has partners or equivalents in his essence, attributes, actions, and names is called *shirk* (polytheism). One who believes in the existence of Allah but also associates certain beings as partners and equivalents to Allah is called *mushrik* (polytheist). There are many types of polytheism. Hypocrisy is a type of hidden polytheism. Praying just to show off is also mentioned among the features of people denying.<sup>21</sup> So is the person who involuntarily "... **takes his low desires for his god...**"<sup>22</sup> and has fallen into a type of polytheism. Ascribing partners to Allah is the gravest of sins: "**Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin.**"<sup>23</sup> According to the Qur'an, Allah is the supreme authority and Creator in heaven and on earth. He has influence over everything. No being can be a partner to Him in any of His attributes.<sup>24</sup>

*Shirk* (polytheism) and *kufir* (disbelief) are two very similar concepts. The difference between them is that disbelief is a more general concept, whereas polytheism is a more particular one. In this sense, every *mushrik* is a *kafir*, but not every *kafir* is a *mushrik*. This is because polytheism is the result of associating some deity with Allah in His essence, names, and attributes, but disbelief occurs with the acceptance of a set of beliefs that are known as disbelief. For example, to accept the existence of two gods as in Mazdaism is polytheism (*shirk*) as well as disbelief (*kufir*). However, not believing in the hereafter is disbelief but not polytheism.<sup>25</sup> In the 1st and 6th verses of Surah al-Bayyinah (98), polytheists and the people of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) are considered to be two groups of disbelievers.

### 3. The Relationship between Faith and Knowledge

The dependence of faith on sincere confirmation shows that it is related to knowledge because confirmation or refusal can only be a matter of discussion when there is knowledge. Information about the visible world coming via reason, which is an integral part of our religious responsibility and our senses, is reliable. Because of this, Allah calls on rational people to be knowledgeable and to contemplate.

<sup>21</sup> Ma'un, 107: 1-7

<sup>22</sup> Furqan, 25: 43.

<sup>23</sup> Nisa, 4: 48, 116; Luqman, 31: 13

<sup>24</sup> Saba, 34: 22-23

<sup>25</sup> Heyet, *Ilmihal*, vol. 1, p. 78



This universe, which seems to be endless, is established on a very sensitive and magnificent balance. The creation of all beings and their existence is ordered by the sole Master and Owner of the universe. All beings in the universe perfectly fulfill the tasks appointed to them and serve human beings. Through the revelations He sends, Allah not only satisfies people's curiosity and questions, He also directs them to communicate with Him through the universe. In this way, reason, which is directed at observation and science, can find a way to contemplate reality and then to believe. More than 500 verses in the Holy Qur'an call people to observe and think.<sup>26</sup> The purpose of this is to help rational people attain faith.

There is a need for a clear mind trained by science and purged<sup>27</sup> from bias to think and see the reality.<sup>28</sup> When reason is based on revelation in regards to metaphysical issues, it becomes stronger and fills the heart with peace and tranquility.<sup>29</sup> In this way, reason finds truth by means of religion, and religion becomes applicable to life by being understood with the help of reason.

Rational information cleansed from bigotry does not contradict revealed knowledge; rather, they are two mutually complementary elements. Both of them are reliable, strong, and adequate evidence for faith that is a conscious intellectual activity.<sup>30</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that abstract information people obtain in various ways cannot be called faith.

In order for knowledge in the heart to turn into faith, it needs to be preceded by willing submission and surrender. Otherwise, every knowledgeable person in this world would be a believer and every ignorant person would be a disbeliever, which is impossible. Even though people of *Ahl al-Kitab* know our Prophet and Satan knows Allah, they are not believers.<sup>31</sup> Faith is a kind of emotional acceptance. People need to feel that what they believe in is an objective reality. **“We will soon show them Our signs in the Universe and in their own souls. ...”**<sup>32</sup> As this verse points out, faith is born from mutual interaction between human's mental / external and emotional / internal perceptions.<sup>33</sup> Mental evidence that shows through cosmological signs speed this interaction and activate in the human mind thoughts and feelings such as “all beings dedicated to my service fulfill their duties without negligence, so loyalty should be my responsibility and I have a duty towards the Almighty

### LET'S SEARCH AND LEARN

Search for the relationship between reason and learning in light of the following verses: Ankabut 29: 43, Al-i Imran, 3: 7 and Zumar, 39: 9.

<sup>26</sup> Yunus, 10: 100; A'raf, 7: 179

<sup>27</sup> Baqarah, 2: 170; Zumar, 39: 17-18

<sup>28</sup> Hajj, 22: 46

<sup>29</sup> M. Said Özvarlı, *Kelamda Yenilik Arayışları*, p. 71

<sup>30</sup> MEB, *Kelam Ders Kitabı*, p. 56

<sup>31</sup> A. Saim Kilavuz, *İslam Akaidi ve Kelam'a Giriş*, p. 39-40

<sup>32</sup> Fussilat, 41: 53

<sup>33</sup> Ali Köse, “İman,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22, p. 214

Being who created me and them.” This feeling prepares the ground for faith.

To attain *tahqiqi* faith in combination with correct knowledge based on evidence and the devotion of the heart is the main goal. On the other hand *taqlidi* faith, which is deprived of these two characteristics, is deficient. Due to this, every believer is responsible for directing his or her faith by supporting it with knowledge, emotion and evidence. As a matter of fact, Ghazali says that the life of faith passes through the stages of imitation, knowledge and enjoyment / contentedness, and one needs to find evidence supporting Islamic doctrine at the stage of knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Although faith is something related to the imperceptible, it is necessary for us to listen carefully to the voice of the universe/knowledge telling us about the Supreme Almighty Being.

#### 4. The Relationship between Faith (Iman) and Action (Amal)

Work, behavior, and actions carried out consciously are called actions or deeds (*amal*). In fact, confirmation of the heart and verbal confession are also actions. However, what is understood from the word “action (*amal*)” is the deeds of the organs other than the heart and tongue. From the perspective of its purpose, faith consisting of only confirmation of the heart is not something composed of only conscientious belief. Faith is the creed necessitating reflection on the changes that take place in one’s heart and conscience to the outside world through behavior and actions.<sup>35</sup> This is why faith and action in Islam are not separated from each other and demonstrate a very balanced part in religion.

#### LET’S DISCUSS

Discuss with your friends the problems caused by a faith not supported by actions (no acts of worship, carelessness about lawful and unlawful things and social duties) among people and society.

#### LET’S EVALUATE

“In the 143rd verse of Surah al-Baqarah, Allah uses the term ‘faith’ as the equivalent of the term prayer: ‘Allah will not invalidate your faith, meaning your prayer.’ Because faith will mature only by performing prayers. Moreover, prayer also consists of faith because it covers intention, expression and action. *Amal* is not the same as *iman*, even though it is not outside faith. Action is part of faith.”

(Mustafa İslamoğlu, *İman Risalesi*, adapted from page 315)

Please evaluate the above text from the vantage point of the relationship between *iman* (faith) and *amal* (action).

<sup>34</sup> Hanifi Özcan, “İman,” Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 22, p. 218

<sup>35</sup> Şerafeddin Gölcük, Süleyman Toprak, *Kelam*, p. 104

The Holy Qur'an emphasizes practical education and teaching as well as intellectual education and teaching<sup>36</sup> and several verses mention faith and good deeds together. The term *amal* in the Qur'an is used to mean acts of worship, times and forms of which are determined such as ritual prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. The term *amal* also refers to acts of worship that can be performed at any time, such as helping the poor.<sup>37</sup> A good deed is associated with the purpose of life and the human's purpose of creation. In this respect, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an that **"Who created death and life that He may try you – which of you is best in deeds ..."**<sup>38</sup> One of the verses<sup>39</sup> that encourages Muslims to do good deeds and participate in individual and social activities is the following:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

**"O you who believe, seek help through perseverance and Prayer; surely, Allah is with those who patiently persevere."** The good deed is the fruit of sincere faith based on love and knowledge in the heart and it is the transformation of revelation into life. Having faith in fact means getting ready to fulfill the requirements of belief. In this sense, a good deed is the most important and perfect demonstration of the fulfillment of the task of servitude to Allah. Good deeds are a means of strengthening and maturing faith and gaining eternal blessings. Faith and good deeds feed and strengthen each other. The more a person ignores the practical dimension of faith, the more that person's devotion to religion decreases, which also leads to the lack of confirmation of faith by the heart.

According to the great religious scholars of the early periods of Islam and scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah*, deeds are not an indispensable part of faith. This is why a corrupt person (*fasiq, fajir*), who adopts all the principles of religion with the heart but does not comply with the commandments and prohibitions of religion, becomes a sinner but is still a Muslim; unless the person considers his or her sin as halal or lawful. For such people, the door of repentance is open. When they die without repentance, if God wills, He will forgive them or He will punish them in accordance with their sins. Due to their confirmation of faith, they will eventually enter paradise. Believers

<sup>36</sup> Ömer Aydın, *Kur'an-ı Kerim'de İman Amel İlişkisi*, p. 46-47

<sup>37</sup> Nisa, 4: 103; Anfal, 8: 3; Zumar, 39: 9; Ma'un, 107: 3.

<sup>38</sup> Mulk, 67: 2; Dhariyat, 51: 56.

<sup>39</sup> Baqarah, 2: 153, 172, 178, 208, 254, 278, 282; Al-i Imran, 3: 102, 130, 149, 156, 200; Nisa, 4: 29; Mai'dah, 5: 35; Tawbah, 9: 119; Isra, 17: 23-39.

and those who do good deeds are mentioned separately in the Qur'an in many verses starting "O you who believe and who do good deeds..."<sup>40</sup> The Qur'an laid down faith as a condition for the validity of deeds. "And whoever does good works and he is a believer, he shall have no fear of injustice nor of the withholding of his due."<sup>41</sup> Allah's characterization of a person who committed a grave sin such as murder as a "believer"<sup>42</sup> is evidence for the fact that deeds are not a part of faith.

Scholars of certain theological *madhhabs* such as the Kharijites, Mutazilites, and Shiites, consider deeds as a part of faith. According to them, faith is confirmation of the heart, confession with the lips, and the entirety of deeds. The difference between the scholars of the *salaf* and the Kharijites, Mutazilites, and Shiites is that the scholars of *salaf* do not see the deed as an indispensable part of faith, but they consider deeds as a condition for the maturation of faith. Therefore, according to them, a person who commits a sin, despite having faith, or gives up performing deeds is a disobedient believer. While the Kharijites consider this person to be a disbeliever, the position of the Mutazilites and Shiites regarding such a person is that he or she is in a place between faith and disbelief.

To sum up, a believer does not apostate from Islam because of laziness, desires, or social conditions, but does become a sinner. Unless the person repents and starts to perform acts of worship, he or she loses the perfection of faith and endangers it. That believer's situation will be similar to a tree whose branches were carelessly cut so the tree loses its beauty and faces the danger of withering.<sup>43</sup> In other words, faith is matured with knowledge, confirmation, confession, and deeds. The Islamic creed is like the plan and project of a building of life, while the deeds are the construction of this building in accordance with this project. Considering faith as a defining element and adopting the name of "Muslim" as an identity are serious claims that require proofs. Claim of faith is also in need of proofs. Deeds are the only way to prove this claim. Freedom is the nourishment of faith. If faith is a prisoner in the believer's heart, its chance of survival will decrease. Demonstration of freely expressed faith is reflected in actions and its self-expression with the words of deeds.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Baqarah, 2: 277, Yunus, 10: 9; Hud, 11: 23; Luqman, 31: 8

<sup>41</sup> Ta-Ha, 20: 112

<sup>42</sup> Hujurat, 49: 9; Baqarah, 2: 178; Tahrim, 66: 8.

<sup>43</sup> A. Hamdi Akseki, *Islam Dini*, p. 55

<sup>44</sup> Mustafa Islamoglu, *Iman Risalesi*, p. 320, 349, 350.

## 5. The Increase and Decrease of Faith

The subject of the increase and decrease of faith was generally examined from the perspective of the relationship between faith and actions. When faith is defined as only confirmation of the heart, confession of speech, or confession of speech together with the confirmation of the heart, there will be no increase or decrease in faith. If deeds are considered a part of faith, then the increase and decrease of faith can be a matter for discussion.

According to *Ahl al-Sunnah* theologians, faith does not increase or decrease from the vantage point of the elements that should be believed in. No matter what their level is, all Muslims are equal in confirming by the heart the requirements they are obliged to believe in and confessing them in speech. If a believer confirms his faith once with certainty and confidence, there will be no increase and decrease of faith in that person's heart. The believer's deeds are a different matter, and the one who will reward them is Allah the Almighty. If one accepts all the basic principles of faith, but does not believe in one or more of them, the person will not be regarded as a believer. In this case, increase or decrease in faith cannot be mentioned because there is no true faith. Increase in faith can only be possible with decrease in disbelief, but a believer cannot be both a Muslim and a disbeliever.

### LET'S CONSIDER

Let's assume that you are a researcher in an observatory and you observe celestial bodies while contemplating the following verses: *"Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire."* (Al-i Imran, 3: 190-191) Think about whether or not what you do contributes to the increase of your faith.

According to *Ahl al-Sunnah*, faith can decrease or increase in quality. People's faith could be different depending on its strength or weakness, its penetration into the depths of the heart, or its being on a superficial level. Some people's faith is at the level of *ilm' al-yaqin* belief and knowledge, which is based on thinking, and other people's faith is at the level of *ayn al-yaqin* belief and knowledge, which depends on seeing. Some other's faith is at the level of *haqq al-yaqin* belief

and knowledge, which depends on living, feeling by the heart, and internal experience. When the Prophet Abraham wanted Allah to show him how He resurrects the dead, Allah the Almighty asked him<sup>45</sup> **“...and do you not believe?”** and Abraham replied saying that **“Yes, but (I wanted to see) that my heart may be at ease.”**<sup>46</sup>

According to the Kharijites, Mutazilites, and Salafis, faith can increase or decrease in both quality and quantity. Thus, faith increases with good deeds, and decreases with sins. In this respect, one of the verses supporting their views is as follows: **“...But as to those who believe, it increases their faith and they rejoice...”**<sup>47</sup> *Ahl al-Sunnah* interprets this verse as “In this verse, increase in faith is not from the point of its confirmation but from the point of its influence on the deeds and obedience upon the heart. When obedience does not show its effects on the heart because of sins that have been committed, we can observe a decrease in faith.”

Like living organisms, people’s faith has a living structure because of its nature. It grows, matures, or weakens. It has a dynamic structure. Faith should not be a confirmation or confession done once. It should be renewed every day, with the totality of one’s being.<sup>48</sup> As a matter of fact, all acts of worship that we perform, our goodness, our glorifying Allah, and expressing our thankfulness are demonstrations of the renewal of our testament of faith. As long as believers carry out good deeds, their faith will be strengthened, but if they neglect them, their faith will be weakened.

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<sup>45</sup> Heyet, *İlmihal*, vol. 1, p. 74

<sup>46</sup> Baqarah, 2: 260

<sup>47</sup> Tawbah, 9: 124; Fath, 4; Anfal, 8: 2; Ahzab, 33: 22; Muddaththir, 74: 31; Al-i Imran, 3: 173.

<sup>48</sup> Hulya Alper, *İmanın Psikolojik Yapısı*, p. 65

### LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the lexical and terminological meanings of the word Iman.
2. What do tasdiq, iqrar, and kufr mean? Write them down.
3. Explain briefly the relationship between faith and knowledge.
4. Summarize briefly the views of the sects of Ahl al-Sunnah and Mutazilite regarding the relationship between faith and action.
5. Explain the debate about whether an increase or decrease in faith is possible or not.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following cannot be said about faith?
  - A. The term iman lexically means to confirm a word, to give confidence, to be safe.
  - B. Faith consists of confirming by the heart and confessing by words everything that our Prophet brought from Allah.
  - C. Confession through words is enough to be considered a believer without confirmation of the heart.
  - D. To deny faith verbally while the heart is full of faith does not affect faith.
  - E. The believer who has taqlidi faith has the responsibility to strengthen his faith with religious and rational evidence.
  
2. Which of the following cannot be said about the hypocrites?
  - A. The hypocrite is the one who claims to be a Muslim even though he does not believe in his heart.
  - B. The most important characteristic of a hypocrite is that he lies.
  - C. Trying to deceive Allah, to show off, and to avoid helping are other characteristics of the hypocrites.
  - D. It is possible to detect the hypocrites even though they claim with words to be Muslims.
  - E. Hypocrites will be punished in the lowest layer of hell.

3. Which one does not contain correct information about polytheism and the polytheist?
- A. One who believes in the existence of Allah but associates partners with him is called a polytheist.
  - B. Allah identifies the polytheists as one of the two groups of infidels.
  - C. Mushrik means the one who attributes a partner to Allah in His essence, attributes, actions and names.
  - D. The gravest sin is to associate partners to Allah.
  - E. The one who associate partners with Allah goes completely astray and even if he repents and believes in Allah, he will not be forgiven.

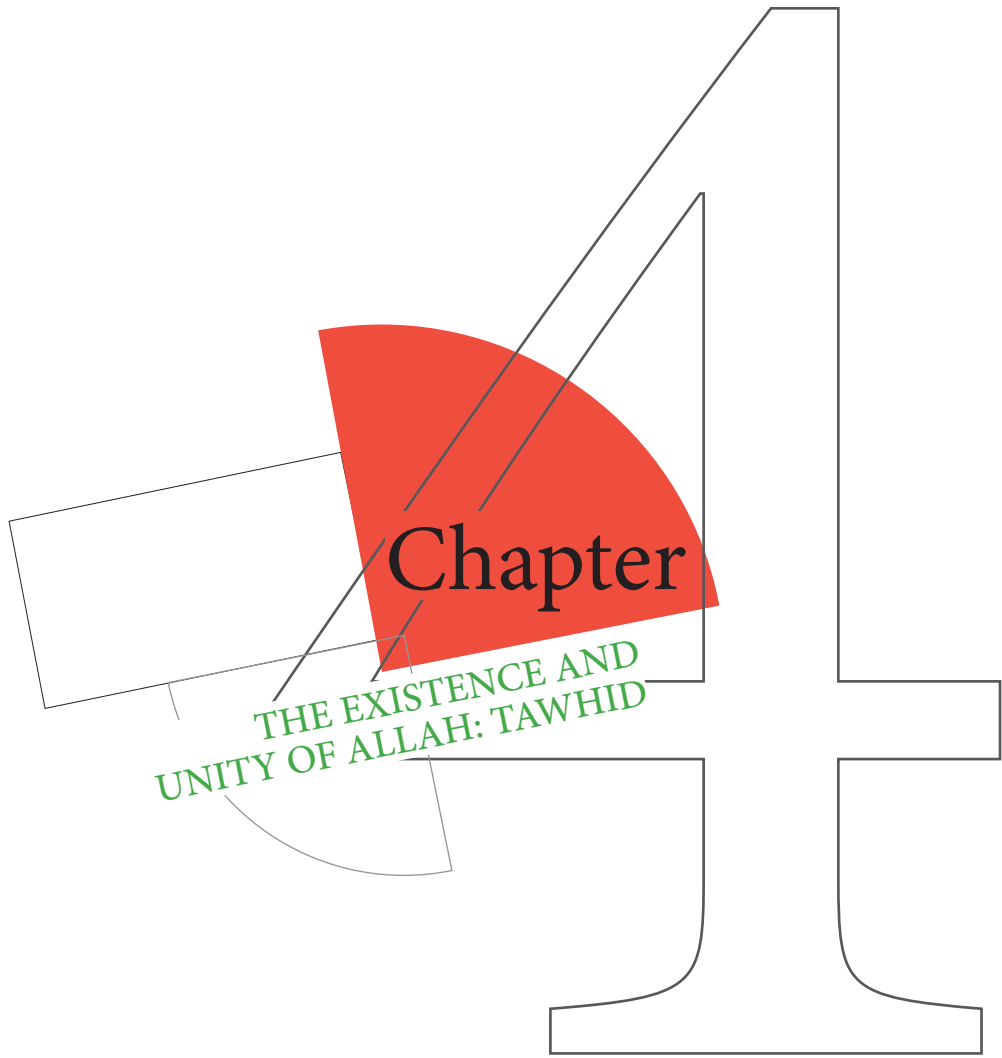
C. Fill in the blanks in following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(rational, sin, denial, faith)

1. Naqli (revealed) knowledge and ..... knowledge purged from bigotry support each other in establishing the faith.
2. Deeds are not part of ..... but are an element that strengthens it.
3. To deny the principles of religion explicitly, to dislike them, to neglect them, and to consider them worthless is .....







# Chapter

THE EXISTENCE AND  
UNITY OF ALLAH: TAWHID



# THE EXISTENCE AND UNITY OF ALLAH: TAWHID

## LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Search for the meaning of the term *tawhid* in the dictionary.
2. Come to class after reading the translation and interpretation of Surah al-Ihklas (112).
3. What does Allah's attribute "*Qiyam bi Nafsihi*" mean? Research.
4. When you pray to Allah, which names of Allah do you mention in your prayer? Specify them.
5. What does people's remembrance of Allah in hard times mean to you? Explain.

## 1. Evidence of Allah's Existence and Unity

One has to properly understand the place and importance of the belief in Allah's existence and unity in one's own life. There are reflections of Allah's existence and His attributes in human life related to created beings. Therefore, the Existence and Unity of Allah is obvious for those who can look, comprehend what they see, and contemplate it. In the Qur'an, belief in the existence and the unity of Allah as well as the sincere bond with Allah is stated as the basic conditions to become a believer. Tawhid constitutes the essence of the religion of Islam. And the belief of tawhid in Islam should be based on certain knowledge.

The process of revelation of the Qur'an started with the verse "**Read with the name of your lord, who created.**"<sup>1</sup> This reading means not only to follow the verses of "the Holy Book", the revelation process that still continued at the

## LET'S THINK

If you had to prove the existence of Allah, what would you say?

Think about it.

## LET'S INTERPRET

How does belief in the unity of Allah affect human life?

Interpret it.

<sup>1</sup> Alaq, 96: 1

time, but also to witness or read the creation. So people are expected to accept the existence of one Creator and His greatness based on created beings. The 13th verse of the Surah Nuh (71) in the Quran emphasizes that all blessings that exist in the universe express Allah's greatness in the power of creation:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

**“What is the matter with you that you deny the greatness of Allah?”**

The universe, which was created in the form that sustains the survival of human beings, is a conscious and marvelous design, and a work of art. Allah has shown evidence of His existence and unity in both human's soul and the universe, and asked us to contemplate them. In other words, for everything created by Allah, including humans, the term “ayah (verse)” is used in the Qur'an. In this respect, it is said that **“And there are many signs in the heavens and the earth that they pass by and give no heed to and most of them, even when they profess belief in God, attribute partners to Him.”**<sup>2</sup>

#### LET'S EVALUATE

*“There are signs in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day for people of understanding; who remember God while standing, sitting and [lying] on their sides, and who ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Lord, You have not created all this without purpose. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of the Fire.’”*

(Al-i Imran, 3: 190-191)

Evaluate the above-mentioned verses with regard to how people think about creation and give meaning to their lives.

Everything in the universe is evidence in terms of pointing out the existence and unity of Allah. This is why Allah calls people to witness the examples of creation like the creation of humans, the water that we drink, fire, rain's revival of dead land, the creation of heaven and earth, clouds, winds, ships sailing in the sea, and the successive arrival of night and day.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, people's own

<sup>2</sup> Yusuf, 12: 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> Waq'ah, 56: 57-72; Baqarah, 2: 164; Hajj, 22: 5

existence demonstrates the existence of a Supreme Being who creates the universe, and gives people the ability to control their behaviors and actions.

Although people differ in color, language, race, denomination and nature, the majority agree upon the existence of one Creator, Supreme Power, and give Him a name in their languages<sup>4</sup> and accept His existence.<sup>5</sup> People try to comprehend and prove the existence of a superior and powerful being who created the universe and keeps it under control by taking care of all beings and events. It is stated in the Qur'an that: **“On the earth, and in yourselves, there are signs for firm believers. Do you not see them?”**<sup>6</sup> In this sense, one of the basic purposes of Islamic theology is to prove the existence of Allah. Works on this issue are called *“Isbat-i Wajib* (proving the One who is necessary)”, because Allah's existence is considered necessary. Some of these proofs are as follows:

### 1.1. Proof of Huduth

*Hadith* lexically means “the thing that comes into existence out of nonexistence.” Its plural form is *huduth*. The thing that comes into existence later, and thus is created, is called *“hadith”*, and its creator is called *“muhdith”*. The universe with everything in it is a being that has come into existence (*hadith*). Therefore, because the universe is a being that has been created, the existence of a creator (*muhdith*) is a rational conclusion.

Nothing comes into existence by itself. The following Qur'anic verse **“Were they created out of nothing, or are they their own creators?”**<sup>7</sup> points to this fact. By giving the creation of the bee, the human, the camel, the heavens, mountains and earth as examples in the Qur'an, it is emphasized that no being except Allah can create even a fly.<sup>8</sup> Just like a book cannot be written by itself without a writer or a building cannot appear without a builder, it is impossible to imagine that the universe has come into existence without a creator. It is also certain that the created beings cannot exist forever. As a matter of fact, each mortal being must necessarily have a beginning. Every beginning needs an originator. Therefore, Allah is the Creator of the universe, which cannot be created by itself. We can express this in a different way: the universe came into

#### LET'S INTERPRET

“Have they been created without a purpose, or are they themselves the creators?”

(Tur, 52: 35)

Interpret the verse given above by taking the proof of *huduth* into consideration.

<sup>4</sup> Isra, 17: 110

<sup>5</sup> Bekir Topaloğlu, *Isbat-ı Vacip*, p. 110

<sup>6</sup> Dhariyat, 51: 20-21

<sup>7</sup> Tur, 52: 35

<sup>8</sup> Mu'minun, 23: 12-14; Ghashiyah, 88: 17-20; Hajj, 22: 70

existence at a certain time, and there must be a creator of this universe whose existence preceded the origination moment of the universe. Therefore, there must also be a Creator of the universe, who is Allah.

## 1.2. Proof of Imkan (Possibility)

### LET'S EXEMPLIFY

In the 114th verse of Surah Ta-ha in the Qur'an, Allah the Almighty advises His servants to pray by saying "... My Lord, increase my knowledge." In light of this verse, what kind of contributions does having knowledge in philosophy, psychology, and the natural sciences make to a better understanding of the issues related to faith?

Allah is the only one whose existence is necessary (*wajib*) and whose nonexistence could not be imagined. This is why the phrase "*Wajib al-Wujud* (the being whose existence is necessary)" is used only about Him. Allah's existence is required by His essence, the nonexistence of which could not be imagined. He does not need another reason to exist. Everything that exists, other than Him, vanishes eventually. All beings that are possible to be nonexistent or need another reason to come into existence are called "*mumkun* (possible) beings." The existence and nonexistence of possible beings are within the limits of possibility. The universe and everything in it are possible beings. They are in need of a creator, who will turn them into existent beings. The emergence of the universe from among an infinite number of options, and making the creating in its current form, is the result of a preference. There should be a being who prefers the existence of the universe to its nonexistence. This Supreme Being can also be defined as follows: the universe and everything in it are possible beings and since every possible being needs a *wajib* (necessary) being who creates them, this *wajib* being is Allah whose existence is necessary.

## 1.3. Proof of Kamal (Perfection)

Nothing other than Allah is perfect. His exalted attributes are mentioned in the Qur'an. The attributes of perfection and impeccability belong to Allah alone. As opposed to this, everything in the universe is somehow deficient and longs for perfection. For example, the idea of reaching perfection, eternity, and maturity through feelings like good morals and honor come from the desires to reach a superior and perfect being. The desire for eternity and immortality

of people shows that they cannot be satisfied with finite and mortal things. This idea of eternity and perfection can come to people neither from themselves nor from the external world, because both of them are deficient and finite. The idea that there is a creator who is at the level of perfection with all of His attributes, and the desire to achieve perfection are proofs of the existence of Allah. Another thought leading us to the existence of Allah is the idea of eternity, which bears the following result: Although I am not a perfect and eternal being, I have the idea of eternity and perfection. It is impossible that this thought has come to me from myself. So it should come from a perfect and eternal being, who is Almighty Allah.

### LET'S INTERPRET

“In this way We showed Abraham Our kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might have certainty of faith. When night descended on him, he saw a star. He said, ‘This is my Lord!’ Then when it set he said, ‘I do not love things that set.’ When he saw the moon rise and spread its light, he said, ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set, he said, ‘If my Lord does not guide me, I will be one of the misguided people.’ Then, when he saw the sun shining, he said, ‘This is my Lord! This is the greatest of all!’ Then when it set, he said, ‘My people, I disown all that you worship besides God. I have set my face with single-minded devotion, towards Him who has created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of the polytheists.’”

(An'am, 6: 75-79)

Interpret the above-mentioned verses in terms of the Prophet Abraham's search for the Creator and the message that he wanted to give.

## 1.4. Proof of Purpose and Harmony

### LET'S WATCH A MOVIE

Watch a movie / slide show illustrating the creation of beings in the universe as well as the order and harmony among them, then answer the following questions;

- What does harmony and order among the beings show us?
- Is there a place for coincidence in this creation?
- How does this coherent process in the universe prove the unity of Allah?

According to Islamic belief, the Creator of the universe and everything in it is Allah. None of the beings in this universe is created in vain, unnecessarily,



and without a purpose.<sup>9</sup> As Allah created this universe, He also determined a measure and purpose for the beings that He created.<sup>10</sup> There is a reason or wisdom for the creation of everything, which is called “purpose of the universe”.

All beings that exist in the universe move in accordance with a measure, order, and in harmony. None of the beings are created without a purpose. For example, it can easily be observed that all creation is meant to serve human beings. It is expressed in the Qur’an that there is no deficiency and fault in creation.<sup>11</sup> For example, in the 49th verse of Surah al-Qamar (54) of the Holy Quran, it is stated that: **“We have created everything in a measure and balance.”** In this respect, there is marvelous harmony and balance in the universe.<sup>12</sup> Beings on earth support and help each other’s life in continuation of a particular system. From human to animals, and from plants to even the smallest organisms, nothing acts randomly. They take care of their needs for nutrition, shelter, and protection in a certain system and plan. The sun, moon, and other stars move in certain harmony. Mountains, forests and plants provide oxygen and cleanse the air; plants become a source of nutrition for animals; and animals prevent plants from spreading excessively and covering the earth. It could not be imagined that the universe and its order can exist by itself or by means of unconscious substances. This mutual assistance and solidarity among the creation indicate a conscious design, because every work that is carried out for a purpose necessitates the existence of a power who plans it. For example, it is stated in the Qur’an that, when the Pharaoh asked the Prophet Moses “Who is your Lord?” Moses replied: **“Our Lord is the One Who has created all things and has given guidance.”**<sup>13</sup> As it is understood from this response, there should be a being who creates everything in certain balance and ensures the harmony among all parts of His creation by determining an aim for them. This being is Allah.

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<sup>9</sup> Qiyamah, 75: 36; Anbiya, 21: 16

<sup>10</sup> Ta-Ha, 20: 50

<sup>11</sup> Mulk, 67: 3-4; Ra’d, 13: 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 40; Mulk, 67: 3

<sup>13</sup> Ta-Ha, 20: 49-50

**LET'S EVALUATE**

“On the earth are diverse tracts, adjoining one another: vineyards and cornfields and groves of palm, the single and the clustered. Their fruits are nourished by the same water; yet We make the taste of some excel that of others. In this also are signs for people who understand.”

(Ra'd, 13: 4)

“Look, therefore, at the signs of God's mercy; how He resurrects the earth after its death. Truly, the same God will resurrect the dead; for He has power over all things.”

(Rum, 30: 50)

Evaluate the verses above from the point of view that the perfection in creation is used as a subject for *Isbat-i Wajib*.

**LET'S CORRELATE**

Make a comparison between sailing a ship without a captain surrounded by strong winds and wild waves in the middle of a vast sea to discuss if this universe could be governed without a creator and guide.

People should observe themselves, their surroundings, and contemplate the wisdom in creation. In this sense, a good believer is also a good observer. Receiving a definite state of belief and making its owner satisfied appear as a result of observation.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, people are invited to think about incidents and works that they frequently witness.<sup>15</sup> As a result of their observations and thoughts, people become obliged to accept a designer who creates the universe, which works in a certain measure and balance. Therefore, to propose the following statements becomes inevitable: The universe presents a system of purposes and causes that are compatible with each other. This purpose and order can only be the work of the will of a creator and designer. So, the universe is the work of an Almighty Creator who is Allah.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.5. Proof of Human Nature (Fitrah)

The creation of humans is a work of art in itself. In the Qur'an, the issue of Allah's existence is accepted as quite a natural matter for a human being who has a clear nature.<sup>17</sup> For example, it is emphasized in the Qur'an that the human being is created to be a servant for Allah.<sup>18</sup> This wisdom in creating humans shows that people could not keep themselves away from understanding one God who guides and manages the universe. This understanding not only

<sup>14</sup> An'am, 6: 75

<sup>15</sup> Araf, 7: 185; Naml, 27: 61

<sup>16</sup> İzmirli İsmail Hakki, *Yeni İlmî Kelam*, p. 206

<sup>17</sup> Rum, 30: 30; An'am, 6: 63; Zumar, 39: 39

<sup>18</sup> Dhariyat, 51: 56

shows that believing is a need for humans, but also indicates the existence of one creator who satisfies this need.

#### LET'S INTERPRET

“Devote yourself single-mindedly to the Religion. And follow the nature [constitution] as made by God, that nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of God. That is the right religion. But most people do not realize it.”

(Rum, 30: 30)

Interpret the above given verse in terms of the relationship between human beings and their nature.

It is stated in the Qur'an that humans answered the question “**Am I not your lord?**” as “**Yes.**”<sup>19</sup> This metaphorical expression shows the close relation between the Creator and His work, and it shows that people could not be careless to this relation in normal conditions. Therefore, believing in the existence of one creator is not difficult for human beings unless they cover their conscience and comprehension with carelessness, arrogance, and obstinacy.<sup>20</sup> In the mind of everybody, there is an idea of one creator who is omnipotent and is always a refuge to people. As a matter of fact, in hard times, when people feel themselves so needy, they give up everything and turn their faces to Allah. Humans take refuge in God and want help from him in every moment that they are in trouble. This turning of their faces is considered one of the obvious evidences for the existence of Allah.

#### LET'S INTERPRET

“It is God who enables you to travel on land and sea. And when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favorable wind, a storm arrives, and the waves surge upon those on board from every side and they think they are encompassed, then they make a fervent appeal to God, saying in all sincerity, ‘If You deliver us from this, we will surely be of the thankful.’”

(Yunus, 10: 22)

Interpret the above given verse as being the proof of human nature (*fitrah*).

<sup>19</sup> Araf, 7: 172.

<sup>20</sup> Nur, 24: 40; Naml, 27: 14; Luqman, 31: 32.

## 1.6. Proof of Tamaru

### GROUP WORK

- Make four separate groups in class to talk about the subject of proofs of Allah's existence and unity.
- Let each group work on one of the proofs that have been developed by Muslim philosophers and theologians.
- Prepare presentations from your findings and share them with your friends.

*Tamaru* lexically means obstruction, prevention, and conflict. This evidence is used to refute the claim that there is more than one god. "God" means the Supreme Being, thus there is nothing more powerful than Him. This meaning of "God" shows that He does not accept any partner. This is expressed in the Qur'an in the 91st verse of Surah al-Mu'minun (23), **"God has not taken to Himself a son, nor is there any other deity besides Him; otherwise, each god would have walked away with what he had created. They would surely have tried to overcome one another. Glory be to God, above all that they ascribe to Him."** The existence of more than one God and imagination of a conflict among them are impossible. It is obvious that if there were such a conflict, the universe would be destroyed and its order would collapse.<sup>21</sup> All of this necessitates the existence of one God. It is stated in the Qur'an that there cannot be a partner of Allah with the following verse **"... Beware! His is the creation, His is the command. ..."**<sup>22</sup>

There are infinite evidences of Allah's existence and unity. In addition to those mentioned above, it is possible to speak about many other proofs of existence of Allah, such as the proof of movement, the proof of morality, compassion and mercy.

## 2. Believing in the Existence and Unity of Allah

Believing in Allah's existence and unity and sincerely bonding with this belief are the most important basic principles of Islamic belief; they constitute the conditions to be a believer. Having faith means to accept the existence of one creator who creates all beings, gives them shape, and manages them.<sup>23</sup> It

<sup>21</sup> Anbiya, 21: 22; Isra, 17: 42.

<sup>22</sup> A'raf, 7: 54.

<sup>23</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 6; Mu'minun, 23: 14.

**LET'S  
EXEMPLIFY**

Exemplify what effects the acceptance of the unity of Allah would have from the viewpoint of justice and equality.

is stated in the Qur'an that: **"Your god is only one God. There is nothing except him. ..."**<sup>24</sup> In the religion of Islam, the term "*tawhid*" is used to denote the oneness of Allah. As *tawhid* means that something is one and unique, it also means to declare and believe that Allah's essence is free from all kinds of defects the human mind can imagine.<sup>25</sup>

**LET'S SHARE**

"Allah sets forth an example: There is a slave in whom are (several) partners differing with one another, and there is another slave wholly owned by one man. Are the two alike in condition? (All) praise is due to Allah. Nay! Most of them do not know."

(Zumar, 39: 29)

Benefiting from the Qur'an, Hadith, and visual materials, prepare a presentation about the subject "Tawhid and its reflection on humans and nature" as emphasized in the above-given verse. And share it with your friends in class.

*Tawhid* tells us that the source of all goodness and beauty is one, and from this perspective, it constitutes the essence of the religion of Islam. Allah wants us to be united in matters of religion. All messengers sent by Allah put emphasis on the same principles from the viewpoint of faith. In this sense, faith is like a summary of history of the prophets demonstrating that the truth is one and universal.<sup>26</sup> To see all people as servants of one Creator means removal of artificial obstacles separating people or dissociating them. As a matter of fact, faith in Allah, who is the One and master of everything, enables a holistic understanding of life. Taking the belief of Allah out of human consciousness or interpreting it for a false meaning means the disappearance of the purpose and meaning in human life. Belief in One Allah allows people to find answers in a holistic way for their questions about the meaning of life and purpose of creation. So, the believers recognize that the universe is moved in a harmony and order by one God. They pay attention not to disrupt this perfect order. They stay away from things that may harm to them and their environment. To respect the created beings and to contribute their healthy functioning are important responsibilities of a believing person. As humans are created beings, the attention that they pay to themselves and their environment creates an

<sup>24</sup> Baqarah, 2: 163

<sup>25</sup> Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmine Giriş*, p. 45, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, *Yeni İlm-i Kelam*, p. 260.

<sup>26</sup> Mevlüt Uyanık, *Tevhit: Kainatın Dili*, P. 141,142

atmosphere of peace and security for the entire universe. Belief in *tawhid* is to act in accordance with the creation of humans, because human nature was created suitable to accept the belief in one god.

Tawhid improves human's feeling of confidence. Faith in the only God, Allah, also means to be safe. When people fulfill Allah's commands and act according to their purpose of creation, they feel themselves safe. Therefore, thanks to their confidence in their Lord, believers never stay away from doing goodness under any circumstances because they know that they should work very hard, and will certainly see the results of their deeds. The belief of tawhid nurtures a sense of equality and justice among people. For example, belief in tawhid creates the principle of equality among people by making superiority or sovereignty peculiar to Allah. As the servants of one God, all people are the children of the Prophet Adam and no one is superior to the others in terms of creation. Superiority is only achieved through *taqwa* (piety). In other words, superiority comes into existence through a sense of responsibility and doing goodness as a consequence of this *taqwa* consciousness. The one who does the most good is the most superior human being. As a matter of fact, social peace and prosperity develop by achieving and ensuring justice and equality among people.

### LET'S EVALUATE

“ Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to Allah (alone) and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him (saying), We do not serve them save that they may make us nearer to Allah, surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful.”

(Zumar, 39: 3)

Evaluate the understanding of polytheism and its negative consequences, based on the above-mentioned verse.

Tawhid liberates people. It keeps people away from evil. Knowing that all powers other than Allah have no effect in their lives is quite a comforting thought for people. The belief in one God who is unique, has no partner, with no equivalent, and Omnipotent saves people from addiction to false or imaginary concepts of power. Because of its emancipatory character, verses of the Qur'an focus more on Allah's unity than on His existence. In fact it is reminded in the Qur'an that when people are asked about who creates and

LET'S  
RESEARCH

“For those who do good deeds, there shall be the best reward and yet more blessings...”

(Yunus, 10: 26)

Search what may be meant by the expression “... and yet more blessings” in the verse above.

LET'S  
EVALUATE

Please evaluate the following verse from the vantage point of having knowledge about Allah:

*“And among men is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an illuminating Book.”*

(Hajj, 22: 8)

keeps the harmony in the universe, every time their answer has been “Allah.”<sup>27</sup> However, people are warned to fulfill the requirements of giving this answer and to act in accordance with the requirements of the belief in *tawhid*. Because of that, by insistently expressing in the Qur’an that there is no partner of Allah or there is nothing like him and He is unique, it is stated that Allah will never forgive associating partners with him.<sup>28</sup> Associating partners with Allah means to give the divine attributes to other beings besides Allah. There is no difference if that being is a particular place, an idol, an animal, or a person.<sup>29</sup> Every idea (of God) imagined to possess all perfect divine attributes other than Allah means people’s humiliation before those beings. However, as the most honorable being of Allah’s creation, people should not lose their honor and dignity before anything they produce with their own hands.

Infinite rewards are promised for those who have faith in the existence and unity of Allah and fulfill the requirements of this faith. It is, of course, stated that the most important of these rewards will be the beatific vision of Allah in the hereafter. This vision will take place in a manner that does not resemble any qualities and forms the human mind can imagine. In the Qur’an, it is stated that: **“Some faces on that day will be radiant looking eagerly towards their Lord.”**<sup>30</sup> This verse states that Lord will show himself to His believing servants. Undoubtedly, this will be a great reward for the believers.

### 3. Attributes of Allah

Allah introduced Himself through the prophets and holy books that he sent, and emphasized His existence and unity. There is a strong emphasis in the Qur’an on the importance of having a correct knowledge about Allah. Allah does not approve entertaining any evil thoughts about Himself.<sup>31</sup> Because of that, one should know Allah exactly as He defined Himself.<sup>32</sup> Almighty and Glorious Allah cannot be comprehended with the sense organs. Because of nonexistence of His partner, anything equal or similar to Him, He cannot be imagined in any way, because He does not resemble anything that He created. His perfect and taintless attributes also cannot be attributed to anything other than Him. He is known with his attributes and actions. This is why attributes of Allah are frequently mentioned in the Qur’an.

<sup>27</sup> Zukhruf, 43: 87; Mu’minun, 23: 84-89; Zumar, 39: 38

<sup>28</sup> Nisa, 4: 48

<sup>29</sup> Ra’d, 13: 16

<sup>30</sup> Qiyamah, 75: 22-23

<sup>31</sup> Fath, 48: 6; Fussilat, 41: 22-23; A’raf, 7: 169.

<sup>32</sup> An’am, 6: 91

### 3.1. Thubuti Attributes of Allah

The attributes of Hayat (Ever-Living), ‘Ilm (Omniscient), Sami’ (All-Hearing), Basar (All-Seeing), Qudrah (Omnipotent), Iradah (Will), Kalam (Speaking), and Takwin (Power to Create) are called *al-sifat al-thubutiyyah* (established or proven attributes) of Allah. Thubuti attributes are about “what Allah is”. This is why knowing these attributes is important to know Him.

#### 3.1.1. Hayat (Life)

The attribute of life means that Allah is alive. He is immortal as the endless eternal being. Allah’s life is not temporal like the created beings. He Himself is the source of His existence. Being the Creator who never dies and is self-sufficient, increases confidence in him. As the ever-living being, Allah is also the One who gives life. He is the one who bestows upon us everything we need to live. He is the one who creates, takes life, and will resurrect. Everything owes its vitality to Him. He is the One who enables us to breathe, provides us good health and everything that we need. He is the source of all life.

#### LET’S NOTE

“And rely on the Ever-living Who dies not...”

(Furqan, 25: 58)

#### 3.1.2. ‘Ilm (Knowledge)

##### LET’S EVALUATE

“Say: Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allah knows it, and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah has power over all things.”

(Al-i Imran, 3: 29)

Evaluate the message of the above verse together with your friends.

Attribute of ‘ilm means that Allah knows everything. Nothing remains secret for him. He covers everything with his knowledge. He properly knows everything and his ‘ilm can never be limited with anything. It is stated in the Qur’an that, **“Do you not see that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor (between) five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever they are; then He will inform them of what they did on the**



**day of resurrection: surely Allah is Cognizant of all things.**<sup>33</sup> He is the One who creates everything that people know and bestows people with the abilities of understanding, learning and expression. All scientific knowledge that we have is His blessing. It is expressed in the Qur'an that we are expected to thank Allah for the blessings given to us as follows **"... then remember the favor of your Lord when you are firmly seated thereon, and say: Glory be to Him Who made this subservient to us and we were not able to do it."** In the following part of this verse, it is stated that: **"And surely to our Lord we must return."**<sup>34</sup> In this respect, it is informed that people will be held accountable for the knowledge they have and for how they have used the means bestowed on them. Allah is the One who will reward or punish in return for the actions people did in this world because Allah knows everything.

### 3.1.3. Sami' (All-Hearing)

The attribute of *sami'* means that Allah hears everything. Nothing can remain hidden from him. He hears everything without needing any material instruments. Nothing prevents him from hearing. Knowing that Allah hears everything makes believers control what they say. It is stated in the Qur'an that: **"They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allah, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allah encompasses what they do."**<sup>35</sup> Allah's hearing of everything necessitates human beings to be balanced and consistent in their words and behaviors, to be far away from evil words and thoughts.

### 3.1.4. Basar (All-Seeing)

The attribute of *basar* means that Allah sees everything. His seeing cannot be compared with created beings. Nothing can hide from Him and cannot escape from his sight. Allah's seeing of everything leads people to be careful in their behaviors. The 14th verse of Surah al-Alaq (96) warns those who commit evil deeds by saying that **"Doesn't that person know that Allah sees everything?"** Moreover, Allah's seeing of everything is an important inducement to do goodness. First of all, we should see the blessings bestowed upon us by Allah and be thankful for those blessings. In this respect, it is stated in the Qur'an

#### LET'S INTERPRET

"...Allah hears and knows everything."

(Baqarah, 2: 256)

Interpret the above given verse in terms of guiding the behaviors of human.

#### LET'S NOTE

"...to Him belongs the unseen of both the heavens and the earth. How clear is His sight and how keen His hearing!.."

(Kahf, 18: 26)

<sup>33</sup> Mujadilah, 58: 7

<sup>34</sup> Zukhruf, 43: 13-14

<sup>35</sup> Nisa, 4: 108

that: **“You will receive a good reward from Allah for all your good works. Allah is Well-aware of what you do.”**<sup>36</sup>

### 3.1.5. Qudrah (Power)

The attribute of *qudrah* means that Allah is omnipotent and has endless power. He can do everything because he has a power over everything. Nothing can incapacitate him. Also He does not share His power with anybody. All the universe is under his disposition. His omnipotence over everything gives hope to people who fight injustice with patience and reliance because He is the One who supports those that are good and right with His power and mercy. It also means that the truth is powerful. In this sense, people who respectfully bow before His power restrain themselves from committing evil because they know that they will be held accountable in the hereafter. It is expressed in the Qur’an, **“...He is the Lord who should be heeded, the Lord of forgiveness.”**<sup>37</sup> In this sense, we should be aware of our responsibilities before our Omnipotent Lord.

### 3.1.6. Iradah (Divine Will)

The attribute of *iradah* means that Allah has a divine will. When he wants something, He just only commands it to “Be” and then it comes into existence.<sup>38</sup> Nothing can stand before His absolute will and nothing can also be carried out without His will. The 22nd and 23rd verses of Surah al-Kahf (18) read as follows: **“And do not say of anything: Surely I will do it tomorrow, unless Allah pleases...”** It is also emphasized in the Qur’an that Allah wants the correct, beautiful, and easy things for people.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, people should pay attention to Allah’s absolute will in the works that they do from their own free will.

#### LET'S EVALUATE

“...surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what He intends.”

(Hud, 11: 107)

Evaluate the above verse within the context of Allah’s attribute of *iradah*.

#### INFORMATION BOX

“...Undoubtedly, Allah is omnipotent.”

(Baqarah, 2: 148)

<sup>36</sup> Baqarah, 2: 110

<sup>37</sup> Muddaththir, 74: 56.

<sup>38</sup> Nahl, 16: 40

<sup>39</sup> Baqarah, 2: 185; Al-i Imran, 3: 108; Ma'idah, 5: 6

### 3.1.7. Kalam (Speaking)

#### LET'S THINK

“And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases; surely He is High, Wise.”

(Shura, 42: 51)

Please think about the ways of revelation considering the above-mentioned verse.

The attribute of *kalam* means Allah’s speech. He speaks without requiring any kind of material instruments to speak. To refer to “the word of Allah”, the phrase “*kalam al-Allah*” is used in the Qur’an.<sup>40</sup> Allah’s revelation to the prophets, sending His books and inspiration to His creation are the reflections of His attribute of speech. For example, as it is stated in the verse “**...and to Musa, Allah addressed His Word, speaking (to him).**”<sup>41</sup> He talked to some of the messengers whom He sent for the guidance of humanity. Of course, these talks were not mutual conversations. They sometimes are from behind a veil or via angels or revelation. Also, all living creatures hold sign of their Creator as a verse and contain a message. These messages express Allah’s existence and unity. It is stated in the Qur’an that: “**Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add.**”<sup>42</sup> Just as all marvelous creations in the universe are manifestation of his absolute will, all true words expressing the truth are also manifestation of His speech.

### 3.1.8. Takwin (Creation)

The attribute of *takwin* means that Allah is the Creator. With this eternal attribute, He is the one who creates the beings in a unique form and out of nothing. All divine actions like Allah’s giving provisions or punishing are related to His attribute of *takwin*. The entire universe is His work. The verse “**All in the heavens and the earth entreat Him for their needs; a new, mighty task engages Him each day.**”<sup>43</sup> points out that in every moment He engages in

<sup>40</sup> İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Yeni İlmi Kelam, p. 273

<sup>41</sup> Nisa, 4 : 164

<sup>42</sup> Kahf, 18: 109

<sup>43</sup> Rahman, 55: 29

a new creation. This work of creating is not something that happens all at once but is a continuous and constant activity. The 34th verse of Surah Yunus (10) expresses that, **“Ask them: ‘Is there any among those whom you associate with Allah in His divinity who brings about the creation of all beings in the first instance and will then repeat it?’ Tell them: ‘It is Allah Who brings about the creation of all beings and will then repeat it. How are you, then, being misled?’”** Such new re-creations are the things that give meaning and value to life. In this sense, people should think about the creation and be thankful that every new day becomes the subject for recreations.

## 3.2. Dhāti Attributes of Allah

The attributes of *Wujud* (existence), *Qidam* (pre-eternity), *Baqa* (eternity), *Wahdaniyyah* (oneness), *Muhalafatun lil-Hawadith*, *Qiyam bi Nafsihi* are called “*al-Sifat al-Dhatiyyah (salbiyya)*.” They are *dhati* (essential / intrinsic) or *salbi* (negative) attributes, which means that only Allah can be defined with those attributes. To know these attributes is very important for *tanzih*, which means to free Allah from all deficiencies and defects as well as to avoid from bad suspicion, false thoughts, and imaginations about Allah. Opposite meanings of these attributes cannot be imagined about Allah. In this sense, *salbi* attributes explain what Allah is not.

### 3.2.1. Wujud (Existence)

The attribute of *wujud* means existence of Allah. He is the One in whose existence there is no doubt and whose nonexistence could not be imagined. All things that He creates are proofs of His existence. In this respect, He is both the apparent and hidden one. We cannot know His essence and nature. It is stated in the Qur’an: **“No mortal eyes can see Him, but He can see all eyes.”**<sup>44</sup> We can know His existence only by observing His works using our reason and emotions. His existence gives peace and confidence to believers and strengthens their feeling of justice. All of this means an important support against the difficulties of life.

### LET'S NOTE

“...and He knows well every kind of creation.”

(Yasin, 36: 79)

### LET'S INTERPRET

“Have they not seen that We have created the night for them to rest and the day for them to see? In this there is evidence for the believing people.”

(Naml, 27: 86)

Interpret the above verse as a proof for the existence of Allah.

<sup>44</sup> An'am, 6: 103

### 3.2.2. Qidam (Pre-Eternity)

The attribute of qidam means that Allah is *pre-eternal* who has no beginning. He is not a being created later. He is the first One with no pre-history. Time was created by Allah. This is why the concepts of “after and before” cannot be imagined about him. Absence of his pre-history shows that the entire universe is created by him, because substance is not pre-eternal. Allah is the only one who is pre-eternal and He creates and shapes everything. In this respect, the verse **“To Him is your return. This is Allah’s promise that will certainly come true. Surely it is He Who brings about the creation of all and He will repeat it so that He may justly reward those who believe and do righteous deeds; and that those who disbelieve may have a draught of boiling water and suffer a painful chastisement for their denying the truth.”**<sup>45</sup> expresses that Allah who has no beginning is the One who starts everything. So it is understood that all created beings have an end. In fact, only human beings are responsible for what they do as beings with an end.<sup>46</sup>

#### INFORMATION BOX

“He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant (over all) and the Knower of hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things.”

(Hadid, 57: 3)

### 3.2.3. Baqa (Everlastingness)

#### LET’S EVALUATE

“All that is on earth will perish. Only the Person of your Lord, full of majesty and splendor, will endure. ”

(Rahman, 55: 26-27)

Evaluate the above verses within the concept of the attribute of *baqa*.

The attribute of *baqa* means that Allah is eternal. There is no ending of him. He is alive and never dies. There is nothing after him. Because there could not be ending of one who has no beginning. Eternality of Allah (without ending) gives hope to people about the continuation of life in the hereafter. Especially, persistence of paradise and blessings in it are good encouragement on behalf of competing in charity. A believing person knows that he or she is a finite being (mortal) before the lord’s eternality but also knows that the lord is the source of his or her life. The thought of eternality independent from Allah removes the responsibility of giving an account. If we pay close attention, one of the things that Satan offered to Adam to mislead him was the desire to remain eternal. So this caused Satan’s going out from Paradise.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Yunus, 10: 4

<sup>46</sup> Anbiya, 21: 23

<sup>47</sup> Araf, 7: 20

### 3.2.4. Wahdaniyyah (Oneness)

The attribute of *wahdaniyyah* means that Allah is one. He is the unique one with no equivalent or partner. He is neither a father nor a son. Surah al-Ihlas (112) in the Qur'an is one of the most important chapters emphasizing the oneness of Allah. In this sense, people are prohibited from worshipping another human, being humans themselves, or another being; worshipping / serving something other than Allah is refused. His divine attributes cannot be attributed to any being other than Him. Thus, justice and equality are ensured among people. For example, people's inherent rights and means are neither the blessings of their fellow human beings nor their graces. The one who bestows these opportunities and makes people free is Allah. This way, one would not feel grateful to anyone for what he deserves and would not feel obliged to pay any requital to take back his own rights. So the unity of Allah increases the awareness of individuals and society in protecting their rights.

### 3.2.5. Mukhalafatun lil-Hawadith

The attribute of *Mukhalafat'un lil-Hawadith* means that Allah does not look like anything He created. Neither His attributes nor His actions resemble those created later. Allah is not limited by time and place. In other words, He is *munazzah* (free) from time and place. He cannot be imagined in any form. He is also unique in His attributes. For example, just as there is no limit in his power or *qudrah*, there is no one like Him in His mercy. Nothing can be like Him or equivalent to him in no subject. Therefore, a believer should neither compare his Creator with any other beings nor should a believer attribute His perfect qualifications to any other things. Allah does not resemble anyone else in His punishments and forgiveness as He does not resemble any other being in providing provisions and helping. In this respect, the idea of perfect and impeccable deity having all kinds of perfection gives hope to people in pursuit of truth. As a matter of fact, humans will continue to be good and do goodness as long as they do not lose their hope from what is good and beautiful.

### 3.2.6. Qiyam Bi Nafsihi

The attribute of *Qiyam Bi Nafsihi* means that Allah exists by Himself without needing anything. Everything except Him needs other beings to exist and to maintain their existence, whereas Allah's existence originates from himself. He

#### LET'S INTERPRET

“Say: “He is Allah, the One and Unique; Allah, Who is in need of none and of Whom all are in need; He neither begot any nor was He begotten, and none is comparable to Him.”

(Ikhlas, 112: 1-4)

Interpret the above mentioned verses in terms of Allah's unity.

#### LET'S NOTE

“... Naught in the universe is like Him ...”

(Shura, 42: 11)

**LET'S EVALUATE**

“Allah, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, Who sustains the entire order of the universe – there is no God but He.”  
(Al-i Imran, 3: 2)

Evaluate the above verse from the point of Allah's needing nothing.

is the unique one who needs nothing. In this sense, he is the owner of unlimited wealth and infinite power. He can never be incapacitated. With these perfect attributes, He is the only being who deserves to be sought for refuge and help. Allah's being in need of nothing or His self-sufficiency reminds that all his commandments and prohibitions are for the people's benefit. In order to exist and live we need our *Rabb* (Lord). We cannot live alone without other people; we want love, attention and compassion. There are always some aspects in which we are weak and helpless, and some others for which we need support or help. People who are aware of this don't get involved in any kind of arrogant and abstemious behaviors. They learn to cooperate and share what they have. They never leave to hold on to reasons that they need to exist. Therefore, they could not retain themselves to feel responsibility against their Lord who created these reasons.

**4. The Names of Allah in the Qur'an****LET'S INTERPRET**

“He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. Worship Him and be steadfast in your worship of Him; Do you know anything carrying his name? None is equal to Him.”

(Maryam, 19: 65)

Let's interpret the above verse in the framework of the subject of names of Allah.

**LET'S RESEARCH AND FIND**

“He is God: there is no deity save Him. He knows the unseen and the visible. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful. He is God, there is no deity save Him, the Sovereign, the Most Pure, the Source of Peace, the Granter of Security, the Protector, the Mighty, the Subduer, the Supreme, Glory be to God, who is far above what they associate with Him. He is God – the Creator, the Originator, the Giver of Form. His are the most excellent names. Everything in the heavens and earth declares His glory. He is the Mighty, the Wise One.”

(Hashr, 59: 22-24)

Find the names of Allah, which are mentioned in the verses above, and find their reflections in your life.

Name is a word to explain, to define, to tell, and to inform of someone or something. Knowing the name of a being is the first step to recognizing it. In this sense, when one uses the name of something, the existence and characteristics of the thing in question become the matter of interest.<sup>48</sup> When the names of Allah are said, his existence and attributes come to mind. In the Qur'an it is said that: **“All perfect beautiful names belong to Allah. So call on Him by these attributes...”**<sup>49</sup> According to this verse, Allah's names are called *“al-Asma' al-Husna”* (the most beautiful names). Each of these names is the expression of his divinity. It is necessary to recognize Allah with His names and to learn His qualifications through these names. Undoubtedly, supreme and perfect qualifications, which are expressed with his names, belong to him. He is impeccable with all His names and attributes and He is perfect.

A believer should learn very well and closely the names and attributes of Allah in order to know Allah who created him and keeps him alive. In this way, the believer will better understand Allah's greatness. Verses in the Qur'an expressing that all the best names belong to Allah also deal with Allah's greatness and dominance. These verses put emphasis on confirmation of Allah's perfection and necessity to respect him because of his impeccability. These verses call people to feel responsible before the greatness of Allah. Therefore, people are warned against the bad results caused by their ignorance about Allah and His verses. It is also emphasized that ascribing these flawless attributes to another being or another object will not be an appropriate approach. It is reminded to stay away from those who distort the meaning of His names, give these names to another being, and call Allah with unworthy names.<sup>50</sup> As a matter of fact, according to general opinions of theologians, to ascribe names and attributes to Allah through metaphors and allusions rather than the real meanings of the words is not permissible.<sup>51</sup>

### LET'S NOTE

The name Allah is expressed in believers' hearts and tongues with feelings of hope, goodness and sincerity. Therefore, His name should not be used in vain in subjects conducting toward evil in any way or causing harm upon people. It is stated in the Qur'an in Surah al-Baqarah (2: 224) that: *“And make not Allah, by your oaths, a hindrance to your being righteous and observing your duty unto Him and making peace among mankind. Allah is Hearer, Knower.”*

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Asad, *The Message of Qur'an*, p. 312

<sup>49</sup> Araf, 7: 180; Isra, 17: 110; Ta-Ha, 20: 8; Hashr, 59: 24

<sup>50</sup> Ta-Ha, 20: 8; Isra, 17: 110; Hashr, 59: 24

<sup>51</sup> Saim Yapram, *Kader*, p. 190



The word “Allah” is the most comprehensive among the names mentioned above. When the term “Allah” is used, it also includes all of His other names. This name could not be used for other beings. Believers should know the meaning of the names of Allah and use them in places appropriate to their meanings. Here the aim is not saying the names of Allah repeatedly by taking them away from their real meanings and contents. It is more appropriate to select one name from among the names of Allah and to use it according to the situation. In this way, a healthier and more conscious communication will be established in terms of fulfillment of the people’s requests. The Qur’an advises us to say prayers (du’a) with these names. Some of the beautiful names of Allah show His grace and compassion to the living beings He created. For example, the one who needs mercy prays Allah with His names of al-Rahman, al-Rahim, or al-Salam. Those who want blessings use the names of al-Razzaq, Wahhab, or al-Latif in their prayers. Those who look for honor and esteem call with Allah’s names of al-Aziz, al-Jalil, or al-Majid. The universe in which we live was created by Allah who is Omnipotent and the Most merciful. He is the one who gives life to the creation and he is the one who sustains it. Humans before this marvelous functioning in the universe should look for ways of being happy, to love and being loved. It is stated in the Qur’an that Allah is the one who takes the lives of people, resurrects them, makes them laugh, cry, rich, and contended.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, those who want to be happy should continuously respect Allah, love Him, and commit to Him.

The behaviors of a person who knows Allah with His names and attributes develop in a positive way. The truth and beauty in the meanings of these names are conducive for the development of people’s positive behaviors by improving them and maturing their moralities. Each name of Allah has a meaning. These meanings show that Allah is within life. Thinking Allah with these names raises awareness to see that creation and guidance of Allah constantly continue. In this sense, values related to these attributes such as righteousness, justice, and security, protect their vitality in the lives of those who use these names. In this vitality, one becomes more hopeful, more faithful, more courageous and more decisive.

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<sup>52</sup> Najm, 53: 43-48.

**LET'S FIND**

Below are some of the meanings of the names (attributes) of Allah. Write related names of these meanings.

<b>A L L A H</b>	Creator		Responder of prayers	
	Bestower of blessings	Al-Razzaq	Loving and beloved	Al-Wadud
	Immortal		Trusted	
	Just		Helper and dear	
	All-Forgiving		Invincible, the only winner	
	Omnipotent		Guiding	
	Protector		Deserving to be praised	

**LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER**

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain one proof showing the existence of Allah.
2. Explain proof of purpose and order.
3. Please tell the importance of unity of Allah from the perspective of believing people.
4. Please elucidate Allah's attribute of *al-Qudrah* by giving examples.
5. Explain the attribute of *Mukhalafatun lil-Hawadith*.

B. Choose the correct answers of the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following propositions belongs to proof of al-Fitrah?

- A. Universe came into existence later.
- B. Universe is a possible (*mumkun*) being along with everything in it.
- C. It is impossible that the idea of eternity came to my mind by itself.
- D. Universe presents a system of reasons and purposes, which are compatible with each other.
- E. People take refuge in God and ask His aid in the difficult times when they need help.

2. Which one of the following phrases means “The Best Names of Allah”?

- A) al-Qadir al-Mutlaq
- B) al-Asma al-Husna
- C) al-Allam al-Ghuyub
- D) Rabb Al-Alamin
- E) al-Sami’ al-Basir

3. Which one of the following choices is not from the Thubuti Attributes?

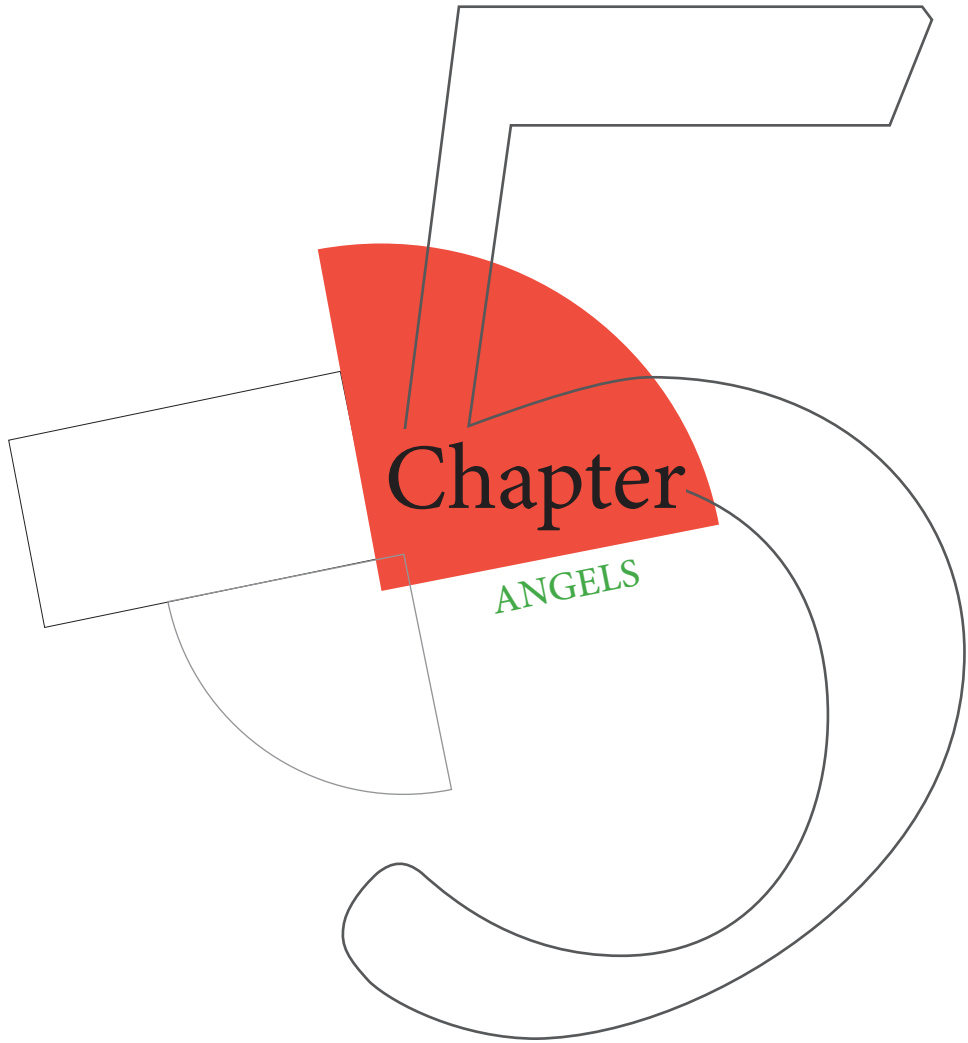
- A) Life
- B) ‘Ilm
- C) Sami’
- D) Basar
- E) Wahdaniyyah

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(a beginning, baqa, an end, basar, sami’)

1. There is ..... of every finite thing.
2. There is .....of every thing that has a beginning.
- 3..... is an attribute which means that Allah is eternal.
4. .... is an attribute meaning that Allah sees all things.

D. Find the meanings of three names of Allah and write what their correspondences are in your life.



Chapter

ANGELS



# ANGELS

## LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Collect information about the characteristics of angels.
2. What could be the effects of belief in the existence of angels on our lives? Think.
3. Collect information about the idioms that we use about genies and the devil.
4. Find translations of verses about jinn and satan, and read them in your class.
5. Find three verses mentioning the relationship between satan and humans and read them in the class.

## 1. The Existence of Angels

One of the basic principles of Islamic creed is the belief in angels.<sup>1</sup> *Malak* (plural *malaikah*), which means messenger, envoy, and owner of power and might, are imperceptible beings who fulfill the tasks commanded by Allah. They are powerful, fast, and have sufficient power to fulfill very difficult works.

Belief in angels is mentioned in the Qur'an among the articles of faith. Allah the Almighty states that **"The Messenger has believed in the Guidance which has been sent down to him from his Lord, and those who believe in the Messenger have also sincerely accepted the same. They all believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and Messengers..."**<sup>2</sup> In the Holy Qur'an some of the angels are identified with specific names, while others are mentioned with their tasks. Other divine (*samawi*) monotheistic religions also accept the existence of angels.

## LET'S FIND

Find the translations of verses explaining the features of angels and share your findings in class.

<sup>1</sup> Baqarah, 2: 177, 285, 98; Nisa, 4: 136; Anbiya, 21: 19-20; Najm, 53: 27-28;

<sup>2</sup> Baqarah, 2: 285; Baqarah, 2: 117; Nisa, 4: 136

Angels neither disobey Allah's commands nor do they commit sins. They do whatever they are ordered to do without delay.<sup>3</sup> It is mentioned in the Qur'an that angels have hands and wings.<sup>4</sup> The multitude of their wings refers to the greatness of their powers, their speed, and their levels in fulfilling Allah's orders and transmitting His revelations. Angels are free from certain needs such as eating, drinking, having sexual relations, sleeping, getting tired, being bored, aging, etc.<sup>5</sup> Despite their superior characteristics, they do not know *al-Ghayb* (the unseen and imperceptible universe). In this respect, it is stated in the Qur'an that **"Say: 'None in the heavens or on the earth has knowledge of the Unseen (Ghayb) save Allah'."**<sup>6</sup>

In the 68th verse of Surah az-Zumar (39), Allah informs us that angels will die like human beings on the Day of Judgment: **"And the Trumpet shall be blown and all who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead save those whom Allah wills. Then the Trumpet shall be blown again, and lo! All of them will be standing and looking on."** With respect to the subject of angels being the intercessors for people, the following information is given in the Qur'an: **"Numerous are the angels in the heavens; yet their intercession shall be of no avail, except in regard to those whom He grants the leave of intercession and whose plea He is pleased to accept."**<sup>7</sup>

In this world and in the hereafter, some tasks are given to angels who are created by different and superior characteristics in comparison to humans.

## 2. Duties of Angels

No being was created without a purpose. Angels, who are numerous according to the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet, have tasks and purpose. Angels' primary mission is to be servants of Allah and to fulfill his orders. From among them, Jibreel (Gabriel), Mikail (Michael), Israfil, and Azrail (Angel of death) are great angels.

In the Qur'an, the names Jibreel, al-Ruh al-Amin (trusted soul), Al-Ruh Al-Quds (The Holy Soul), and Rasul (Messenger) are given to the Archangel Gabriel.<sup>8</sup> Jibreel is responsible for taking the revelations to the prophets and

<sup>3</sup> Nahl, 16: 50; Anbiya, 21: 19-20, 26-28; Tahrim, 66: 6; Zumar, 39: 75; A'raf, 7: 206

<sup>4</sup> An'am, 6: 93; Fatir, 35: 1; Haqqah, 69: 17; Ma'rij, 70: 4

<sup>5</sup> Anbiya, 21: 19-20; Zukhruf, 43: 17; Saffat, 37: 149; Najm, 53: 27-28; Hud, 11: 69-70

<sup>6</sup> Naml, 27: 65; Baqarah, 2: 31-33; An'am, 6: 59

<sup>7</sup> Najm, 53: 26

<sup>8</sup> Baqarah, 2: 97-98; Nisa, 4: 163; Tahrim, 66: 4; Shu'ara, 26: 193-194; Nahl, 16: 102

also to other angels.<sup>9</sup> The Prophet Muhammad<sup>10</sup> saw Gabriel twice with his original form, and he appeared in human form to Mary when he brought her the news of the birth of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Gabriel is a friend of our Prophet and the supporter of the believers.<sup>12</sup>

Mikail (Michael) means “Ubayd Allah (Allah’s little slave)” in Hebrew and Syriac. The word is mentioned in the Qur’an as “Mikal.” Mentioning Jibreel (Gabriel) and Mikail (Michael) by their special names in the following verse: **“Who is an enemy to Allah, and His angels and His messengers, and Jibreel and Mikail! Then, lo! Allah (Himself) is an enemy to the disbelievers,”**<sup>13</sup> shows their high rank and greatness in the presence of Allah.

The name “Munadi (Caller)” is mentioned in the Qur’an to refer to the angel Israfil while the name “Israfil” is used in the sayings of the Prophet. One of these hadiths reads as follows: **“When he got up at night he would commence his prayer with these words: O Allah, Lord of Jibreel, and Mikail, and Israfil, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who knowest the unseen and the seen...”**<sup>14</sup> Israfil will blow the first trumpet which will announce the doomsday, and the second one (nafh),<sup>15</sup> which will start the resurrection. It is also Israfil’s task to call people who are mentioned in the following verse **“And listen on the Day when the caller will call from a place nearby...”**<sup>16</sup> to the place of gathering (mahshar).<sup>17</sup>

The word Azrail, the name of another angel, comes from Hebrew. It is mentioned neither in the Qur’an nor in the hadiths. It came to the books of Qur’anic exegesis from the sources of Israiliyyat\* by means of Muslims like Qa’b Al-Akhhbar and Wahb B. Munabbih, who embraced Islam during the period of the first two caliphs.<sup>18</sup> This angel’s name is mentioned in the Qur’an as “the angel of death”. The phrase “*Malak al-Mawt*” (the angel of death) mentioned in the following verse: **“Tell them: “The angel of death who has been charged with your souls shall gather you, and then you shall be brought back to your Lord.”**<sup>19</sup> refers to Azrail. Using the plural form of the word *malak*,

<sup>9</sup> Yunus Şevki Yavuz, Zeki Ünal, “Melek,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, p. 202

<sup>10</sup> Najm, 53: 13-14; Takwir, 81: 23

<sup>11</sup> Maryam, 19: 17-21.

<sup>12</sup> Tahrim, 66: 4; Qadr, 97: 4; (Lütfullah Cebeci, “Mikail,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, p. 45)

<sup>13</sup> Baqarah, 2: 98

<sup>14</sup> Muslim, Al-Du’a Fi Salat al-Layl, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Naml, 53: 87; Zumar, 39: 68

<sup>16</sup> Qaf, 50: 41-42; Qamar, 54: 6-8;

<sup>17</sup> Lütfullah Cebeci, “Israfil,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 23, p. 181

\* The reports and stories narrated from the sources of Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmad Saim Kılavuz, “Azrail,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4, p. 350-351

<sup>19</sup> Sajdah, 32: 11



i.e. *malaikah*<sup>20</sup> when speaking about the angel of death shows that there are assistants of Azrail.

In addition to the above-mentioned four great angels, there are many others. In the 172nd verse of Surah al-Nisa (4), the expression **“The Messiah will not disdain to be a servant of God, neither the angels who are near stationed to Him...”**<sup>21</sup> is used about them. The wholehearted obedience of the angels is expressed in another verse as follows: **“[The angels] who are near to Your Lord, never turn away from His service out of arrogance; they rather glorify Him and prostrate themselves before Him.”**<sup>22</sup> Angels, whose names are mentioned in the Qur’an as Harut and Marut,<sup>23</sup> are sent to test people.

Angels called “Kiramān Katibin, Raqib-Atid” or “hafaza” are responsible for recording people’s good and bad, open and hidden deeds and for protecting them. These angels are mentioned in the Qur’an in the following verses: **“Or do they think that We do not hear their secret talks and their whispering counsels? Yes, indeed We do and Our messengers (i.e., angels) are with them, writing.”**<sup>24</sup> **“For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession, before and behind him: They guard him by the command of Allah...”**<sup>25</sup>

### LET’S THINK

“Those who say, “Allah is our Lord” and then remain steadfast, upon them descend angels (and say): ‘Do not fear nor grieve, and receive good tidings of Paradise which you were promised. We are your companions in this world and in the Hereafter. There you shall have all that you desire and all what you will ask for.’”  
(Fussilat, 41: 30-31)

Think about the existence of angels in light of the above-mentioned verses.

The existence of angels that inspire perseverance, truth, and the right things in the hearts of the believers<sup>26</sup> and pray for them is informed with the following verse: **“...while the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth...”**<sup>27</sup> In addition to these, some angels are

<sup>20</sup> Anfāl, 6: 50; Nahl, 16: 32, 33

<sup>21</sup> Ahzab, 33: 56; Nisa, 4: 172; Zumar, 39: 75

<sup>22</sup> Araf, 7: 206

<sup>23</sup> Baqarah, 2: 102

<sup>24</sup> Zukhruf, 43: 80

<sup>25</sup> Ra’d, 13: 10-11; Infitar, 82: 10-12; Qaf, 50: 21; An’am, 6: 61

<sup>26</sup> Anfāl, 6: 12; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 3

<sup>27</sup> Shura, 42: 5; Ahzab, 33: 43; Mu’min, 40: 7-9; Najm, 53: 26

put in charge of helping believers with their worldly and spiritual problems.<sup>28</sup> Angels, who are the friends of believers, will stand next to the believers in their journey in the afterlife and console them.<sup>29</sup>

There are also angels who will welcome the believers with salutations, serve them, and accompany them in the hereafter. This subject takes part in the Qur'an with the following expressions **"...angels shall enter unto them from every gate, and say: 'Peace be upon you. You merit this reward for your steadfastness.' How excellent is the ultimate abode!"**<sup>30</sup> In another verse it is stated that: **"Over it are nineteen (angels). We have appointed none but angels as the keepers of the Fire, and We have not made their number but as a trial for the unbelievers ..."**<sup>31</sup> The name of the representative of the angels who are in charge in paradise is Ridwan, and the representative of the angels in charge in hell is called Malik.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. The Importance of Belief in Angels

Only Allah truly knows the wisdom of the existence of angels. A person's duty is to think about angels whose characteristics and tasks are explained in the Holy Qur'an by Allah the Almighty. When belief in angels and their existence is thought, such contemplation provides benefits for people and affects people positively.

Apart from the fact that angels were created in such a way as to not be capable of committing sins, they also fulfill their tasks in the best manner. Their creation on goodness and benefaction does not lead them to any kind of laxity and boasting. They never neglect their tasks. With this trait, angels represent a nice example for conscious human beings in fulfilling the tasks of servitude towards Allah the Almighty.

Those who believe in the existence of angels are careful to do good deeds and act moderately as a result of being conscious that there are angels appointed by Allah and recording everything they do. This belief keeps believers from doing evil. By protecting their minds and actions from evil, it also ensures them a peaceful and happy life.

#### LET'S DISCUSS

What are the impacts of belief in the existence of angels on human's daily lives?

Discuss in class.

<sup>28</sup> Baqarah, 2: 87, 253; Nisa, 4: 110; Fussilat, 41: 30-31, Anfal, 6: 9-10; Al-i Imran, 3: 123; Ahzab, 33: 9; Najm, 53: 26 and Mu'min, 40: 7-9

<sup>29</sup> Fussilat, 41: 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> Ra'd, 13: 23-24; Anbiya, 21: 103; Zumar, 39: 73.

<sup>31</sup> Muddaththir, 74: 30-31; Zukhruf, 43: 77.

<sup>32</sup> Zumar, 39: 71-72; Zukhruf, 43: 77; Tahrim, 66: 6; Alaq, 96: 18.

Angels are the symbols of goodness, beauty and truthfulness. Those who believe in angels listen carefully to the virtues inculcated by the angels, and so deserve to be qualified as “like an angel” by internalizing those virtues. A believer matures further under the influence of this positive approach, hence looks for ways to strengthen his or her moral values more by knowing that fulfilling tasks and responsibilities will make him or her superior to angels.

Those who believe that angels come to help those who are in difficulty do not lose their hope, tenacity and will. Knowing that Allah will support those who believe in Him by means of His angels is, in a way, a reward for belief in the unseen.<sup>33</sup>

Since angels are spiritual beings, people who have no knowledge about the concept of revelation would ignorantly attribute to them many qualifications. For example, some polytheists compared angels to their daughters whom they did not respect and appreciate. They slandered angels saying that: “**angels are the daughters of Allah.**”<sup>34</sup> Others considered them as intercessors just as they did with their idols.<sup>35</sup> Allah the Almighty introduced their true nature, saying “**angels, who are Allah’s chosen servants .....**”<sup>36</sup> and saved people from such superstitious and suspicious ideas.

#### 4. Jinn and Satan

Angels are not the only spiritual beings that cannot be seen or perceived by sense organs. Genies (*jinn*s) and Satan, who are introduced by the Qur’an as in the same category of beings with angels, are also invisible beings.<sup>37</sup> Among the spiritual beings, angels are beings who do goodness, are obedient to Allah, and inspire people to do good things, whereas Satan is the being who deceives people and leads them to evil.

The Holy Qur’an and authentic hadiths of the Prophet mention the genies. It is mentioned in the following verse that genies were created from fire without smoke and were created before humankind: “**And the Jinn race, We had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind.**”<sup>38</sup> Genies are beings who have free will and are created to worship Allah. This is expressed in the Qur’an as follows: “I

<sup>33</sup> Mustafa İslamoğlu, *İman Risalesi*, p.271.

<sup>34</sup> Saffat, 37: 149-150

<sup>35</sup> Najm, 53: 26

<sup>36</sup> Zukhruf, 43: 19

<sup>37</sup> Araf, 7: 27. 72nd chapter of the Qur’an has the title of al-Jinn and speaks about some of their features.

<sup>38</sup> Hijr, 15: 27

**created the jinn and humans for nothing else but that they may serve Me.”<sup>39</sup>**

Jinns do not know the unseen (*al-ghayb*) either. However, it is related in the Qur’an that they pry into the heavens to steal their secrets, and they are driven away from it by blazing fires.<sup>40</sup> Allah has forbidden the sanctification of genies because they also are required to be the servants of Allah;<sup>41</sup> It is reported in the following verse that the prophets were sent down to them: **“(Then Allah will also ask them): ‘O assembly of jinn and men! Did there not come to you Messengers from among yourselves, relating to you My signs, and warning you of the encounter of this your Day (of Judgment)?’ They will say: ‘Yes, we bear witness against ourselves.’ ...”**<sup>42</sup> Believing jinns will be together with believers in paradise and disbelieving ones will enter in hell together with disbelievers.<sup>43</sup>

Satan, who is not visible but whose existence is clearly reported in the Holy Qur’an and authentic hadiths, was created from fire. The term Satan is the common name used for jinns who go to extreme measures in their mischief and evil, are arrogant, and insistently try to drive people away from the truth.<sup>44</sup> Iblis is the ancestor of jinns. Iblis had taken his place among angels by exalting his rank through worshipping Allah. He then refused to obey Allah’s order to prostrate before Adam by claiming that he was superior to Adam, and went astray. He was damned by Allah and expelled from Allah’s presence. This incident is mentioned in the Qur’an as follows: **“And recall when We said to the angels: ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam’; all of them fell prostrate, except Iblis. He was of the jinn and so disobeyed the command of his Lord. Will you, then, take him and his progeny as your guardians rather than Me although they are your open enemies? What an evil substitute are these wrong-doers taking!”**<sup>45</sup> Allah permitted the accursed Satan (from His presence) to lead people astray. He deceived Adam and his wife Eve and caused their expulsion from paradise. Satan began intense efforts to keep the descendants of Adam and Eve away from the truth.<sup>46</sup>

Allah warned people about the enmity of Satan, his tricks, and his deception, and asked His servants to seek refuge in Him. Allah expresses that Satan will

<sup>39</sup> Dhariyat, 51: 56

<sup>40</sup> Jinn, 72: 8-9; Hijr, 15: 17; Mulk, 67: 5

<sup>41</sup> Rahman, 15; Hijr, 15: 26-27; Qaf, 50,51; Dhariyat, 51: 56

<sup>42</sup> An’am, 6: 130.

<sup>43</sup> Ali Erbaş, *Melekler Alemi*, p. 36

<sup>44</sup> Araf, 7: 16-17

<sup>45</sup> Kahf, 18: 50

<sup>46</sup> Araf, 7: 12, 19-24; Baqarah, 2: 34-38; Kahf, 18: 50-51; Sad, 38: 74-83

have no influence and authority over persons who have sincere faith in Allah and trust in their Lord in the following verse: **“Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord.”**<sup>47</sup> The thing that makes Satan appear more powerful is the weakness of people’s wills and morality, their hopelessness and their uncertainty. Therefore, believers should protect themselves from Satan’s evil by praying to Allah, trusting in Him (*tawakkul*), and rejecting their bodily and worldly desires. Moreover, it has been advised in the Qur’an that those who do not obey the divine rules will be exposed to Satan’s deceptions in the following verses: **“And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint for him a Shaitan, so he becomes his associate, And most surely they turn them away from the path, and they think that they are guided aright.”**<sup>48</sup> In the end, those who do not show the decisiveness to break away from Satan’s deception and attempts at mischief become his voluntary soldiers and prisoners. Those who die without renouncing their servitude of Satan will blame Satan with remorse. In the hereafter, when they blame others, Satan will say that they should blame themselves.<sup>49</sup>

In some verses of the Qur’an, Allah the Almighty metaphorically uses the word Shaitan about evil people and jinns. The following verses are an example of this usage: **“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men, the King (or Ruler) of Mankind, the God (or judge) of Mankind from the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper), who whispers into the hearts of mankind, from among the jinn and the men!”**<sup>50</sup> **“And thus did We make for every prophet an enemy, the Shaitans from among men and jinn, some of them suggesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive (them), and had your Lord pleased they would not have done it...”**<sup>51</sup>

Allah has created beings with their opposites in order to allow people to easily recognize their differences. Angels represent cleanliness, truth and goodness, whereas Satan is the representative of the opposite characteristics. Angels were created to symbolize people’s good aspects whereas Satan was created to represent people’s bad aspects. Angels and Satan were created, and people have been tested as to which one will be their model.

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<sup>47</sup> Nahl, 16: 98-100; Isra, 17: 65; A’raf, 7: 201; Hijr, 15: 41

<sup>48</sup> Zukhruf, 43: 36-37

<sup>49</sup> A’raf, 7: 200-202; Nahl, 16: 98; Isra, 17: 65; A’raf, 7: 21; Saba, 34: 21; Mu’minun, 23: 97-98; Mujadilah, 58: 14-22; Ibrahim, 14: 22

<sup>50</sup> Nas, 114: 1-6

<sup>51</sup> An’am, 6: 112; Baqarah, 2: 14

**LET'S FIND**

TYPES OF BEINGS	+ Angel+	-Satan-	-Jinn+	-Human+
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CHARACTERISTICS OF BEINGS	Origin/Creation	.....	Fire	.....	Earth
	Will/Responsibility	.....	.....	Responsible	.....
	Knowledge of the <i>ghayb</i>	No	.....	.....	.....
	Authority over others	.....	No	.....	.....

Fill in the blanks with suitable words appropriate to the basic characteristics.

**LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER**

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Which angel names are mentioned in the Qur'an? .
2. In the Qur'an, with which features is Satan defined? Specify.
3. Write five ways to prevent Satan's tricks and deceptions.
4. Compare angels, jinn and Satan in terms of their knowledge of the *ghayb*.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following choices cannot be said about angels?
  - A. Jibreel, Azrail, Mikail, and Israfil are the greatest ones among angels.
  - B. Angels were sometimes seen by the prophets in human form.
  - C. Angels are always under Allah's command and rulings.
  - D. Angels are beings who can make mistakes like us.
  - E. Angels will serve believers and accompany them in the hereafter.

2. Which one of the following choices does not indicate a characteristic of jinns?

- A. They are spiritual beings who were created from smokeless fire.
- B. They have the trait of prying the secret knowledge that Allah gave to angels from the heavens.
- C. They are responsible for being servants of Allah like other human beings.
- D. They cannot harm without Allah's permission.
- E. There are believers and disbelievers among them, and they will be held accountable for their actions in the hereafter like us.

3. Which one of the following choices is not one of the features of Satan?

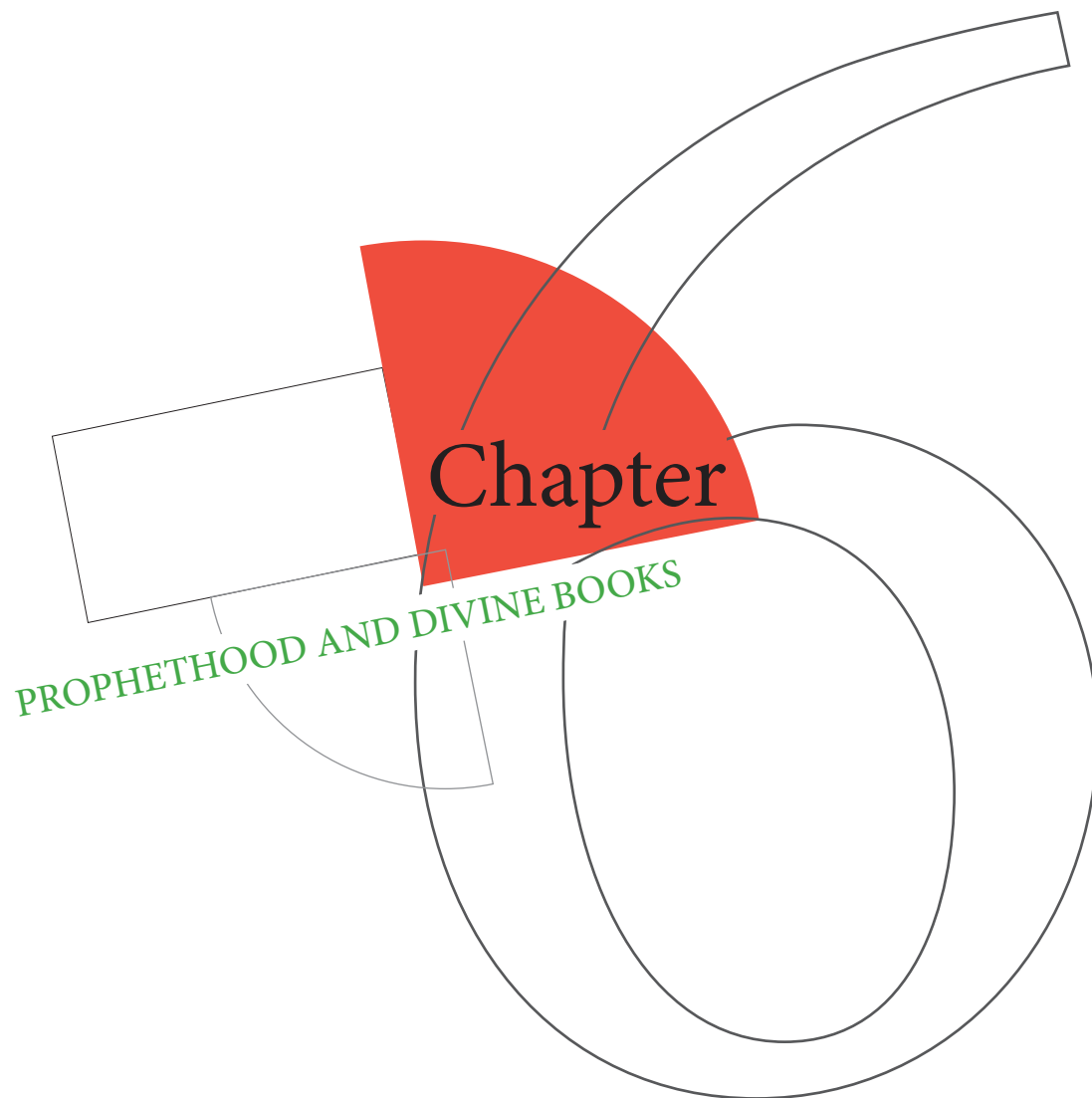
- A. The other name of Satan is Iblis and because of his piety he used to be among the angels before his disobedience.
- B. He was created with the power to forcibly take people under his domination.
- C. Satan was created from fire and created before humans.
- D. Satan does not know the *ghayb*.
- E. He is a very insidious and insistent creature.

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(Gabriel, Satan, Human)

1. Jibreel, al-Ruh al-Amin, Al-Ruh al-Qudus, and Ruh are other names of the angel .....

2. Angels represent truth and goodness, and ..... represents the opposite characteristics.



Chapter

PROPHETHOOD AND DIVINE BOOKS





## PROPHETHOOD AND DIVINE BOOKS

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Learn the meanings of the terms “*peygamber, rasul, nabi*”.
2. Refer to the glossary of religious terms and learn about the meanings of the concepts “*sidq, fatanah, and ismah*”.
3. Collect information concerning the divine books.
4. Collect information about the Qur'an's being a miracle.
5. Gather information regarding Prophet Muhammad's being a role model and his being the last prophet.

### 1. Concepts of Nabi, Rasul and Wahy

The word *rasul* lexically means “the one who delivers the message of a person to another, the one who serves as a messenger between the two.” Terminologically, a *rasul* is the one who fulfills the mission of delivering the divine messages. It can also be called *mursal*. The mission of prophethood is called *risalah*. The word *rasul* takes part in many verses of the Holy Qur'an. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an that: **“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain their affairs in justice.”**<sup>1</sup>

The word *nabi* lexically means the one who brings news and tidings. As a term, it means the one who conveys to people the revelation that comes from Allah. In this respect, informing people is also called *nubuwwah*. The terms *risalah* and *nubuwwah* are in infinitive forms and both mean prophecy. The word *peygamber*, which is used for *nabi* in Turkish, is originally a Persian word

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<sup>1</sup> Hadid, 25: 57

## LET'S THINK

Think about the meaning of the word *nabi* reading the verses given below:  
 Baqarah 2: 213; Al-i  
 Imran 3: 79-81;  
 Jathiyah 45: 16;  
 Ankabut 29: 27;  
 Hadid 57: 26.

and means the person who brings a message and gives information. In the Holy Qur'an, the terms *nabi* and *rasul* have been used in place of the word *peygamber*. These three concepts can sometimes be used interchangeably.

In order to be a prophet, revelation must be received from Allah the Almighty. Revelation is Allah's sending His messages about what He wants to inform people by means of His messengers secretly, expeditiously, and in a special way. Prophets were entrusted with the task of conveying the revelation that they received from Allah to the people without making any changes. In regards to this, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that: **“And if Muhammad had made up about Us some false sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; then We would have cut from him the aorta. And there is no one of you who could prevent Us from Him.”**<sup>2</sup>

Prophethood is an innate gift granted by Allah. It cannot be acquired by working, worshipping or obedience. Being chosen by Allah is the most essential condition to being a prophet. Allah the Exalted determines Himself whom He sends as a prophet by choosing among His chaste and distinguished servants, and He entrusts with the task of prophecy whomever He wills. Allah the Almighty has expressed that prophecy entirely depends on His wish saying that: **“That is the bounty of Allah, which He gives to whom He wills...”**<sup>3</sup> Property, wealth, glory, fame, position and rank cannot be the criteria to become the one chosen by Him.

The first prophet was Adam (pbuh), who was also the first human being, and the last prophet was the Prophet Muhammad (saw). The expression in the Holy Qur'an **“...but he is the messenger of Allah and the last prophet...”**<sup>4</sup> states that the prophethood came to an end with the prophethood of Muhammad (saw). The revelation that came to Prophet Muhammad has been protected in its original form even without any small change, although the revelations that had been sent to the previous prophets could not be protected in their original forms. Thus, there is no need to send prophets after the Prophet Muhammad since the Holy Qur'an is a universal book that was revealed to him, and guides the whole humanity until the Day of Resurrection.

As it is stated in the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Exalted sent prophets throughout the history of mankind and called people to embrace the truth and apply it to

<sup>2</sup> Haqqah, 69: 44-47

<sup>3</sup> Jum'ah, 62: 4

<sup>4</sup> Ahzab, 33: 40

their lives by the guidance of the prophets. In this regard, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that there are no people or community to whom a prophet has not been sent: **"By Allah, We did certainly send messengers to nations before you..."**<sup>5</sup> Each one of the prophets delivered his message in the language of the community in which he was sent and called people to believe in Allah. Allah the Almighty says regarding this matter: **"And We did not send any messenger except speaking in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."**<sup>6</sup> So this made the communication between the prophets and their people easier. The names of some of the prophets have been clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, but the total number of the prophets does not consist of just the mentioned ones. In this regard, it is said in the Holy Qur'an that: **"Oh Muhammad! We have already sent messengers before you, among them are those (whose stories) We have related to you, and among them those (whose stories) We have not related to you."**<sup>7</sup>

According to Islamic belief, prophecy is the most prominent part of the religion. It is obligatory for every Muslim to believe in all the prophets sent to humanity, from Adam to Muhammad, peace be upon them all, without making any distinction among them, and to believe in the reality of the knowledge that they received from Allah. Allah the Exalted has said in the Holy Qur'an that: **"The messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and (so have) the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, saying, 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers...'"**<sup>8</sup> In short, believing in all the prophets sent by Allah, and making no distinction among them is the most essential duty of every Muslim.

## 2. Reasons for Allah's Sending Prophets and Revelation

People need prophets who are real guides. Allah's sending prophets to people is a sign of His love toward His servants and His mercy toward them. This is expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: **"Certainly did Allah confer great favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching**

<sup>5</sup> Nahl, 16: 63, Yunus 10: 47

<sup>6</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 4

<sup>7</sup> Mu'min, 40: 78

<sup>8</sup> Baqarah, 2: 285

**them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error.”<sup>9</sup>**

Allah has created human beings in the best form, and granted them some special attributes such as intellect, free will and thinking. Although human beings acquire knowledge about themselves, about their environment, and other creatures through these abilities, all this knowledge is limited and depends on the proportion of man’s ability to understand. For instance, though people can understand the existence of Allah and His unity through their intellect, they cannot fully grasp some attributes belonging to Him. A person cannot know how to worship Allah and what will happen after death. Reaching happiness in this world and in life after death, improving in terms of thought and morality are possible only by fulfilling the orders that the prophets taught. Therefore, Allah the Almighty sent messengers in order to satisfy such needs.

#### LET’S EXAMINE

*“Oh Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.”*  
(Ahzab, 33: 45-46)

Taking the verses given above into consideration, examine for what purpose the Prophet Muhammad was sent.

There should be messengers sent by Allah so that people can be held responsible and liable for their actions. This way, people can avoid offering an excuse to Allah on the Day of Judgment by saying, **“We did not know, no messenger was sent to us.”** Concerning that it is stated in the Holy Qur’an: **“We sent messengers and bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers...”<sup>10</sup>**

Allah has charged people with some responsibilities, and He sent prophets in order to clarify what those responsibilities are and how people can accomplish these duties. For instance, in the Holy Qur’an, *zakat* (alms-giving) has been expressed as an obligatory worship, and it has been explained to whom it should be given, but it is not explained in detail the kind and amount of

<sup>9</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 164

<sup>10</sup> Nisa, 4: 165

property that can be given as *zakat*. Hence, in this and similar cases, people need explanations from the prophets. Allah the Almighty informed people that He would hold them responsible for their actions after His messengers made necessary explanations to them. If there were no prophets sent by Allah, people could not be liable for any religious responsibilities except the responsibility of knowing about Allah's existence and His unity. This is expressed in a Qur'anic verse that states: **"...And never would We punish until We sent a messenger."**<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, messengers were sent in order that they become role models for the believers in every aspect of life, such as family and social life, or commercial relations, etc. In this regard, it is expressed in the Holy Qur'an that: **"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah a pattern..."**<sup>12</sup>

Throughout history, all the prophets inculcated people believing and adhering to the same principles of faith. Those principles are belief in Allah, His angels, His prophets, His books, the life after death, and predestination. Nevertheless, people's needs have changed over the centuries, and likewise, the conditions of life in different communities have been changing. Due to this, it is normal to see some differences between the messages of subsequent prophets and previous ones in respect to answering different social needs, and regulation of human relations according to different life conditions. This is the natural result concerning the social change depending on the improvement of human life. And this change, eventually, took the last form through the messages of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>13</sup>

Messengers of Allah were human beings and part of the society in which they lived. Therefore, they needed to eat, drink, dress, and shelter like other people in their society, and they worked like any other person in order to provide for their own needs. However, unlike ordinary people, they received revelation from Allah the Almighty. The fact that the prophets were chosen from among human beings facilitated people's understanding of the revelation and its implementation in their lives. Since messengers are the people who witness the problems of the society that they lived in, they indicated solutions to these problems in accordance with the revelation they had received from Allah, and so led their society. In the Holy Qur'an, however, people who did

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<sup>11</sup> Isra, 17: 15

<sup>12</sup> Ahzab, 33: 21

<sup>13</sup> Hüseyin Algül, *İslam'a Giriş Gençliğin İslam Bilgisi*, p. 161.

not want to accept messengers sent with human attributes, just like the ones they themselves had, are given the reply as such: **“Say if there were upon the earth angels walking securely, We would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a messenger.”**<sup>14</sup>

### LET'S MAKE A LIST

List the purposes of sending prophets to people.

1. They explained to people what their responsibilities are.
2. ....
3. ....

One of the basic reasons for the prophets' being chosen from among the people is that the one who leads people should be someone from among those people, because human beings can take only a human being as an example for themselves. Hence, the messengers who were sent by Allah were chosen among people so that they could lead their people. Messengers of Allah not only convey the commands and prohibitions determined by Allah, but they also become a role model for the people they lead.

## 3. Attributes of the Prophets

Messengers of Allah had humanistic features like ordinary people; they sat and stood, ate and drank, travelled and had children, fell ill and died. They had some special attributes and traits that made them different from other people as a consequence of being a prophet of Allah. Owing to these attributes granted to them, they were successfully able to fulfill the mission of prophethood. They were equipped with traits such as righteousness, reliability, intelligence, wisdom, and being protected from sins in order to deliver to people the message that they received from Allah the Almighty.

### 3.1. Sidq (Truthfulness)

The word *sidq* lexically means being righteous. It denotes the coherence between someone's words and actions, and it is one of the most significant

### LET'S DISCUSS

Why do the prophets have some special attributes unlike ordinary people?

Think about it.

<sup>14</sup> Isra, 17: 95

features of the messengers of Allah. First of all, the one who takes over the mission of delivering the warnings and commands of Allah to people has to be truthful and righteous. Messengers are those who are righteous in their words, affairs, thoughts and behaviors. This attribute shows that the prophets were righteous and truthful when they conveyed the divine message to people. Allah's messengers never told any kind of lies. If they had told lies, they would have lost the trust of the people who believed in them.

Prophets were known as the best people in terms of morality by the society in which they lived even before they received revelation and before they began their mission. The Holy Qur'an intensively points out this matter, and emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad was a reliable person who never told lies, not even a small one, throughout his life. In other words, the Prophet Muhammad, before and after the mission of his prophethood, was called "Sadiq Al-Wa'd Al-Amin"<sup>15</sup> (the one who keeps his promise, reliable person) not only by the believers but also by all sections of his society.

While the Holy Qur'an uses the word *sadiq* for some prophets: **"And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true (sadiq) to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet"**<sup>16</sup> for some others it uses the word *siddiq*, which is expressed in a verse as follows: **"And mention in the Book the story of Abraham. Indeed he was a man of truth (siddiq) and a prophet."**<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2. Amanah (Trustworthiness)

*Amanah* means being reliable and trustworthy. It is a person's observance to something that he is entrusted with, or one's fulfillment of a mission and responsibility that he is charged with. In this regard, it is expressed in a verse: **"It is not attributable to any prophet that he would act unfaithfully..."**<sup>18</sup> Betrayal, i.e. the opposite of *amanah*, cannot be imagined about the prophets.

Prophets are faithful and reliable people both in the accomplishment of their mission and in all other aspects of life. There are many verses concerning these attributes in the Holy Qur'an. The verse **"I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser."**<sup>19</sup> is one example. The most significant thing entrusted to the prophets is conveying the messages of religion and Allah's warnings to people. They successfully fulfilled their responsibilities in this respect and protected the things with which they were entrusted.

#### LET'S INTERPRET

Think about being faithful and reliable in terms of their effects on social life and make comments on it.

<sup>15</sup> Komisyon, *İmam Hatip Liseleri Kelam Ders Kitabı*, p.93.

<sup>16</sup> Maryam, 19: 54

<sup>17</sup> Maryam, 19: 41

<sup>18</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 161

<sup>19</sup> Araf, 7: 68



Prophets are known with those attributes not only during the period of their prophethood but also before being entrusted with their mission. The best example of that, of course, is the Prophet Muhammad (saw). He had an outstanding character and was the most reliable person in his society even before receiving the mission of prophethood as well as during his prophethood. This is why he was called “Al-Amin” (trustworthy) by the people of his society, including the Meccan pagans, even in the period of ignorance.

### 3.3. Fatanah (Intelligence, Wisdom)

*Fatanah* means that prophets were wise, clever, understanding and discerning people. All the messengers of Allah had a superior level of intellect and intelligence, a strong memory, a high-level logic, and an ability to easily convince. Prophecy is a task that brings great responsibilities together, so it is necessary to have a keen intellect and to be equipped with excellent capabilities in order to fulfill these responsibilities. Thanks to these abilities, the prophets grasped Allah’s message very well and easily resolved people’s problems.

Related to these characteristics, the Prophet Hud’s addressing his people is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as follows: **“Hud said, ‘O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.’”**<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Allah the Almighty bestowed a level of intelligence, great attention, and a mature mind on His prophets.

#### LET’S INTERPRET

During the reconstruction of the Ka’bah, a dispute emerged among the tribes of Quraysh concerning which tribe would attain the honor of placing al-Hajar al-Aswad (The Black Stone) in its proper place. Prophet Muhammad was chosen as an arbitrator by the tribes. The effort and skills he displayed while solving this dispute, which took place before his mission of prophethood, prevented a battle that was about to break out.

Interpret this incident in terms of the Prophet Muhammad’s truthfulness, reliability, and intelligence.

### 3.4. Tabligh (Delivering the Message of Allah)

The lexical meaning of the word *tabligh* is to inform and transmit something.

<sup>20</sup> Araf, 7: 67

Terminologically, it means prophets' deliverance of the revelation sent by Allah to people without concealing a part from it, without detracting anything from it, or without adding something to it other than revelation. This is the most sacred and the primary task of the prophets, which has been expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: **"O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message..."**<sup>21</sup> and another verse of the Qur'an reads as such: **"I convey to you the messages of my Lord and advise you; and I know from Allah what you do not know."**<sup>22</sup>

Allah's messengers never made additions or subtractions from the revelation that they received from Allah.<sup>23</sup> It is not possible to imagine any of the prophets not being able to convey the divine message of Allah to the people.

### 3.5. *Ismah* (Being Protected from Sins)

*Ismah* means avoiding committing sins. Prophets before and after being charged with the mission of prophethood avoided all kinds of grave sins and blasphemy and from associating partners with Allah. They never intentionally committed sins in their lives. Due to the fact that they were human beings, they made some minor mistakes called *zalla*, which were not equivalent to sins. They, however, corrected their mistakes as soon as Allah the Almighty warned about them. This is expressed in the Holy Qur'an with the following words: **"And if We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little."**<sup>24</sup> Prophets were protected and they avoided certain actions and behavior that could harm their positions because they became role models for the people and their leaders.

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<sup>21</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 67

<sup>22</sup> Araf, 7: 62

<sup>23</sup> Haqqah, 69: 44-46

<sup>24</sup> Isra, 17: 74

## LET'S WRITE

## The Common Attributes of the Prophets

SIDQ

Maryam, 19: 54

.....

A'raf, 7: 68

.....

Nahl, 16: 82

.....

A'raf 7: 67

.....

Isra 17: 74

After examining the meanings of the verses given above, write the prophetic characteristics expressed in those verses.

#### 4. Miracles as the Proof of Prophecy

The word *mujizah* (miracle) literally means “marvelous and supernatural incidents which are ascribable to human power”. In the Holy Qur’an, the words “*ayah, ayat, bayyinah, dalil*” are mostly used in place of the word *mu’jizah*. The word *ayah* refers to a specific omen, a proof or a sign that verifies something. Therefore, *mu’jizah* means a sign, a proof or divine news, or a word that is delivered.<sup>25</sup> Terminologically, miracles are extraordinary events put forth by the messengers of Allah with His permission in order to prove the truthfulness of the messengers, and to challenge the unbelievers. It is not possible for ordinary people to have the ability to set forth extraordinary things like miracles. Miracles occur in order to prove and confirm the prophecy of Allah’s messengers. In order to consider an extraordinary happening a miracle, it should be set forth by someone who is given the mission of prophecy, so if an ordinary person exhibits some marvelous events, these cannot be considered

<sup>25</sup> Komisyon, *İmam Hatip Liseleri Kalam Ders Kitabı*, p. 91.

miracles. Miracles are in fact the acts of Allah, and saying “the miracles of the prophets” is just a metaphorical expression.

Miracles should take place from the prophets, and should be beyond or against the laws of nature. In addition to these conditions, miracles should be put forth in accordance with a specific claim, and occur after a kind of denial or refutation. A miracle should be something that leaves people powerless and in shock. Miracles are so much beyond human capabilities that they are impossible to explain by human intellect.

### LET'S FIND

Learn about the miracles of the prophets by reading the translations of the verses expressed below, and find some examples of miracles belonging to the prophets in the Holy Qur'an.

The Prophet Abraham (pbuh) was thrown into fire by Nimrod, the ruler of Babylon, but the fire did not burn him obeying the command of Allah: *“O Fire! Be thou cool, and a means of safety for Abraham!”*

(Anbiya, 21: 58-69)

The Prophet Moses turned the scepter into a snake (Ta-Ha 20: 17-21); when he placed his hand into his armpit and took it out, it came forth extremely white (Ta-Ha, 20: 22; Naml, 27: 12; Qasas, 28: 32); Moses' scepter swallowed the magicians' ropes and sticks in the presence of Pharaoh (Ta-Ha, 20: 65-70); he split the Red Sea when he hit it with his scepter, then the Children of Israel crossed through the opened path in the sea, then the path closed by the waves of the sea while Pharaoh and his army were passing, and then they were drowned

(Shu'ara, 26: 61-66)

The Prophet Jesus made a bird from clay with Allah's permission, and it came to life and flew when the Prophet Jesus breathed into it; he brought the dead back to life; he healed the blind and the leper (Ma'idah, 5: 110); he brought down a repast from the heaven at the request of his disciples.

(Ma'idah, 5: 114-115).

No prophet can exhibit miracles without receiving help from Allah, which proves their righteousness against disbelievers. In this respect, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that: **“We did send messengers before you, and appointed**

**for them wives and children, and it was never the part of a messenger to bring a sign except as Allah permitted...”<sup>26</sup>**

Allah the Almighty has supported His messengers by miracles, and granted to each prophet some kinds of miracles in accordance with the conditions of the time in which they lived. A miracle bestowed to a particular prophet was not granted to all the prophets, and the Holy Qur’an informs us about some of the miracles that were granted to the messengers before Prophet Muhammad (saw).

The greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad was the Holy Qur’an itself as the source of guidance and mercy. In order to understand the miraculous character of the Qur’an it is enough to know that it was brought by a person who did not receive any education during his lifetime. The Holy Qur’an addresses all sane people of all ages, and it is an excellent and eternal miracle that leaves the human mind in admiration. The miraculous character of the Qur’an will last until the end of the world, although the miracles of other prophets were just witnessed by the people of their time, and their effects ended with time. Prophet Muhammad expressed in one of his sayings that: **“There is no prophet who was not given a miracle so that the people of their time believed. The thing that was given to me as the miracle was nothing but what Allah revealed to me.”<sup>27</sup>** Allah the Almighty stated in the Qur’an that the greatest miracle of His last messenger is the Holy Qur’an itself: **“And yet they say: ‘Why are not miraculous signs sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say: ‘The signs are in the power of God alone, and as for me, I am but a plain warner.’ And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is mercy and a reminder to those who believe.”<sup>28</sup>** The Holy Qur’an is a clear miracle in terms of both the meaning and the text. It was sent down during a period in which Arabic literature was in its heyday, and it challenged Arabs by inviting them to bring something similar to the Qur’an, owing to its wording style, admirable utterance, rhetoric, and clarity in grammar; it made people incapable of responding to this challenge.

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<sup>26</sup> Râd, 13: 38

<sup>27</sup> Bukhari, I’tisam, 1

<sup>28</sup> Ankabut, 29: 50-51

## 5. The Books Sent Down to the Prophets

Beginning with Adam (pbuh), who is the first human being as well as the first prophet, Allah sent down revelations to all the prophets. This is explained in a verse as such: **“Before you, also, the messengers We sent were but men, to whom we granted inspiration. If you realize this not, ask of those [who] possess the message.”**<sup>29</sup> In the Holy Qur’an it is mentioned that Allah the Almighty sent His messages three ways: **“It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah’s permission, what Allah wills, for He is Most High, Most Wise.”**<sup>30</sup>

Allah sent divine books in order to guide people to the right path, to teach them what is good and what is bad, to warn and inform them about His commands and prohibitions. The verse of the Qur’an expresses this feature as follows: **“All mankind were once one single community, then they began to differ, whereupon God raised up the prophets as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, and through them bestowed revelation from on high, setting forth the truth, so that it might decide between people with regard to all on which they had come to hold divergent views...”**<sup>31</sup>

The words that Allah the Almighty revealed to His messengers in order to guide and enlighten His servants, and written form of these words are called “divine book”. The word used in Arabic to denote the meaning of book is *kitab*, and its plural form is *kutub*. Divine books can be called “*al-Kutub al-Munzala*” that means heavenly books, for they were sent down by Allah. The revelation can be divided into two types: *suhuf* (pages) and *kutub* (books).

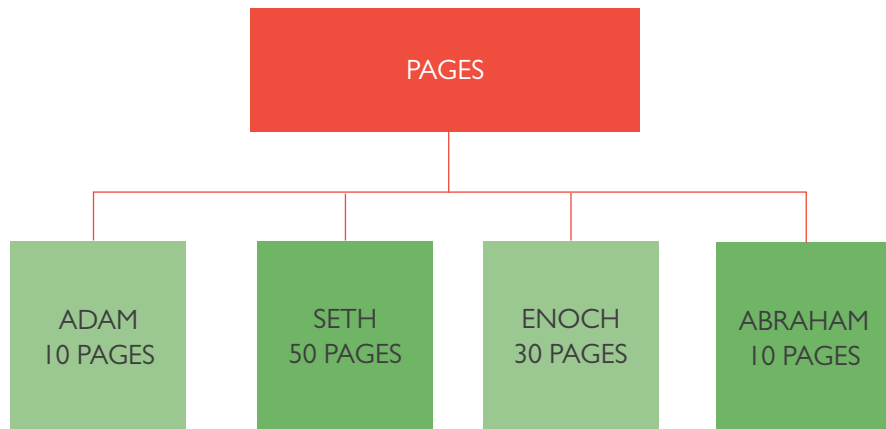
The texts of the revelations sent down before the Qur’an and consisting of just some pages are called *suhuf*, and the texts of revelation in the form of a larger volume are called *kutub*.

No *suhuf* has survived until today; also the Qur’an does not provide detailed information about them. We know that these comprised 100 pages in total and were sent down to the prophets of Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Abraham, peace be upon them.

<sup>29</sup> Anbiya, 21: 7

<sup>30</sup> Shura, 42: 51

<sup>31</sup> Baqarah, 2: 213



The divine books, which are larger in terms of volume compared to *suhuf* and contain universal messages, are the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Qur'an.

### 5.1. The Torah (Al-Tawrat)

Tawrat is a Hebrew word meaning law, creed, or doctrine, and it is the name of the divine book revealed to the Prophet Moses. It is also known by other names like Ahd al-Atiq and Ahd al-Qadim, that means the Old Testament. Jewish people call it "the Torah". According to Jewish beliefs, the Torah is the book that Allah revealed to Moses on the mountain of Sina. It consists of five parts: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Torah was sent to the Children of Israel through the Prophet Moses in the Hebrew language, and today its translations are also available in other languages.

### 5.2. The Psalms (Al-Zabur)

The Zabur, which lexically means the written thing or letter, is the name of the divine book that was revealed to the Prophet David. Regarding that, the Qur'an says: "... We did endow on some prophets more highly than others, just as We bestowed upon David a book of divine wisdom."<sup>32</sup> In terms of volume, the Book of Psalms is the smallest among the divine books, and it did not bring a new religious law. The Zabur, which is considered a part of the Torah under the title of the Psalms, comprises lyrical utterances and chants, praises to God and words of wisdom, and some advice. Psalm is the name

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Allah the Almighty bestowed on the Prophet David such a beautiful voice that when he recited from the Zabur, people and animals would gather around him and listen to him. And everyone who listened to his recitation of the Zabur admired it.

(Saba, 34: 10; Sad, 38: 17-20)

<sup>32</sup> Isra, 17: 55

given to each part of the Zabur, and there are a total of 150 psalms in the Zabur.

### 5.3. The Gospel (Al-Injil)

#### INFORMATION BOX

Christians accept the Old Testament as their Holy Book, which includes not only the Gospels but also the Torah, the Psalms, and whatever was revealed to the prophets between Moses and Jesus. The Bible includes 66 books in total.

Injil literally means glad tidings, education, or an instructive thing. It was sent down to the Children of Israel through the Prophet Jesus, and this is expressed in the Holy Qur'an with the following words: **“And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him. We sent him the Gospel, therein was guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.”**<sup>33</sup> The Gospel is also known by the name of Ahd al-Jadid, which means the New Testament. The oldest copy of the Gospel that has survived until our times is in Greek. Today, there are four books considered to be the Gospel by most Christians, and these are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Religious rules have often been emphasized in the Torah, while the Gospels give priority to moral aspects of these rules. The life of Jesus, his struggle in inviting people to believe in God, moral values like righteousness, love, and humility are the main subjects of the Gospels. Additionally, it encourages people to love each other and emphasizes the essence of the divine commands.

### 5.4. The Qur'an

The word Qur'an literally means to collect, to read, and to bring together. Terminologically, it is defined as the divine book that was sent down by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Jibreel and reached us in its original form even without any changes. Simply reading the Holy Qur'an is considered an act of worship. It is not possible to bring forth something similar to the Qur'an. In the second verse of the Surah Yusuf in the Holy Qur'an, Allah says: **“We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may learn wisdom.”** However, because not everybody knows Arabic, the

#### LET'S SHARE

Think about why the Holy Qur'an is also named Kitab (Book), Furqan (The Criterion), Dhikr (remembrance), Nur (light), and then share your opinions with your friends.

<sup>33</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 46



Qur'an has been translated into different languages. Moreover, there are many commentaries on the Qur'an in many languages today. The Holy Qur'an has some other names like "Al-Kitab, Al-Furqan, Al-Dhikr, Al-Nour." The Prophet Muhammad is Allah's last messenger, and the Holy Qur'an is the last divine book. In other words, there will be no holy scripture sent by Allah after the Qur'an until the Day of Resurrection.

The Holy Qur'an started to be revealed in Laylat al-Qadr in the month of Ramadan in 610. The process of revelation of the Qur'an lasted for about 23 years. The Prophet memorized all the verses as soon as they were revealed to him, then he dictated these verses to his scribes of revelation. The scribes of revelation then wrote the verses down on some writing materials available at that time, and all these written materials were carefully protected. Therefore, the process of the revelation and recording of the Holy Qur'an was completed in 632, just before the death of Prophet Muhammad (saw).

After the Prophet passed away, the pages of the Qur'an were collected and compiled together in the form of a book by efforts of the first caliph Abu Bakr. During the reign of Uthman, the copy was reproduced based on the original form, and then each of these copies was sent to the urban cities of the Muslim world at that time.

Each of the chapters of the Qur'an is called a *surah* and sentences within the chapters are called *ayah* (verse). The Holy Qur'an was revealed verse by verse or chapter by chapter, not all at once, since some of the verses were revealed after a specific event in order to inform about that event. This way, it was ensured that Muslims could understand the Qur'an better and embrace it wholeheartedly.

The most dominant subjects of the Qur'an are Allah, nature, human beings, life in this world and life after death, and prophecy. In addition to these, it is often emphasized in the Qur'an that there will be no divine message from Allah after the Qur'an, and human beings should live their lives in accordance with the Qur'an until the Day of Judgment. Muslims' knowledge about the previous divine scriptures comes from reports in the Qur'an.

## READING PASSAGE

We can summarize the general features of the Holy Qur'an as follows:

- 1) The Holy Qur'an was sent down to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Jibreel. It originally came from Allah in terms of both its meaning and wording. Neither the sayings of the Prophet nor the words of others are mixed with it. The Qur'an is the Word of Allah.
- 2) Each one of the verses and the chapters, as soon as they were revealed, was recorded word by word by the scribes of revelation under the control of the Prophet himself. Furthermore, the whole Qur'an was memorized by hundreds of the companions of the Prophet.
- 3) The Qur'an was protected and transmitted from generation to generation, without any change, from the Prophet Muhammad to us. The copy of the Qur'an that is in our hands today is identical to the Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by means of Jibreel, and was dictated to the scribes of revelation by the Prophet. All copies of the Qur'an are the same, and the protection of the Qur'an is ensured by Allah the Almighty Himself as He declares in the 9th verse of the Surah al-Hijr: "We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."
- 4) The Qur'an is a miracle in terms of both meaning and word. It is far beyond the power of human rhetoric due to its clarity, eloquence, and terseness. Concerning this, the Qur'an challenges the whole of humanity in the 38th verse of Surah Yunus: "(Oh Muhammad!) Or do they say, 'He forged it?' Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides Allah, if it be you speak the truth!'"  
No poets or men of literature have been able to produce something similar to the Qur'an. It is also a miracle in meaning; there is nothing in it that contradicts the laws and truths whose accuracy has been proven by science, experiences, and human intellect. Moreover, developments in science and techniques enable us to understand the Qur'an better.
- 5) The Qur'an is the last divine message of Allah, so there will not be any other scripture revealed by Allah after it. The Qur'an addresses itself to all humanity, and the rulings that it covers are general. It is not a book sent for a particular race or nation, or for a specific region or period of time, but rather it is the sacred book of the whole universe and the whole humanity. Believers are confronted with the responsibility of understanding the Qur'an in a way that they can solve the troubles of the whole of humanity.
- 6) The Qur'an is a book whose recitation is considered an act of worship, so understanding the Qur'an while reading it is much more important and rewarding than just reciting it in Allah's presence. Allah the Almighty has expressed in the 2nd verse of Surah Yusuf that the Qur'an was sent down in Arabic in order that people could understand it. In its every chapter or verse, the Qur'an has the same purpose, gives the same advice, shows the same way, and carries the same spirit. The Qur'an is the divine book that calls humanity to good, to truth, and to justice.
- 7) The Qur'an is the book that came to all humanity in order to show the inner side of human beings, things, events, and phenomena, as well as to protect people from any kind of being conditioned.

(Komisyon, *Kelam Ders Kitabı*, p.83-84)

## 6. The Prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad

### 6.1. His Message

The Prophet Muhammad started to change the society in which he lived by the light of the revelation that he received from Allah. He altered the direction of humanity by the universal rules that he brought. He invited all people to the religion without making any distinction between slaves and free ones.

During the 23-year period of his prophethood, he conveyed the messages of Allah about the belief in the oneness of Him, the Day of Resurrection, and about the moral responsibilities of people toward each other and society. In this context, Prophet Muhammad took “the reverence to Allah” as the only criterion for the superiority among people. He treated people in accordance with the Qur’anic doctrines throughout his entire life.

During the Meccan period, Muslims tried to purify their hearts from all signs of paganism. The verses revealed during the Period of Mecca were mostly related to the meaning of life, and those verses invite people to worship, justice, honesty and helpfulness. The verses revealed during the Madinan period aimed at the construction of a new society and culture.

In the farewell sermon of the Prophet, the principles that Muslims should pay attention to in order to follow the straight path were touched on, and several significant issues were put into words by the Prophet. It also emphasized that as long as Muslims follow an understanding of religion based on the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet, they would be able to reach the ultimate happiness both in this world and the hereafter.

#### LET’S INTERPRET

In the farewell sermon, Prophet Muhammad drew attention to the following highly important matters in both individual and social life:

1. Life, property, and honor of individuals should be protected from all types of violation.
2. Nobody has the privilege to harm others.
3. All believers are brothers.
4. Debts should be paid back and nothing should be added to them (as interest) other than the capital of the debt.
5. Blood feuds and seeking personal justice are banned.

6. Women are companions of men in life. It was ordered that women should be treated fairly and proclaimed that women have the right to possess property and personal savings just as men do.
7. All human beings, no matter what the color of their skin is and from which race they are coming, are equal.
8. Deeds that can harm family and social life, like adultery, are forbidden.
9. The Holy Qur'an has been entrusted to people; therefore it is advised that people should firmly hold on to it.
10. Calculation of the days, months, and years which was a reason of dispute among the Arabs in the age of ignorance was clarified. Regarding some months as permitted ones and some others as forbidden and changing their order are prohibited. One year consists of 12 months. It is also pointed out that Mecca and its environment are sacred places.
11. The things entrusted should be returned to their owners.

Interpret the matters expressed above in terms of universal messages given by the Prophet.

Unlike the previous prophets, Prophet Muhammad was not sent only to a particular community, or to a specific period of time, but was sent to the entire humanity. The messages of the divine religion that he brought are universal. Therefore Islam as a universal religion demands from believers to have universal values and to think universally. In this respect, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: **“We have not sent you but a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin)...”**<sup>34</sup>

Islam is a religion that brings people in morally high and universal values, which makes them human beings in the real sense. In this context, the only example for us is our beloved Prophet, who was sent as a mercy to the universe. While he was warning people through the revelation that he received from Allah, he also lived in accordance with the rules of Islam and tried to be a role model for everyone.

## 6.2. His Exemplary Character

While the Prophet was conveying the divine message to people, he put forth an exemplary lifestyle to demonstrate the message of Islam better. He set an example for believers in the context of understanding Islam in a right way. The Prophet, who is a beneficence and a mercy for humanity and who is announced

<sup>34</sup> Saba, 34: 28; Ahzab, 33: 40

in the Holy Qur'an as "the one having superior morality"<sup>35</sup>, is an outstanding person carrying virtues and values that make us human. The idea of a perfect human being that Islam suggests took shape in his life. In the Holy Qur'an it is mentioned that:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

**“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”**<sup>36</sup> and so his lifestyle is presented to us as “the most beautiful pattern to live.” However, understanding his exemplary lifestyle and values represented by him deeply necessitates exerting a conscious effort. We should understand all values that he represented and shape our lives in the light of those values instead of degrading the Prophet’s model life and his tradition to specific areas of life and to specific courses of action. This does not mean that we should go back and dive into history but rather use his morality and teachings as basic sources of our actions and behaviors by updating his call for the happiness and peace of the whole humanity. His tradition possesses such a characteristic that can light the path going to the happiness and salvation not only of Muslims but of all humanity.

The source of Prophet Muhammad’s good morality was the Holy Qur’an as it is expressed by the wife of the Prophet, Aisha, saying that: “Do you not read the Qur’an ever? His morality is the morality of the Qur’an.”<sup>37</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad attracted people’s attention owing to his high morality during the period of prophethood as well as before receiving the mission of prophecy. He stated that he was sent as being complementary of good conduct. The main target of Islam is to constitute morally good societies formed by individuals who have moral values. Through his ideas, lifestyle, and behaviors, the Prophet Muhammad proved that he was an example for humanity.

<sup>35</sup> Qalam, 68: 4

<sup>36</sup> Ahzab, 33: 21

<sup>37</sup> Muslim, Musafirin, 139

**LET'S TALK****Exemplary Character of the Prophet Muhammad**

The Prophet was a pure-minded, compassionate, merciful, hardworking, diligent, helpful, generous, patient, fair, tidy, upright, modest, and faithful person. He would avoid mischief, rudeness, maliciousness, prejudice, tale bearing, laziness, cruelty, lying, extravagance, arrogance, and boastfulness. He would respect all people and sincerely help them. He had a deep sense of responsibility and a superior sense of duty. He was an organized and measured person as well as being rigorous and careful. He supported sharing, greetings, peace, and solidarity. He tried to prevent disorder, controversies, and fights among brothers. He was genial to the extent that people never hesitated to speak with him whenever they were with him; on the contrary, they would feel comfortable while talking to him. He was fair and devoted both in his individual relationships and public service. He hated cruelty and injustice. Patience and gratefulness were among his most prominent attributes. To be a good servant of Allah, he always performed his worship, prayers, remembrance – in short, all religious requirements – with sincerity. He reserved time to rest, to be with family members, to do house work and public service in addition to the time that he dedicated to performing worship. In other words, he carried on his duties and services in complete balance. He delivered rights to their owners in full; it was impossible to see any injustices committed when he was present. He never intentionally disgruntled people and broke their hearts; when he did so unintentionally, he immediately apologized and made amends. He was not in favor of revenge, but of winning people's hearts all the time. He never cursed anyone because he was the prophet of forgiveness and mercy. He showed complete tolerance towards others. When bravery was needed, he was very courageous, daring, and active. He was open to all kinds of licit innovations and attached importance to consultation and learning about others' views with regards to crucial matters.

(Hüseyin Algül, *İslam'a Giriş Gençliğin İslam Bilgisi*, p.176)

Talk about the effects of the exemplary character of the Prophet Muhammad on conveying the message of Islam to people.

**6.3. His Being the Last Prophet**

Allah the Almighty has sent His beloved Prophet who demonstrated high morals<sup>38</sup> and an exemplary lifestyle<sup>39</sup> as a mercy for all the worlds<sup>40</sup> to the whole of humanity<sup>41</sup>. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad expressed this saying: "...Each one of the prophets that came before me had been sent to just their own peoples;

<sup>38</sup> Qalam, 68: 4

<sup>39</sup> Ahzab, 33: 21

<sup>40</sup> Anbiya, 21: 107

<sup>41</sup> Saba, 34: 28

but I have been sent to all mankind as a messenger.”<sup>42</sup> Hereby, the responsibility of the messages the Prophet Muhammad brought comprises all people.

By sending Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet, Allah the Almighty has put a seal on the chain of the prophets that began with the Prophet Adam. Therefore there will be no prophet sent by God anymore until doomsday. Hence, the Prophet Muhammad has taken the title of *khatam al-anbiya* meaning “the seal of the prophets”. In the Holy Qur’an, this attribute of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned as follows: **“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing.”**<sup>43</sup> The Prophet Muhammad said that: “I am the last of the prophets;<sup>44</sup> there will be no prophet after me.”<sup>45</sup> In another hadith he expressed that: “... I have been sent to all people. Prophethood ends with me.”<sup>46</sup>

Prophet Muhammad’s being the last prophet results in some important responsibilities to Muslims. First and foremost, every Muslim has to take over the mission of delivering the message of Islam (*tabligh*), which the Prophet fulfilled. Thus, they should know and understand Islam in accordance with the revelation.<sup>47</sup>

### LET’S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Why were prophets sent to the people?
2. What are the general attributes of the prophets?
3. What are the reasons for sending divine books? Explain.
4. What does *suhuf* mean? To which prophets were *suhuf* revealed and how many pages did they consist of?
5. To which prophets were four divine books revealed? List them.
6. What are the most prominent characteristics of the Holy Qur’an that make it different from other divine books? Explain.
7. Why were prophets chosen from among the people? Explain the reasons.

<sup>42</sup> Bukhari, *Tayammum*, 1; *Salat*, 56; Muslim, *Masajid*, 3

<sup>43</sup> *Ahzab*, 33: 40

<sup>44</sup> Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 18; Muslim, *Fadhail*, 23

<sup>45</sup> Tirmidhi, *Fitan*, 43

<sup>46</sup> Muslim, *Masajid*, 5

<sup>47</sup> Komisyon, *Imam Hatip Liseleri Kalam Ders Kitabı*, p. 99

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following choices *cannot* be a reason for the prophets to be sent?

- A) Inviting people to the religion of Allah.
- B) Demonstrating to people how to worship Allah.
- C) Maintaining old beliefs, traditions and customs.
- D) Being a role model for people in terms of morality.
- E) Announcing which responsibilities people have.

2. Which attribute of the prophets is stated by the expression “Prophets are clever and wise”?

- A) Sidq
- B) Amanah
- C) Fatanah
- D) Ismah
- E) Tabligh

3. Which one of the choices expresses the prophets to whom the four divine books were sent taking the order into account starting from the earliest prophet to the last prophet?

- A) Moses, Jesus, David, Muhammad.
- B) Jesus, David, Moses, Muhammad.
- C) Moses, David, Jesus, Muhammad.
- D) Muhammad, Jesus, David, Moses.
- E) Muhammad, Moses, Jesus, David.

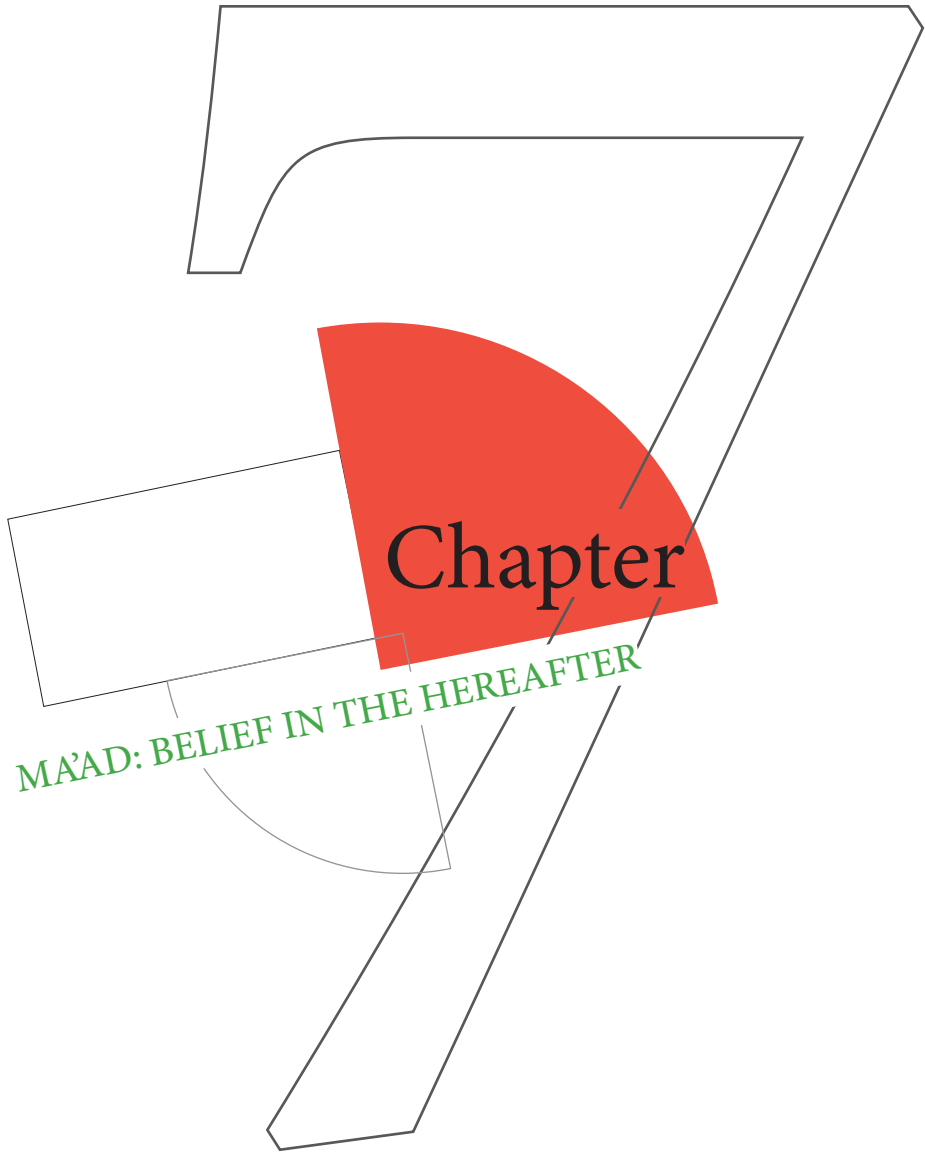
C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(wahy, kitab, rasul, the Holy Qur’an, hadith)

1. The messenger who fulfills the task of prophethood is called .....
2. God’s reporting His messages to the prophets secretly, in a special way, and in succession in order that they convey them to people is called .....
3. God’s revelation to His prophets in order to guide and enlighten His servants, and its written form is called .....
4. The greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad is.....







# Chapter

MA'AD: BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER



## MA'AD: BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Research the topic pointed out in the 155th verse of Surah Al-Mu'minun from the books of exegesis.
2. How does people's belief that they will definitely be judged on their behavior in this worldly life influence their behavior? Reflect.
3. Find some proverbs regarding the issue that evil and good will not go unacknowledged and write them in your notebook.
4. Research the meanings of the terms "*ba's*, *mahshar*, *mizan*."
5. Find verses that mention paradise and hell by reading a translation of the Qur'an. Then write them in your notebook.

### 1. Life has a Purpose

#### LET'S THINK

It is clear that a pen is designed to write with and a book is written to be read. Compatibility of a key with a door lock shows that the key is produced in order to open that door.

The fact that necessary conditions for the emergence of life have been brought together only in our world demonstrates that life is the consequence of a conscious design.

**Is it possible, then, to think that life is without a purpose?**

Can we imagine that a huge mosque or a great palace are constructed without a purpose? Of course not, because, if there is an intellectual design in a place it means that there should certainly be a purpose to it. Therefore, by means of

their equipment and architectural features, it can be clearly understood that a mosque is built for worship and a palace is built for living in.

Our knowledge of the universe shows that everything, from atoms and cells to the huge galaxies, is created in accordance with a plan and so creation cannot be purposeless and in vain. For instance, the balance of the ratio of gases in the atmosphere, the sensitive calculations on the inclination of the earth's axis that causes the seasons, and countless examples similar to these, clearly prove that there is an aim of creation in all of these. The aim is life itself, and the earth among planets has been chosen as an appropriate place for this purpose, and the balance of the universe has been arranged in order to serve that purpose. This fact is pointed out in a verse as follows: وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ” that means **“And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play.”**<sup>1</sup>

If everything in the universe has been arranged so as to serve life, what is the meaning and the purpose of life? This is the essential question that people need to answer. Allah the Almighty directs people to contemplate the purpose of life by saying: **“Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?”**<sup>2</sup>

The word “life (*hayat*)” has been used in the Holy Qur’an to express both the life in this world and life after death. Allah the Almighty says: **“How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned.”**<sup>3</sup> According to this verse, through death only worldly life ends and by Allah’s re-creation, a new life begins for people. The Holy Qur’an rejects the belief that ignores life after death and that claims: **“... There is none but our worldly life, and we will not be resurrected.”**<sup>4</sup>

According to the Qur’an, the most significant feature of this life is its being a place of trial for humans, which is explained in the following verse: **“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.”**<sup>5</sup> In Islamic understanding this life is just a field for human endeavor and people’s deeds are the harvest in life after death. Then, people will be rewarded or punished in the hereafter in return for their actions in their worldly life.

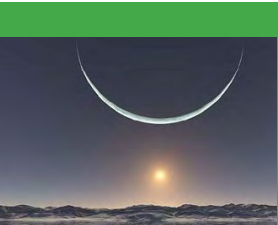
<sup>1</sup> Dukhan, 44: 38

<sup>2</sup> Mu’minun, 23: 115

<sup>3</sup> Baqarah, 2: 28

<sup>4</sup> An’am, 6: 29

<sup>5</sup> Mulk, 67: 2



The fact that necessary conditions for life have been brought together only in our world demonstrates that life is the consequence of a conscious design.

The purpose of this life is to create human awareness of the creator and awareness that they are the servants of God. The following verse emphasizes this matter as follows: **“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”**<sup>6</sup> Here the word “worship” means to know Allah and to live in awareness of His satisfaction. One’s knowing Allah refers to knowing the source and the purpose of one’s life. A person should live his or her life in accordance with the purpose of creation. In this context, not only acts such as prayer and fasting, but also behavior like working, serving humanity, supporting what is right and objecting to what is wrong, can be considered worship. Thus, people have the chance to turn their entire lives into a kind of worship by means of their good and beneficial behavior.

#### LET’S INTERPRET

Comment on the verses below in the context of the purpose of life in this world.

*“Say, ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision.’ Say, ‘They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.’ Thus do We detail the verses for a people who know?”*

(A’raf 7: 32)

The ultimate purpose of worldly life should be to gain eternal happiness in the hereafter, because life in this world is temporal as is expressed in the Qur’an in the following verse: **“And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter – that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew.”**<sup>7</sup> The above verse points to the importance of people determining the true aims in their life and providing a good balance between this world and the hereafter because people will be disappointed if they live unheeding of the eternal life that awaits them in the hereafter. This deception means the failure of the test in this world, the Qur’an warns people about it as follows: **“O mankind, indeed the promise of Allah is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allah by the Deceiver [i.e. Satan].”**<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Dhariyat, 51: 56

<sup>7</sup> Ankabut, 29: 64

<sup>8</sup> Fatir, 35: 5

## LET'S INTERPRET

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”

(Qasas, 28: 77)

Interpret the above verse in the context of belief in the hereafter.

The world is a testing place where a good life after death can be earned. It is also a place in which material and spiritual blessings as well as hardships and troubles are found. This is why people are asked to be patient in their difficulties in this world and be thankful for its blessings. Therefore, humans should stand up to life's challenges, object to injustice, and resist the evil desires of their souls, and should appreciate life with all its beauty and be thankful to God for the countless blessings He has created for His servants. However, thankfulness necessitates being aware of the limits that God lays down while rejoicing in these blessings. Concerning this, Allah the Almighty has said that: **“O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”**<sup>9</sup>

In conclusion, despite the fact that worldly life is not permanent, it gives humans the opportunity to attain eternal life in the hereafter. Hence, people should assess their worldly life as best they can, and carry on their lives honestly and in accordance with true belief. They should have virtues such as knowledge, love, respect and justice, and at the same time, they should distance themselves from all kinds of wrong behavior, and from creating mischief in this world. The thing that would bring human beings ultimate happiness in this world and the hereafter is maintaining a sense of responsibility toward God. Allah the Almighty has said that: **“O you who have believed, fear Allah; and let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow – and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do. And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”**<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 87

<sup>10</sup> Hashr, 59: 18-19

## 2. Death is a Fact of Life

### LET'S INTERPRET

#### EVERYTHING ENDS

The toy remains stuck in a place,  
 All fiction ends.  
 Death... What does scare you when it comes?  
 All fear ends.  
 The thought doesn't dig its wells in the mind anymore;  
 All drilling ends.  
 Then we forget the sleep named life,  
 All sleep ends.  
 It ends, everything ends; sounds, shapes, and colors  
 All smells end.  
 The door will be closed by the query in the grave,  
 All queries end.  
 (Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Çile*, p. 128)

Interpret the poem above in terms of death being a fact of life.

In the Holy Qur'an, it is emphasized that death is a fact of life and escaping from this fact is impossible. This has been pointed out in some verses as follows: **"Every soul will taste death..."**<sup>11</sup> and in another verse: **"Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you should be within towers of lofty construction."**<sup>12</sup>

Death is something that most people feel afraid of and never wish to encounter even though it is an inevitable fact of life. This is expressed in the following verse: **"And the intoxication of death will bring the truth; that is what you were trying to avoid."**<sup>13</sup> Two basic reasons make people afraid of death: first, the fear of eternal extinction by death, and second, worrying about losing the things that they have and love. These two matters have a major impact on human life. When people come across hardship and troubles, it is easier for those who consider there will be no life other than this one, to find life meaningless and to become pessimistic. This is one of the most important underlying causes of depression.<sup>14</sup>

People who do not believe in the hereafter have different ideas about the

<sup>11</sup> Anbiya, 21: 35

<sup>12</sup> Nisa, 4: 78

<sup>13</sup> Qaf, 50: 19

<sup>14</sup> Necati Öner, *Stres ve Dini İnanç*, p.33



meaning of life in respect to death. Some of them embrace a lifestyle that excludes worldly affairs and all responsibilities, claiming that life is meaningless when there is death in the end. However, for some, thinking about death is useless and meaningless and so it is necessary to live as though death does not exist. This second group claims that: “There is no death for us while we are living, and when we die we will not exist anymore, therefore, thinking about death is meaningless.”<sup>15</sup> Both of these approaches are not realistic or correct in the context of giving meaning to human life, because, in both cases, death does not refer to anything other than eternal nonexistence for humans. Therefore, thinking constantly about death weakens people’s joy of life who do not believe in the hereafter, and distances them from life. Likewise, it is impossible to live while assuming that there is no death in a world in which people often encounter the reality of death. The only thing that saves people from fear of death and correctly connects them to life is belief in the hereafter, because people who believe in it already accept that death does not mean nonexistence. On the contrary, they could believe that death is the beginning of a new and eternal life. Furthermore, this new life is bestowed with limitless blessings for those who believe and perform good deeds. Therefore, one’s only purpose should be trying to attain eternal life by living one’s life in the best way.

Prophet Muhammad advises us not to forget that death is an inevitable part of life and to prepare ourselves for this fact by fulfilling good deeds for the sake of God. When he was asked, “Who is the most intelligent and mature among people?” he replied: “The one who often contemplates death and prepares himself for it. These people are the intelligent ones.”<sup>16</sup>

Death can be compared to a teacher who gives lessons without using their voice and words. That teacher gives a vital message for those who think. Sometimes, these messages can be so effective that they wake the person up from heedlessness and confront him or her with the truth, liberate that person from the bondage of his unbridled ambitions and bad behavior. The Prophet emphasizes the positive effects of death on our lives and says, “I have left you things that advise you. One of them stays silent, and the other one speaks. The silent one is death and the speaking one is the Holy Qur’an.”<sup>17</sup> “Remember death much for it removes all worldly obsessions all at once.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Necati Öner, *Stres ve Dini İnanç*, p.18

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Majah, *Zuhd*, 31

<sup>17</sup> Fada'il Al-'Amal, p. 383

<sup>18</sup> Tirmidhi, *Zuhd*, 4; Nasai, *Janaiz*, 3

**MAWLANA JALALADDIN RUMI SAYS:**

“When you see my coffin on shoulders when I die, never think I have worried about this world... Don’t cry for me, don’t say woe or what a pity. If you fall into the trap of the devil, then it is time to say woe, time to say what a pity. When you see my funeral, don’t call this as separation. Yet, it is time to meet, time to get together. When I’m put into the grave don’t say goodbye, because the grave leads to the doors of paradise. As you saw how to set, watch how to rise too. How can setting harm the sun and the moon?... You think it sets, but it is preparation for rising. And the grave looks like a prison, but actually it is liberation from the prison...”

“Know that I’m resurrected... I was a tear, but became a smile... I dived into the sea of love; eventually I reached the eternal blessing. Which seed didn’t germinate when it is sowed in the earth?... Then why do you think human seed doesn’t germinate? Which bucket came back empty when it was thrown into water? Why should beloved Joseph cry when he fell into the well?... If it is you who takes my life, death comes to me pleasantly like candy. If I will be with you, death is more pleasant than life.”

(Divan-ı Kebir’den Seçmeler, Compiled by Şefik Can, vol. 2, couplet: 911; vol. 3, couplet: 1393)

Imam Ghazali divided people into four categories in accordance with their understanding of death. The first group consists of people who dive into worldly pleasures, forget the transience of this world, and think that life means just amusement and expediency. These people never wish to remember death because it demoralizes them. The second group consists of people who are aware of their mistakes and try to be a good servant by repenting. Likewise, death is something undesirable for them, too, since they feel afraid of dying because of their sins. These people actually believe in returning to God, but they wish to delay death in order to be worthy of the good rewards in the hereafter. The third group includes those who know God and are full of His love. For them, death refers to meeting with the beloved; therefore, it is not frightening. As for the fourth group, it comprises people who have wisdom. Whatever God approves, it is incontestably the best for them, whatever God wishes, and it deserves to be loved most.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ghazali, *Ihya*, trans. by Ahmet Serdaroglu, vol. 4, p. 804-806

### 3. Resurrection after Death (Ba's, Hashr, and Mahshar)

The word *ba's* literally means to actuate, to wake up, and to resurrect someone. In Islamic terminology, it refers to Allah's reviving of the dead on the Day of Judgment in order to start a new life in the hereafter and bringing people back to life from their graves.

Belief in the hereafter is one of the basic Islamic pillars. The second most predominant subject of the Qur'an, after belief in the unity of Allah, is belief in the hereafter. Several verses from the Qur'an inform about the *ba's* as the initial phase of life after death. Beside the term *ba's*, other expressions have been mentioned in the Qur'an such as "yawm al-ba's"<sup>20</sup>, which means the day of resurrection, "yawm al-khuruj"<sup>21</sup>, which means the day of leaving the earth, and "yawm al-hasra"<sup>22</sup>, which refers to the day of remorse.

The Qur'an explains the stages of life in the hereafter in detail. The transitional phase from worldly life to the hereafter is the Day of Resurrection. The Qur'an makes striking statements about how the resurrection will happen.<sup>23</sup> According to these statements, the resurrection will begin when the Trumpet is blown. After that, the order of the universe will be totally destroyed and life will come to an end.<sup>24</sup> Following the second blowing of the Trumpet, the *ba's* will take place. Allah the Almighty will resurrect people, taking them from their graves just as He causes plants to germinate from under the soil,<sup>25</sup> and people will come into the presence of their Lord<sup>26</sup> by rushing in the same direction.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Rum, 30: 56

<sup>21</sup> Qaf, 50: 42

<sup>22</sup> Maryam, 19:39

<sup>23</sup> Qiyamah, 75: 6-15; Infitar, 82: 1-5; Zalzalah, 99: 1-8

<sup>24</sup> Zumar, 39: 68

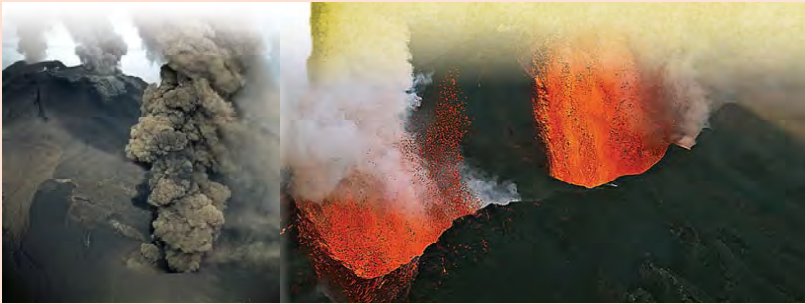
<sup>25</sup> Nuh, 71: 17-18

<sup>26</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 51

<sup>27</sup> Ma'arij, 70: 43

### SCENES IN THE QUR'AN ABOUT THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake,  
 And the earth discharges its burdens,  
 And man says, "What is [wrong] with it?"  
 That Day, it will report its news,  
 Because your Lord has commanded it.  
 That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds.  
 So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it,  
 And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.  
 (Zalzalah, 99: 1-8)



For human beings, life after death is *ghayb*, and so people cannot imagine it. Human knowledge about this unseen realm consists of only what Allah has reported. Therefore, the Qur'an affirms that resurrection after death is realistic and reasonable, although it is seen as something astonishing for humans, so they need to be convinced about it. For instance, it is mentioned in the Qur'an that: **"And [mention] when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.' [Allah] said, 'Have you not believed?' He said, 'Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied.' [Allah] said, 'Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them – they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.'"**<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Baqarah, 2: 260

## LET'S INTERPRET

“O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed – that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind.”

(Hajj, 22: 5)

Think about the verse above and speak about it in class.

The Qur'an addresses humans while informing them about life after death. Therefore, it uses the language of logic that is understood by almost everyone. It helps people to comprehend the resurrection by directing humans to contemplate some experiences in their lifetime. For instance, the Holy Qur'an gives the example of the one who says **“Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?”**<sup>29</sup> and replies to him by saying that: **“Does man not consider that We created him from a [mere] sperm-drop – then at once he is a clear adversary? And he presents for Us an example and forgets his [own] creation. He says, ‘Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?’ Say, ‘He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, Knowing.”**<sup>30</sup> The main logic we recognize in this verse is that doing a job for the second time is easier than doing it for the first time. In other words, it is illogical to think that the one who performs a task for the first time cannot do the same thing the second time. Therefore, the first creation of a human in the womb of that person's mother is the proof of the second creation after death.

In another verse, Allah the Almighty presents the example of His reviving the earth with rain, which had been arid and infertile before, and He wishes people to make an analogy between that example and resurrection after death. Yet, the human mind can easily grasp that the one who takes the life of something, and brings it to life again is able to kill another and revive it again. Concerning this, Allah the Almighty says that: **“And of His signs is that you see the earth**

<sup>29</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 78

<sup>30</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 77-79

stilled, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and grows. Indeed, He who has given it life is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”<sup>31</sup>

The Qur’an presents evidence for the resurrection by giving the example of creating fire from green trees. Water and fire are opposites, while we cannot say the same thing for human beings and the soil. Therefore, in making comparisons with fire and water, it is easier for the human body to revert back to its former state, which was created from the soil and returns to the soil. In a verse, this event is explained as follows: “[It is] He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then from it you ignite. Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator. His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”<sup>32</sup>

Another proof that the Holy Qur’an brings for resurrection after death is that it is unreasonable to think that someone who has the ability to manage a very difficult job is not able to carry out another task, which is simpler and smaller than the previous one. For this reason, it would be much easier for Allah the Almighty to create humans for the second time after death than creating the earth and the heavens, including all beings, out of nothing. In this regard, Allah the Almighty says in the Qur’an that: “The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of the people do not know.”<sup>33</sup>



*“Do they not see that Allah, who created the heavens and earth and did not fail in their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”*

(Ahqaf, 46: 33)

<sup>31</sup> Fussilat, 41: 39

<sup>32</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 80-82

<sup>33</sup> Ghafir, 40: 57

In this worldly life, we see that justice has not been provided in many cases and many people have left this world before they can give an account of the bad deeds that they have done. The cruel cannot be totally distinguished from the innocent in this world; the good cannot be distinguished from the evil in the real sense, so life in this world ends before establishing total justice. This situation necessitates the existence of a new life in which everybody receives what he or she deserves and gives an account of what he or she committed. This is a requirement of the justice and the wisdom of Allah the Almighty. It is unthinkable that Allah would deprive humans, whom He has created as the most outstanding and eminent beings among others, of His absolute justice because He, the Supreme Creator, has created everything in the universe in accordance with a particular purpose through His justice and wisdom. In this respect, Allah says that: **“And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror].”**<sup>34</sup> In another verse it is expressed that: **“So by your Lord, We will surely question them all, about what they used to do.”**<sup>35</sup>

### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the verse below in the light of Imam Ghazali's explanation.

*“And they say, ‘There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.’ And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”*

(Jathiyah, 45: 24)

Ghazali says that doubts regarding the resurrection after death come from the fact that similar incidents witnessed in this world are not well understood. For instance, one who has no knowledge concerning the reproduction of organisms and the formation of fetuses cannot easily accept when told that humans, as the most eminent being, were created from a kind of simple fluid called semen. Now then, if the extraordinary structure of this universe is taken into consideration, the reality of resurrection after death can be easily understood.

(Ghazali, *Ihya*, vol. 4, p. 511)

The stage after the *ba's* is called *hashr*, which lexically means to gather a group in a place by taking them from where they have been. Terminologically, it refers to gathering the resurrected people in the presence of Allah on the Day of Judgment in order for them to be questioned. Therefore, *hashr* is

<sup>34</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 42

<sup>35</sup> Hijr, 15: 92-93

the following phase of the *ba's* in the hereafter. The place where people will gather is called *mahshar*. The terms *mawqif* and *arasat* can also be used as its synonyms. In several verses of the Holy Qur'an *hashr* in the hereafter has been depicted. According to these verses, the earth will split; people will leave their graves and come into the presence of their Lord in flocks. This is mentioned in a verse as follows: **“And the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten.”**<sup>36</sup>

On the day of *mahshar*, people will be in different states in accordance with their beliefs and deeds. These states are described strikingly in the Holy Qur'an. For instance, Allah the Almighty has expressed in a verse that: **“On the Day We will gather the righteous to the Most Merciful as a delegation, and will drive the criminals to Hell in thirst. None will have [power of] intercession except he who had taken from the Most Merciful a covenant.”**<sup>37</sup> In another verse it is stated that: **“And We will gather them on the Day of Resurrection [fallen] on their faces - blind, dumb, and deaf.”**<sup>38</sup>

### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the verses and sayings of the Prophet given below, which depict the day of *mahshar*.

“But when there comes the Deafening Blast, on the Day a man will flee from his brother, and his mother and his father, and his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him. [Some] faces, that Day, will be bright – laughing, rejoicing at good news. And [other] faces, that Day, will have upon them dust. Blackness will cover them. Those are the disbelievers, the wicked ones.”

(Abasa, 80: 33-42)

The Prophet Muhammad said that:

“Allah will host seven classes of people under the shadow of His Throne on the Day of Resurrection in which there will be no other shadow. These people are those: The governor who is fair; the young who has a pure life worshipping only his Lord; the Muslim who used to love going to mosques; the two who love each other for the sake of Allah, who come together and separate for the sake of Allah only; the one who rejects being together unlawfully with a woman when she offered this even if she is very beautiful and has a good position, and stays away from her by saying ‘Indeed, I have the fear of Allah.’ The one who gives alms secretly that even his left hand doesn't know what his right hand gives; and the one who remembers Allah and weeps when he is alone.”

(Bukhari, Adhan, 36; Muslim, Zakat, 91)

<sup>36</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 51

<sup>37</sup> Maryam, 19: 85-87

<sup>38</sup> Isra, 17: 97



#### 4. The Questioning of People (Hisab, Sual, and Mizan)

Allah holds people responsible for what they say and for their behavior because human beings are endowed with intellect and free will. They can distinguish right from wrong and choose what is right through their own will. As a result of these attributes, we can say that people are bestowed with the freedom to follow their own way. So, the thing that makes people responsible in the presence of Allah is their freedom.

The Holy Qur'an always reminds humans of their responsibilities on earth. At the same time, it determines the essence and conditions of their responsibilities. For example, the verse **"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity..."**<sup>39</sup> states that humans cannot be held responsible for what is beyond their power; and the verse **"And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another..."**<sup>40</sup> explains the measure that each person can only be held responsible for what he or she does.

When the verses of the Qur'an are analyzed as a whole, it is understood that the events in life after death will take place in the order of "questioning (*sual*)", "giving the book of deeds", and "trial balance (*mizan*)", and then "judgment (*hisab*)". First, Allah's messengers will be questioned about whether they conveyed the divine message to people; then people will be questioned about whether they embraced these messages brought by the messenger. The following Qur'anic verse explains this matter as follows: **"Then We will surely question those to whom [a message] was sent, and We will surely question the messengers. Then We will surely relate [their deeds] to them with knowledge, and We were not [at all] absent."**<sup>41</sup> Following the cases mentioned in the verses, a book of deeds will be given to their owners; after that the good and bad deeds recorded in these books will be measured on the *mizan*; eventually everybody will be judged in accordance with the consequences of the previous three phases.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Baqarah, 2: 286

<sup>40</sup> Fatir, 35: 18

<sup>41</sup> Araf, 7: 6-7

<sup>42</sup> Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 17, p. 240

## LET'S WRITE

Write the messages given in the verse below.

“[And asking them], ‘What put you into Saqar?’ They will say, ‘We were not of those who prayed, nor did we used to feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it], and we used to deny the Day of Recompense, until there came to us the certainty.’”

(Muddaththir, 74: 42-47)

The book of deeds will be given to some people from their right side while some other people will take theirs from their left or behind. Those who take their books from their right side are the believers who have earned a place in paradise. Their questioning will be easy and they will rejoice. They will be happy just like students who pass their exams, and they will say whenever they come across others that: “**...Here, read my record! Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account.**”<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, those who take their books from their left or behind will go to hell after questioning. When their book of deeds is given, it will be said to them: “**Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant.**”<sup>44</sup>

After everything that people have committed secretly or publicly in their worldly life is uncovered and authenticated, the stage of *mizan* (scale) begins. *Mizan* refers to weighing and measuring the good and evil deeds of people in the hereafter so that that the justice of Allah can be witnessed clearly by everyone. Allah the Almighty has said: “**And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as accountant.**”<sup>45</sup>

After the measurement of people’s good and bad deeds in the phase of *mizan*, another stage of the hereafter, called *hisab* starts. *Hisab* means the judging or questioning of people in the hereafter. In the Holy Qur’an, beside the word *hisab*, some other expressions are also used such as *yawm al-hisab*,<sup>46</sup> which means the day of account, and *yawma yaqumul-hisab*<sup>47</sup>, which refers to the day

<sup>43</sup> Haqqah, 69: 19-20

<sup>44</sup> Isra, 17: 14

<sup>45</sup> Anbiya, 21: 47

<sup>46</sup> Sad, 38: 53

<sup>47</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 41

when the account will be given. Also, the statement *yawm ad-din*<sup>48</sup> is used to mean the day of reward and punishment.

### LET'S INTERPRET

Who is insolvent?

Once the Prophet Muhammad asked his companions: "Tell me who is called insolvent?" They replied: "The one who lost all his money, goods, and chattels." Upon that, the Prophet told them who the real insolvent is as follows: "A Muslim will be in the presence of Allah on the Day of Recompense. He has much beneficence because of his prayers, fasting, and almsgiving, which he fulfilled in his worldly life; however, he also slandered someone, stole something, insulted or hurt others, and shed the blood of someone. During his judgment, the return of his goodness that he normally would have deserved through worship will be distributed among those whom he had insulted, slandered, and hurt; he becomes as if he had never performed good deeds although the amount of violated rights of people for which he has to make amends has not ended. Since he has nothing anymore to make amends for his crimes, he will be expected to take over the sins of those whose rights had been violated by him, then he will go to hell; he is the real insolvent."

(Muslim, *Birr*, 59)

Interpret the hadith above in the context of violating others' rights and having a sense of responsibility.

It is explained in a verse that everybody will be judged in the hereafter for what they have done as follows: "And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will encounter spread open. [It will be said], 'Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant.'"<sup>49</sup> In the hereafter, the account will cover everything ranging from the small to the large. Allah the Almighty has said that: "That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."<sup>50</sup> The verse encourages people to perform good deeds however small, at the same time it forbids any kind of bad behavior, since sins that are committed often, even if they are minor ones, can eventually be considered normal over time by the sinner.

<sup>48</sup> Fatiha, 1: 3; Infitar, 82: 15-19

<sup>49</sup> Isra, 17: 13-14

<sup>50</sup> Zalzalah, 99: 6-8

According to the Qur'an, the greatest sin, which Allah will never forgive on the Day of Judgment, is to associate partners with Him. Concerning this, it is mentioned in a verse that: **“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly gone far astray.”**<sup>51</sup> Also, according to Islamic belief another grave sin, which people will certainly be questioned about, is violating others' rights. Whether or not this kind of sin can be forgiven only depends on the will of the person whose rights are violated. Slander, gossip, theft, statements and behavior that disturbs other people, not paying the amount of money that a worker deserves, not paying the expenses for public services, in short, defrauding people and violating their rights are considered examples of that type of sin. The Prophet Muhammad said that people who live by violating others' rights will be in the situation of an insolvent person on the Day of Judgment in the hereafter.

Allah the Almighty has forewarned what the situation will be in the hereafter for people who live without caring about the Day of Judgment as follows: **“Who took their religion as distraction and amusement and whom the worldly life deluded. So today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and for having rejected Our verses.”**<sup>52</sup>

According to the Qur'an, when that terrifying day comes and people's judgment begins, repentance and regrets will be to no avail. It is reported that a person's own hands, feet, and skin will bear witness in addition to the records in the book of deeds. This is stated in a verse as follows: **“And [mention, O Muhammad], the Day when the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire while they are [driven] assembled in rows, until, when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do. And they will say to their skins, ‘Why have you testified against us?’ They will say, ‘We were made to speak by Allah, who has made everything speak; and He created you the first time, and to Him you are returned.’”**<sup>53</sup>

As for the people who believe and perform good deeds, there will be no fear and sorrow for them on the Day of Recompense.<sup>54</sup> They will receive the blessings that their Lord prepared for them in return for what they did<sup>55</sup> and their questioning will be easy. Allah the Almighty will show the vastness of His

## LET'S INTERPRET

The Prophet Muhammad said that: “The most intelligent among people is the one who does not forget death ever and prepares himself for it.”

(Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 31)

Interpret the above hadith in relation to remembering death.

<sup>51</sup> Nisa, 4: 116

<sup>52</sup> A'raf, 7: 51

<sup>53</sup> Fussilat, 41: 19-21

<sup>54</sup> Baqarah, 2: 62

<sup>55</sup> Sad, 38: 49-52

mercy to those people and warn them about falling into despair regarding the mercy He will show to His servants.<sup>56</sup>

There will be returns for our actions not only in the hereafter. In this regard, Allah the Almighty has declared that: **“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”**<sup>57</sup> The verse clearly points out that everybody will suffer the effect of their actions in this world as well. For instance, disruption of the ecological balance, the increase of diseases, and crimes can be considered consequences of our mistakes in this world. The divine justice of Allah (*Sunnatullah*) in such matters never changes. Human beings reap what they sow. If they use their free will in the wrong way, then they have to put up with its consequences.

### LET'S INTERPRET



“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”

(Shura, 42: 30)

“...And Allah has not wronged them, but they wrong themselves.”

(Al-i Imran, 3: 117)

Interpret the verses above in the context of judgment in the hereafter.



## 5. Paradise (Jannah) and Hell (Jahannam)

### Heaven

*Jannah* is derived from the word *jann*, which means to cover up or to hide. It lexically means a garden that covers the ground with trees and plants. The plural

<sup>56</sup> Zumar, 39: 53

<sup>57</sup> Rum, 30: 41

form of jannah is *jinaan* or *jannaat*. In the Qur'an, its meaning is "the land of eternal blessings and happiness in which believers will stay in the hereafter."

The topic concerning life after death is intensively dealt with in the Qur'an. The Qur'an reports that worldly life is temporal, and there will be a time of testing,<sup>58</sup> and people who pass that test will be rewarded with paradise and those who fail will be punished in hell.<sup>59</sup>

The feature of paradise that is most emphasized in the Holy Qur'an is its eternity. In a verse it is said that: "**But they who believe and do righteous deeds – those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.**"<sup>60</sup> There is more than one paradise, which consists of different stages and which has different qualities, as is understood from the verses and the sayings of the Prophet.<sup>61</sup> People will be rewarded with a stage of paradise in accordance with how they lived their lives in this world. Their situation is stated in the 4th verse of Surah al-Anfal as follows: "**Those are the believers, truly. For them are degrees [of high position] with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision.**"

#### LET'S NOTE

##### SOME KEY FEATURES OF LIFE IN PARADISE

1. There will be no death in heaven.
2. Blessings and means will be limitless in heaven.
3. Blessings and the beauty of paradise are beyond the understanding of the human mind and imagination.
4. The life in paradise will be bodily as well as spiritual; people of heaven will have both bodily and spiritually superior virtues.
5. There will always be peace and tranquility in heaven. There is no place for deficiencies and imperfection, evil and ugliness, fear and anxiety in paradise.
6. The people of paradise will see Allah and speak to Him; there will be complete pleasure and gratification between the people of paradise and their Lord.
7. Heaven is prepared for those who believe and perform righteous deeds; unbelievers, hypocrites and pagans will not enter paradise.

The blessings and charms of heaven are recounted with such impressive depictions in the verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet that

<sup>58</sup> Mulk, 67: 2

<sup>59</sup> Hashr, 59: 18-20

<sup>60</sup> Baqarah, 2: 82

<sup>61</sup> Furqan, 25: 75; Muslim, Imara, 116

even the most abstract concepts can be understood and felt, as if turned into paintings of people coming to life. The events that will happen in the hereafter are like a play that is put on the stage, so to speak. For example, in the 40th verse of Surah al-A'raf, it has been declared that the excuses of unbelievers will not be accepted by Allah on the Day of Judgment and that they will never enter heaven: **“Indeed, those who deny Our verses and are arrogant toward them – the gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle. And thus do We recompense the criminals.”**

In depicting life in heaven and hell, the Holy Qur'an uses parables in order to make heaven and hell understandable to the human mind. However, the resemblances that are presented in the verses are not in essence and nature true but just similar in name. This is given in a verse as follows: **“They arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend. And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes as reward for what they used to do.”**<sup>62</sup>

According to portrayals stated in the verses, the vastness of paradise is as great as the heavens and the earth, and heaven is so immense that it cannot be imagined. Heaven has a very nice climate as expressed in the following verse: **“...They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold.”**<sup>63</sup>

Many verses talk about “the gardens beneath which rivers flow.”<sup>64</sup> In the 15th verse of the Surah Muhammad, four different rivers have been described as follows: **“[Here is] a parable of the garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; rivers of honey pure and clear...”** In some other verses it is expressed that there are “spouting springs”<sup>65</sup> in paradise and “righteous ones will enjoy those springs there.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Sajdah, 32: 16-17

<sup>63</sup> Insan, 76: 13

<sup>64</sup> Baqarah, 2: 25; Tawbah, 9: 72

<sup>65</sup> Rahman, 55: 66

<sup>66</sup> Hijr, 15: 45

## LET'S NOTE

## SOME OF THE NAMES OF HEAVEN MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN

“Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – they will have the Gardens of *Firdaws* as a lodging.”

(Kahf, 18: 107)

“Indeed, for the righteous with their Lord are the Gardens of *Na'im*.”

(Qalam, 68: 34)

“Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of *'Adn*; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.”

(Tawbah, 9: 72)

“As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them will be the Gardens of *Ma'wa* as accommodation for what they used to do.”

(Sajdah, 32: 19)

Heaven is covered with green vegetation and fruits, and its beauty is mentioned in the 14th verse of Surah al-Insan as follows: **“And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance.”** Moreover, in the 20th verse of Surah az-Zumar, it is reported that **“...chambers built high, beneath which rivers flow...”** are prepared. Moreover, in a hadith, it is said that there will be tents built from hollow pearls.<sup>67</sup> The people of paradise will live in such luxury that there will be thrones engraved with ores, golden and silver vessels and crystal goblets, dresses made of silk, and jewels adorned with pearls.<sup>68</sup>

It was reported that a perfect life, absolute friendship and brotherhood will prevail in paradise.<sup>69</sup> The greatest blessing that the people of paradise will enjoy is declared in the Qur'an as follows: **“...but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.”**<sup>70</sup> **“Looking at their Lord; and [some] faces, that Day, will be contorted.”**<sup>71</sup> **“[And] ‘Peace,’ a word from a Merciful Lord.”**<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Muslim, Jannah, 23-25

<sup>68</sup> Waq'ah, 56: 15-16; Insan, 76: 15-21; Hajj, 22: 23

<sup>69</sup> Hijr, 15: 47; Muslim, Jannah, 16-17; Araf, 7: 43

<sup>70</sup> Tawbah, 9: 72

<sup>71</sup> Qiyamah, 75: 23-24

<sup>72</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 58



It should be noted that paradise is a gift from Allah to human beings. However, this gift is not an exact recompense for what people do due to the fact that the blessings of heaven are unlimited while the righteous actions of humans are limited. Therefore, people are rewarded with heaven through the boundless generosity of Allah the Almighty.

## Hell

### LET'S NOTE

#### SOME KEY FEATURES OF LIFE IN HELL

1. *Hell is an eternal residence. There will be no death for the people in it.*
2. *The punishments in hell will be so severe that it is not possible for humans to comprehend it.*
3. *Life in hell will be both bodily and spiritually.*
4. *Unbelievers, hypocrites and pagans will stay in hell forever. Also, believers who commit sins will be punished there due to their guilt if Allah does not forgive them. But they will not stay in the hell eternally; when their punishments end, they will enter heaven.*

What Islam aims for is to ensure people's obedience to Allah and so to have them receive Allah's rewards, prepared for His servants in this world as well as in the hereafter, in return for their obedience. Punishment is not the essential element, but it is a kind of precaution to prevent evil. As is understood from the dominant theme in the verses of the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, the essential relationship between human beings and Allah is based on love and mercy. Thus, the many names of Allah (*Al-Asma Al-Husna*) express the meaning of mutual pleasure and love between humans and Allah while the names that comprise the meaning of wrath and anger are few in number.

In the Qur'an, various names have been used to identify hell. Some are: *Sa'ir*,<sup>73</sup> which means blazing fire; *Saqar*,<sup>74</sup> which means scorching and blackening fire; *Hawiyah*,<sup>75</sup> which refers to a deep pit, scarp; *Hutamah*,<sup>76</sup> which means the eternally fueled fire directed at hearts; *Jahim*<sup>77</sup> refers to the burning fire in

<sup>73</sup> Mulk, 67: 5

<sup>74</sup> Muddaththir, 74: 28-29

<sup>75</sup> Qari'ah, 101: 9

<sup>76</sup> Humazah, 104: 4-7

<sup>77</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 10

layers; *Hamim*,<sup>78</sup> which means scalding water; *Dar Al-Bawar*,<sup>79</sup> which means the home of ruin; and *Suu Ad-Dar*,<sup>80</sup> which refers to the worst home.

Depictions of hell stated in the Qur'an are scary and frightening as much as the descriptions of heaven are attractive and impressive. Through these portrayals, verses about hell have a deterring effect on people committing bad and evil acts, while verses concerning heaven steer people to righteousness and truthfulness. This is explained in the 35th verse in the Surah al-Muddaththir as follows: **“Indeed, the Fire is of the greatest [afflictions].”** While the Qur'an describes hell, it also warns people by touching upon the reasons why people's end in hell is so horrible.

### LET'S MAKE A LIST

Some attributes of the people in hell are expressed in the verses below. Make a list of them.

*“[Who will be] in gardens, questioning each other, about the criminals. [And asking them], ‘What put you into Saqar?’ They will say, ‘We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the poor and we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it], and we used to deny the Day of Recompense, until there came to us the certainty.’”*

(Muddaththir, 74: 40-47)

*“Woe to every scorner and mocker, who collects wealth and [continuously] counts it. He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal.”*

(Humazah, 104: 1-3)

*“[Allah will say], ‘Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever, preventer of good, aggressor, and doubter, who made [as equal] with Allah another deity; then throw him into the severe punishment.’”*

(Qaf, 50: 24-26)

*“And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer, [and] scorner, going about with malicious gossip. A preventer of good, transgressing and sinful. Cruel, moreover, and an illegitimate pretender.”*

(Qalam, 68: 10-13)

When we examine the verses about those who are committed to hell, we can

<sup>78</sup> Waq'ah, 56: 42

<sup>79</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 28

<sup>80</sup> Rad, 13: 25

see that they consist of people who violated the rights of Allah, the rights of people, and the rights of other creatures. Denial of Allah, associating partners with Him, and hypocrisy are major sins considered violations of the rights of Allah. Persecuting people, taking somebody's life, torturing others, usurping the property of orphans, and other similar behavior is considered a violation of people's rights.

The Holy Qur'an explains the state of people in hell by giving very impressive depictions that have a profound effect on humans. According to these depictions, people in hell will<sup>81</sup> have shackles upon their necks.<sup>82</sup> Very harsh and imposing angels are the guardians of hell.<sup>83</sup> The doors of hell will be locked and over them will be fire.<sup>84</sup>

When people in hell want to escape hellfire and the anguish that surrounds them, they will be thrown into the fire again by maces of iron.<sup>85</sup> They cry out for their punishment to be alleviated, but their cries will be disregarded. They will want to die and flee from the anguish, but for them there will be no death.<sup>86</sup> In the 49th and 50th verses of Surah al-Mu'min, it is said that: **“And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, ‘Supplicate your Lord to lighten for us a day from the punishment.’ They will say, ‘Did there not come to you your messengers with clear proofs?’ They will say, ‘Yes.’ They will reply, ‘Then supplicate [yourselves], but the supplication of the disbelievers is not except in error.’”**

As it is understood from the verses, there will be psychological punishments as well. The greatest sinners among them are to be forgotten by Allah in the hereafter because they forgot Him in their worldly life, and will be despised and humiliated and abandoned by those whom they associated with Allah, their own hands, feet, and skin bearing witness against them and falling into deep remorse. These psychological punishments are described in some verses as follows: **“[It will be commanded], ‘Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire, then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water.’ [It will be said], ‘Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble! Indeed, this is what you used to dispute.’”**<sup>87</sup> In another verse the regrets of the people

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<sup>81</sup> Isra, 17: 97; Furqan, 25: 34

<sup>82</sup> Ra'd, 13: 5; Nur, 24: 33

<sup>83</sup> Tahrim, 66: 6; Muddaththir, 74: 30-31

<sup>84</sup> Balad, 90: 20

<sup>85</sup> Hajj, 22: 21-22; Sajdah, 32: 20

<sup>86</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 16-17

<sup>87</sup> Dukhan, 44: 47-50

in hell are put into words: **“True sovereignty, that Day, is for the Most Merciful. And it will be upon the disbelievers a difficult Day. And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, ‘Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend. He led me away from the remembrance after it had come to me. And ever is Satan, to man, a deserter.’”**<sup>88</sup>

## 6. Faith in the Hereafter Gives Meaning to Worldly Life

### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the symbolic story given below.

*One of the twins in their mother's womb says to the other: “Hey, look my brother, I think there is somebody who loves us and knows what we need here; all our needs are supplied for months gratis. Look, do you think our hands, feet, and eyes are formed for nothing? Presumably we are getting ready for a new life, and also we cannot fit here anymore, we are getting bigger day by day. Yes, certainly we are transient here. There is a new and real life that waits us.”*

*The other twin replies: “You are speaking about imaginary things again, but the truth consists of what we see only, I don't believe in what I don't see. Yes, we will not be able to fit here soon, as you said. But life comes to an end for us eternally. That's it...”*



What gives meaning to a being is the cause of its existence. For instance, the thing that gives meaning to human life before birth is the life a person will have in this world. If there was not life in this world, there would not be meaning for the baby's life in the mother's womb.

What gives meaning to the life of humans in this world, however, is life in the hereafter because the innate features of the human being demonstrates that people are created for an eternal life, not for a temporal one. For example, the sense of eternity and desire for it that is innate in people, shows that they are created for an everlasting life. Likewise, humans are endowed with intellect and free will as distinct from other creatures. So it demonstrates that people are being tested in this world, because, if life in this world were only a biological process, then it would be unnecessary for humans to have reason and free will. Having intellect and free will gives the privileges of thinking and choosing to people, and this makes them have responsibility for what they do. In other words, life in

<sup>88</sup> Furqan, 25: 26-29

this world only gains meaning by means of a new life in which everybody will face the consequences of what they do in this world. Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an that: **“Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned? Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing and seeing. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.”**<sup>89</sup>

People who know that this life is just a test for them can easily recognize what their responsibilities on earth are. Through this sense of responsibility, they act with the awareness that what they do in this life will not remain unrequited. Thus, for them this world becomes not a temporal place of amusement anymore but a preparation for a new eternal life in the hereafter. This belief becomes the source of a very strong morale and permanent happiness because life becomes an opportunity for people to gain the pleasure of Allah and paradise. This means to discover the meaning and the purpose of life. This matter is stated in a verse as follows: **“And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah, so will you not reason?”**<sup>90</sup>

Those who discover the meaning and the purpose of life in this world endure the difficulties of life because every hardship is a test for them in this temporal life. They never fall into despair when they are faced with injustice because they know absolute justice will be provided in the hereafter, and they find consolation. People who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment are the ones **“who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.’”**<sup>91</sup>

### LET'S THINK

Would it make sense for human beings to be endowed with free will to choose in this worldly life if there won't be another life in which they will get the return of what they do in this world?

Would it make sense for human beings to have superior attributes such as intellect and free will, if life was just a biological process for them just as it is so for other creatures?

Think about the questions above in terms of the freedom of human beings.

Belief in life after death makes humans content. For those who sincerely

<sup>89</sup> Insan, 76: 1-3

<sup>90</sup> An'am, 6: 32

<sup>91</sup> Baqarah, 2:156.

believe in the hereafter, all worldly experiences are just temporary. The ultimate purpose is only to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty, and for this reason, it is not worth harming others. The Prophet Muhammad pointed this out by saying: “There are three things that belong to human virtually in this world. These are what he eats and consumes, what he puts on and wears out, and what he prepares as rations for the hereafter by almsgiving.”<sup>92</sup>

The possibility of committing a crime for those who have faith decreases because their belief in being questioned in the hereafter about what they committed establishes a strong motive for self-control. It is obvious that there is always a need for a deterrent from the evils in man’s inner world. The increase of crime and suicide rates even in modern societies clearly shows there is such a need at all times.

Belief in the hereafter creates the ideal of a virtuous lifestyle because each virtuous act performed will receive the response that it deserves in the presence of Allah. This ideal encourages humans to try to be honest and fair; therefore, people should rigorously pay attention to the rights of Allah, the rights of other people, and other creatures. They should consider performing righteous deeds and serving others to be the requirements of being a good person and should try to be constructive, corrective, and productive on earth.

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<sup>92</sup> Muslim, Zuhd, 3, 4

## LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. How can you explain, based on the order and the harmony in creation, that life is not purposeless?
2. How should we understand the notion of “worship” expressed in the verse: “*And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.*” (Dharyat, 51: 56)? Remark.
3. Give information about the notions of the *ba's* and *mahshar*.
4. What are the proofs for the resurrection in the hereafter according to the Qur'an?
5. What are the contributions of belief in the hereafter that make life in this world meaningful?

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the followings is *not one* of the consequences of belief in the hereafter?
  - A) Belief in the hereafter decreases fear of death.
  - B) It prevents despair.
  - C) It decreases the rate of crime.
  - D) It weakens the desire to work.
  - E) It increases people's resistance against hardships.
  
2. Which one of the followings is one of the proofs of resurrection after death?
  - A) Renewal of nature with the season of spring.
  - B) The continuous renewal of cells.
  - C) Creation of the universe out of nothing. (The first creation)
  - D) Creation of the earth and the heavens.
  - E) All of them.
  
3. What does the fact that the necessary conditions for the emergence of life have been brought together only in our world among countless celestial bodies show us?
  - A) Power of coincidence.
  - B) Matter has intellect.
  - C) There is a communication between physical entities.
  - D) Laws of nature are conscious.
  - E) The world is designed for a specific purpose of life.

4. Which one of the following gives the *wrong* information about the features of paradise?

- A) Paradise is prepared for believers.
- B) Life in paradise is eternal.
- C) There are different stages of paradise.
- D) Unbelievers enter paradise after they are punished for their sins.
- E) Blessings in paradise are unlimited.

5. Which one of the following gives the *wrong* information about hell?

- A) Hell is eternal.
- B) Hell includes different layers.
- C) Torment in hell is very severe.
- D) Hell is prepared for unbelievers.
- E) Believers will not stay in hell eternally.

C. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

(...) Nature has been created for us; we can use it as we wish.

(...) The way to overcome the fear of death is not to think about it.

(...) Absolute justice will be provided in the hereafter.

(...) Belief in life after death reinforces human's consciousness of self-monitoring.

D. Fill in the blanks in the following questions with the most suitable word from those given below.

(an atom's weight, good, *hisab*, evil, *ba's*, *mizan*, the hereafter)

1. "So whoever does ..... of ..... will see it, and whoever does ..... of ..... will see it." (Al-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8)

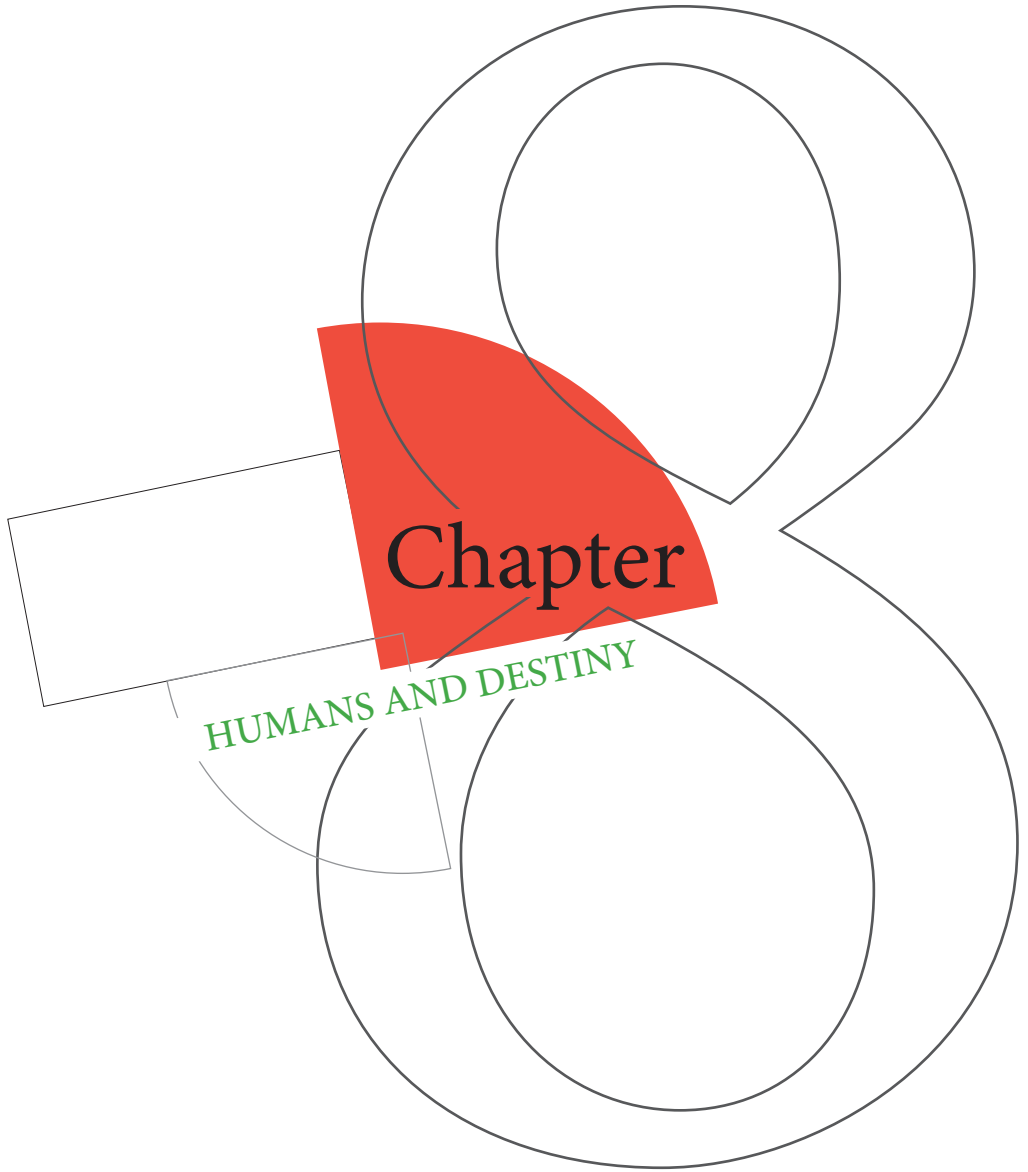
2. Resurrection of humans after death by Allah is called .....

3. Exposure and measurement of good and evil deeds of people in the hereafter is called .....

4. The second predominant subject after the Unity of Allah (tawhid) that takes place in the Qur'an is belief in .....







# Chapter

HUMANS AND DESTINY



## HUMANS AND DESTINY

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Learn the meaning of the terms “*qadar*, *qada*, and predestination” referring to a dictionary.
2. What is the relationship between destiny and death due to natural disasters? Research.
3. What is the reason why people in some countries have longer lifespans compared to others? Think about it.
4. What do you understand from the sentence “Creation of the universe is fate”? Explain.
5. What is the relationship between submission (*tawakkul*) and human responsibility? Discuss with your friends.

### 1. The Concepts of Qadar and Qada

#### INFORMATION BOX

Before Islam, during the age of ignorance, Allah’s creation was considered to be an intervention by Him at the beginning and end of human life. According to them, Allah did not interfere with what people do after He created them. People believed that, between their birth and death, they would keep going toward a kind of extinction, full of nightmares in the arms of time, which is called “*dahr*”. Islam corrected this pessimistic understanding. It emphasized that life is under the control of Allah with its all aspects and there cannot be any power other than Him that has any effect on life.

(Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur’an*, taken from p. 164)

Lexically the word *qadar* means the limit, measure, amount and value of something. In the Qur’an, it is used with several meanings such as measuring, being strong enough, power and capacity, determining something based on

#### LET'S THINK

Think about why some people show a fatalistic tendency in some cases.

measuring, and ruling after pondering.<sup>1</sup> Terminologically, this word refers to Allah's foreknowledge of time, place and features of everything that has happened since pre-eternity and that will happen for eternity, as well as His determination for them as they are in the pre-eternity. The common meaning of the term of *qadar* and its derivatives, which are mentioned in many verses of the Qur'an, is "regulation of everything in accordance with a measure and rule." In the 49th verse of Surah al-Qamar in the Qur'an, it has been said that "إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ" **"Indeed, We have created everything by measure."**

Therefore, *qadar* refers to Allah's creating the whole universe and everything in it in accordance with a measure and order, and providing a constant harmony among created things.<sup>2</sup>

The term *qada* lexically has several meanings such as to rule, to order, to pay, to fulfill, to supply, to judge, etc.<sup>3</sup> The root of this word refers to carrying out something with complete confidence. In the Qur'an, it is used for the meanings of command, provision, decision, judgment, proclamation, declaration, and creation. Terminologically, it means the realization of the things in due course according to God's determination in pre-eternity. The concepts of *qadar* and *qada* are sometimes used interchangeably.

Everything has a specific place in existence in terms of measurable values. This is why the concept of *qadar* has a meaning different from the common understanding that people have today. Theologians argue that the existence of the Creator who determines the order in the created universe is necessary.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, *qadar* indicates the measure and the harmony in creation. It is called *qadar* that Allah knows everything and creates it in accordance with His knowledge. The universe with all its content has not been created for nothing, haphazardly and aimlessly; there is nothing left deficient in its creation.<sup>5</sup> The harmony in creation consists of all capabilities, power, and facilities that existent beings have. The one who grants them the power and facilities is Allah the Almighty. The harmony in man's creation is his destiny. No one can go out of the measures that Allah assigned for him.

Creation of the universe is the result of predestination. The universe in which we live has been created in accordance with a specific order. In the 21st verse in Surah al-Hijr in the Qur'an, it is said: **"And there is not a thing but that with Us are its depositories, and We do not send it down except according to a known**

## LET'S NOTE

It is expressed in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> verses of Surah al-Rahman that all created beings glorify and prostrate to Allah.

This approach demonstrates that all beings point out the existence and the power of a creator by acting within the laws determined for them.

<sup>1</sup> *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, p. 353. Ragib, *Mufredat*, p. 657-660

<sup>2</sup> Talaq, 65: 3; A'la, 87: 2-3; Ra'd, 13: 8; Waq'ah, 56: 60

<sup>3</sup> *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, p.366

<sup>4</sup> Saim Yeprem, *Kader*, p. 186

<sup>5</sup> Mulk, 67: 3-4

**measure.”** Everything acts in harmony with biological, physical and social rules laid down by Allah the Almighty. The law that Allah placed in order to provide harmony in the universe is called “*sunnatullah*”, which can also be called *qadar*. Everything evolves in accordance with a divine measure and continues to live. The Qur’an emphasizes that there will be no change and deflection concerning this.<sup>6</sup> The sun and the moon’s determination as being the measure of time, the day and the night’s following each other, the distance between the sun and the moon, and the responding to good and bad deeds with rewards and punishments are all considered as *qadar*.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, this creation is not something that has finished and completed, but rather it always continues.<sup>8</sup>

### LET’S EXAMINE

Examine the map of concepts concerning the measurement in Allah’s creation given below.

“Indeed, We have created everything by measure.”

HARMONY	ORDER	RULES	CREATION
The distance between the Sun and the Earth	Creation of the day and the night	Motion of every single object in an orbit	He created the inanimate beings
The thickness of the atmospheric layer	Creation of the tides	Continuity of the seasons	He created animate beings
The distance of the Moon to the Earth	Creation of the seasons	Succession of the day and night	He created natural events
The rotational speed of the World around itself	Creation of gravity		

Creation of human beings is also a part of *qadar*. All the things that people possess come from blessings, which were created by Allah and bestowed upon them. Capabilities which are bestowed on human beings, such as having the

<sup>6</sup> Fatir, 35: 43; Fath, 48: 23

<sup>7</sup> Baqarah, 2: 189; Ya-Sin, 36: 40; An’am, 6: 96; Kahf, 18: 55

<sup>8</sup> Rahman, 55: 29; Naml, 27: 64

capacity of doing right and wrong deeds, and having the faculties of intellect and free will, constitutes the destiny of humans.<sup>9</sup> For instance, human nature is created in such a way that people feel the need to believe in a creative power and act according to it.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, people have feelings like joy and sorrow in addition to some characteristics like eating, drinking, sleeping, getting rest, and walking. Moreover, human psychology has to be in specific measure and balance. In this context, there is something in this life that people cannot change, such as having certain parents, being mortal, or their skin color. People play an active role in shaping their own behavior by using their intellect and will, and by making choices despite some limitations. In the end, they choose for themselves either what is good or what is bad. The Qur'an emphasized that everybody is responsible for their preferences and choices that they make within the measures and limits by saying: **“And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck...”**<sup>11</sup>

### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the verse stated below after examining the concept map that shows the laws in the universe.

THE LAWS OF GOD (Sunnatullah)		
BIOLOGICAL LAWS	SOCIAL LAWS	PHYSICAL LAWS
Creation of living beings	These laws are in the field of sociology	These laws are about the relationships among matter
Development of living beings	These laws deal with relationships between people and society	They examine the motion of matter
They are laws about the traits of living things	They have a cause-and-effect relationship	They examine the structure of substance and energy, and their changes
Every living organism has a different biological system	They are universal	They are established by experiments, observations, and research
These laws are scientifically established		Their results can be tested
They are universal		They are universal

*“...and He has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination.”*

(Furqan, 25: 2)

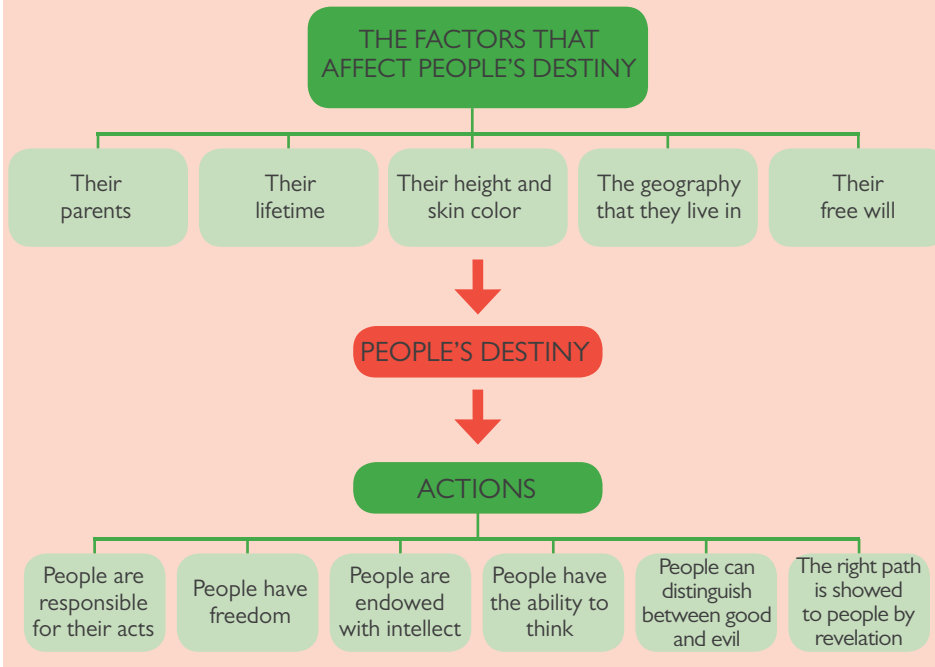
<sup>9</sup> Shams, 91: 8

<sup>10</sup> Rum, 30: 30

<sup>11</sup> Isra, 17: 13

**LET'S EVALUATE**

Evaluate the concept map given below in relation to the destiny of mankind.

**LET'S INTERPRET**

Identify the false understandings of *qadar* in the society by preparing a compilation of common idioms, proverbs and lyrics in your society concerning fate and destiny, and discuss with your friends. Then interpret your findings within the framework of the correct understanding of destiny.

## 2. Some Human Features Concerning Destiny

Just as there is a destiny and a measure for everything in the universe, every human being has a special fate. There are some measures and limits for human beings that they should comply with. People are creations that have intellect, freedom and responsibilities. The main features that direct people's destiny are as follows:



## 2.1. Being Sane

### LET'S NOTE

*Using the term qadar to mean appointment, determination, or preordainment, and interpreting religious sources – especially the sayings of the Prophet – in a way that supports these meanings never accord with the notion of human responsibility. Besides, this cannot be accorded with the attributes of Allah, especially the attributes of His justice and wisdom as well as with many verses of the Qur'an. The situation is no different for concepts such as sustenance and the time of death, which are considered part of destiny. There are some problems either in the authenticity of narrations or commentaries depending on the content of these narrations which claim whether human will be sa'id (the person who is happy and good in the presence of Allah) or shaqi (the person who deserves to be punished, who is a sinner and evil in the presence of Allah) is predetermined when he or she was in the mother's womb. Therefore these kinds of narrations should be rejected especially when hadith scholars have even the smallest hesitation about their accuracy. But the narrations that are authentic and sound should be interpreted. The most prudent way concerning these narrations is to examine them within the historical dimension, and as the expressions of general culture of the time.*

(Saim Yeprem, Kader, compiled from p. 186-187)

People have the faculty of intellect, which is an important tool that determines their preferences. They have to use their intellect, which is granted to them by Allah. The Qur'an clearly expresses that people who do not use their mind will be in loss.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it was requested by the Prophet himself that people act in accordance with a reasonable understanding and clairvoyance, equipped with consciousness and sensitivity.<sup>13</sup> In the Qur'an, people who behave according to blind imitation and unconscious submission have been described as cruel by the verse as follows: **“And among us are Muslims [in submission to Allah], and among us are the unjust. And whoever has become Muslim – those have sought out the right course.”**<sup>14</sup>

Intelligent people behave thinking about the outcome of their acts. They understand that their freedom to choose between events and issues makes them different. They recognize that their preferences give them some responsibilities. So they control their behavior while being aware of these responsibilities. They know that they should endeavor in order to succeed and achieve their goals. In this respect, the believers never stop to use their reason. Believers strengthen their faith with righteous deeds as a requirement of being intelligent, because it is not fair to earn and expect that which they did not make any effort for.

<sup>12</sup> Yunus, 10: 100

<sup>13</sup> Yusuf, 12: 108

<sup>14</sup> Jinn, 72: 14

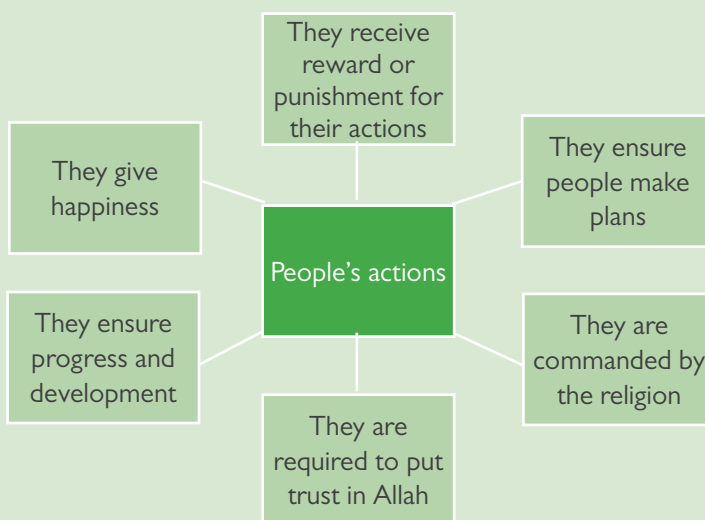
This is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **“They consider it a favor to you that they have accepted Islam. Say, ‘Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.”**<sup>15</sup> People think, make plans, take some decisions and apply them by using their intellect. People who are endowed with certain measures, opportunities and capabilities strive to be happy, endeavor to improve themselves and progress, and exert the utmost effort to achieve a goal, and all these are their destiny.

## 2.2. Being Free

Freedom is one of the significant attributes for human being. People are given freedom by Allah in order to fulfill their duty to do good and righteous deeds in this world.<sup>16</sup> The one who needs to endeavor to achieve this purpose is the person himself or herself. People should be free in order to be held responsible. Allah gives a wide area to people in which they can act freely and He holds them responsible in accordance with the freedom that He granted them. The destiny of a person is to be free in actions and in doing whatever he or she wishes. People are never accountable for what they did not do or for what they actually were forced to do.

### LET'S EXAMINE

Examine the concept map below regarding people's actions.

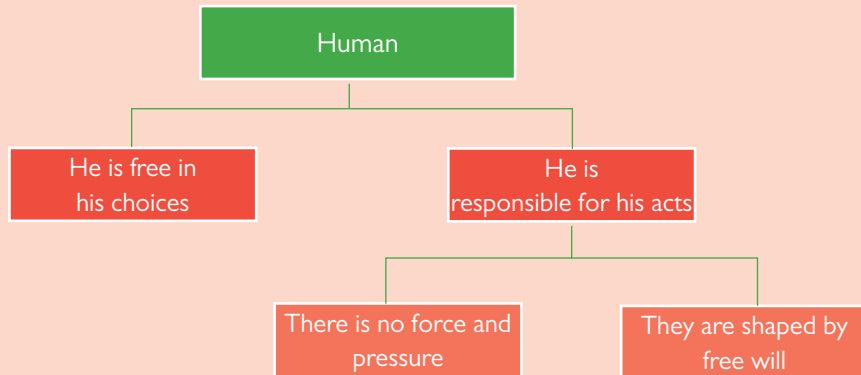


<sup>15</sup> Hujurat, 49: 17

<sup>16</sup> Kahf, 18: 7; Hud, 11: 7

## LET'S PREPARE

Prepare a speech based on the concept map about freedom and acts of human given below.



## LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the verse given below in terms of freedom of human beings: “And they said, ‘If the Most Merciful had willed, we would not have worshipped them.’ They have of that no knowledge. They are not but falsifying.” (Zukhruf, 43: 20)

People have the capacity to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, and beautiful from ugly; they also have the ability to attribute a specific value to what they come across and to make a choice among things. This ability and power are granted to human beings by Allah the Almighty. People employ them in accordance with their free will. Freedom, as the source of both good and evil, can lead to consequences in favor of human beings as well as against them. In this sense, even unbelief and ascribing partners with Allah are included in the limits of freedom granted to people. Allah sent His messengers and divine books to help people so that they can make correct choices with their free will. Then He gave them the freedom of choice as to whether they believe or disbelieve, as it is expressed in the following verse: **“Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.”**<sup>17</sup> A person’s freedom means to be responsible for what he or she does. However, idolaters who rejected this responsibility did not accept that Allah’s will about something depends on the preferences of His servant. Rather, they claimed that their own choices were the results of the divine decision. Such wrongful ascriptions of idolaters are refused in the Qur’an as follows: **“Those who associated with Allah will say, ‘If Allah had willed, we would not have associated [anything] and neither would our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything.’ Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say, ‘Do you have any**

<sup>17</sup> Insan, 76: 3

knowledge that you can produce for us? You follow not except assumption, and you are not but falsifying.”<sup>18</sup>

### 2.3. Being Responsible

Being responsible is an important measure for human beings. They use their capability of preference and making choices, which they potentially have in themselves, and with this aspect they are distinguished from other beings. People should act with the awareness that they will be judged, and should be aware of their responsibilities and seek ways to perform righteous deeds, because according to the Qur’an, they will see the response of their actions even if it is as small as an atom’s weight.<sup>19</sup> Humans cannot escape from responsibilities for their own actions that occur as the outcome of their free will.

It is not right way for a person to let himself or herself be taken by the flow of events and to wait for happiness and success to be laid at his or her feet. In the Qur’an, it is stated that people who act without questioning anything in the tides of life or blindly show submission to all events have said that **“And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it].”**<sup>20</sup> It is quite obvious that such an imitation that is deprived of consciousness cannot lead humans to good. It is often seen that people abandon their responsibilities or pass them to others by saying, “What can we do, this is our destiny.” when they face some situations that they do not like or that they do not have the opportunity to change or correct under the influence of false interpretations and traditions. In this way the guilty and their guilt are concealed by qualifying these situations with the names of “destiny”, “predestination”, “foreordination”, “fortune” or “misfortune”. It can even be seen that some people who try to free themselves from their responsibilities consider such calamities as punishments from Allah when they encounter predicaments.<sup>21</sup> However, it is not possible to attribute the consequences of bad incidents that befall upon them to Allah the Almighty, because He never tyrannizes His servants and never wishes bad for them. It is not correct for people to think of destiny as a refuge that frees them from their responsibilities. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that mistakes like seeking refuge in destiny can prevent bringing to account

#### LET'S EVALUATE

Read the translation of the 75th verse in Surah al-Nisa and evaluate it in relation to people fulfilling their personal and social responsibilities.

<sup>18</sup> An'am, 6: 148; Nahl, 16: 35

<sup>19</sup> Zalzalah, 99: 7-8

<sup>20</sup> Muddaththir, 74: 45

<sup>21</sup> Ankabut, 29: 10

responsible people for their crimes or taking lessons from wrong actions. Concerning this matter, in the 30th verse in Surah al-Shura, it is mentioned that “And whatever strikes you of disaster – it is for what your hands have earned...” which points out people are responsible for what they do.

### LET'S MAKE A LIST

Find some examples within the context of the question “what kind of problems would emerge if human beings did not have the faculties of intellect, freedom and liability?” and discuss these examples in class with your friends.

Make a list of the results that you reach.

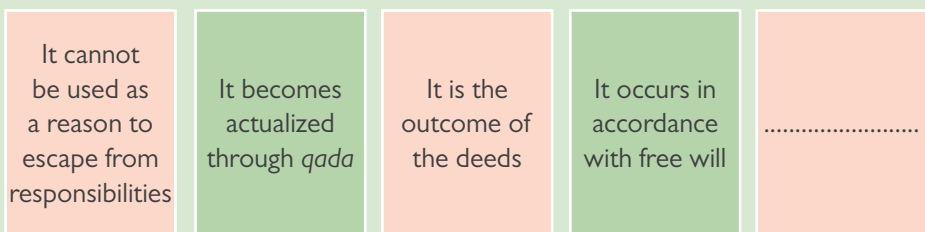
### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the issue of ‘umr taking into consideration the verse expressed below.  
“It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term and a specified time [known] to Him...”  
(An’am, 6: 2)

### LET'S FIND

Find an appropriate response for the blank spaces in the concept map given below related to destiny.

#### DESTINY



### 3. Some Notions Related to Qadar

When the notion of *qadar* is mentioned, some concepts related to it come to mind. *Ajal* (time of death), *‘umr* (lifetime), *afat* (disasters), health, illness, success and failure, *tawakkul* (submission), *khair* (good) and *sharr* (evil) are some of those concepts.

#### 3.1. Ajal (Time of Death) and ‘Umr (Lifetime)

The word ‘*ajal*’ lexically refers to the meaning the end of life, period, duration, and some similar words. This term denotes the time when the life of a human ends and this worldly life comes to an end. ‘*Umr* is the term for the period of time between the birth and the death of a human. It is mentioned in the Qur’an that societies have a specific lifetime, just as does every other living being.<sup>22</sup>

Death is an inevitable fact of life.<sup>23</sup> It is reminded in the Qur’an that people are given a lifetime long enough to think and make choices,<sup>24</sup> and so it is not

<sup>22</sup> Araf, 7: 34

<sup>23</sup> Anbiya, 21: 44

<sup>24</sup> Fatir, 35: 37

welcomed that people put aside their responsibilities and desires to live long.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the Qur'an says that **“And it is not [possible] for one to die except by permission of Allah at a decree determined...”**<sup>26</sup>

### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the people's natural lifespan in light of the verse stated below.  
 “And if Allah were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon the earth any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”  
 (Nahl, 16: 61)

Allah assigns and appoints a natural lifetime for every living being. Human beings have a chance to complete their natural lifetime as long as they eat healthily and have adequate nutrition under normal conditions, and who are not negatively affected by environmental factors. It can be observed that people live longer in countries with a low level of factors that have negative effects on the natural lifespan as determined by Allah. This determination shows that the external causes that constitute obstacles for the completion of the natural lifetime of people could not have been determined previously. In this regard it has been stated in the Qur'an that: **“...And no aged person is granted [additional] life nor is his lifespan lessened but that it is in a register...”**<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the order established by Allah for this earth should be taken into account in order to constitute the conditions that provide a good life for human beings and so prolong their lifetime bestowed upon them by their Lord. This is why it is stated in the Qur'an that: **“...Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely...”**<sup>28</sup>

## 3.2. Rizq (Sustenance)

The term *“rizq”* lexically means the blessings, shares, lots and portions that all living beings benefit. Terminologically, it refers to the blessings that Allah

<sup>25</sup> Baqarah, 2: 96; Ya-Sin, 36: 68

<sup>26</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 145; Luqman, 31: 34

<sup>27</sup> Fatir, 35: 11

<sup>28</sup> Ma'idah, 5: 32

the Almighty bestowed upon all living beings. These blessings can be material as well as spiritual. It is expressed in the Qur'an that: **“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision...”**<sup>29</sup> Allah encourages people to earn their *rizq* by saying: **“...Disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah...”**<sup>30</sup> Likewise, all the prophets who showed obedience to Allah's commands tried to earn their own sustenance by having a profession or a craft and made great effort, so they have become a model for others concerning *rizq*.

Allah has prepared the earth for people as a place where they can live and He has given all the blessings in it to serve people. Everything is offered for their benefit like the pouring rain, the greening soil by plants, the seas carrying ships... Even He reckons as evidence of His existence and His Power that some things are demanded from His grace on this earth.<sup>31</sup> And the blessings are regarded as the consequence of His mercy in the 18th verse of Surah al-Nahl saying: **“And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”** Allah created blessings on earth enough for all living beings and counseled about economic, social, and moral issues in order to provide that these blessings should be shared among them. Moreover, Allah condemns the monopolization of wealth and its circulation just among the rich people and emphasizes that it should be shared.<sup>32</sup> In the Qur'an it is expressed that wealth is a test for people who carry out their responsibilities in proportion to their richness. Not sharing wealth for fear of losing it is described as a trap of the devil, and it is stressed that the more wealth is spent in charity, the more it will be increased by Allah. Helping others in secret or in public is encouraged as one of the requirements of faith in Allah.<sup>33</sup> In the Qur'an, abstaining from sharing the blessings of Allah is described as a kind of usurpation of the rights of others and considered to be equal to denying that *rizq* comes from Allah.<sup>34</sup> All these commands and recommendations demonstrate that hunger or poverty is not the result of destiny. When people experience financial difficulties or problems with their livelihood, it is the result of their own or other people's actions. The means on this earth there is

### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the hadith below in terms of earning *rizq*.

“Nobody can eat better earnings than what he earned by his own hands. The Prophet of Allah David used to eat what he earned by his own hands too.”

(Bukhari, Buyu, 15.)

<sup>29</sup> Hud, 11: 6

<sup>30</sup> Jum'ah, 62: 10

<sup>31</sup> Rum, 30: 23

<sup>32</sup> Hashr, 59: 7

<sup>33</sup> Baqarah, 2: 268; Ibrahim, 14: 7; Nahl, 16: 75

<sup>34</sup> Ma'arij, 70: 24; Nahl, 16: 71

more than enough for everyone who lives in it, and benefiting from them is everybody's right. However, pagans who claimed that poverty was shaped by divine determination rejected this by adopting a fatalistic attitude. Regarding this, it is declared in the Qur'an that: **“And when it is said to them, ‘Spend from that which Allah has provided for you.’ those who disbelieve say to those who believe, ‘Should we feed one whom, if Allah had willed, He would have fed? You are not but in clear error.’”**<sup>35</sup> Creation of rizq is certainly determined by Allah's will. Concerning distribution of sustenance, people also have some responsibilities they should fulfill in accordance with their economic position.

### 3.3. Afat (Disasters)

People encounter many natural disasters on this earth such as earthquakes, floods, erosion and forest fires. In the Qur'an, it is said: **“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance; that you not transgress within the balance.”**<sup>36</sup> All physical laws of this world are created by Allah. He is the One who created the earth in accordance with a balance as a manifestation of His mercy and justice, and who wants us to protect this balance. He never does anything without meaning and a specific purpose. In this sense, a significant number of disasters are stimulated by problems caused by people themselves, and in many cases we confront these disasters as a consequence of not taking necessary measures.

#### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the message given in the verse written below.

*“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”*

(Rum, 30: 41)

<sup>35</sup> Ya-Sin, 36: 47

<sup>36</sup> Rahman, 55: 7-8



### LET'S DISCUSS

Discuss the topic expressed in the following paragraph with your friends by appreciating or criticizing it.

“As can be seen in the example of earthquakes, disasters lead to the emergence of social differences between those who live in better conditions and are not harmed by the disaster and those who live in poor conditions and lose most of their wealth. Disasters make such social differences clearer between those two groups. In this sense, disasters demonstrate that the purpose of creation of the world where we live necessitates a fair and collaborative environment. Likewise, minimum conditions of life should be prepared and maintained for everybody in a manner befitting people. Losses caused by disasters are the returns paid by the people who did not or could not take necessary precautions with regards to preparing and maintaining a correct and healthy life. The damage which can be prevented by taking certain measures can never be destiny. In this regard, destiny at the very most can be the people’s inevitable losses as a result of their own neglect and impassivity.”

According to the Qur’an, Allah does not give people responsibilities beyond their capacity.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, people should first try to eliminate the factors that cause disasters, fight with them, and try to find ways to escape from these disasters with minimum damage. For example, when we take into consideration that people can protect themselves from the effects of an earthquake by taking precautions, it becomes inconceivable that the divine decree aims to harm people who are unable to take these precautions. Thus, in these circumstances, it is not appropriate to attribute to the divine decree death of children, young, and elderly people, who are far from committing any possible evil. Furthermore, it is obvious that strong construction methods provide adequate protection against earthquakes. Considering disasters the consequence of destiny or foreordination is not correct when it is possible to prevent life and property losses by taking necessary precautions. People can take measures against possible disasters by using their intellect. Today, necessary precautions can be taken with the help of earthquake maps, so this disaster is no longer a surprise. The consciousness of the hereafter and judgment day indicates that people are responsible for combating disasters. In order to live in a more beautiful and more secure world, the message of the Qur’an is as follows: **“They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they**

<sup>37</sup> Baqarah, 2: 286

enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous.”<sup>38</sup>

### 3.4. Health and Disease

#### GROUP WORK

- a) Organize two groups in class to research the benefits and harms of people regarding their illnesses as their destiny.
- b) Each one of the groups should study the ideas and evidence that they find concerning these benefits and harms.
- c) Prepare a presentation with your findings and discuss it with your friends.

Health is one of the most important blessings bestowed upon people. Islam makes many recommendations for people to be healthy. In Islam, cleaning and sanitation requirements are taken quite seriously. Allah points out in the verses He sent down that He gives importance to cleanness of His servants. For instance, the minor (*wudu'*) and major ablutions (*ghusl*) are themselves actions providing cleanliness. In the same way, a similar sensitivity is shown to matters related to food and drink, and it is said in the Qur'an that “**O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful...**”<sup>39</sup>

#### LET'S FIND

Find the relevance between doing the right thing and being successful, which is expressed in the verse below.

“Allah will say, ‘This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.’ For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.”

(Ma'idah, 5: 119)

Allah the Almighty has created a remedy for every illness. People simply have to find it and be treated because they have to be healthy to be able to worship Allah properly. People should be patient in the face of problems like sickness, be treated, and exert effort to get healthy. Showing patience, however,

<sup>38</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 114

<sup>39</sup> Baqarah, 2: 125-168-172

does not mean putting up with the problems or considering them as part of their destiny and doing nothing. On the contrary, it means to struggle with them in order to get rid of them. In fact, even saying prayers is a sign showing the wish and effort to change the troublesome situations that people face. The world would be a much healthier place if people spent their money and effort in order to be protected from illness, to find necessary treatment methods, and to be saved from diseases instead of wasting them on weapons and fighting each other.

### LET'S INTERPRET

“And Allah will save those who feared Him by their attainment; no evil will touch them, nor will they grieve.”

(Zumar, 39: 61)

Interpret the saying “Failure is not a destiny” in light of the verse given above.

### 3.5. Success and Failure

If people use their willpower on the right path and direct it to good things, then they become successful. This is called “*tawfiq*”, which refers to people’s success with the help of Allah for those who act to earn the pleasure of Allah in their affairs. If people turn to the wrong path and make wrong choices, they fail in their affairs, which is called “*khizlan*”. The term *khizlan* refers to a situation when Allah no longer is helping His servant who moves in the wrong direction.<sup>40</sup> In the 88th verse of Surah Hud, it is declared that success depends on Allah’s help in the following words: “...**And my success is not but through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return.**”

People want to be successful and to exert effort for this. In the 128th verse of Surah al-A’raf, the importance of fulfilling responsibilities in order to become successful is emphasized as follows: “**And the [best] outcome is for the righteous (having the sense of responsibility to God).**” In this respect, success is not something that occurs spontaneously without making any effort as an outcome of fate or predestination. In the Qur’an, it is stated, “**And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.**”<sup>41</sup> In this respect, lives of the prophets, problems that they encountered, and their efforts to be successful are presented as good examples for us.

Dangers that human beings may face in life are explained and things that may make them unhappy and unsuccessful are described in the Qur’an. Despite all these warnings, people are granted freedom in their preferences. Failure is completely the result of people’s own decisions because success is achieved by their own actions. In addition to the factors originating from

<sup>40</sup> Hud, 11: 88; Isra, 17: 22; Furqan, 25: 29

<sup>41</sup> Najm, 53: 39

themselves, people's failure might be caused by the environmental factors in which they live. However, this should not be regarded as a pressure coming from the divine predetermination. The only beings responsible for the social anarchy and corruption as well as physical anarchy happening in this world are the people themselves.<sup>42</sup> Human beings are the ones who cause pollution and wars, kill and persecute each other, and always think of themselves without caring about others. According to the Qur'an, real success is being rewarded in life after death as the result of worldly life and gaining the pleasure of God.<sup>43</sup> In this sense, people should endeavor to succeed and fulfill especially their moral responsibilities. Hence, they should wait for success from Allah after striving for it and should not base their success on others' victimization. It is stated in the Qur'an, "And never think that those who rejoice in what they have perpetrated and like to be praised for what they did not do – never think them [to be] in safety from the punishment, and for them is a painful punishment."<sup>44</sup> In this context, a believer should not be so arrogant as to claim that he did all the good things and should not be so lazy as to expect success without doing anything. Allah never approves of His servants bragging about what they did not do.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.6. Tawakkul (Submission)

*Tawakkul* lexically means to trust, to rely on, and to transfer an affair to someone else. Terminologically, it refers to one's relying and depending on Allah, expecting help from Him after doing the best to achieve what he wants. One of the meanings of the word *mu'min* (believer) is a person who is reliable as well as who relies on Allah. In this regard, it is mentioned in the 81st verse of chapter al-Nisa that: "...And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs." The believer depends and relies on Allah concerning the affairs that he did or will do. This trust keeps him from committing bad acts, while at the same time giving him hope in his difficult moments. There can be no good in actions done without contentment and help from Allah and in wealth that is earned without working and deserving it. People who have faith behave correctly and honestly in all of their affairs, paying attention to Allah's pleasure. They leave the result to Allah hoping for the best from Him after they endeavor to do

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<sup>42</sup> Rum, 30: 41; Al-i Imran, 3: 182

<sup>43</sup> Tawbah, 9:72-89; Ma'idah, 5:119; Nisa, 4:13

<sup>44</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 188

<sup>45</sup> Saff, 61: 2

their best concerning an issue. It is not appropriate for believers to expect to be successful in instances in which they did not make an effort, except the cases in which they prove insufficient or do not have enough power.

*Tawakkul* is a nice behavior and a moral attitude. Allah the Almighty says that He will support those who believe in Him and will help them in almost every aspect of life.<sup>46</sup> Those who depend and rely on Allah know that He will certainly help them with true provision and wisdom; He is the One who knows the unseen world and future, and all goods are under His control. As it was expressed in the 122nd verse of Surah Al-i Imran, **“It is in Allah that the believers should put their trust.”** Therefore, by fulfilling the commands and prohibitions of Allah, believers try to do their best in their affairs. They expect Allah’s help and protection against potential difficulties that they may face because Allah never leaves His servants alone and helpless, those who work and struggle by relying upon Him. His limitless power, mercy and greatness have never returned this trust without a response. In this regard, in the 38th verse of Surah al-Hajj, it is mentioned that: **“Indeed, Allah defends those who have believed...”** *Tawakkul* in Allah without taking any precaution and making any effort does not accord with the sense of responsibility of Islam and is not considered an appropriate attitude.

### LET’S INTERPRET

Interpret the verses given below in the context of the notion of *tawakkul*.

“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.”

(Anfal, 8: 2)

“...And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”

(Al-i Imran, 3: 159)

<sup>46</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 160; Ma’idah, 5: 11; Anfal, 8: 49-61

### 3.7. *Khair* (Good) and *Sharr* (Evil)

#### LET'S NOTE

The reason to attribute both good and evil to Allah is to prevent dualistic misbelief by ignorant people who believe in two gods, as the god of goodness and the god of evil. Therefore, it is intended to prevent people who get involved in evil deeds (*sharr*) from believing in a deity other than Allah in order to get rid of troubles that they have.

(Saim Yeprem, *Kader*, p. 188)

The word '*khair*' lexically means good and useful work. Terminologically, it refers to behavior that Allah commands, approves and likes. The word '*sharr*' on the other hand means bad and sinful action. It terminologically refers to behavior that Allah prohibits and dislikes.

People's actions carry a specific value as good or bad (*husn* and *qubuh*), also the consequences of these actions have a value as *khair* and *sharr*. The value of these actions is determined by Allah. Moreover, the human mind is endowed with the capability to conceive and find them.<sup>47</sup> Allah will reward those who perform *khair* and punish those who commit *sharr*. Therefore, people should perform righteous deeds and avoid committing evil acts. A person's achievement of good or turning toward evil is in that person's own hands. In this regard, Allah's predetermination takes form in accordance with the servant's behavior. It is Allah who leads to the *khair*, but the *sharr* is derived from the absence of *khair* or from the abandonment of *khair*, and it is entirely the outcome of the actions of human beings.

### 3.8. *Hidayah* (Guidance) and *Dalalah* (State of Being Astray)

*Hidayah* means the right path and attaining *hidayah* means to be guided to the right path. In the Qur'an, it is said that "...Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance..."<sup>48</sup> In this sense, *hidayah* refers to leading to the right path, pointing it out, and guiding on this path. There is no doubt that the guidance of Allah is not haphazard. It is such a guidance the finer details of which are taken into account, which is thought with mercy and designed in accordance with a specific purpose that will result in goodness. As a term, the

#### LET'S MAKE A LIST

Create a suitable atmosphere for a discussion related to the relationship between the will of God and human will in the context of the understanding of fate, then make a list of the consequences that you obtain.

<sup>47</sup> Saim Yeprem, *Kader*, p. 187

<sup>48</sup> Baqarah, 2: 120

notion of *hidayah* has a positive meaning, which is to avoid the wrong path and to find the right path.

### LET'S GIVE EXAMPLES

Exemplify the verse given below in the context of the Qur'an and *hidayah*.

"Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward."

(Isra, 17: 9)

*Dalalah* means the wrong path, and falling into *dalalah* refers to going astray, going awry, being lost, deviation, or heresy. In the Qur'an, it is expressed that **"... (guide us to the way) not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray."**<sup>49</sup> In this context, *dalalah* means abandoning the truth by deviating from the right path. Terminologically, *dalalah* refers to following the wrong path and deviating from the way that is shown by Allah.

### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the verses given below in terms of achieving what they hope.

"So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him – He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path."

(Nisa, 4: 175)

"Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – their Lord will guide them because of their faith..."

(Yunus, 10: 9)

Allah is the One who created all the paths that people can turn to, and people are the ones who choose one of these ways. Allah has shown the people the right and wrong paths by sending prophets and scriptures. He has made the whole universe available to the service of people. He has made human beings superior to other living beings by bestowing upon them the power of discernment and free will. He created signs of His existence and oneness in human being's own self and nature. He endowed human beings with intellect and gave them the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. Allah's warnings concerning

<sup>49</sup> Fatiha, 1: 7

human's choosing the right path is just like a kind of guidance to a specific address.<sup>50</sup> Allah advises people to be careful about the possible consequences of their choices. He counsels and shows the way without differentiating His servants from one another. In the 3rd verse of Surah al-Insan, it is emphasized that human beings should make the right choice as follows: **“Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.”** Therefore, one's falling into *dalalah* by choosing the wrong path is a person's own preference.

The Qur'an considers insistence on disbelief, extreme mendacity, committing crimes, and cruelty as among the reasons for going astray and not being able to reach guidance.<sup>51</sup> Being on the wrong path for a long time and making a habit of evil deeds create a different sense of morality in a person. So, after a while, the person cannot understand that the path that he or she follows is actually the wrong one and may lose the chance to return. Thus, this psychological state is pointed out and people are warned about this situation in the Qur'an as follows: **“...And whomever Allah leaves astray – there will be for him no guide.”**<sup>52</sup> In other words, being in an irreversible position by choosing a wrong path is a psychological fact, a measure, or a destiny determined by Allah. But to prefer or to abandon this path happens as the result of one's own choice. The verse in Surah al-Fatiha, **“Guide us to the straight path.”** reminds us that people should constantly be in search of the truth. Allah has promised that He will help those who believe and do righteous deeds. For instance, it has been explained in the Qur'an that: **“And those who strive for Us; We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.”**<sup>53</sup> This promise for guidance is a significant support that makes people look for the right address and reach what they hope. In other words, Allah the Almighty has given the directions for the right address to everyone, but helps only those who make an effort to reach that address.

Human beings freely choose right or wrong paths themselves and take responsibility for their choice. By emphasizing persistently that people's guidance is in their favor and going astray is against it, the Qur'an informs us that using pressure to give people guidance will not be useful.<sup>54</sup> Even the Prophet's request or love for a person will be useless for people's guidance unless they wish it themselves.<sup>55</sup> Nobody can be condemned or punished for what he or she did

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<sup>50</sup> Tawbah, 9: 115

<sup>51</sup> Zumar, 39: 3; Ghafir, 40: 28; Ahqaf, 46: 10; Naml, 27: 81

<sup>52</sup> Ra'd, 13: 33

<sup>53</sup> Ankabut, 29: 69

<sup>54</sup> Yunus, 10: 108

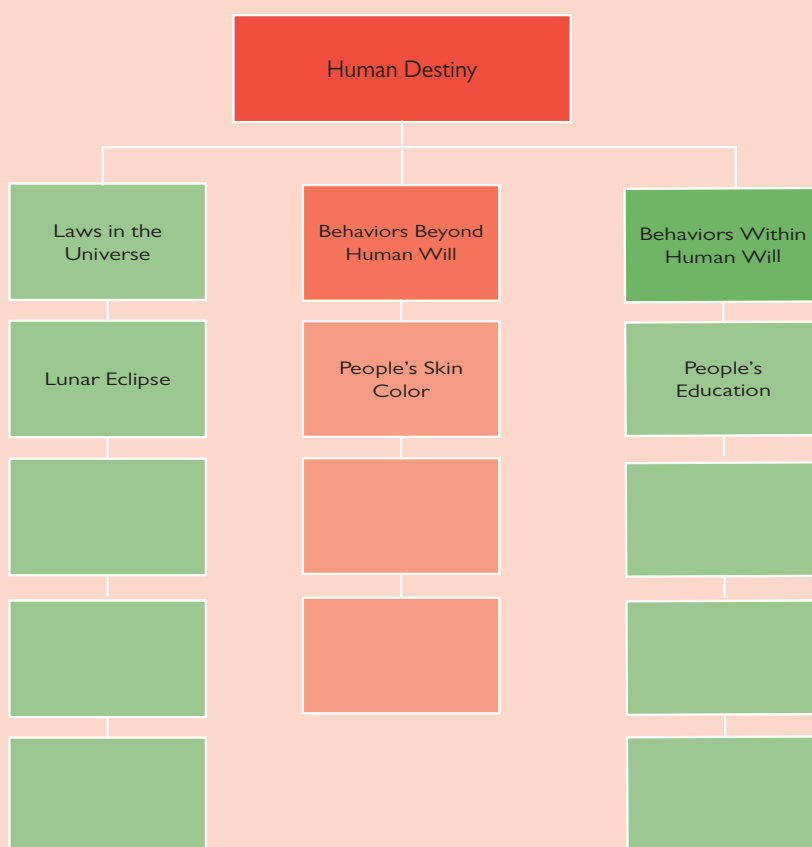
<sup>55</sup> Qasas, 28: 56; Baqarah, 2: 272



not do or was obliged to do. To believe or not to believe, to do righteous acts or to commit evil are people's own decisions. Allah does not guide those who don't deserve the straight path. Without a reason, nobody is given what he or she does not deserve unless he or she takes a step toward that which is good and avoids that which is bad.<sup>56</sup> In the Qur'an, it has been stated that *"And your Lord would not have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were reformers."*<sup>57</sup> It is seen that some people wait for a good response to their actions without doing anything about them but just by saying, "it is our predestination, our destiny, and divine providence." Indeed, nothing can take place unless Allah wills it. However, the person should take a step in order for Allah to will and create it.

### LET'S RESEARCH AND FIND

Fill in the blanks in the chart that explains the notions related to human destiny.



<sup>56</sup> Baqarah, 2: 264; Al-i Imran, 3: 186

<sup>57</sup> Hud, 11: 117

## LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the lexical meaning of the word “*qadar*”.
2. Explain how having intellect can influence human destiny.
3. Give information about the relationship between freedom and human destiny.
4. Explain what kind of correlation there is between people having a longer life and their destiny.
5. Explain what the true understanding of *tawakkul* should be.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

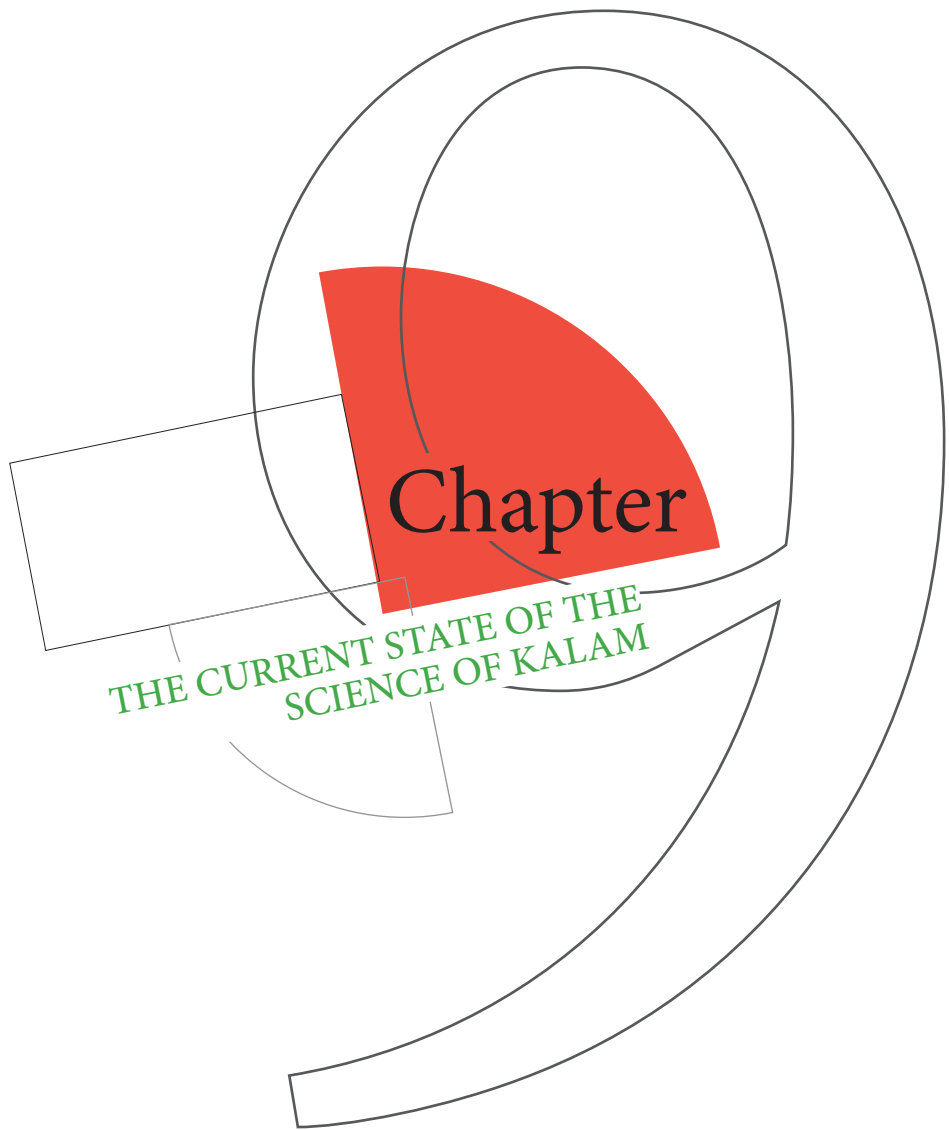
1. Which one of the following choices *is not* a reflection of the concept of fate in terms of the universe?
  - A) Rising of the sun
  - B) States of the moon
  - C) Environmental pollution
  - D) Rain
  - E) Clap of thunder
2. Which one of the following choices *is correct* concerning disasters?
  - A) People can be protected from disasters.
  - B) It is not possible to be protected from disasters.
  - C) People must escape from disasters.
  - D) Disasters are for bad people.
  - E) We should not try to understand the reasons for disasters.
3. Which one of the following choices *is correct* regarding the stages of *tawakkul*?
  - A) Thinking – action – taking refuge in Allah
  - B) Taking refuge in Allah – thinking – action
  - C) Action – thinking – taking refuge in Allah
  - D) Thinking – waiting – action
  - E) Taking refuge in Allah – action – thinking

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(order, destiny, time, he strives)

1. The law that Allah established in the universe is called .....
  2. Everything in the universe is created in accordance with a/an .....
  3. “And that there is not for man except that [good] for which .....”  
(Najm, 53: 39)
- D) The understanding of destiny is an important issue for people. Discuss with your friends the positive and negative effects caused by people’s understanding of fate.





Chapter

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE  
SCIENCE OF KALAM



## THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SCIENCE OF KALAM

### LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. What kind of criticisms do you hear today regarding the principles of faith? Remark.
2. What kind of role can the science of *kalam* have in the protection of the principles of faith and morality in society? Research.
3. Investigate the terms “deism, agnosticism, positivism, and nihilism” from a dictionary of philosophy. Then share your findings with your friends.
4. What is the purpose of the creation of human beings? Research.

### 1. The Science of Kalam Today

The Prophet Muhammad delivered the revelation that he received from Allah to his Companions; at the same time, he addressed various questions that occupied the minds of his Companions. For example, when one of them talked about feeling a kind of doubt in his heart about faith, the Prophet replied to him by saying “*This is faith itself.*”<sup>1</sup> and stressed the importance of the transformation of the imitative faith (*taqlid*) to ascertained faith (*tahqiq*), which can be achieved by contemplating and questioning.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of the Prophet, believers continued to look for answers to their problems concerning issues of faith. Some internal dynamics like the problem of understanding Qur’anic verses correctly and response to political events, as well as some external dynamics such as cultural interactions faced by Muslims in newly conquered lands, were enough to create new theological problems. Islamic societies took advantage of methods of the science of *kalam* in answering

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim, Iman, 209, 211

<sup>2</sup> Abu Dawud, Adab, 109

problems regarding the Islamic creed. Therefore, various opinions and thoughts about faith emerged under the broad sphere of freedom of thought.

There was no change in the principles of faith that the science of *kalam* explained and defended from the beginning until today. Muslim societies today, however, still come across many problems regarding the issues of faith. Thus, it is an obligation to defend the principles of faith through applying today's knowledge, mentality, culture and methods against criticisms of the time to this science.

The books on *kalam* written in the classical period gave place to many proofs like the proof of *huduth* and the proof of *imkan* in order to prove the existence of Allah (*Isbat al-Wajib*). Yet, all these methods of proof may not be considered valid and sufficient today, because religious beliefs were dominant among the communities of the period when classical *kalam* books were written, and irreligious trends like atheism were not so common. However, the science of *kalam* develops solutions by using new methods and discourses to the problems of belief put forth by the movements of disbelief, which are widespread today. Therefore, the current science of Islamic theology deals not only with how people can attain true belief but also with various kinds of belief systems.

Today the science of *kalam* examines the classical culture of *kalam* that was formed around the Islamic principles of faith by using a critical approach and contributes to the emergence of a new religious thought without severing ties with the past. The science of *kalam* in Muslim societies today continues to exist by means of academic studies that specify the importance of giving a greater role to science and rationality, in addition to utilizing information that comes from *naql* (textual sources of the Qur'an and hadith). Some of the studies in this framework are just like a repetition of the classical culture of *kalam* and are about the history of *kalam*; but a large number of them deal with new theological problems that emerged under the influence of contemporary trends.

Studies within the context of the science of *kalam* today continue to rely on revelation as well as intellectual deductions and senses, as they did in the past. Yet, the new *kalam* also takes the interpretations of the outcomes of the social and positive sciences into consideration. Therefore, the relationship between both the natural and social sciences and *kalam* developed remarkably. For instance, the field researches on the relationship between society and religion provide significant data for the science of *kalam* today.

Subjects covered by *kalam* have not changed, as modern sciences could not answer the main questions that earlier Muslim theology discussed, but the

### LET'S DISCUSS

Why is there a need for applying new methods in the science of *kalam* today?

Discuss.

methods to discuss these subjects have been changing. The science of *kalam* evolves continuously and is renewed due to new criticisms directed against the principles of faith, and because of social changes. Hence, the science of *kalam* today wants to improve a kind of methodology that keeps religious life and consciousness of faith alive in a way that addresses the human mind and heart.

## 2. Contemporary Theological Problems

New philosophical movements based on human reason substituted the systems of thought affiliated to Christian beliefs in the West, especially because of the Renaissance and Reform movements and renewed methods of the natural sciences and philosophy. Along with the age of Enlightenment, some movements have arisen asserting that God's intervention on earth is out of the question, and it is not possible to prove the idea of God. Moreover, various trends that appeared in the 19th century came forward with atheistic ideas and the denial of moral values. This kind of thoughts, which caused the spread of unbelief and dissolution of the social structure, has become widespread over time among Muslim communities. The new science of *kalam* that emerged in our age endeavored to demonstrate the contradictions of these trends and to answer their criticisms against religion. Today, trends like positivism, nihilism, and atheism that deny the existence of God have lost their former vigor, but despite this, they keep their existence as a kind of consciousness and attitude. For this reason, the movements denying God and morals continue to be among the most important subjects of *kalam* today.

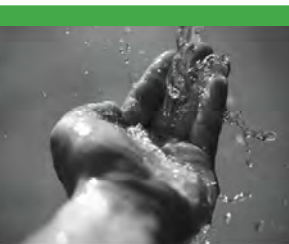
### 2.1. Deism

#### LET'S NOTE

##### Fundamentals of Deism

- Reaching the existence of God not through religion but through the structure of reason.
- God is the One who created the universe, but He never intervenes in the universe after its creation.
- Rejecting revelation and prophethood.
- Objecting to all sorts of miracles.
- Human reason can establish the principles of morality itself, which can be sufficient for salvation.





*Islamic belief calls attention to the viability of the relationships between Allah, human beings, and the universe.*

Deism has arisen first as a belief system that rejects Christianity and its Holy Scriptures, while accepting the existence of God as the Creator of the universe. Today, it is considered as a belief system that accepts the existence of God without being affiliated with any particular revealed divine religion, and rejects the attributes of God like Omniscience and Divine Will; objects to God's acts, wisdom, and grace in the universe, and denies revelation, prophethood, and the hereafter. Therefore, deism is a philosophical movement that acknowledges the existence of God as the first cause of the universe; on the other hand it meets revelation and prophecy with suspicion or rejects them totally. For example, in the 18th century, one of the pioneers of the Enlightenment movement, Voltaire, always criticized the Sacred Texts and religious institutions belonging to Christianity in a sarcastic manner. Likewise, Rousseau, who was a very influential thinker of the 18th century and one of the intellectuals who prepared the French Revolution, claimed the human mind can distinguish between good and evil without needing a guidance by revelation.

Islamic belief calls attention to the viability of the relationships between Allah, human beings, and the universe, because Allah is the Supreme Being who interferes in the universe every moment by His creative acts, His knowledge, infinite wisdom, and grace. Allah is not just an agent of a creation, which happened all at once, but rather He keeps constantly creating at every moment. This is expressed in the Qur'an: "يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ", "Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is bringing about a matter."<sup>3</sup>

As He creates every moment of the universe, He also interferes in human life and history by sending revelation. He sent messages to people through His prophets whom He chose. Revelation is the direct intervention of Allah in history and people's affairs. Human beings gain value in the presence of Allah by their belief, worship, and prayer as a response to His messages. This is the communication of a person with his Creator. The relationships between Allah, who created this universe, and the universe that submits to Him by working in accordance with the laws established by Allah; and between Allah, who sends messages to people and human beings who respond to these messages by their worship and prayer to Him, find their meaning in the understanding of the concepts of creator-created, prophethood, and worship in Islam. In Islamic

<sup>3</sup> Rahman, 55: 29

belief, the relationship between Allah, the universe, and human beings is not like the relationship claimed by deism, which is the relationship of “maker and made” that happened at one time and then came to an end. The continuous creation is a dynamic and vibrant correlation that descends from Allah to the universe, and to people through revelation and mercy..

### LET'S MAKE A LIST

“And We have already sent [messengers] to nations before you, [O Muhammad]; then We seized them with poverty and hardship that perhaps they might humble themselves [to Us].” (An'am, 6: 42)

“And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein” (Qaf, 50: 16)

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.” (Baqarah, 2: 186)

Which claims of deism are rejected by the verses given above? Make a list.

## 2.2. Polytheism

Allah the Almighty sent all the prophets from Adam to Muhammad with a common message. This common message is *tawhid*, the essence of which is the Oneness of God. It is declared in the Qur'an: “**And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allah and avoid Taghut.’ And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers.**”<sup>4</sup> Research in the field of the history of religions demonstrates that early beliefs depended on the Unity of God, and polytheism today emerged later as a heretical belief.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout history, there appeared people who adopted gods other than Allah. Some of them embraced natural forces, some of them embraced spirits, and some accepted self-made objects as idols, or they believed that there were other gods besides Allah. In some communities, polytheistic beliefs

<sup>4</sup> Nahl, 16: 36

<sup>5</sup> Günay Tümer, “Din,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9, p. 317

demonstrated themselves as each tribe having its own gods to worship. In whatever way it demonstrated itself, polytheism is the common name used for such beliefs that worship more than one god. Polytheistic beliefs were seen in Babylonia, Assyria, Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt, some African societies, and during the age of ignorance in Arab society.

#### LET'S READ AND FIND

“And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say, ‘Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?’ Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.”

(Yunus, 10:18)

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.’”

(Ahqaf, 46: 4)

Why is polytheists' worship of idols objected to in the verses stated above? Find the reasons for it.

Arabs before Islam had polytheistic beliefs. They believed in a Supreme Being that they called “Allah”, “Aziz” and “Alim”, who created them and the whole universe, put the sun and the moon into a specific order, and made the earth convenient for nourishment of all living things by sending rain.<sup>6</sup> They swore by His name, taking refuge in Him when they fell into trouble or danger, and accepted Him as the Lord of the Ka’bah.<sup>7</sup> However, they also worshipped idols beside their belief in the Supreme God, believed that these idols would bring them closer to God, and be intercessors for them in the presence of God.<sup>8</sup> Each one of these idols, the names of some of which have been mentioned in the Qur’an, belonged to different tribes and their numbers were in the hundreds. In this respect, worshipping something other than Allah and associating partners with Him is called “*shirk*” in the Qur’an; those who commit *shirk* by ascribing partners to Allah are called “*mushrik*”.

<sup>6</sup> Ankabut, 29: 61-63; Zukhruf, 43: 9

<sup>7</sup> An’am, 6: 40-41-109; Nahl, 16: 38; Yunus, 10: 22; Quraysh, 106: 3

<sup>8</sup> Yunus, 10: 18; Zumar, 39: 3

The Prophet Muhammad and all other prophets that came before him fought with *shirk* and called people to worship only Allah the Almighty. From this perspective, the whole history of humanity can be interpreted as a combat between *tawhid* that refers to the Oneness of Allah and *shirk*, which refers to associating partners with Him. For instance, in the Holy Qur'an it is expressed that all prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Saleh, Shu'ayb, Jonah, and others invited people to worship only Allah.

It is a significant point that the Holy Qur'an dwells on the Oneness of Allah rather than on His existence, because people have always believed in the existence of a creating power. It is, however, expressed that faith in God should be without ascribing partners to Him in the Qur'an as follows: **“And most of them believe not in Allah except while they associate others with Him.”**<sup>9</sup> In this respect, it is pointed out in the Qur'an that people may idolize not just certain material objects but also their lust and desires, worldly aspirations, certain people who are special for them, and Satan. As a result, they may mix a kind of polytheism with their faith.

#### LET'S EXPRESS

“He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.”

(Hashr, 59: 23)

According to the verse, how should belief in Allah that avoids *shirk* be? Express.

According to the expressions in the Qur'an, ascribing partners to Allah is not just a simple form of belief. In addition to that, people who associate partners with Allah are discussed in the Qur'an as being arrogant, randy, offensive, liars, rude, and despotic. The reflections of *shirk* in social life can be observed in the following traits: looking down on others, preventing good deeds, dividing people into several classes, and having a kind of conception of society far from equality and justice. That's why the belief in *tawhid* in the Qur'an requires the believers to have a moral sensitivity towards others

<sup>9</sup> Yusuf, 12: 106

and their environment, and to have integrity of personality. The Qur'an has shown that the principle of the Oneness of Allah is related to the principles of social and economic equality in society, by prohibiting some actions that harm the social and economic balance, like extortion and theft, as well as by encouraging the performance of certain acts of worship which provide social cohesion such as *hajj* (pilgrimage) and *zakat* (almsgiving). Thus, the Prophet Muhammad emphasized the belief in *tawhid* that builds a community based on solidarity and equality among people by removing the belief of *shirk*, which is based on social and racial discrimination by accepting various idols, and thus advocating for a fragmented and tribal social structure.

The Qur'an demands people not only believe in the existence of Allah but also believe in Him as the only God who creates and gives meaning and life to everything. This is also necessary for believers in order to achieve a healthy personality by becoming liberated from false beliefs. Faith in Allah as the only God who creates everything, has the absolute power, and encompasses the creation with His mercy reinforces the sense of equality and justice; enables people to comprehend life in this world in unity, and reminds them that the source of all beauty is the same. As it is expressed in the Qur'an, *shirk* is the cause of people's and society's downfall. This is explained in the following verse: **"And it was already revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers."**<sup>10</sup>

### 2.3. Mysticism

Mysticism has been defined in different ways by the terminology of various religions and beliefs. Mysticism has developed under different names among the members of all religions as an experience that goes beyond the seen world to reach the invisible realm. Mysticism is the term used for people's spiritual experience in attaining the unseen unity and reality (*batin*) beyond the visible objects (*zahir*), and for the thought that expresses this spiritual experience.

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<sup>10</sup> Zumar, 39: 65

**LET'S NOTE**

## Basic Ideas of Mysticism:

- There is an unseen reality beyond the seen realm.
- There is an inner “I”, which is beyond human’s visible “I”.
- A person can reach God by exceeding his or her normal borders.
- The knowledge of reality can be attained only by *kashf* (reconnaissance) and *ilham* (inspiration).

The most distinctive aspect of the mystic experience is the mystics’ claim that they have contact with God without an intermediary. For instance, while the absolute truth is expressed as a living God by the mystics who believe in divine religions, truth is identified as inanimate beings like “nirvana”, “the one”, and “the good” by mystics who believe in man-made religions and the mystics who follow philosophical schools. According to mystics, the absolute truth is transcendental. However, at the same time, the absolute truth is an internal and essential being of the universe, which is within time and space.

All mystical schools believe that people can reach sublime levels through a high cognizance in their own soul, by exceeding their normal capacity, and can be united with god. According to a mystical understanding, people possess two “egos”. The first “ego”, which is vile and selfish, is the biggest obstacle to reaching the mystical experience. The other “ego”, which can be reached by transcending beyond the former “ego” through purifying the soul, staying away from worldly pleasures and controlling all desires, is a sublime one that can comprehend the inner unity of the universe, and has the ability to be united with the absolute truth.

Mysticism is also known as Gnosticism (*Irfaniyya*) for it considers *kashf* (mystical revelations) and *ilham* (inspiration) as the sources of knowledge. According to Gnosticism, god and the true knowledge of things can be attained through intuitive power and *wajd* (ecstasy), and by keeping the physical experience of the senses and reason outside. Muslim mystics also have accepted knowledge attained by *kashf* and *ilham* as the source of true knowledge.

Imam Maturidi, who stated for the first time that *ilham* cannot be considered a source of knowledge, and theologians who follow in his footsteps, accept that the sources of knowledge for human beings are revelation, intellect, and

## LET'S DISCUSS

Why do the views of mysticism not comply with the principles of Islam?

Discuss with your friends.

the senses. The scholars of *kalam* have expressed that it is possible that some knowledge can be inspired in people's hearts, but they also express that *ilham* (inspiration) is subjective and cannot constitute a definitive source of generally applicable knowledge. Based on this point, the science of *kalam* acknowledges that *ilham* cannot be used as evidence in religious matters.

## 2.4. Agnosticism

Agnosticism is the term for a philosophical movement arguing that the human mind cannot reach the absolute truth about God and the universe.<sup>11</sup> Agnosticism emerged in Ancient Greece for the first time around the ideas of Protagoras. He thought that reaching knowledge of whether or not there is a god and the nature of god is far beyond human capacity.<sup>12</sup> Huxley first used the term "agnostic" in the Modern West in 1869. For Huxley, many movements of human thought prove the existence of God in their own way. It is, however, not possible to attain knowledge concerning God within the limits of the human mind.

### LET'S NOTE

In Islamic theology, sophists have been discussed in three groups:

Agnostics (*Laadriyyun*): Those who claim it is not possible to attain knowledge.

Sceptics (*Inadiyyun*): Those who doubt the possibility of the existence of knowledge and doubt all kinds of attained knowledge.

Subjectivists, Relativists (*Indiyyun*): Those who claim that objective knowledge is impossible, and that knowledge itself is subjective.

In the history of Islam, those who followed agnostic ideas were known as "*Laadriyyun*", which is one of the branches of sophists who doubt the possibility of the existence of objective knowledge. According to them, people cannot know whether there is knowledge and truth or not.<sup>13</sup> For agnostics, it is impossible to say "there is a god" or to say "there is no god", because it cannot be known. The skeptical attitudes of agnostics in the history of Islam were criticized by both the Mu'tazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah theologians, especially concerning the possibility of gaining knowledge of whether God exists or not. Theologians have expressed that the human mind and senses can attain

<sup>11</sup> Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Felsefi Doktrinler ve Terimler Sözlüğü*, p.54, 55

<sup>12</sup> Macit Gökberk, *Felsefe Tarihi*, p. 43

<sup>13</sup> Jurjani, *Al-Ta'rifat*, p. 244

objective knowledge and knowledge about the existence of God. Especially the efforts of Imam Ghazali, which aimed to refute the skeptic views by defending the possibility of objective knowledge, prevented this movement from spreading among Muslims.

#### LET'S NOTE

Agnosticism in the science of *kalam* is expressed with the term “*Laadriyyun*”, which is derived from the Arabic verb “*La adri*”, which means “I don’t know”. According to Islamic belief, in order to believe in something, the person must have certain knowledge about what he believes in. Therefore, faith and attestation cannot be together with the doctrine of agnosticism, because attestation by the heart cannot be achieved unless people have certain knowledge. Faith does not accept any doubt, hesitation and uncertainty.

According to current understanding, a typical agnostic is someone who does not exert special effort in order to prove the nonexistence of God, while he does not regulate his life in accordance with the claim that God exists. However, according to the Qur’an, holding people responsible for their acts depends on belief in God and the hereafter. If knowledge regarding existence is not possible as the agnostics asserted, knowledge about Allah, the prophets, and the hereafter would also not be possible, and so it would be impossible to talk about common values among people. The idea of the impossibility of proving the existence of God can lead to the spread of disbelief. Moreover, the denial of common values may become one of the greatest obstacles in creating a society united and directed to the same destination. The Qur’an, however, informs that people should believe in the existence of Allah and His oneness, and should use their free will in the direction of building a community on this earth based on morality and justice.

## 2.5. Positivism

Positivism is a movement that emerged with the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857). According to this movement, people can achieve only empirical knowledge that is based on determination of positive occurrences and visible phenomena. All knowledge that cannot be attained directly through experiment is theological and metaphysical, and as such, they are just figments of the imagination. Thus, Auguste Comte rejected religion and metaphysics,



arguing that we cannot perceive them with our senses and cannot prove their reality through experiment, whereas he accepted physics and the mathematical sciences.

One of the basic arguments of positivism is related to the historical development of thought. According to this argument, people first imagined the beings in the universe as living things, and then believed in various gods that govern the universe. Later on, in place of the belief in many gods, people reached the belief in one God, who creates the universe by Himself, rules it and breaks the order that He created in the universe through miracles when necessary. Today, people refuse all kinds of knowledge that cannot be experimentally proven.<sup>14</sup> Thus, since the 19th century, positivism has argued that religiosity is something that belongs to the initial period of the history of human thought, and human beings who have been intellectually evolving can no longer rely on anything other than positive sciences.

### LET'S DISCUSS

#### The Basic Arguments of Positivism

- Human beings can attain knowledge of only visible phenomena.
- Religion and metaphysics, which are not included in the physical and mathematical sciences, are rejected.
- Belief is a phenomenon that belongs only to the primitive period of humanity.
- Belief will disappear and people will adhere only to the positive sciences.

Discuss with your friends the inconsistencies in the arguments given above.

Recent research in the field of the history of religions demonstrates that there have been monotheistic beliefs since the beginning of the history of humanity, and monotheism did not emerge in later periods. Belief was not a need just in primitive communities; it is a need of all people at all times. Worship and prayer do not necessitate the idea that thinking and experiments are not necessary, just as people's belief in god does not mean their disbelief in science, because faith is not an obstacle to reasoning. On the contrary, religion, philosophy, and science exist to find solutions to people's material and spiritual problems. Philosophy and science are enlightening fields for those who conceive of religion correctly. Even Auguste Comte during the last stages

<sup>14</sup> Macit Gökberk, *Felsefe Tarihi*, p. 466

of his life, who considered religion to be the product of primitive periods of society, and thought human beings would not need a religion in the future with the advancement of science anymore, attempted to establish a positive religion whose god is humanity and whose miracles are scientific discoveries.

According to the Qur'an, the Prophet Adam was the first human being as well as the first prophet. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that many prophets were sent before the Prophet Muhammad. It is also emphasized in the Qur'an that the Prophet Muhammad was not the first messenger appointed by Allah.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, except in some societies, which deviated from the right path, the belief in Allah is a belief that people have had in general throughout history. Besides, all prophets delivered the principles of this belief and called people to faith in One God, justice, and morality.

People's need to believe is one of the greatest realities of life that demonstrates the invalidity of arguments of positivism. On the other hand, religious research concerning primitive communities and recent developments in science has led to severe criticisms of positivism. Thus, positivism lost its influence in the contemporary era on a large scale. However, today many people who claim that they act in the name of reason and science, and have positivist consciousness and approaches, also direct some criticisms against beliefs. They want to refuse all kinds of religious and moral values. The negative and demeaning expressions used about Islam like "outdated" and "the religion of those who lived 1400 years ago..." can be considered reflections of this positivist approach. However, today's pioneering scientists who have improved the science with their new theories speak of the existence of God in contravention to positivist scientists who denied the existence of God living 50 years before them, and this clearly shows that the idea of positivism has become untenable.

## 2.6. Atheism

In a general sense, atheism means unbelief in the existence of God. In other words, atheism is a belief that not only denies the existence of God but also rejects the idea of His existence by presenting proofs. Those who believe in the nonexistence of God assert that they reach the idea of god's nonexistence based on some kind of reasoning, and act in accordance with this disbelief. Therefore, we can say that atheism is also a type of belief, which appears to be

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<sup>15</sup> Ahqaf, 46: 9

a form of faith opposite to the belief in god. So, an atheist can be defined as a person who does not accept the existence of a god who creates everything and controls the universe. An atheist is also a person who exerts effort to prove his or her claims about god's nonexistence.

Atheism has existed, even if it was on an individual level, in various periods of history. As a reaction to the idea of belief in God, atheism was embraced by some philosophers in the Western world. It has, however, been losing its intellectual basis and is weakening today.

TYPES OF ATHEISM AND THEIR BASIC CLAIMS				
Absolute Atheism:	Theoretical Atheism:	Practical Atheism:	Unconcerned Atheism:	Ideological Atheism:
It claims that the human being is inherently faithless. According to this current, there is no concept of God in the human mind; therefore, there is no need to reject God who already does not exist.	It criticizes evidences that aim to prove the existence of God, and tries to put forth proofs concerning His nonexistence. The concepts of angels, miracles, revelation, prophecy, and the hereafter, which are related to belief in God, are refused.	It is the attitude of people who live as if there is no God and do exclude God in their everyday life. An atheist who has this attitude does not think in the slightest about God and tries to keep himself away from religion and all types of worship.	It is meaningless to discuss about whether God exists or not. All people who claim there is God as well as those who try to prove His nonexistence are wrong.	Atheism was sometimes advocated as an ideological principle and considered as the basis of political views. As a result of this kind of atheism, defended by socialist regimes, all kinds of religious beliefs, institutions, worship, ceremonies, habits, customs, and traditions were severely rejected and prohibited.

The concept of atheism among Muslim communities is expressed with the term “*ilhad*”, and the atheist is referred to with various terms such as “*mulhid*”, “*kafir*”, and “*zindiq*”. *Ilhad* is a word used in the sense of denying the basic principles of the religion like the existence of God, His oneness, and the hereafter, also doubting and arousing suspicion about them. Even though some small fractions emerged

in Muslim societies by rejecting the oneness of Allah, denying prophethood, and the hereafter, and accepting that matter is not created, atheism has never been a serious problem in Muslim societies. In the Holy Qur'an, it has dealt with people who deny the oneness of Allah by ascribing partners to Him rather than discussing people who completely reject His existence.

“...WE WILL WORSHIP YOUR GOD AND THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS,  
ABRAHAM AND ISHMAEL AND ISAAC, THE ONE GOD...”

(Baqarah, 2: 133)

“Against the argument that ‘God has died’, everybody should find the answers to these three questions: Which God has died? Who killed Him? And why was He killed? If the dead renders a concept that is the source of crimes, despair, fear, and terror, then let Him die. If today metaphysics demolishes the structure by its own internal dissolution and nihilism, which it has established for centuries, let it be demolished. But, if the One wanted to be killed refers to ‘the God of Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac’, as a common statement of the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an, it is not possible to say that even a single atheist has ever been able to succeed in it until now.”

Mehmet S. Aydın, *Din Felsefesi*, p. 227

The science of *kalam* has proven the existence of God, holding forth various proofs like *huduth*, *imkan*, *purpose*, and *order*. Some other proofs have been presented by the philosophers in order to prove the existence of Allah. Ontological proof, the proof of morality, and the proof of religious experience can be listed among them. Atheists have attacked these proofs, which aim to prove the existence of God, but they have not been able to put forward any certain proof that shows the nonexistence of Allah. Atheists also attribute the formation of the universe to coincidence as opposed to those who say Allah created the universe.

In the Qur'an, it is stressed that evidence of the existence of God can be seen both in people themselves and in the external world. According to the Qur'an, belief in God comes from people's nature, and denying Him is just an illusion. The external world, also, is full of signs that demonstrate the existence of God. Regarding this matter, it is stated in the Qur'an: “**And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.**”<sup>16</sup> The Qur'an deals with some issues like the excellent structure of the universe in harmony and

<sup>16</sup> Jathiyah, 45: 13

order, suitability of the world for human life. The Holy Qur'an expresses that all these are signs of the existence of God and His oneness for those who have eyes to see, minds to think, and hearts to take lessons.

### READING TEXT

*Is Life on This Earth a Coincidence?*

*Hold 10 tokens in your hand and number them from one to 10. Then put them in your pocket and mix them. Then try to take them out of your pocket in the order from one to 10, the result will be as follows:*

*The chance of pulling the token number one out is at the rate of one-tenth; the rate of pulling out the tokens number one followed by number two is one percent; the chance of pulling out the tokens number one, two, three, and four in order is at the rate of one in 10,000. Thus it can be observed that the chance of pulling out all tokens in the order from one to 10 is at the rate of one in 10 billion.*

*Our purpose for giving this simple example is to demonstrate to our readers how the numbers increase against coincidence.*

*Without a doubt, life on earth depends on numerous fundamental conditions. The coincidental existence of such conditions at a certain place, at a certain time, and being connected to each another with strong ties is mathematically impossible. Hence, in nature there is a real guiding power, which directs everything. If we accept this fact as a truth, we can witness the existence of aim and purpose.*

*(Cressy Morrisson, İlim İman Etmeyi Gerektirir, p. 5)*

## 2.7. Nihilism

Nihilism is a philosophical trend that objects to existing values, beliefs, political systems, and asserts there is no reality regarding existence. Nihilist is the one who does not accept any philosophical reality, does not adopt the existing social order, rejects all kinds of political authorities, and does not recognize any moral values.

The fundamentals of nihilism are rooted back in Schopenhauer's (d.1860) pessimistic view of the world. According to him, this universe has no meaning, the world is entirely bad and nonexistence is better than existence. While Muslim theologians acknowledge that Allah has created the best possible world, Schopenhauer asserts that this world is the worst possible one, and the will that has formed this world is blind and has no intelligence and consciousness at all.

Nietzsche, who followed this pessimistic world view, came up with an aimless, negative, and pessimistic understanding of nihilism as a reflection of a

troublesome mood denying all kinds of moral values. Nihilism, in a pessimistic way, not only puts forth that there are no moral values like good and bad and there is no meaning of existence, but also consists of an approach that aims to demolish what it does not believe. Nietzsche claims that people have to create their own self by themselves in order to gain their freedom, and adds that this becomes impossible if people accept the existence of God.

Nihilism is conceiving the universe unilaterally in a depressed mood by focusing only on evils in the universe. According to Islamic belief, the idea that the universe consists of just evils contradicts Allah's mercy (*rahmah*), grace (*lutf*), and assistance (*inayah*). The Qur'an expresses that the universe has been created in conformity with human life, and many kinds of blessings have been offered to the service of humankind. Clean and nice kinds of sustenance have also been granted to human beings. People are encouraged to benefit from these kinds of sustenance, to wear them, to drink and eat them, and to wander on earth by utilizing them. However, people are expected to be thankful in return for these blessings and to observe their environment in order to draw lessons from it. Hence, a pessimistic mood that is not able to see the beauties in the universe is not befitting for a Muslim.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The views of Nietzsche should not be directly considered as a criticism towards Islam, because the God that this thinker rejects is not the Allah of Islam. Nietzsche grew up in a culture in which the belief was that Jesus was tragically crucified; human beings are born as sinners and cannot be acquitted unless they go to church and be baptized there; and people will be thrown into fire if they commit sins and are scared with hell after death. He uttered the freedom of thought of a community that was smashed under the wars of religion for years as well as under the pressure of the church. Therefore, his ideas should be understood and evaluated by paying attention to the circumstances in which they were argued.

(Aydın Topaloğlu, *Ateizm ve Eleştirisi*, compiled from p. 153-154)

**LET'S READ AND INTERPRET**

“Does man think that he will be left neglected?” (Qiyamah, 75: 36)

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Dhariyat, 51: 56)

“...And despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” (Yusuf, 12: 87)

Interpret the verses given above in the context of why nihilism does not conform with the principles of Islamic belief.

According to Islamic belief, people were not created in vain. Their aim is to worship Allah and to achieve happiness both in this world and in the hereafter by acting virtuously. Whether or not they achieve this aim depends on human's own free will. The fact that people were not created in vain keeps them from purposelessness and pessimism, because belief in Allah whose mercy, grace, and forgiveness is endless causes people to be at peace. At the same time, people create their moral identity by being worried about the hereafter where they will get the return of actions performed in this world by their own free will, and by being afraid of not gaining the pleasure of Allah who created them. The spiritual basis of morality and righteous deeds is faith in Allah and the Day of Resurrection.

**2.8. Satanism**

The roots of Satanism, which means worshipping Satan, go back to the medieval magicians and even some heretical groups that separated from Christianity. This kind of Satanism, known as traditional Satanism, was born as opposed to Christian understanding of Satan, views of life, the world, and morality.

On the other hand, modern Satanism that appeared in the USA takes opposition and rebellion, which are considered as the most predominant characteristics of Satan, as its basis. Thereby, Satanism is a movement that opposes Christianity in particular as well as all religions and religious values in general, at the same time, it represents standing by Satan and everything that Satan represents. Satanists usually see the youth who have troubles in their lives as the target audience, and they try to make them adopt their own satanic ideas. Moreover, Satanists encourage committing violent acts like persecuting people and animals, suicide, and homicide during their rituals.

**LET'S FIND**

Find verses from the Qur'an that shows how Satan deceives people.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Modern Satanism was born with the establishment of the Church of Satan by a Hungarian American, Anton Szandor LaVey, in San Francisco in 1966. LaVey directed his activities towards people outside of his church members and wrote some books. “The Satanic Bible” and “The Satanic Rituals” can be listed among the most important of his books, which explain the basic principles and rituals of Satanism.

Satanism, from an individual perspective, is a sign of psychological deterioration. From a social perspective, it is the source of negativities such as moral collapse, degeneration of basic values that keep the society together, damage of the social and cultural structure, alienation from national and spiritual feelings. Satanism breaks off family ties and drags the youth to commit suicide and other kinds of heretical actions.

The Holy Qur’an wants people to worship only Allah and to be in the company of only good people. Following Satan, who rebelled against Allah and was expelled from His presence, means to follow empty promises, deceptions, ugliness, and evil. The Satan who rebelled against Allah is also the people’s enemy. In this respect, it is mentioned in the Qur’an: **“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about Allah what you do not know.”**<sup>17</sup>

## 2.9. Tanasuh and Reincarnation

*Tanasuh* lexically means something following another thing, something’s circulation from hand to hand, the rotation of a thing, and taking the place of another. Terminologically, it refers to the belief that asserts the embodiment of the spirits of dead people, the body of an animal or a human being. *Tanasuh* is expressed by the term “reincarnation” in Western languages.

Belief in reincarnation emerged in Hinduism in India, and then was adopted by Buddhism and other Far Eastern religions. The religions that accept belief in reincarnation deny belief in the hereafter. Thus, according to these religions, the reward for goodness is the rise of the soul of the dead and its re-embodiment in another human body; and the punishment for evil is the descent of the soul

<sup>17</sup> Baqarah, 2: 168-169



and its re-embodiment in an animal body. For instance, there is the law of cause-and-effect in Hinduism called “karma”. According to this law, the immortal human soul will come back to the world in another body in return for what this human did in the past. The circulation of the soul from body to body may ascend this soul to maturity. If the human soul purifies itself, after experiencing many embodiments in animal or human bodies, it attains ultimate happiness and merges into the creator god, Brahma. Likewise, according to Buddhism, a transition of a soul to another body occurs encompassing all living things from the tiniest insect to human beings. Salvation of the soul (Nirvana) can be possible by ceasing the relation with worldly life, overpowering all desires of the soul at the stage of being in a human body.

### LET'S TALK

What is the role of belief in the hereafter in correcting our behavior?

Express your opinions.

Transfers between religious and social classes (the caste system) in Hinduism can only be achieved by reincarnation. For example, a person in the class of workers and slaves in the caste system can ascend to a higher class in that person's next life if he or she becomes a good slave in the existing life. This belief also ensures that higher classes keep the lower classes under control.

### LET'S INTERPRET

“[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord, send me back, so that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.’ No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected. So when the Horn is blown, no relationship will there be among them that Day, nor will they ask about one another. And those whose scales are heavy [with good deeds] – it is they who are the successful. But those whose scales are light – those are the ones who have lost their souls, [being] in Hell, abiding eternally.”

(Mu'minun, 23: 99-103)

Interpret the verses expressed above in terms of belief in reincarnation and the hereafter.

As in other Abrahamic religions, reincarnation is rejected in Islam, because the Qur'an reports that people will be questioned about their good and bad deeds in the hereafter. According to statements in the Qur'an, when those who follow the wrong path see the return of what they did in the hereafter, they will ask permission to go back to the world in order to perform righteous deeds. This is depicted in the 167th verse of Surah al-Baqarah as follows: “Those who

followed will say, ‘If only we had another turn [at worldly life] so we could disassociate ourselves from them as they have disassociated themselves from us.’ Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets upon them? And they are never to emerge from the Fire.’

The religion of Islam, which advocates the belief in the hereafter, does not accept the resurrection of the human soul after death within a new body. In the Qur’an, it has been stated that the desire to come back to this world after death is a useless expectation for those who did not perform righteous deeds in their worldly life. On the Day of Recompense, people whose good deeds outweigh their bad ones on the scale will be entertained in paradise adorned with the blessings by Allah, be far from fear and sadness, and have a face shining with happiness. As for those who are resurrected by their evil deeds, they will be sent to hellfire with their blackened faces in fear. In this respect, *akhirah* (the hereafter) is the other life in which people will get the return for what they did or did not do with their own free choice. Thus, believing in the continuous transition of the soul from one body to another body becomes a paradox for a person who believes in the hereafter.

### 3. The New Science of Kalam

The science of *kalam* explains the principles of faith and responds to criticisms against these principles. Throughout its long history, the science of *kalam* has produced answers to problems in accordance with the principles of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and benefiting from all of intellectual history. For example, classical *kalam* works discussed subjects stemming from the understanding of the universe and matter in that period. However, the sciences that developed in the last centuries, recent philosophical movements, and new methods have necessitated essential changes in the science of *kalam* as well.

Philosophical thought has opened up a new era under the influence of the applications that reformed the religious life in Europe and of new methods developed in philosophy. These new methods and developing sciences gave rise to new philosophical currents, and these currents have shown their influences over Muslim societies especially after the 19th century. In classical *kalam* books, finding any criticism or a response against negative effects of philosophical trends such as materialism, positivism, and nihilism on Muslim societies is impossible. Thus, the new science of *kalam* is the theology of today that has arisen in order to respond to these kind of problems that did not appear in previous centuries.

#### LET'S MAKE A LIST

Write the reasons that led to the development of the new science of *kalam*.

The new science of *kalam* is a science that refuses unbelief in all its forms (atheism, agnosticism, positivism, nihilism, etc.), that replies to all kinds of criticisms towards religion, proves the existence of God by methods appropriate to our age, explains and defends the principles of Islamic faith.

The most well known among the theologians of this new era are Izmirli Ismail Hakki, Ismail Fenni Ertugrul, Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Iqbal. Those theologians that shaped the new science of *kalam* attached importance to reasoning instead of just imitating, and to rethinking the knowledge that comes from the past within the framework of the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They developed new approaches, paying attention to the whole Muslim community instead of approaches based on only certain groups. They reviewed the problems of classical *kalam* and opened discussions about them while dealing with present theological problems in their works.

In some of the works written relating to the new science of *kalam*, the basic issues of *aqaid* (beliefs) were argued in light of the problems originating from new philosophical currents. The first among them is the work of Abdullatif al-Harputi, *Tankih al-Kalam fi Aqaid-i Ahl-i Islam* (Basic Islamic Beliefs from the Theological Perspective).<sup>18</sup> In the same way, *Ussi Islam-The New Aqaid* written by Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, *Risalah al-Tawhid* by Muhammad Abduh, and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* by Muhammad Iqbal take place among the works on the new science of *kalam*. The most famous work of the period of the new science of *kalam* is written by Izmirli Ismail Hakki, *Yeni Ilm-i Kelam* (The New Science of Kalam) giving its name to that period.

Some of the books written in the period of the new science of *kalam* are works that aimed to prove the existence of God and rejected the movements of disbelief. One of the early examples of them is *al-Radd 'alad-Dahriyyin* (Rejection to Naturalism) composed by Jamaluddin al-Afghani. Likewise, *Allah'ı Inkar Mümkün müdür?* (Is it possible to deny Allah?) by Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, and *Maddiyyun Mezhebinin Izmihlali* by Ismail Fenni Ertugrul, can be mentioned among these kinds of works.

The issues handled in the works composed during the period of the new science of *kalam* differ from the subjects of the works belonging to the classical period of the science of *kalam* in some aspects. In the new period of *kalam*, proving the existence of God was considered the main problem, while God's essence and attributes were dealt with more in books of the classical period of *kalam*. It was stressed that the belief in predestination does not contradict

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<sup>18</sup> Abdullatif al-Harputi, *Tankih al-Kalam fi Aqaid-i Ahl-i Islam*, p.9

people's ability to have free choice and freely perform actions; prophecy became based on knowledge related to guidance (*hidayah*) that prophets brought instead of sensational miracles. Some different issues not discussed during the classical period, such as the relationship between religion and science and the social status of women, began to be dealt with. The attempt to establish a new type of rationalism that also takes textual sources (the Qur'an and Sunnah) into consideration in place of the rationalism and scientism of the positivist period, which excluded the unseen realm (*ghayb*) and the knowledge of the unseen, has become one of the significant subjects of the new period of the science of *kalam*.<sup>19</sup>

### LET'S COMPARE

The differences between the subjects of the classical period of *kalam* and the new science of *kalam* are given below. Compare the changed subjects in the science of *kalam* in light of today's problems concerning belief that led to this change.

The Classical Period of Kalam	Today's Problems of Faith	The New Science of Kalam
The essence and the attributes of Allah were emphasized more.	Some currents that deny the existence of God, like atheism.	Proving the existence of God and His oneness ( <i>tawhid</i> ) are focused on.
The correlation of Allah's knowledge, His will and power with the belief of destiny were emphasized more.	Claims of existentialist atheists like nihilists that assume humans can be totally free only by denying God.	The fact that belief in destiny does not contradict human free will and power is dealt with more.
<i>Naqli</i> knowledge (knowledge coming from the Qur'an and the Sunnah) was focused on; limits of senses and intellect were stressed.	The positivist worldviews claiming that knowledge can only be attained by senses and reason.	A kind of rationalism depending on revelation ( <i>wahy</i> ) is attempted to be established.
Science and the understanding of the universe in the classical period were taken as the basis.	The claim of positivism that religion is a bygone phenomenon and that science abolished religion.	The relationship between religion and science is dealt with; the idea that religious beliefs are innate is emphasized; it paid attention to the benefits of the scientific developments to the science of <i>kalam</i> .

<sup>19</sup> M. Sait Özervarlı, *Kelamda Yenilik Arayışları*, p. 11, 12, 17-35

## LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What are the reasons for the emergence of the new science of kalam?
2. What are the contemporary kalam problems? List them.
3. What are the features that make today's science of kalam different from the classical science of kalam? State them.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which belief among the following choices is rejected in the following verses? “[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.’ No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.” (Mu’minun, 23: 99-100)

- A) Polytheism                      B) Nihilism                      C) Mysticism
- D) Deism                              E) Reincarnation

2. Which one of the following is the author of the book “Yeni Ilm-i Kelam (The New Science of Kalam)”?

- A) Izmirli Ismail Hakki  
 B) Ismail Fenni Ertugrul  
 C) Jamaluddin al-Afghani  
 D) Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi  
 E) Muhammad Iqbal

3. Which one of the following translations of the verses can be used as evidence by a person who wants to show that deism is not an acceptable belief according to the Qur’an?

- A) “And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them...” (Yunus, 10: 18)  
 B) “Does man think that he will be left neglected?” (Qiyamah, 75: 36)  
 C) “Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is bringing about a matter.” (Rahman, 55: 29)  
 D) “Woe to every scorner and mocker!” (Humazah, 104: 1)  
 E) “And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith].” (Dharyat, 51: 20)

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

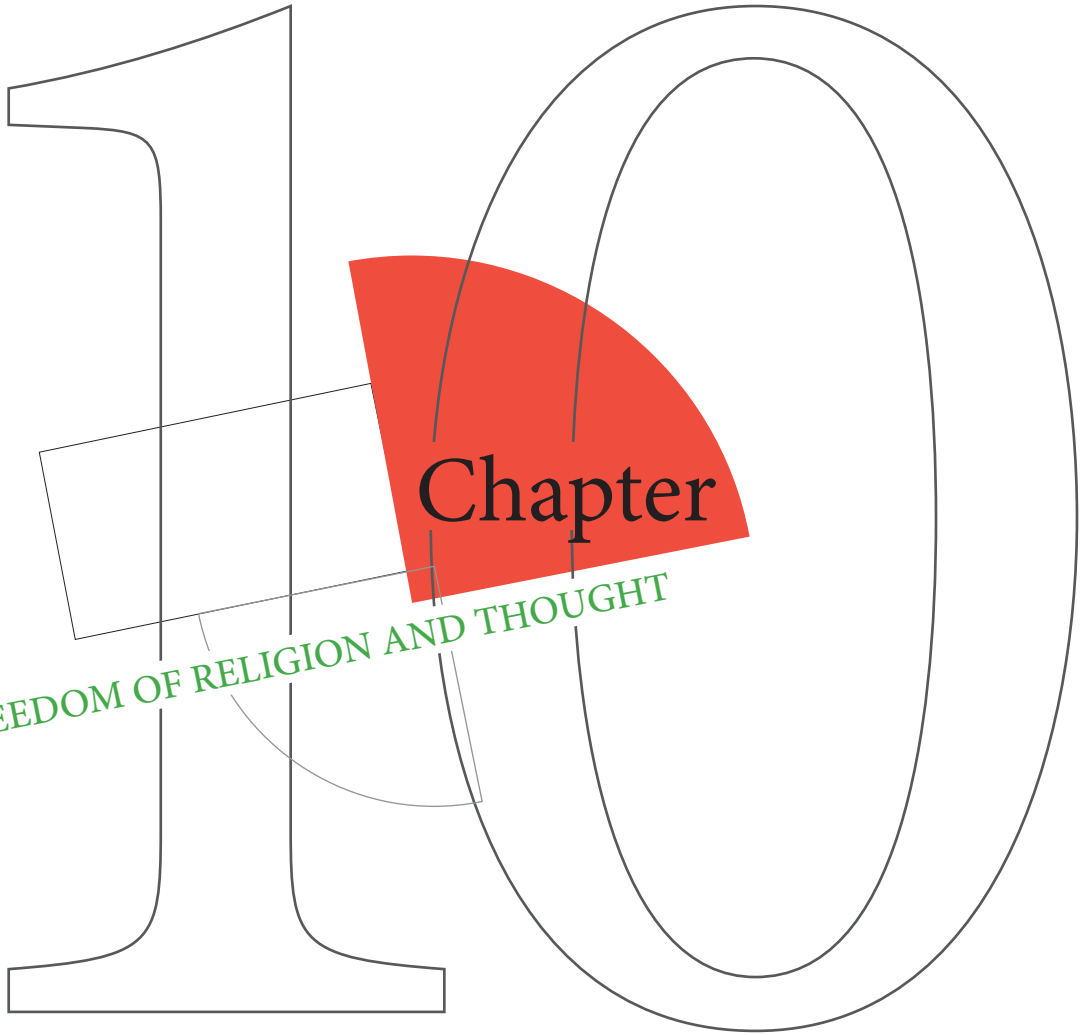
(polytheism, reincarnation, mysticism)

1. *Tanasuh* is expressed with the term ..... in Western languages.
2. .... is the type of belief that supports the belief in more than one god, and that is dealt with and rejected in the Qur'an most.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

- (...) Agnosticism is the movement that argues that belief in God is a belief belonging to ancient times.
- (...) The philosophical movement that denies the existence of God is atheism.
- (...) The current that accepts the existence of God through reason, but at the same time, does not accept His interference in the universe and history is called deism.





Chapter

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THOUGHT





# FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THOUGHT

## LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Look for the meanings of the terms “religion and freedom”.
2. Find some examples demonstrating how Islam gives importance to freedom of religion, and then share them with your friends.
3. What kind of freedom can be related to freedom of belief? Research.
4. Examine the laws concerning “freedom of belief and thought” in your country’s constitution and share them with your friends in class.

## 1. The Importance Attached by Islam to Freedom of Religion

Freedom means people having independence in their speech, thought, and behavior without violating the rights of others; being able to make decisions through their own free will; and having the opportunity to fulfill their decisions.

Being able to choose is the basis of freedom. To choose something necessitates being conscious, and consciousness emerges as a result of discernment and comparison. Therefore, there should be free will, different options, and consciousness in order to be able to choose something. The step that comes after “choosing” is “action”. Being deprived of fulfilling what is chosen makes the right of free choice meaningless. Therefore, freedom in the real sense means having the right to choose freely and being able to fulfill that choice.

Human beings are born with rights related to the five fundamental values Islam aims to protect: life, property, intellect, lineage, and religion. Freedom is to be able to use these rights without any kind of restriction. The possibility of living humanely is lost if people do not have rights and liberties. Thus, these basic rights and freedoms are indispensable and inalienable universal values applicable to every human being no matter what that person’s religion,

language, race, nationality, color, gender, authority or position is. The Holy Qur'an also prohibits the restriction of people's fundamental rights and freedom by frequently emphasizing the values in question, and warns about what such an attitude would cost in the name of humanity. This is expressed in a Qur'anic verse as follows:

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

**“And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption.”<sup>1</sup>**

The religion of Islam recognizes all rights and liberties related to a person's individual and social life, and guarantees these rights and freedoms by accepting the principles of equality before the law, equality before the judiciary, and equality of opportunity. Those rights and liberties are classified as political (*siyasi*) and general (*umumi*) rights and freedoms in Islamic law. The right of choice, the right to be elected, and the right to participate in government are the main political rights. Freedom to enjoy a healthy life, freedom of belief and worship, freedom of thought and of expressing opinions, freedom of education, business freedom, the freedom to acquire property, the freedom of abode, and freedom to travel are considered the general (*umumi*) freedoms.<sup>2</sup>

### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the emphasis on freedom of thinking, searching and learning in the verses given below in the context of their contribution to the development of the natural and religious sciences.

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.”

(Baqarah, 2: 164)

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”

(Sad, 38: 29)

<sup>1</sup> Shu'ara, 26: 183

<sup>2</sup> Hayrettin Karaman, *Mukayeseli İslam Hukuku*, vol. I, p. 109-116

The value given to human freedom in Islam is most prominent in the belief of *tawhid* (monotheism). *Tawhid* is people's belief in Allah and submitting only to Him who is Omnipotent. The opposite of *tawhid* is "*shirk*". *Shirk* is people's belief and worship of things other than Allah. According to the Qur'an, these false deities are those that humans love as they love Allah<sup>3</sup> and whom they fear just as they fear Allah<sup>4</sup> and to whom they ascribe extraordinary powers<sup>5</sup>, and whom they obey and submit to unconditionally.<sup>6</sup> According to the Qur'an, *shirk* means the worship of idols "which humans invented by their own hand"<sup>7</sup>, and so they lose their freedom by worshipping false deities. However, *tawhid* puts an end to *shirk*, which restricts human freedom and which enslaves them. Allah the Almighty has shown how much He values human freedom by repeating the message of *tawhid* through the prophets that He has sent.

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes reasoning and thinking. This emphasis has an encouraging effect on people concerning the use of their minds, thinking, enquiring, and learning, besides liberating them. The importance that Islam gives to freedom of searching and learning can be seen when the verses and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad related to the importance of knowledge (*'ilm*) and scholars (*'alim*) are analyzed. For instance, Allah the Almighty says in a verse: **"And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving."**<sup>8</sup>

The broad area of freedom granted to people by Islam concerning thinking, enquiring and learning paves the way for their intellectual development. Moreover, the Qur'an defines every being in the universe as a sign of Allah and wants His servants to think over those signs. According to the Qur'an, while the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) comprises verbal verses, the book of the universe consists of existential verses (beings). Thinking about the verbal verses of Allah allows for the development of the religious sciences. However, pondering and researching about existential (*kawni*) verses opens the way for the development of the natural sciences.

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<sup>3</sup> Baqarah, 2: 165

<sup>4</sup> Nahl, 16: 51

<sup>5</sup> Saba, 34: 41

<sup>6</sup> Mu'minin, 23: 47

<sup>7</sup> Saffat, 37: 95

<sup>8</sup> Fatir, 35: 28

## LET'S DISCUSS

Does restricting some human behavior mean restriction of freedom? Discuss with your friends giving concrete examples.

Human freedom is associated with having reason and free will. People make decisions by using their reason, and act in accordance with their decisions by using their free will. This trait cannot be seen in other creatures. All created beings other than humans act within the framework of a program that is determined only for them. They have no ability to choose.

Allah the Almighty reports that He has created humans with outstanding features as honorable beings and that He has offered them everything.<sup>9</sup> It is seen that human superiority is a state related to a person's freedom because what makes humans valuable in the presence of Allah is their performance of good deeds by using their free will, to do right while they are free to make the opposite choice.<sup>10</sup> It also demonstrates how much Allah the Almighty values the freedom of His servants.

Freedom flourishes in an environment in which rights and the law are considered important and in which justice prevails. There is no freedom in societies in which rights and the law are disregarded and in which justice does not prevail. Therefore, it is an inevitable fact that people have to live by adhering to certain rules and regulations, because ensuring order among people who live together can only be possible by determining rights and responsibilities and abiding by them. Otherwise, absolute freedom may lead to disorder and chaos. The things that determine the limits of freedom are the rules and regulations that people have to comply with. The important thing here is the accurate determination of what people's rights and responsibilities are.

Allah has determined boundaries for human beings and ordered them to live by taking these bounds into consideration. At the same time, He has liberated people by granting them free will and so has given them an opportunity to determine their own way. Allah the Almighty has said: "**And say: The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve. ...**"<sup>11</sup> Thus, life is a place of examination and human freedom becomes the qualification to take this exam. This resembles the freedom of a student to choose whether or not he studies for an examination. Yet it should be noted that this student has to live with the result of that exam. Hence, people should know the value of the freedom that has been granted to them and should not use it in ways that will harm them. In a verse, it has been

<sup>9</sup> Luqman, 31: 20

<sup>10</sup> Nisa, 4: 125

<sup>11</sup> Kahf, 18: 29

declared: “[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed – and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.”<sup>12</sup>

Allah has said that He will reward those who understand the value and purpose of their freedom and who use their free will correctly with eternal life and unlimited blessings in the hereafter. It has been stated in a verse: “...**And those who have believed and done righteous deeds will be in lush regions of the gardens [in Paradise] having whatever they will in the presence of their Lord. That is what is the great bounty.**”<sup>13</sup> Rewarding human beings, compared to other created beings, with such grace is because people are free beings with the right to choose whatever they wish.

## 2. Freedom to Choose a Religion

### LET'S DISCUSS

Discuss the truthfulness of the expression given below with your friends.

“Today there are some societies that do not have science, art, or philosophy like in the past, but the existence of a society without religion is impossible.”

(Henry Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, p. 127)

Belief is something exclusive to people, and religious belief has appeared in every period of history. The fact that there has never been a community without a religion throughout human history demonstrates that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between human nature and religion.<sup>14</sup> This can be likened to the fact that every human being feels hunger, which shows that they have an intrinsic need to eat. Thus, the human is an inherently believing being. However, man has been set free regarding the choice of what and how he or she believes.

Belief is a matter of willingness. Mankind's belief in a religion shows that he or she loves the principles and the rules of religion and sincerely embraces them. Therefore, it is impossible to implement true belief by oppression and force. A religion that is not adopted wholeheartedly by free choice means hypocrisy (*nifaa*), and as such has no value according to Allah. Trying to make someone accept a religion by force also contradicts the notion that life in this world is

<sup>12</sup> Mulk, 67: 2

<sup>13</sup> Shura, 42: 22

<sup>14</sup> M. Abdullah Draz, *Din ve Ahlak İnanç*, p. 96-97

a test because it eliminates different options and takes away people's freedom to choose. Allah says that even He does not intervene in people's freedom of choice, those whom He has created as conscious and free beings and He forbids people to do so. It is expressed in a Qur'anic verse that **"And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?"**<sup>15</sup> It is stated in another verse that **"So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller."**<sup>16</sup>

Allah the Almighty has created human beings with a nature that is able to know the truth and to accept it. Human beings are created with a tendency towards the right belief because they innately possess the necessary features for this.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, by divine revelation, right and wrong are obviously separated from each other. It is stated in the 256th verse of Surah al-Baqarah that **"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."** Therefore, it is not correct to force people to accept a certain religion. What should be done is to remind and inform them about the truth and call on them to accept it.

The violation of the right of choosing a religion by a person's own free will, and the violation of the right of living their belief as it should be lived, is called *fitnah* in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an considers *fitnah* a greater sin than homicide. In a verse, it has been said that: **"They ask you about the sacred month - about fighting therein. Say, 'Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Haram and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allah. And fitnah is greater than killing.'"**<sup>18</sup> In another verse, Allah wants believers to prevent cruelty and oppression from dominating the earth. Allah allows *jihad* in order to provide complete freedom of religion and conscience on this earth.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, *jihad* is not a war carried out in order to make people accept Islam by force. On the contrary, it is a struggle in order to remove all obstacles so that people can choose any religion by their free will. As is understood from the relevant

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<sup>15</sup> Yunus, 10: 99

<sup>16</sup> Ghashiyah, 88: 21-22

<sup>17</sup> Rum, 30: 30

<sup>18</sup> Baqarah, 2: 217

<sup>19</sup> Anfal, 8: 39

verses, freedom for human beings is more important than the right to life because the most important feature that makes human beings human in the sense of their having free will. Thus, people whose free will is taken away and who cannot live according to what they believe lose their dignity, and this is a situation worse than death.

Prophet Muhammad rigorously defended the freedom of choosing a belief. At the beginning, Muslims who chose the religion of Allah through their own free will were exposed to severe torture to force them to abandon their religion. To combat this oppression, the Prophet suggested that people with different beliefs live together in society in a peaceful atmosphere saying: “... **For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.**”<sup>20</sup> When the oppression did not end, Muslims left their homes and migrated to Madinah. Also, when the Prophet became more powerful and returned to Mecca to take control of the city, he did not force anybody to become Muslim in spite of everything they had done in the past.

### LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the following statement in the treaty that the Prophet made with Christians from Najran in terms of the importance of the freedom of belief in Islam.

*“The patronage of Allah and responsibility of Muhammad who is the Messenger of Allah are upon the people of Najran and those who follow them including their estate, lives, religious beliefs and practices, families, places for worship, and everything that is under their property. No reverend will be taken from where he performs religious duties, no pastor will be taken away from the church where he fulfills his religious duties to another location; and no priest will be taken from the monastery where he lives...”*

(Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Prophet of Islam*, vol. I, simplified from p. 622)

Freedom of choice of a religion does not just mean the right to be able to accept a specific religion. Every religion has commandments that need to be followed by the believer. It is not possible to embrace a religion, and at the same time, to consider its practices unnecessary. Thus, living in accordance with a person's belief is an inseparable part of religious freedom.

<sup>20</sup> Kafirun, 109: 6



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Religious education and training and the delivering of its message takes place in the 18th article of United Nation Convention on Humans Rights in 1948, and the 9th article of European Human Rights Conventions in 1950 as the compulsory elements of freedom of conscience and religion.

(Saffet Köse, *Din ve Vicdan Hürriyeti*, p. 17)

People have the same right to worship as they have the freedom to choose a religion. Freedom of worship is an integral part of freedom of belief. The right to worship covers the rights of a person to fulfill the commandments of the religion individually or in congregation. In this regard, Islam has always been tolerant towards other religions and the history of Islam is full of examples of this. For instance, once a committee from Najran went to Madinah in order to meet the Prophet and arrived before him at the mosque. After the meeting, it was time for their worship, so the Prophet left the mosque to them.<sup>21</sup> As a result of this mentality, a church, a synagogue, and a mosque were built side by side in Dar al-‘Ajazah in Istanbul during the Ottoman Period, and a suitable environment was prepared in order that members of different religions could worship.

The construction and protection of places of worship are rights instituted by freedom of religion. Concerning this, it has been stated in a verse that **“And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned in His mosques and strive toward their destruction?...”**<sup>22</sup> Muslims have shown the necessary respect to the places of worship of people from other religions just as they have shown respect to their own places of worship. This attitude of Muslims, to protect all places of worship, is based on the following Qur’anic verse: **“...And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.”**<sup>23</sup>

It is not right for people to believe in something that they do not understand. Thus, opportunities should be offered for people to learn about religions so that they can make the right choice. Furthermore, if a person who believes

<sup>21</sup> Servet Armağan, *İslam Hukukunda Temel Hak ve Hürriyetler*, p. 620

<sup>22</sup> Baqarah, 2: 114

<sup>23</sup> Hajj, 22: 40

in a religion does not know about that religion, he or she may be susceptible to superstitions and false beliefs. Faith groups that do not know their own religion can have difficulties in communication and become bigots over time. Therefore, the freedom to choose a religion must include the right to be educated and trained in that religion as well.

In order for a religion to continue and express itself freely depends on its being able to defend itself against criticism. For this reason, every religion has the right to defend itself and to deliver its message provided that it does not resort to oppression and violence. If this right is prevented, that religion's right to survive will be in danger. Thus, the Holy Qur'an gives human beings the right to defend themselves. However, it also wants people not to go too far while they are doing this.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Qur'an encourages the religion to follow the good and forbid the bad and ugly (*al-Amr bil-Ma'ruf wan-Nahy 'an al-Munkar*) as an important task, which cannot be neglected.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Freedom within the Religion

#### LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the verse below in terms of man's freedom to benefit from the blessings of life.

"Say, 'Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?' Say, 'They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.' Thus do We detail the verses for a people who know."

(A'raf, 7: 32)

One of the basic meanings of the word "religion" in the Qur'an is people's obedience and submission to Allah. At first glance, this can create hesitation concerning mankind's freedom in the religion. But when we think deeply, we can see that the obedience of which the religion approves ennoble human beings spiritually and liberates them by preventing them from bad deeds because what Allah wants people to do is to avoid evil things and live a virtuous life.

<sup>24</sup> Baqarah, 2: 190

<sup>25</sup> Al-i Imran, 3: 104

Two basic principles that protect and improve human freedom in Islam are “*tawhid*” and “*taqwa*”. The belief of *tawhid* gives people the awareness not to divinize anything other than Allah. Likewise, *taqwa* (piety) helps people avoid sins as well. It preserves them from becoming addicted to all kinds of bad habits. Hence, it ensures that people maintain their spiritual freedom. *Taqwa* in the Qur’an is considered the measure of the value of a human being in the sight of Allah.<sup>26</sup> The measure of *taqwa* in the Qur’an shows that Islam accepts that all people are inherently equal in God’s view. This equality that everybody is born with prevents some people from restricting others’ rights and freedoms with claims of superiority over others because of race, color, gender, wealth or social status.

### LET’S EVALUATE

Evaluate the conversation given below, which took place between the Prophet and Mu’adh bin Jabal when the Prophet sent him to Yemen as the governor, in the context of freedom of thought within the religion.

*When the Messenger of Allah intended to send Mu’adh ibn Jabal to the Yemen, he asked:*

*How will you judge when the occasion of deciding a case arises?*

*He replied:*

*I shall judge in accordance with Allah’s Book. He asked:*

*(What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah’s Book? He replied:*

*(I shall act) in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.*

*He asked: (What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and in Allah’s Book?*

*He replied: I shall do my best to form an opinion and I shall spare no effort.*

*This reply pleased the Messenger of Allah.*

(Abu Dawud, Aqdiyah, 11)

Islam gives great importance to freedom of thought within the religion. One important indicator of this is the institution of *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* means people finding solutions using their independent reasoning in light of revelation when they face new problems. The Prophet himself made *ijtihad* in certain cases and he encouraged his Companions to do so as well. Moreover, the Prophet welcomed the Companions’ finding solutions by making *ijtihad* regarding the problems that they encountered during his time. This approval of the Prophet is found among the religious sources under the title of “*taqriri sunnah*”.

<sup>26</sup> Hujurat, 49: 13

This freedom of thought, which Islam presents by means of *ijtihad*, paved the way for studies to understand and interpret verses and hadiths, which established a ground for the formation of denominations in the historical process. Denominations are the institutionalized forms of religious interpretations that arose for the purpose of satisfying the religious needs of the Islamic community and in order to produce solutions to new problems believers faced. Muslims have considered such differences in interpretation of Islamic thought as attempts to reach the truth, and accepted them as wealth just as they did the different colors of rainbow. Thus, schools that do not contradict the spirit of Islam are welcomed; turning sectarian differences into a matter of fight have never been approved.

The value that Islam gives to freedom of thought is related to its being a universal religion. If Islam did not operate the mechanism of *ijtihad* that produces solutions to emerging needs depending on the time and place, it would not have had the opportunity to spread and could not have continued as a religion that can be followed in every era.

Islam provides a wide scope of freedom for people to live their lives. The principle of “permissibility is the original rule in matters” is the indicator of this. The Qur’an reports that the earth along with all its blessings has been created for the benefit of human beings.<sup>27</sup> Prohibition is an exceptional case and only those who adversely affect the physical and mental health of others have been forbidden. For this reason, there are few prohibitions of things in Islam but the area of lawful things in Islam is very broad. Therefore, the Qur’an rejects approaches that narrow the area of freedom by prohibiting the use of permitted things by Allah in order to get closer to Him.<sup>28</sup>

Committing a sin does not make people apostates. It is stated in a Qur’anic verse that: **“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’”**<sup>29</sup> Not excluding those who commit sins in the religion is a reflection of people being free in their behavior. However, it does not mean that freedom gives humans the right to do evil. Rather, this demonstrates that Islam is a realistic religion that takes into account people’s nature concerning their ability to do righteous or evil deeds, and the influence of their environment on them.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibrahim, 14: 32-34

<sup>28</sup> Hadid, 57: 27; Ma’idah, 5: 87-88

<sup>29</sup> Zumar, 39: 53

#### 4. Laicism

The word “laicism”, which comes from French, is originally derived from the Greek word “laikos”. Laic means the person who is from the ordinary people, namely the one who is not from the clergy.<sup>30</sup> In terminology, laicism refers to the separation of government and religious affairs from each other.

Laicism first emerged as a reaction to the understandings and applications of Christian clerics in Europe. There was a centralized church power whose superiority was accepted in the Western world and the head of this power was the pope. The pope was both a religious and political leader. The church also dominated educational institutions. The oppressive practices of the church shook the people’s confidence in the church. In time, the church turned into an institution that people feared rather than an institution that regulated religious affairs. The oppression of the clergy also had its effect on intellectual life. They declared war against different opinions, and courts of inquisition were established by the church to punish scientists and thinkers.

The struggle between the church and the political powers in Europe started in the 15th century and continued up until the 18th century. In this process, Martin Luther carried out the first internal revolt against the authority of the church. The movement “liberalism” that later developed and grew stronger put forward the idea of freedom of conscience saying that “political power depends on the votes of the people and is responsible to them.”<sup>31</sup> Freedom of conscience gives people the right to choose their religion freely as well as the right not to follow a religion. This resulted in the separation of the church and the political authority from each other.

The authority of the church was challenged with the French Revolution in 1789. Pastors were forced to take an oath of allegiance to the republic. A law passed by the French parliament in 1905, declared religious affairs and affairs of the state to be formally separated from each other, and the period of the laic state started. After the principle of laicism was adopted by the Christian world, Christianity began to lose its influence in many fields.

The idea of laicism, which was initially born out of the French Revolution, has been defined in a wide range of philosophical, legal and political terms. It has been adopted by different states together with its different applications in

<sup>30</sup> Hamza Erođlu, *Türk İnkılap Tarihi*, p. 422-423

<sup>31</sup> Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, *Atatürkçülük, 1<sup>st</sup> book*, p. 344

management. Some governments applied laicism emphasizing its dimension of freedom of conscience and religion, while others asserted a kind of laicism dwelling on the separation of religious and state affairs.

In the secular state, executive, legislative and judiciary powers are not regulated in accordance with religious principles. Therefore, secular states completely separate religious and state affairs from each other, and religious rules and institutions cannot intervene in the administration of the state.<sup>32</sup> State agencies cannot carry out the functions of religion just as the religious institutions cannot fulfill the functions of the state.<sup>33</sup>

According to the principles of laicism, religion is a matter of conscience and based on individual choice. Religion contributes to the establishment of social order by bringing up morally upright individuals who listen to the voice of conscience. Thus, people should be able to practice their belief freely and should not be interfered with. However, religion cannot be put forward as a phenomenon that regulates social life. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said: “Religion is a matter of conscience. Everybody is free to obey the order of his conscience. We respect religion, and we are not against thinking and thought. We just try not to mix religious affairs with the duties and obligations of nation and government.”<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the fact that laicism separates religious and state affairs from each other, it guarantees the freedom of conscience, worship and religion of all citizens.<sup>35</sup> In a secular state, religious freedom not only refers to the freedom of belief of a certain religion and the fulfillment of its requirements, but it also covers a person’s freedom of unbelief in a religion or freedom not to fulfill his religious duties. Moreover, according to secular understanding, members of different religions are treated equally before the law without discrimination. According to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “Freedom of conscience must be considered as one of the most important natural rights of the individual. Each individual has the right and freedom to think whatever he wishes, to believe whatever he wills, to have a specific political view, to fulfill the requirements of his religion or not to fulfill them. People’s opinions and preferences cannot be controlled.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ayten Sezer (Editor), *Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, p. 457

<sup>33</sup> Ali Güler, *Atatürk ve Cumhuriyet*, p. 245

<sup>34</sup> *Atatürkçülük*, 1, 45

<sup>35</sup> *Atatürkçülük*, 2<sup>nd</sup> book, p. 331

<sup>36</sup> *Atatürkçülük*, 3<sup>rd</sup> book, p. 238

**LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER**

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What does freedom mean? What are the areas of freedom? Explain them.
2. What kind of approaches does Islam maintain concerning freedom to choose a religion? Explain.
3. What does "freedom within the religion" mean? Write about it.
4. Explain the relationship between people's superiority over other creatures and their being granted free will and freedom.
5. Explain the consideration of denominational differences as a matter of enrichment in the context of freedom of thought in Islam.
6. What were the reasons that created the idea of laicism in the West? Write them down.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which of the following is not one of the inseparable parts of freedom of religion and conscience?
  - A) Human beings can choose whatever they will as their religion.
  - B) People cannot be condemned because of their belief.
  - C) People can perform their worship as required by their beliefs.
  - D) People have the right to learn their religion and to teach it to those who ask to know.
  - E) People can use any method in order to spread their religion.
  
2. Which of the following is not one of the characteristics of a secular state?
  - A) Religious and state affairs are separated from each other in a secular state.
  - B) Religion is considered a personal matter of conscience in a secular state.
  - C) A secular state does not take any religion as a base for regulations of the state.
  - D) A secular state is unbiased towards all religions.
  - E) A secular state does not attempt to determine how a religion should be lived.

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(*tawhid*, *ijtihad*, revelation)

I. Man's ability to find solutions using his intellect in the light of revelation when he faces new problems is called ..... in Islam.





## GLOSSARY

### A

- Ahkam** : Provisions, rulings, plural form of hukm.
- Amal al-Salih** : Acceptable acts according to religion; good deeds.
- Ayah (verse)** : Each part which constitutes chapters of the Qur'an.
- Ahl al-Kitab** : People of the Books; it is especially used for Jews and Christians in Islamic literature.
- Ahl al-Sunnah** : People of tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. People who obey absolutely to words, behaviors of prophet Muhammad and follow his steps in every field. Its opposite is 'ahl al-Bid'ah.'
- Anbiya** : Plural form of Nabi; messengers or prophets.
- Asma al-Husna** : Most beautiful names and attributes of Allah.
- Azali** : One that has no beginning. Pre-Eternal.
- Ayn al-Yaqin** : To know something by seeing it.

**B**

- Ba's** : Resurrection.
- Batil** : False beliefs. Superstitions related to supernatural events, hidden and irrational power, prophecy.
- Batin** : Hidden and esoteric.
- Bid'ah** : Different principles and decrees which emerged after the life of the prophet Muhammad in the religion of Islam.

**C-D**

- Caliphate** : Person who is responsible for leadership of muslims and is to be the religious protector of the muslim community as representative of prophet Muhammad.
- Dargah** : Dervish lodge or convent.
- Dhikr** : Remembrance, articulation, mentioning. Being said of Allah's names in sequence by people who are followers of one religious denomination.
- Dua** : Prayer, invocation to Allah, supplication.

**E-F-G**

- Fardh** : Obligatory; actions whose fulfillment is wanted in a decisive and obligatory way by Shari'.
- Fasahah** : Technical, effective, exciting, convincing and artistic speech.

- Fasiq** : One who commits grave sins and insists on minor sins. Also the person who commits sins openly and without shame is considered fasiq.
- Fajir** : Synonymous of Fasiq. It is the one who gone astray and commits sins.
- Fiqh** : The science of Islamic jurisprudence.
- Fitnah** : Forces that cause mischief, scandal, chaos, or disorder within the Muslim community, disturbing social peace and order.
- Fitrah** : Creation (nature) and inborn physical characteristics of human beings.
- Fitri** : Innate.
- Ghayb** : Realm of unseen or imperceptible.
- H**
- Hadith** : Behaviors and words of the Prophet Muhammad; the science that investigates these words and behaviors.
- Hafiz** : One who has memorized the entire Qur'an.
- Haqq al-Yaqin** : To know something by experiencing it. This knowing includes hearing, seeing, experiencing.
- Haram** : Things that are against religious rules, the forbidden things in terms of religious aspect, opposite of Halal, prohibited. Illicit.

<b>Hawari</b>	: Each of the 12 disciples of Jesus.
<b>Hawra</b>	: Temple of Jewish people.
<b>Haya'</b>	: Sense of shame, shame, embarrassments, abashment.
<b>Halal</b>	: Things that are approved by religion, not forbidden from the viewpoint of religion, opposite of haram. Licit.
<b>Hypocrite</b>	: A person who pretends to be a believer, although he or she actually doesn't believe.
<b>Hijrah</b>	: Migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Madinah in 622, which is accepted as a beginning of Islamic calendar.
<b>Hidayah</b>	: Right way, guidance.
<b>Hikmah</b>	: Wisdom, reason, hidden reason. Allah's incomprehensible purpose.
<b>I-J</b>	
<b>Iblis</b>	: The name of Satan mentioned in the Qur'an.
<b>Islah</b>	: Rectification, recriment.
<b>Istilah</b>	: Terminology.
<b>Ibadah</b>	: Worship; to fulfill Allah's orders, respectful behaviors towards Allah.
<b>I'jaz</b>	: To explain many things with little words; miraculousness.
<b>Ijma'</b>	: Meeting. Muslim scholars' consensus on an issue.

Ijtihad	: Opinion, special opinion, understanding, comprehension; independent reasoning.
‘Ilm al-Yaqin	: To know something just based on knowledge not by seeing or hearing.
Iqrar	: Confessing directly without hiding, saying openly. To internalize, to confirm, confirmation.
Israiliyyat	: Short stories, comments originating from al-Qitab al-Muqaddas.
Itiqad	: Belief, faith, creed.
Juz’	: Each of one-thirtieth of the Qur’an, or each of 20 pages of the Qur’an.
<b>K</b>	
Ka’bah	: The sacred place in Mecca visited by Muslims throughout the year and circumambulated around.
Kaffarah	: Atonement; offering fasting or charity in order to ask forgiveness from Allah.
Kalam	: Word, form of speech, speaking. It is science that deals with the existence of Allah, truthfulness of Islamic religion.
Kawni	: Which is related to people or creation.
Khawas	: Distinguished people of one society, intelligentsia.
Khawf	: Fear.
Kitab al-Muqaddas	: Sacred Book; term used for Torah, Psalms, and the Bible.

## L-M

<b>Lutf</b>	: Goodness, help, benefaction, blessing coming from one who is given importance and respected.
<b>Mahram</b>	: Person who cannot legally marry you because of being a close relative. Something hidden and a thing that isn't reported to another people.
<b>Mahshar</b>	: Great crowd. The vast place in which people will come together in the hereafter after the resurrection.
<b>Menakibname</b>	: Hagiography.
<b>Mashrab</b>	: Nature creation, habit, character.
<b>Madhhab</b>	: Denomination; one of the schools that appeared because of differences of opinion about religious issues, comments, and understanding.
<b>Mizan</b>	: Scale in the hereafter, weighing machine, measuring device, measure.
<b>Mujiza</b>	: Miracle; extraordinary events that are showed by prophets to disbeliever to prove their prophethood by permission of Allah.
<b>Mujizat</b>	: Plural of <i>mujiza</i> .
<b>Mushaf</b>	: Book consisting of various pages. Later it became a term used for the Qur'an.
<b>Mutasawwif</b>	: Sufi.
<b>Mujtahid</b>	: Muslim jurist who is able to apply independent reasoning to issue rulings in religious matters.

<b>Munazzah</b>	: Clean, free from.
<b>Murid</b>	: Disciple of sufi order; Sufi.
<b>Mushrik</b>	: Polytheist.
<b>Mutawazi</b>	: Modest, oen who does not show off.
<b>Mukhalafatun lil-Hawadith</b>	: The attribute of Mukhalafatun Li al-Hawadith means that Allah doesn't look like anything that He created.

## N

<b>Nahw</b>	: Arabic syntax.
<b>Nass</b>	: Certainty, openness, word or evidence in the Qur'an; textual source.
<b>Nabi</b>	: Messengers to whom no books were revealed, but they continue to deliver the message of the previous prophet.
<b>Nafs</b>	: Inner self, personality.
<b>Naqli evidences</b>	: Evidence based on narrations and textual sources.

## P-Q-R

<b>Prophet</b>	: Person who delivers Allah's commandments to people, calls them to religion, messenger, ambassador.
<b>Pir</b>	: Founder of any denomination or craft.
<b>Qiraat</b>	: Reading. Reciting the Qur'an according to certain rules and signs.
<b>Qiyas</b>	: To consider something equally, to equate, to compare, to rate, to make analogy.



<b>Qudrah</b>	: Power, omnipotency.
<b>Rasul</b>	: Person who delivers Allah's commandments to people, calls them to religion, messenger, ambassador.
<b>Ra'y</b>	: Thought, opinion, and idea.
<b>Riya</b>	: Hypocrisy, two-facedness.
<b>S</b>	
<b>Samawi</b>	: Heavenly religions. It refers to divine true religions sent down by Allah with revelations to prophets.
<b>Sahaba</b>	: Companions; Believers who met Prophet Muhammad in his life and had a conversation with him, converted to Islam; the friends of the Prophet.
<b>Salawat</b>	: Prayer that is recited to show respect the Allah's Messenger.
<b>Sarf</b>	: Arabic grammar, morphology.
<b>Sarwar</b>	: Head, captain, noble chief man.
<b>Suhuf</b>	: Pages; divine revelation other than the four holy books sent down to some prophets.
<b>Sur</b>	: An instrument the features of which we don't know; it will be blown by the angel Israfil before doomsday and to start the resurrection and Day of Judgment.
<b>T</b>	
<b>Taassub</b>	: Bigotry, severe partisanship, blind obedience, conservativeness.

<b>Tabiin</b>	: Term used about Muslims who met the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad.
<b>Tafsir</b>	: Islamic science that deals with the interpretation of verses of the Qur'an; exegesis.
<b>Taqwa</b>	: To fear Allah, to abstain from all prohibitions of religion and to fulfill its orders, Zuhd.
<b>Tahqiqi Faith</b>	: Tahqiq means to research something. And Tahqiqi faith means to know and learn principles of Islamic faith with evidence and sincerely believe in it and to consciously live it.
<b>Taqlidi Faith</b>	: Taqlid means to imitate something. It is a weak form of faith. Because it is learned from the family or from society and people who have taqlidi faith and just do what they see.
<b>Tariqah</b>	: Sufi order.
<b>Tasawwuf</b>	: Islamic mysticism, Sufism.
<b>Tabau't Tabiin</b>	: Muslims who saw people of Tabiin.
<b>Tabligh</b>	: To call people to religion, delivering the message of Islam, notification.
<b>Tafakkur</b>	: Deep thinking, contemplation.
<b>Tawazu</b>	: modesty, humbleness.
<b>Tawakkul</b>	: To do whatever you can to your best ability and then to trust Allah and leave it to Allah.
<b>Tawfiq</b>	: Success, reconciliation.
<b>Tawhid</b>	: To believe in the unity of Allah, to count him as one, to consider him just one.

<b>Ta'wil</b>	: Interpretation, explanation.
<b>Tawba</b>	: Repentance, to determine not to commit the same sin.
<b>U-W-Z</b>	
<b>'Urf</b>	: Tradition, customs of a society.
<b>Usul</b>	: Method; the way that is followed to reach one purpose, procedure, style.
<b>Ummah</b>	: All Muslims who sincerely believe in the Prophet Muhammad, apply what he said and did, and gather around of his principles.
<b>Wajib</b>	: Actions whose fulfillment are compulsory according to Islam.
<b>Wajib al-Wujud</b>	: Necessary existence. It refers to Allah's existence and what His necessary existence is.
<b>Wahy</b>	: Being reported of one command or thought to prophets by Allah.
<b>Wajd</b>	: The state of rapture, ecstasy.
<b>Zahir</b>	: Clear, apparent.
<b>Zindiq</b>	: The heretic.
<b>Zulm</b>	: A cruel treatment, which is applied by powerful man to weak people by being against law or conscience, apprehension, inhumanity, injustice, long-suffering.
<b>Zuhd</b>	: Piety; being occupied with just worshipping Allah.

## ANSWER KEY

### Chapter I

B) 1. D 2. C 3. A

C) 1. Revelation 2. Certain

D) 1. D 2. D 3. Y 4. D

### Chapter II

B) 1. E 2. E 3. B 4. E 5. B

C) 1. Confirmation 2. Thought 3. Jafar al-Sadiq 4. Supporters of Ali 5. Wa'ad-Wa'id

### Chapter III

B) 1. C 2. D 3. E

C) 1. Rational 2. Faith 3. Denial

### Chapter IV

B) 1. C 2. B 3. E

C) 1. A beginning 2. An end 3. Baqa 4. Basar

### Chapter V

- B) 1. D 2. B 3. B
- C) 1. Gabriel 2. Satan

### Chapter VI

- B) 1. C, 2. C, 3. C
- C) 1. rasul, 2. wahy, 3. kitab, 4. The Holy Qur'an

### Chapter VII

- B) 1. D, 2. E, 3. E, 4. D, 5. D
- C) F, F, T, T, T
- D) 1. an atom's weight, good, an atom's weight, evil, 2. ba's, 3. mizan, 4. hereafter

### Chapter VIII

- B) 1. C, 2. A, 3. C
- C) 1. destiny, 2. order, 3. he strives

### Chapter IX

- B) 1. E 2. B
- C) 1. reincarnation, 2. polytheism
- D) F, T, T

### Chapter X

- B) 1. E, 2. E, 3. E
- C) 1. Ijtihad

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