Religion

A Multidisciplinary Study



Editor

Assoc. Prof. Yılmaz Arı

BZT TURAN

RELIGION

A Multidisciplinary Study

Editor: Assoc. Prof. Yilmaz ARI

Religion has occupied a central place in human history, encompassing social, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, and psychological dimensions, making it a profoundly multifaceted phenomenon. This volume offers an interdisciplinary perspective to understand the role of religion in contemporary society, addressing its complex nature through contributions from diverse fields, including art, music, technology, politics, philosophy, psychology, Sufism, and ethics.

This valuable work comprehensively examines the relationship between religion and art and ritual, the transformation of religious music in the modern world, the impact of technology and individualized social life, interactions between science and Sufism, the legitimizing function of religion in politics, identity and memory politics in historiography, the ethical dimensions of religious language, the relationship between psychology and religion, and Nietzsche's critique of Christianity.

Taken together, these contributions reveal the intricate and multidimensional nature of religion, which cannot be fully understood from a single disciplinary perspective, highlighting the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach. By offering significant insights into both academic literature and public understanding, this volume serves as a valuable resource for scholars and readers seeking a deeper comprehension of the role of religion in contemporary society.

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BZT TURAN
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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Religion has occupied a central place in human history, encompassing social, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, and psychological dimensions. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach is essential to fully understand and interpret contemporary discussions on religion. This volume examines the multifaceted nature of religion through contributions from diverse fields, including art, music, technology, politics, philosophy, psychology, Sufism, and ethics. Prof. Dr. Hasan Ocak explores the inseparable relationship between religion and art within the context of rituals and metaphysical beliefs, while Assoc. Prof. Hakan Emre Ziyagil analyzes the transformation of religious music in the modern world and the impact of digitalization. Prof. Dr. Muhammet Özdemir discusses the interplay between religion and technology in philosophical and social terms, and Dr. Mustafa Turan and Assoc. Prof. Sevim Yılmaz examine the relationships among science, religion, and Sufism in historical and conceptual contexts. Assoc. Prof. Bekir Emiroğlu investigates the mutual legitimization between religion and politics and the transformations shaped by modernization and globalization, while Assist. Prof. Şahin Baykal analyzes how the historiography of al-Andalus is constructed in terms of identity, memory, and ideology. The moral and linguistic dimensions of religion are addressed by Assoc. Prof. Emel Karaşahin and PhD candidate Neslişah Başbuğ, who examine how religious language, with its ethical and moral dimensions, responds to the contemporary search for meaning. Finally, Assist. Prof. Durali Karacan explores the reciprocal relationship between psychology and religion, and Assist. Prof. Seyfettin İliter evaluates Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, collectively strengthening the interdisciplinary perspective of the volume. Together, these contributions reveal the complexity of religion, which cannot be explained from a single disciplinary standpoint, and demonstrate the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach. This volume offers a valuable resource for scholars and readers seeking a deeper understanding of the role of religion in contemporary

society and contributes meaningfully to both academic literature and public awareness. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors for their invaluable contributions, rigorous scholarship, and dedication, without which this volume would not have been possible. This volume offers a valuable resource for scholars and readers seeking a deeper understanding of the role of religion in contemporary society and contributes meaningfully to both academic literature and public awareness.

Sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Yılmaz ARI

Editor

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CHAPTER 1

RELIGION AND ART

Prof. Dr. Hasan OCAK[1]

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between religion and art in general and the influence of art on religious rituals as a concrete reflection of this relationship. The study first addresses the relationship between religion and art and examines the importance of symbolic elements for art and religion. It then draws attention to the religious culture of life that worship brings about and what situations arise in the expression of this culture through art. Finally, it focuses on the practical elements found in religious rituals and examines their underlying meanings in the context of art philosophy. Throughout human history, the phenomenon of religion and art has been one of the most thought-about and analyzed topics. The similarities in the theories put forward about the origins of religion and art reveal the existence of a serious relationship between religion and art. From this perspective, one of the aims of this text is to offer an art-centered interpretation of theories about the nature of religion, attempting to express that art is at the center of religion and religious life. The religious sphere and the artistic sphere share many similarities, and this inevitable relationship between them has been felt throughout human history, from ancient times to the modern era. Art and religion are both ways of making the imaginary

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visible as an expression of representations. It seems impossible to separate religion's form of expression from art. Religion needs representations to be visible, and theories about the origins of religion offer explanations of what the first representations of belief corresponded to. In this context, when we try to evaluate the representations in these theories from an art-centered perspective, we can conclude that humans arrived at metaphysical beliefs that gave them power and meaning in the face of their natural environment through artistic creation.

Keywords: Philosophy of religion, religion, art, philosophy, philosophy of art

1. Concepts of Art/Esthetics and Religion

Since ancient times, the concept of "aesthetics" has been a subject of inquiry for philosophers. For Homer (9th century BC), the source of all kinds of beauty is nature. According to Pythagoras (580–497 BC), beauty lies in harmony. The harmony found in the cosmic system is the clearest indication of this. Plato's (429–347 BC) aesthetics is a metaphysics of beauty—that is, the absolute beauty inherent in things. He was the first to take a conscious stand against imitation (mimesis) in art. As he expressed in the famous allegory of the cave, according to Plato, art is not the simple imitation (mimesis) of objects and nature, but the expression of the idea of beauty, which he considered close to the idea of virtue. With such an understanding, Plato moved away from the rational perspective of Socrates (470–399 BC) and moved towards an abstract understanding of art. In other words, his interpretation of beauty has a transcendental understanding of beauty.

Aristotle (384–322 BC), who had been a student of Plato for many years, found it erroneous for his teacher to envision a realm of ideas separate from the essence of things. According to Aristotle, since things exist as a form, the idea already exists hidden within them. There is no need to think of a realm of ideas separate from things. Therefore, beauty is the reflection of visible objects based on imitation (mimesis).

According to both ancient and contemporary philosophers, the greatest and only sign of "beauty" is the harmony inherent in the essence of the thing itself. We can see this definition in all philosophers from Aristotle to Hegel (1770–1831). When we think of harmony, the idea of unity in multiplicity undoubtedly comes to mind. We only get a general impression of evening or dawn from countless color tones. The individual color impressions melt into this general impression. This is the way of transforming multiplicity into unity, of giving things an aesthetic form (Tunalı, 1996, pp. 156).

The German aesthetician Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), on the other hand, defines aesthetics as an experience of pleasure arising from the harmony between the imagination and the faculty of understanding in the contemplation of an object. As can be seen, Kant's beauty is based on establishing a parallel between the desire for "liking" and harmony. In other words, beauty is an object of enjoyment. Based on all these definitions, it can be said that the factor that makes any object and work of art beautiful is the harmony, symmetry, rhythm, and balance found in it.

As is known, Muslim philosophers such as Farabi (872–950) and Ibn Sina (980–1037) had a great influence on the recognition of the works of Plato and Aristotle in the Islamic world. The same claim can be made in the field of the interaction of philosophical thought. For example, Plato establishes a relationship between evil and harmony (beauty). Evil is the absence of harmony, while virtue is harmony. Ibn Sina, a Muslim philosopher, was greatly influenced by Greek philosophy in recognizing the existence of a close relationship between evil (sharr) and ugliness (qubḥ), even though Ibn Sina, as a Muslim philosopher, considered beauty as one of the attributes of God. According to this understanding, inharmony in the plane of existence in general, i.e., deconstruction (kubuh), is an evil. Yes, the Qur'an also speaks of harmony, but it takes one beyond that harmony and leads one to the principle of monotheism through the abstract symbols of geometry (Grabar, 1988, pp. 160-161).

In aesthetic experience, there is a faculty of perception. The greatest mistake of philosophers from antiquity to modern Western philosophers is to attribute the perception of the harmony they see in the universe and in the plane of creation of all living beings to the visual faculty while neglecting its background. Although people have different degrees of perception patterns in terms of the nature of creation, every human being has the ability to perceive beauty as a requirement of his or her nature. So much so that the most civilized people as well as the most primitive people have this ability of perception. This is a privilege of being created as a human being and is potentially present in the consciousness of every construct. On the basis of values, the sense of beauty, like the sense of morality, reaches its highest point during the continuation of a civilization. If humans are not reduced to automatons but are nurtured through education aligned with their natural constitution, aesthetic perception can follow a more advanced process and explode into consciousness together with the perception of wisdom.

The aesthetic way of looking at nature and all living beings is, like other human ways of looking, a subject-object relationship. There are certain

objects, which we call aesthetic objects, and there are human beings who observe these objects and contemplate and reflect on them. People hear something and express it through various means. This hearing constitutes aesthetic experience, and this expression constitutes what we call a work of art. At the basis of the Western understanding of art lies the idea of imitating nature and human beings (mimesis), as well as the deification of the actual human being. The Greek term "anthropomorphia," which means anthropomorphism, is used to express this understanding in art life. The conceptual meaning of this is the transference of human qualities to God or the imagining of God in human form. The Hungarian aesthete Georg Lukács (1971), who considers art a superstructure institution like morality and law, takes a Marxist approach and considers the iconization and deification of human beings through art as a necessity of civilization. According to him, this urge to materialize has created gods everywhere. Greek art, stemming from a similar idea, limited beauty to the human body and was unable to expand from the idea of harmony to infinity. The famous ancient philosopher Protagoras' (485–415 BC) statement "man is the measure of man" was influential in the establishment of this understanding. Based on this, God and divinity were concretized in the image of man. In short, in the striking words of Wilhelm Hegel, the god of the Greeks is man (Hegel, 1986, pp. 78).

Moralists such as St. Augustine (354–430), one of the leading representatives of ascetic ethics, who became the Aristotle of Christianity by transforming the beliefs of Christianity into a system of philosophy, came to the conclusion that art first of all seduces people through the senses. Because beauty is a science of the senses. As St. Augustine pointed out, aesthetics, instead of reminding people of the glory of God, led them to immerse themselves in the glamorous appearance of the world. Sensuous beauty is therefore nothing but a sweet path that leads the soul to ruin. The only reason why the notion of beauty in the world is not tolerated in St. Augustine's moral philosophy is that it is seen as an obstacle to faith, a belief that is rooted in the Gospel of John. This Gospel forbids the love of the universe, let alone bodily pleasures. For one thing, the Christian conception of the cosmos emphasized the enjoyment of beauty, but rather a fallen state, sin, and the valley of tears. But despite all these concerns, Christianity could not get rid of the Hellenistic belief in an anthropomorphic God and the iconography that reflected this belief in objects, and the depictions of the infant Jesus and Mary in churches became an indispensable part of worship life. Perhaps this may have been initiated to keep the idea of the resurrection of Jesus alive (Augustinus, 1993, pp. 68; Phillip, 2010, pp. 134).

2. Religion-Art Relationship

When it is accepted that the expression that forms the basis of the philosophy of religion is "the explanation of the meaning and importance of religion in the total human experience," and when it is considered that aesthetic experience is also included in this field, it is imperative for the philosophy of religion to focus on the relationship between religion and art. Today, some judgments that there is an insurmountable barrier between art and religion and that religion and art are separated from each other attract attention (Aydın, 1999, pp. 296). However, the aesthetic figures in almost all religions show that such a judgment is far from a serious basis and that these opinions remain mere desires reflecting the assumption that they are unfalsifiable assumptions. "...It is seen that religion and art cannot be separated from each other when considered as life. Art without life would be dry, superficial, and without enthusiasm... Religion without art would be a dry pile of moral verses detached from life; it would be dogmatism itself. The Western Middle Ages, Scholastic thought is like this. The Middle Ages is a religious age without art." (Turgut, 1993, pp. 171).

In the course of history, some approaches have sought to analyze art and religion as if they were identical fields. First of all, this evaluation would result in the reduction of art to religion. However, "the criterion of art is man, the criterion of religion is God." Religiosity is first and foremost based on a commitment to the mysteriousness of God and expresses that the sacred exceeds the capacity of human understanding (Kauffman, 1941, pp. 463-469, 465).

The relationship between religion and art is much more difficult to articulate than the relationship between religion and fields such as science and ethics. The main reason for this is that ethics and science, etc., provide objective data. Although art is a field that is expressed through concrete works, it has a very subjective structure.

It cannot be denied that the religious perspective that human beings were created by a competent being, namely God, and that this occurred in an orderly manner, and that human beings are or should be directed from a state of incompetence to become competent in line with a certain purpose, has formed an important basis for the majority of those who have been engaged in art throughout human history. It seems possible to say that religious experience is essentially an aesthetic experience of absolute reality. This is because religious experience has the formal structure and meaning-bearing

value of the aesthetic element and proceeds in a direction that belongs to aesthetic experience.

Religious expressions are sometimes used to describe art. It can be said that this use is largely metaphorical. It is sometimes used to emphasize admiration for the aesthetic experience, and sometimes to indicate the religious task undertaken by the artist. “Nothing could be more natural than for every religion to have an influence on the artist who was born and raised in a cultural environment that was largely formed by its own influence. Religion influences both the form and content of art, as well as the foregrounding of one type of art and the backgrounding of another.” (Kauffman, 1941, pp. 463).

Acts performed in a religious context do not constitute the essence of religion per se. They express a series of stances of a deeper and more essential element toward life. In a sense, this can be said to be an aesthetic stance. Therefore, it can be said that the greatest point of agreement between art and religion is their evaluation of essence and form. Both the clergyman or religious person and the artist point to the weight of the essence when making this distinction. Throughout history, it can be said that the elements of conflict between people have taken place over forms that are detached from the essence. For example, it cannot be said that members of any faith who emphasize the importance of the essence have moved too far away from one another. It should also be noted that the emphasis on the weight of the essence does not necessitate the elimination of form altogether. For without form, it is out of the question for any religion or art to express itself fully.

Throughout history, people have made use of many symbolic elements, from numbers to colors, from animals to other elements of nature, from buildings and monuments to musical elements. “Symbols have been developed for all people. Because all people have the desire to share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions with others. The emotions, thoughts, and mental states that one person has are similarly present in other people. Thanks to these common characteristics, they are able to use symbolic language and communicate in this way... This is why symbolic language is shared by all human beings. Some of the words that make up this language may have been erased from our memory. But it is never possible to forget the basic structure of this language. It will remain hidden in our brains until the day we die.” (Fromm, 1997, pp. 38-39).

This shows that the use of symbols is a universal reality that almost no cultural structure can deny. In this context, it can be said that the main purpose of using symbols in the transmission of various metaphysical issues

is that it is easier to concretize the abstract issue and transfer it to another person, and that it is thought that the real value of the narrative would not resonate sufficiently without the use of symbols (Has, 2005, pp. 32).

"Symbol can be defined as the expression of an individual's or society's emotional experience in a language loaded with symbols and implicit language instead of a direct expression." Therefore, it is possible to define symbolism as "the way people think and feel, the values that function by taking into account some elements, beliefs, and beliefs that they have obtained through questioning by using their consciousness." (Eliade & Kılıçbay, 1992, pp. 16, 27). We can state that one of the most important meeting points of religion and art is the value they give to symbols. Both fields give importance to symbolic expression from time to time in terms of helping the individual to exhibit a more flexible attitude at the point where his perception gains value. Symbolism, which is more effective in art, is of great value in religion, especially in terms of worship. In this regard, we can say that the most important point of similarity between religion and art is that they both emphasize the aesthetic dimension. However, it can be said that the aesthetic element emphasized in religion must have an objective, albeit relative, dimension. Otherwise, the possibility of forming a common imagination would disappear. In art, this may not always be possible. Moreover, the artist's aim is not always to create a common perception (Koç, 1995, pp. 89).

Although the symbol has a very important function in terms of religion, it would not be correct to say that it is the sole element. Because in symbolic language, the personal experience of the individual carries weight. Therefore, it cannot be said that the perception of any person has the same value and meaning for all other people. Here, the formal element comes into play and enables people to meet at a common point. It is also a wrong approach to try to put forward a universal understanding of religion based on symbols. Because although the symbol has a dimension that transcends the literal, it needs to be explained in order to be understood correctly. This explanation cannot be completely independent of the culture or religion in which the symbol is used, and there is absolutely no symbolism that is detached from its context.

3. Aesthetic Dimension In Rituals (Worship)

It has already been mentioned that theistic religions are generally based on three fundamental principles and that they differ in their approach to these three elements. These are the conception of divinity or belief in God,

morality, and ritual (worship). Since the following chapters analyze how the relationship between the understanding of divinity and morality and aesthetics is established or attempted to be established, the preference for the concept of "ritual" here is only because the concept of "ritual" is more inclusive.

In general, issues such as belief and faith constitute the mental/cognitive side of religions, while worship or rituals, in whatever form they take, are the tangible manifestations of this thought or worldview. Of course, a believer or a religious person is aware that the being he or she believes to be sacred has a transcendent reality outside/above him or herself and recognizes that the sacred transcends what the person has created. It is seen that the "sacred" is associated with a being and, above all, with an emotional experience; this experience is then expressed in the form of visions, images, intellectual categories, religious practices—in short, religious institutions. Such a general understanding gives us the impression that every act of faith is a form of worship. Indeed, the sacred and experiences of the sacred are often externalized or expressed in some way through concepts, myths, and symbols. The externalization of the lived experience, which is perhaps the first goal of rituals—and we often make our evaluations and analyses through external phenomena—makes us feel that the perception and realization of the sacred presence contain elements that are both useful and dangerous. Because rituals are often performed in order to achieve some gains or to eliminate some dangers (Zuesse, 1987, pp. 406).

In order to lead a balanced life, the human soul cannot be nourished only by theoretical truths. Apart from its need to know and believe, it needs to be grounded in a practical principle that will constantly regulate its actions, whether in its personal behavior or in its relations with God or with human beings. As Whitehead points out, in this practical aspect, religion, compared to its other elements, is the most important force that cleanses the spiritual parts of man. This is because the actions, objects, and practices that have value in terms of rituals are also a source of excitement. One of the two basic functions of rituals is "protection," and the other is "enthusiasm." Religion manages and tries to balance the relationship between the sacred and profane/worldly spheres through rituals. Therefore, it can be said that rituals provide the transition and balance between two states, two eras, two systems, two identical societies, etc. (Whitehead, 1993, pp. 92).

The above-mentioned basic features of rituals—i.e., purifying and strengthening our spiritual structure—are also indispensable requirements of aesthetics and art. It is clear that the great arts offer brilliant values to the

soul and pave the way for the reorganization of our environment. From such a point of view, it does not seem easy to exhaust the importance of rituals with an accepted work of art (Read, 1981, pp. 67).

Although the intellectual dimension is necessary in art and rituals, emotion always has a more important place than intellect in both. Because most of the time, art and rituals are made in the name of the emotion they will elicit. Seeing that ritual and art have a structure with similar functions, Whitehead claims that people become artistic in rituals and reflect their rituals with their art. According to him, our human adventure, which begins with curiosity, wonder, and sensation, is externalized in ritual and art as play or as stimuli for our emotions. In this context, we see that Whitehead states that religion is an art; that the true authenticity of ritual and art must be sought in solitude; and that you can never be a good religious person or a good artist if you have never been alone with yourself (Whitehead, 1993, pp. 93).

It is clear that in some societies and in some segments of society, art and aesthetics have replaced religious belief and worship and tried to fill their void. There are many examples in history to confirm this. For example, during the heyday of Roman and Greek civilization (and even today), many people sought solace by filling the void left by religion with art. It is no coincidence that some philosophers and psychologists today argue that the behavioral symptoms of the religious individual are surprisingly similar to those of lovers or those united in aesthetic passion. According to these arguments, music, art, and scripture are rhythmic symbols of religious beliefs reflected outwardly. Religions, probably just like art style and fashion, are structures that have been cleverly designed with the aesthetic characteristics of human nature in mind—or that God has not ignored the aesthetic nature of human beings (Dawkins, 2006, pp. 253).

The fact that aesthetics is based partly on the realm of freedom and partly on sensation, and that religions try to maintain a balance between the sacred and the profane, especially through rituals, has led them to be sometimes synonymous and sometimes interchangeable. Of course, considering that society, language, and art do not develop or change on their own but in interaction with each other, it is impossible for religion and rituals, which are an inseparable element of it, not to share in these mutual relations. Therefore, the most important point in both religion and aesthetics is to explain the relationship of religion and aesthetics with external existence “in terms of whether they have an organic connection”; in other words, to show how the religious manifests itself in the sensible.

However, the idea that art is a substitute for religion and religion for art, or that the two are identical, and that religion and art can be fully externalized, becomes an approach that requires careful attention—especially when it comes to Islamic art and religion. For, according to Muslim theologians and artists, art has always been conscious of the fact that it is art; it has never attempted to replace religion or to stand against it as an "element of opposition."

In our opinion, of course, religion is not art, but no one can say that living by hearing, thinking, and enjoying is not related to art or aesthetics. Therefore, when the Ihsan (spiritual excellence) dimension of Islam is considered—i.e., "the believer behaves as if he sees Allah and Allah's Jamal" is taken into account—it is inconceivable for believers to stay away from beauty, subtlety, deep perception—in short, aesthetic enjoyment. Because the Muslim has the goal of being one of the good ones by choosing the beauties of the universe and life. To summarize, Islamic aesthetics never ceases to be interested in metaphysics, even if its intensity changes.

From monotonous, simple gymnastic movements to dance, song, and poetry, the common element in all of them that creates aesthetic excitement is actually rhythm and meter. Although music and dance in primitive societies are thought to involve simple rhythmic movements, it is also widely believed that they functioned as an integral part of primitive rituals. Perhaps Plato is actually referring to this aesthetic nature of human beings (modern and primitive society) rather than the human condition on a temporal plane when he claims that the rhythmic and harmonious movements we make in the singing of a song (also while listening) or in a dance create rhythm and harmony in the mind. In a way, such a claim also implies that movements that are far from rhythm and meter will be insufficient in creating aesthetic sensitivity. For example, we do not find any aesthetic value in the general view of a man who leaps with joy and shouts at the top of his lungs. Nor can we attribute any elegance to the behavior of people who fight. But when we connect these movements of theirs to a sequence or order with constant repetitions over time—that is, these rhythmic movements—they create an aesthetic excitement in us. Therefore, it is always possible for a fight to turn into a war dance. In short, even in primitive societies, it seems difficult to imagine an art devoid of meter and rhythm (Read, 1981, pp. 78).

The use of artistic manifestations and instruments in the rituals of primitive societies is due to their ability to better express collective excitement. They are more effective in provoking excitement than highly refined works of art whose scale becomes invisible in the gestalt/integrity of melodic beauty.

Among the primitive arts, the first striking element is the gymnastic-like dances that accompany various religious rituals and battles. Although it is difficult to distinguish between religion and magic (sorcery) in primitive manifestations—because magic, like religion, can have certain beliefs and rituals. According to some anthropologists, it too has superstitions, ceremonies, sacrifices, prayers, songs, rites, and even gods. For this reason, in primitive societies, some of the ceremonies and purposes of magic and religion can be confused. When we analyze the issue in the center of Hegel's idea that art is one of the most sublime things that came to us from the past, the understanding of art and aesthetics of primitive societies can also contribute to the life experience of today's people—provided that our evaluations are not from a single or reductionist perspective. In this context, in order to understand the art of primitive societies, it is not necessary to look at their works of art only from an objective and evolutionary perspective. Therefore, it is quite possible to see a high metaphysics in the artworks of primitive societies, which can evaluate art in its entirety but also transcend objective interpretations—whether in the wood carvings of the Maori or the Assyrian reliefs. In a Hegelian interpretation, such a metaphysical understanding can also be considered a continuous recording of the great process of reckoning (thesis–antithesis–synthesis) in which man and the external world have been engaged since the day of creation and will continue to engage in the future (Farazer, 1927, pp. 253).

Music is one of the most important means that religions use to express themselves and gain a social dimension while not neglecting the position of the individual. As an integrative element of social life, music is among the indispensable elements of religion and religious life, especially with its qualities such as dramatization or emotional intensification in the context of rituals. Despite the fact that some theologians and clergymen viewed music with suspicion due to its association with entertainment and worldly pleasures, and even banned it altogether—and despite the fact that many people today consider it as a leisure activity—it is seen that religions definitely include music, albeit in certain forms, and that music is of central importance especially for some religions.

Music, with all its individual and social texture, is both a carrier of human values and thoughts and an aesthetic bridge between the beliefs of the individual and society. Music, with its melody and meaningful linguistic structure, is also used to express metaphysical experience in a manner similar to rituals with its character in the externalization and transportation of human experience. This is because music, with its aspect that gains meaning in or through rituals, and with some of the common features it shares with rituals,

gives the impression that it itself has a ritualistic power. Even from our own lives, we can say that people who listen to music or participate in rituals go beyond the constraints and obligations of the current daily life and step into a different world with their experience. In this respect, to agree with Schopenhauer, music is the truest, most expressive, and most real language. Music is not the image, imitation, composition, and indirect depiction of existence, but directly the existence itself and the essence of existence. The world can be called the embodied will as well as the embodied music (İkbal, 1908, pp. 27).

Schopenhauer, who considers music as a metaphysical force, is not alone in this assumption, for music has always been believed to have a metaphysical power since the dawn of humanity. In ancient Egyptian religion, for example, we see the Sun God singing and making the realm emerge from the cries of light, and at the beginning of the Brahma creation myth, music and harmony accompany creation.

Within rituals, the event of death itself and some post-mortem practices are a state of "aesthetic sublimity," and it is in the ritualistic dramas of funeral rites that we encounter manifestations of aesthetics or art. In these ceremonies, we see the development of the branches of art involved in speech, singing, architecture, and ornamentation. Funeral ceremonies, which were originally a dramatic scene, gradually took on a purely lyrical character; in many cultures, they gave birth to elegies, prayers, laments, and were the source of the formation of an enormous oral literature. The dramatic element in funeral ceremonies and the attitudes taken towards the idea of death cause us to revive certain religious legends or myths. These enrich the imagination on the one hand and influence aesthetic modes of expression on the other. In short, funeral ceremonies play an important role in both the birth and development of a musical genre. Attitudes taken in the face of death and immortality or funeral ceremonies, with their aesthetic excitement, can lead people to a new field of thought and contribute to the evaluation of life in an existential dimension.

4. Aesthetic Experience and God

Aesthetic experience, like religious experience, is multifaceted. In the first stage, the subject's contact with the object arouses a kind of emotional appetite in the subject's perception and focuses attention on the object. Therefore, aesthetic perception emerges as a result of an emotional state and involves a series of voluntary-emotional conditions. The element that makes aesthetic experience different from other experiences is a cognitive state

arising from satisfaction in the first stage. The cognitive state in aesthetic experience is aesthetic judgment (Zdybicka, 1991, pp. 153). This judgment varies from person to person. On the other hand, since aesthetic experience is available to all people, it would be appropriate to ask whether it implies the ultimate beauty. In order to claim this, it is essential to make some assumptions. First of all, it is assumed that the object of aesthetic experience is beautiful.

The value discovered in aesthetic experience is beauty. That is to say, it is to break away from everyday concerns, preoccupations, and objects and move to a new dimension that is practically irrelevant. This aesthetic attitude is sometimes identified with religious experience because it does not provide a measurable material benefit and opens the subject's existence to new dimensions. Yet there is a big difference between the object and purpose of religious and aesthetic experience. Religious experience is ultimately a search for unity with a transcendent being. It is, therefore, an act that aims to achieve a true union with God. In contrast, aesthetic experience may not always have an existential aspect. Moreover, while aesthetic experience takes us away from practical reality and leads us to live in the moment, religious experience, on the contrary, leads the subject to action. Although religious experience in a sense distances the subject from daily practical concerns, it aims to include their actions in the awareness resulting from religious experience. Sometimes there is no apparent difference between religious experience and aesthetic experience. Natural beauty reveals the uniqueness of particular objects (Dadosky, 2010, pp. 3).

Theistic natural signs involve the indirect perception of God. These signs are thought to be grounded in human nature and lead to belief in God. For example, the splendor of nature can remind us of God. The sunset over a mountain landscape can be considered a theistic natural sign. This perception leads to certain beliefs about God's existence and attributes. In fact, perceiving beauty as a theistic natural sign is related to the epistemology of aesthetic feelings. One should not be reluctant to trust aesthetic experiences as well. First, the value of an emotion, object, or situation is appreciated. To believe that the world is as it appears in sensory experience is to tend to trust emotions as well as sensory perceptions. Emotions enable us to perceive and value the beauty in objects. This perception is, in a way, an evaluation arising from a combination of physical characteristics. Therefore, beauty is not entirely in the eye of the beholder. The subject only needs to be "ready to perceive the value of splendor" to experience beauty (Alston, 1991, pp. 28).

Nature, taken as a theistic sign, represents a kind of image of the divine creator. With the analogy that lightning is invisible but its effect is visible, Socrates says that we can observe the order that God has given to the universe only in its effect. If nature is, in reality, an image or mirror of the divine, then nature, like human beings, has an integrity in itself and a value for itself. Thus, nature ceases to be merely an object for man and becomes an end for God. In this context, the visible is the sign of the divine. The visible part of nature, then, emerges as the beauty bestowed upon it by God. In a similar sense, human life is thought to be the image of God insofar as it reveals creativity, intelligence, will, freedom, and love—or better. "Wherever we look at beauty, we eventually reach the level of divinity: every beauty that you unfold in nature is nothing but the appearance of the Idea of the Beautiful." The changing manifestations in the visible world lead man to his unchanging Being. On the other hand, when we take unity as the ontological distinction between creator and created, nothing can be like God. Thus, God's beauty can be seen in His actions, and the perfection of His actions is the measure of all other beauty (Evans, 2010, pp. 12-17). Beauty in nature is not the divine beauty itself, but its image—its reflection.

Today, aesthetic value is thought to be found in nature and in works of art. In the Middle Ages, many thinkers believed that there was a transcendent aspect of beauty, goodness, and unity. The theological tradition, influenced by Plato's *Feast*, embraces the idea that God is the source of beauty and that beauty is even defined by God. Post-medieval thinkers emphasize the connection between God and beauty. "The apprehension of nature as a sign leads to a process of contemplation and perception in man." Whatever the object of beauty, it leads to God. Not only nature but also works of art can bear a divine signature. A song that stirs the emotions, an inspiring story, or a work of art that evokes aesthetic pleasure bears God's imprint. It can be said that God only gives the world a shadow of His perfection. Order, harmony, and appropriateness in things correspond to divine unity. Even if the love of beauty in human beings is not satisfied with things, it will tell us about divine beauty as if it reminds us of a dream. The artist is the one who tries to see the divine beauty more than anyone else. Because the main goal in art is to pass from the visible to the ideas. Existence is beautiful in terms of the trace of the most beautiful, and the effort to understand the beautiful is a kind of effort to understand God. Because the artist creates his art in pursuit of the beautiful (Karadeniz, 2020, pp. 14).

We should note that theistic signs are not obvious to every observer who thinks only about nature or human beings. One can very well look at nature or humans and find no trace of the divine there. If God exists and created

the world, is there any reason to believe that natural beauty points to this? Conversely, there is no reason to think that God does not reveal Himself through natural beauty. Suppose that God's self-revealing through natural beauty is grounded in human nature. If God exists, there is no obstacle to His creating beauty to point to Himself. The relativity and subjectivity of beauty are counterexamples. Nevertheless, it is clear in one way or another that nature evokes emotions such as awe, wonder, gratitude, and respect. Some may say that these feelings or beauty are entirely in the mind, imagination, or evolutionary outcomes, but we cannot say that such arguments exclude the perception of beauty (Şimşek, 2014, pp. 78).

As is well known, the beauty of objects in the external world causes a kind of satisfaction in the perceiver. Human tastes do not preclude this. The diversity of tastes can be explained in several ways. Some people may have better senses than others. Although all this beauty points to God, not all access may be equal. Sensitivity to beauty and the mind/God behind it can vary from person to person. Indeed, "They speak to everyone, but their beauty is understood only by those who compare their outward voices with the truth within." Seeing the splendor in theistic signs can lead to a love of God, but in the absence of this love, it would not be difficult to explain beauty in different ways. Perceptual sensitivity and divine concerns provide a perspective for perceiving theistic natural signs. Seeing aesthetic experiences as revelations of God or as the means by which the divine reveals itself requires the subject to respond with assent and obedience. This is a kind of act of faith. In aesthetic experience, then, the traces of God's activity and presence in nature become more clearly visible. Therefore, the experience of beauty can provide a rational justification for God's existence, even if it is not necessary (Augustinus & Pusey, 1949, pp. 37).

Aesthetic experience, as is known, includes all human beings. As Aquinas says, "Everyone loves the beautiful." Therefore, it can be said that the aesthetic evidence used to prove God's existence is inclusive/universal. In order to talk about aesthetic proof, it is necessary to talk with the concepts of aesthetics. First of all, we must specify what we mean by the term God. Otherwise, the question "Which God?" will come up, which will lead to some semantic and epistemological ambiguities. The term God can be understood in the light of qualities such as omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute goodness. It is one thing to prove the existence of such a God; it is another to find the fulfillment of the existential longing for a transcendent being. Proving God's existence does not require the existence of a personal relationship with God, as emphasized in theistic religions. As a matter of fact, arguments and their conclusions lack the personal relationship that would

offer an I–Thou interaction. In other words, believing that the conclusion of an argument is true does not directly lead to faith in God. A theology that appeals only to abstract reason can foster the sense that religious belief lacks existential depth. Whereas the ontological argument is a priori and does not refer to the nature of experience, the cosmological argument relies on concepts such as succession, causality, and contingency without value content. Among traditional arguments, the aesthetic argument provides a value-based understanding and appreciation of beauty.

Indeed, axiological arguments focus on value. The supreme being must exist; therefore, God must exist. Everything that must exist probably exists, so God probably exists. In the same way, aesthetic arguments provide a strong argument for theism. In contrast, the beauty argument has received relatively little attention. The aesthetic argument is not included in anthologies of natural theological arguments; it is sometimes found among arguments for design. However, the evidence can be traced back to antiquity. Ecology is certainly the science that deserves to be a theoretical framework for making sense of our place in the world. When the design argument or aesthetic evidence is developed in the field of value, it can encompass all this. A posteriori arguments have been neglected in recent philosophy of religion, and a re-examination of design arguments could open up this area (De Cruz & De Smedt, 2015, pp. 133).

More succinctly, the aesthetic argument does not have a traditional argumentative structure, but it is argued that aesthetic experience depends on the existence of God. For a theist, God's desire to create beauty is a reason—but this is not the case for a non-theist. Aesthetic evidence must therefore show how aesthetic experience is explained by theism. This can be done in two ways: by appealing to the idea of design and by seeing beauty as an element of religious experience. The views of philosophers of religion who deal with the existential dimension of the aesthetic argument are experiential in nature. R. Swinburne, who appeals to beauty to strengthen his argument for design, and F. Tennant, who presents one of the most comprehensive views of beauty, are examples of the idea of design. Both forms of the aesthetic argument infer the existence of a creator from the beauty of the present realm. To see beauty as a form of religious experience is to see aesthetic experience as including the experience of God. On this interpretation, beauty somehow reflects the nature of God. Thus, people experience God through beauty. Although aesthetic experience is also related to religious experience, the connection with God in aesthetic experience is relatively indirect compared to religious experience (Swinburne, 2019, pp. 2).

Proving God's existence may not be very difficult, but finding meaning and fulfillment is sometimes difficult. To expect proofs of God's existence to satisfy a restless heart is to ask too much of them. Divine religions, on the other hand, offer such hope. Theological proofs support those who want to believe. Aesthetic evidence can be thought to be based on existential longing in this context. The justification provided by experience may not always be an argument. Although divine experiences can make a claim, they will not be considered a direct argument. Aesthetic desire is tried to be satisfied with experiences based on aesthetic pleasure. The sense of sublimity revealed in works of art or experiences of nature is a kind of remembrance. In this respect, the desire for aesthetic experience is quite different from other desires. For example, one can satisfy one's desire to eat cake by eating cake, but the desire in the face of a striking work of art increases in intensity. The first premise of such a universality argument is that people perceive nature as full of beauty. Lewis claimed that humans seek to fulfill their longing for God through aesthetic experiences. The existence of artistic activity in all known human cultures empirically supports the universality of aesthetics (Lewis, 2001, pp. 136-137).

Aesthetic evidence shaped in this way is based on a sense of longing, and for it to work, the reader is expected to have the same feeling. Feelings of restlessness and incompleteness are thought to stem from longing for God. As a response to existential longing, Augustine was one of those who could only soothe his restless heart with the beauty of God. According to him, the most perfect harmony is unity. By "one" is meant God. He has placed beauty and appropriateness in everything. All of these beauties come from the divine source and are justified by it. If the beginning and end of beauty is *wahdat*, God is the principle and cause of all beauty. In short, beauty points to the divine. Creation wants to communicate the nature of the divine. The saturation of forms radiates from the object through beauty. All creation is a reflection of divine beauty. Thus, a person can be beautiful in spirit and body to the extent that he or she approaches the perfection of God.

Augustine says that beauty reminds us of divine beauty, but this remembrance does not imply an innate knowledge in Plantinga's terminology. According to this understanding of remembrance, "we remember God from the moment we recognize Him." So what does this mean? Calvin, as A. Plantinga suggests, speaks of the existence of conditions that remind us of God. The aesthetic argument establishes a connection with beauty and the divine.

Plantinga, a follower of Calvin, says that the aesthetic experience of nature makes one feel the existence of God directly. One does not look at the night sky and conclude that God exists and write it down in one's notebook. Such an argument would be extremely weak. When we perceive the night sky, a mountain landscape, or a tiny flower, beliefs suddenly emerge. One does not draw a conclusion and form a belief accordingly. The heavens reveal the glory of God, but not necessarily as a premise for an argument. Plantinga says that aesthetic evidence does not have a classical argumentative structure. There is no inference from the proposition "Beauty exists" to the statement "Therefore God exists." The aesthetic proof has a phenomenological rather than a formally deductive nature. In his discussion with B. Russell, F. Copleston stated that religious experience does not prove the existence of God with certainty, but the best explanation of such an experience is the existence of God. The basic idea of aesthetic evidence, when informed by experience, is to reveal the beauty of God in certain ways. In this way, it is concluded that aesthetic experience is a justification for theistic belief (Robinson, 2005, pp. 74).

5. Islam and Art

The center of Islamic aesthetics is the belief in tawḥīd. *Tawḥīd* means the ontological separation of the Creator from all other creatures. Every creature obeys the laws of time and space. There can be no unity or integration between the Creator and the created in any sense. The belief in *tawḥīd* fundamentally rejects the pantheistic way of thinking. The Creator is above all nature and all beings; that is, He is a transcendent being. Nothing is like Allah; nothing can symbolize or represent Him. In fact, the *mutashābih* (anthropomorphic) words and expressions in the Qur'an, which deal with Allah's actions (*takhlīq* [creation], *tarzīq* [sustenance], *ihdā'* [guidance], *idlāl* [misguidance]), both His attributes of knowledge (*yad* [hand], *wajh* [face], *istiwā'* [establishment]), and His attributes of action, prevent Allah from being symbolized or shaped by any human or natural figure. This is because Allah is beyond any form of imagery or conception that can occur in the human imagination. He transcends all characteristics of created beings (*ḥādith*), such as body, substance, form, shape, time, space, number, essence, and organ.

Islamic aesthetics is based on two religious principles: tawḥīd and tenzīh (sanctification). Whenever Christianity ignored these two basic principles, it deviated from the line of *tawḥīd* by surrendering to a Hellenized understanding of religion. Judaism and Islam, on the other hand, rejected any

kind of anthropomorphic or representational attempt to bring God closer to the senses and consistently distanced themselves from the visual arts, which require the most concrete forms. The most important difference between the Greek and Islamic understanding of art is that Islam believes the Muslim artist discovers beauty; they do not create it. All kinds of beauty, which exist as manifestations of Allah's attribute of beauty, become touchable, visible, and audible through the activity of the artist. The Muslim artist believes that everything that exists is connected to Allah. Thus, the duty of the artist as a believer is not merely to satisfy aesthetic pleasure, but to point toward the means of guidance within the world (Buckhardt, 2013, pp. 22).

Why does Islam not tolerate the depiction of living beings? Is there a prohibition in clear and explicit religious references?

It should be noted that there is no explicit ruling in the Qur'an prohibiting or permitting the depiction of living figures. In the pre-Islamic *Jāhiliyya* society, idols (*ṣanam*, *tamāthīl*) and images were worshipped. The Qur'an mentions that this superstitious tradition continued among the people of Prophet Abraham and Prophet Moses. This worship went beyond mental imagination and took place in a tangible, physical way. The main reason for Islam's lack of tolerance toward depictions of living beings (human and animal) is the fear that the artist might fall into the temptation of blurring the ontological distinction between God and man. Behind this prohibition lies the fervor of the relentless struggle against idolatry. In fact, it can be said that the Prophet's initial prohibition of visiting graves—later allowed under certain conditions—and his removal of sculptures and frescoes inside the Kaaba on the day of the Conquest of Mecca, were all rooted in the concern that the community might drift from monotheism into *shirk* (associating others with God). In other words, the artist's ambition to create something resembling Allah's creation is seen as highly dangerous in terms of Islamic belief. Consequently, in Islamic art, there is no claim of "creation" in the sense found in Western aesthetics (Ayvazoğlu, 1993, pp. 40).

Tawḥīd is certainly not opposed to art, beauty, or human efforts to pursue them. Here, the ultimate beauty belongs to Allah. Starting from the declaration that "there is no god but Allah," the Muslim artist knows that nothing in nature can represent Allah. For this reason, Muslim artists turned to abstraction and preferred stylization—a kind of translation of nature into non-nature—rather than the Aristotelian concept of *mimesis*. For example, the human figure was stylized like a flower, assigning it an unnatural quality. This is particularly evident in miniature art. For this reason, although the Muslim artist had a deep love for the Prophet Muhammad, they never depicted him, not even in

miniature form. The clearest example of this contrast is that, while the façade of a Gothic-style church is adorned with images of Jesus Christ and Mary, the qibla side of mosques remains empty, decorated only with ornamentation and calligraphy. It is not possible to see living figures depicted anywhere within a mosque.

The driving force behind Islamic art's tendency toward abstraction or emptiness is the theological principle of tenzīh—the belief that human beings should be free from all forms of imitation that may be associated with God's image. The second foundational idea is that knowing God belongs to the domain of the absolute unseen, and therefore cannot be visually expressed. This is the highest aesthetic truth, and it is inaccessible to human beings. For Allah is both absolute and sublime. It is impossible to represent Allah definitively through any example drawn from the phenomenal world. The most profound expression of this is Allah's attribute of *baqā'*, which means eternity and infinity. Eternity, in its most succinct definition, refers to something inexpressible or beyond articulation (Canrera, 2017, pp. 115).

Every Islamic work of art—from architecture to miniature, from calligraphy to illumination, from bookbinding to all forms of ornamentation—took on a new aesthetic function in the hands of Muslim artists. These forms symbolized a new interpretation of *tawḥīd* through this "emptiness" or "infinity" that expresses sublimity. In contrast to Greek and Renaissance art, where the image of a deified man (*homo divinus*) is central, Islamic art draws attention to the immanence of absolute beauty in the visible world while firmly preserving the boundary between man and his Creator.

In the aesthetic theorems of antiquity, when reality became defined through the senses, painters transformed their forms into objects of worship. Beauty was restricted to the human body, and man was transformed into a Promethean, immoral god or goddess. Imam al-Ghazālī (d. 1058/1111), who ushered in a new era of transcendence in Islamic philosophy, offered a unique reinterpretation of the aesthetic value of *tawḥīd* by indirectly criticizing the art of antiquity, which centered on the idolization of man. Those trapped in the realm of imagination and the senses believe that beauty consists only in outward appearance—beauty of form and shape. For them, beauty is what the eye sees as beautiful. They are confined to individual forms and fail to perceive beauty in that which is not visible, imagined, shaped, or colored. It is a mistake to limit beauty solely to the tangible. Everything has beauty in accordance with its own appropriate state. *Ḥusn* and *jamāl* are also found in things unknown to the senses. For instance, when we say "good character" or "beautiful knowledge," are we not affirming beauty in abstract realities?

There is also beauty that can be known through the light of insight (*firāsa*), and this reflects the aesthetic understanding of *tawḥīd* (Gazzâli, 1994, pp. 457-458).

In the Qur'anic linguistic system, Allah is the highest semantic node, dominating all fields of meaning. He is at the center of being. Human beings and all other creatures are subordinate to Him in the ontological hierarchy. There is no being that can rival Him. The Qur'an does not employ formal logic or scientific demonstration to prove the existence of Allah, as such methods pertain to the empirical realm. Instead, it appeals to reason (*ʿaql*), heart (*qalb*), and revelation (*naql*). Humans can come to know God indirectly through these paths. Accordingly, both Islamic philosophers and theologians have developed various methods of rational demonstration to establish the foundations of belief in God.

To believe that no method can be developed beyond those currently available would be to deny the intellectual dynamism of humanity. More persuasive forms of demonstration can be developed by appealing to the cultural context of each era. While the Qur'an addresses the essence and existence of God, its primary target is always the human being.

Therefore, even topics related to the absolute realm are explained using human concepts and categories so that they can be understood. Since revelation is addressed to humans—who are themselves part of the phenomenal world—Allah's essence, which belongs to the realm of the absolute unseen (*ghayb*), reaches them only through a mediated epistemology that extends from the transcendent to the experiential world. But how can a being within the phenomenal world come to know Allah, who belongs to the unseen absolute?

As is well known, when the Qur'an speaks of the God-human relationship, it emphasizes not "knowing" in the cognitive sense, but belief in the unseen. The absolute unseen is inaccessible to human perception. Knowledge of it comes only through prophethood. Yet in seeking to know Allah, people have inevitably turned to explanations that are not dependent on revelation. One such method is analogical reasoning—inferring the unknown from the known. Another is the Qur'an's strategy of explaining the unseen by using what is observable. This is often accomplished through metaphor or parable, appealing to both intellect and senses. Through these rhetorical devices, the Qur'an conveys the beauty of what it commands and the ugliness of what it forbids. The aesthetic imagination embedded in the cosmic order draws the gaze of the beholder beyond the material, toward the divine.

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CHAPTER 2

RELIGIOUS MUSIC IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Abstract

Music, as one of humanity's most ancient and universal languages establishes a profound connection between the material world and spiritual beliefs. However, in the contemporary era, this tradition faces a complex dance of change. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how the forces of secularization, modernization, and digitalization are reshaping religious music, aiming to elucidate the paradox between the declining auditory presence in traditional institutions and the proliferation of new musical forms. Employing a qualitative research design based on descriptive analysis and a comprehensive literature review this chapter investigates the sociological transformation of sacred music within a phenomenological framework. Rather than focusing on technical or structural analysis of specific liturgies, the study explores the broader "transformation thesis" of religious expression in the modern world. The research addresses the central question of how religious music negotiates its existence under secular pressure and evolves into innovative forms to maintain its function. Key findings reveal a significant spatial shift: religious music is moving from the communal sphere of churches and mosques to the individualized, private sphere of smartphones and digital platforms. While traditional performance practices

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are weakening, the study identifies a surge in hybrid genres, where religious messages are blended with secular forms such as electronic music, rock, and jazz. This digital democratization expands global access but simultaneously raises critical discussions regarding the potential loss of spiritual sincerity and depth. Ultimately, contradicting the notion that religious music is facing extinction, this work asserts its unique value by demonstrating how it is reconstructed as a vital tool for identity formation and belonging in modern society.

Keywords: Ethnomusicology, modernity, spirituality, sacred music, secularization

1. Introduction

The melodies echoing under the sky are intertwined with music, one of the most ancient and universal languages of humanity. It also establishes a deep connection with religious beliefs and rituals, adding a dimension that adds meaning and spirituality to our existence. In the modern world, this ancient tradition is being swept away in a complex dance of change and continuity. On the one hand, the waves of secularization and modernization are leading to the decline of traditional religious music practices and the change of their role in society. Classical hymns and prayers echoing in religious institutions such as churches, mosques and synagogues are being replaced by silence, religious music education and performance are weakening, and the number of religious musicians is decreasing. This situation is creating a gap between a generation yearning for the past with a wind of nostalgia and a generation setting sail for new pursuits. On the other hand, the dynamism of the modern world is also paving the way for religious music to sprout in new and innovative forms. Different musical genres such as electronic music, hip hop, rock and jazz are blended with religious feelings and messages, creating a brand new musical universe. In this way, religious music reaches a wider audience, is adopted by different generations and keeps pace with the pulse of the modern world.

With the influence of digital technologies, the production, distribution and consumption of religious music are gaining a completely different dimension. Religious music works, which can now be easily accessed over the internet, reach millions of people through smartphones, tablets and computers. This contributes to religious music transcending its borders and becoming a global phenomenon. Will the opportunities offered by the digital age help religious music become widespread or will they cause it to drift away from spirituality and sincerity? These and similar questions pave the way for intriguing and

important discussions about the future of religious music in the modern world. Issues such as the challenges faced by traditional religious music practices, the changes in the role of religious music in the modern world, the emergence of new and innovative forms of religious music and the use of religious music in the digital age are of great importance. In addition, the impact of religious music on individual and social identity, spirituality and sense of belonging in modern society is undeniable.

Throughout this journey, we will explore the story of religious music from the past to the present, analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by the modern world, and examine different perspectives on the future of religious music. Our goal is to better understand the place and importance of this ancient tradition in the modern world and to create a meaningful framework for the future of religious music.

2. The Emergence of the Concept of Religion and Music

Religious music encompasses musical genres that are associated with and performed by religious beliefs, rituals, and emotions. These musical genres are generally used in religious contexts, such as reading sacred texts, singing hymns, praying, and playing in religious ceremonies. The relationship between religion and music is a strong bond that has existed throughout human history. It is known that religion affects people's spiritual and spiritual worlds and provides them with peace and happiness, and that music also has a similar effect. People have expressed their feelings and met their spiritual needs by using music both in religious rituals and in daily life for thousands of years. Religious music is not limited to a specific religion; it is encountered in almost all world religions in different forms and traditions. The concept of "religious music", which generally reveals the power of self-expression as a reflection of people's spiritual integrity, still maintains itself with this strong structure. For example; when the call to prayer in Islam, puja in Buddhism, and the rituals that emerged in Hindus are considered, the concept of religious music is seen as a combination of divine words and music and its use (Ellingson, 2005). At the same time, according to Hindu belief, Brahma (god) is depicted with Saravasti playing a cymbal in his hands, while Vaishnava (god) is shown playing a flute by blowing into a conch shell (Beck, 2006, p.114).

When we look at the life before Islam when we say religious music, we come across many facts. Among these facts, it is possible to talk about the combination of the concept of fine arts with religion among societies and

the oldest Turkish communities. It is observed that the clergymen in these societies expressed beautiful words to mobilize the society and the connection with music (Özkan, 1987). At the same time, people called shamans used this religious music concept (harmony, lyrics and dance) in the emergence of the Turks. Later, these people were also called by names such as Kam, Ozan, Baksı, Bahşi and Kam (Banarlı, 1971). Based on this, it is seen that the connection between religion and music emerged together and formed the main theme of religious rituals through different people. On the other hand, the Turks included music in the ceremonies and celebrations related to religion that they put forward in the period before Islam. Later, with the acceptance of Islam by the Turks, the interest in music reached higher levels. Over time, forms called religious music will emerge and continue to this day as the richness of a deep-rooted culture (Özalp, 2000, p.106).

If we go back further in the relationship between religion and music, it is possible to talk about the ancient periods. Here, we come across the ancient period and the rituals belonging to them. One of the most important building blocks used in these rituals is music. Therefore, although the concept of religion came to the fore in the emergence of civilizations, it would not be wrong to say that music gained a real identity with its combination and use. This situation will provide a transfer until today as a part of both cultural and cultural transfer that has lasted for years. The music used in these ancient periods was presented by the musicians who performed it in a very devoted manner, and it continued as an important element that could not leave room for error. Thus, the combination of divine words with music and the resulting devoted work revealed how important the connection between religion and music was even in that period. In fact, one of the main reasons for the creation of religious words and music was not to anger the gods (Elbaş, 2010, p. 247). This situation, which was frequently encountered in religious rituals in those periods, was examined meticulously and in a very sensitive order.

The connection between music and religion can also be seen in tribal cultures, going back to ancient times. In tribes, there are musical concepts that generally emerge with the subject of magic. Although these concepts were not performed through melodic structures, they were performed with instruments similar to drums today. It can also be said that musical structures have the characteristics of a religious ceremony in which tribal people present their own voices together with rhythms. Therefore, it is observed that religion and music, as well as the magic plot, are presented together. It is also useful to note that dance figures are used in the shows performed in these rituals. The photo below shows the dances and figures performed by New Zealand tribal people together with music.



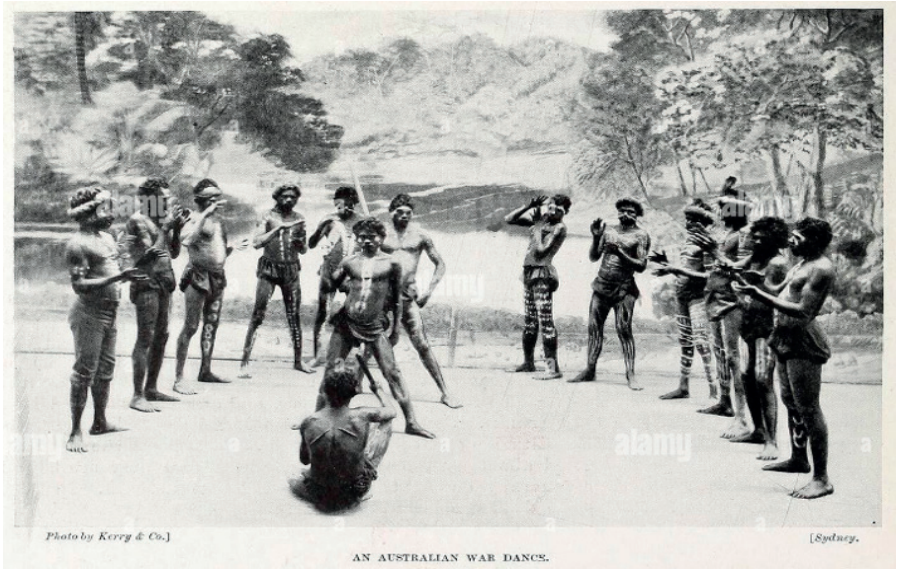
1.War Dance, New Zelland *(SOFREP, 2022).*

The ancient civilizations that formed the basis of the concept of religion and music exhibited quite holistic behaviors with the understanding of fate. Among these behaviors, they adopted the belief that all the good and bad situations that happened to them in their lives were given by the gods due to the belief in fate. In addition, they organized religious ceremonies to win the favor of the gods and to make themselves closer to them. These religious ceremonies are again connected to music and are performed within a ritual. In these rituals, some religious ceremonies are performed by considering what the gods want from them or whether any anger is presented to them. Ceremonies were held within some facts about the diseases that will be presented to them from the beginning to the end of their lives and how the cures for these diseases will be. These ceremonies are also thought to reveal the relationship of music with religion (Yiğit, 2023, p.132).



2. Ancient Roman Period Religious Ceremony *(Alamy, n.d)*

Another community where music and religion have the most important place among the tribes are the Aborigines. Aborigines are known as Australian natives. The concept that best expresses the connection between religion and music in these communities is Yijan. Yijan is generally defined as a dream (Batuk, 2013). According to this belief system, it is said that the ancestors of the Aborigines walked and moved in the sky.



3. Aborigines and Religious Music Show *(Alamy, n.d.)*

In the archaeological excavations carried out in the Anatolian region, some evidence of importance for the history of music was found. Some materials and symbols used to produce sound were found among this evidence. In the light of this information, it can be said that the concept of musical culture was born in the Neolithic period (Karaagaç, 2018, p.287). Thus, it would not be wrong to say that the foundations of the religious-based musical approach also manifested themselves in the Anatolian region. At the same time, Judaism is among the religions that emphasize music. The word "singing" is repeated 309 times in the verbal expressions used in the Jewish religion. This situation also shows us the connection of the Jewish religion with music (Friedmann, 2009, p.25).

3. Types of Religious Music

Religious music covers a wide range and appears in different forms in different religions and cultures. Some of the most common types of religious music are as follows:

3.1. Hymns

These are melodies that express religious beliefs and feelings, usually adapted from sacred texts. They usually consist of lyrics that are appropriate to the structure of each religion, and their melodic structures show their existence within the musical system of that period. Hymns also show the structure of a certain system formed within the structure of religion. They present the rules that exist within any religion within a certain structure and with melodic patterns. Hymns, which constitute the most basic structure of music and the concept of religion, are among the most important building blocks of the belief system.

3.2. Prayer Music

It is expressed as the music used during the reading or singing of prayers. Again, prayers are read with melodic patterns according to the own prayer and discourse style of each religion. Although it is a single human voice, it can include collective prayer rituals. At the same time, prayers can be read with the accompaniment of different instruments, as in the old and ancient periods. The own structure of each religion is taken as a basis here.

3.3. Ritual Music

Music played during religious ceremonies, usually accompanying the reading or performance of sacred texts. Rituals are performed with their structure specific to different religions. The most important of these and the best examples of the Mevlevi rituals that are well-known all over the world are one of the best examples. Mevlevi rituals can also be called Sufi music.

3.4. Meditation Music

Music used during religious meditation and contemplation, usually creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere. It consists of melodic patterns that people generally do alone and that a certain music repeats frequently. Today, there are music made especially with the culture of Buddhism and meditations related to it. These meditations are performed by associating them with certain movements and keeping up with the calm structure of the music. At the same time, meditation music is also a type of music used during mental exercises such as meditation and mindfulness, creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere. These musics are designed to help deepen meditation by calming the mind and reducing stress and anxiety. These musics, which are generally listened to in a calm mood, are designed to make people focus on a certain task and reach the highest peak of concentration related to that task. It is a type of music that is frequently preferred in the modern world for the soul to calm down and take a peaceful state.

3.5. Spiritual Musics

It is called musics related to religious beliefs and spiritual concepts, but not limited to a specific religion. This type of music is generally listened to to increase focus and maximize concentration. It also includes positive affirmations such as purifying one's own soul and nourishing oneself with spiritual feelings. This form of music, which stands out in our modern world, offers us the different tone of religion and music. Spiritual musics, which are presented using many different instruments, are also listened to by people from different religions today. When this style of music is considered, it is seen that it shows itself in the modern world as a different reflection of religious music. There are many different artists who reflect and perform this form of music today.

4. The Modernization Process of Traditional Religious Music Practices

Modernization and secularization have led to the decline of religious institutions such as churches, mosques, synagogues and the traditional religious music practices performed in these institutions in many societies. This has led to a decline in religious music education and performance, a decrease in the number of religious musicians and a decrease in the audience of religious music. At the same time, the decrease in some cultural accumulations with modernization is revealed by the music produced. It can be said that the concept of traditional religious music has also been pushed to the background due to the increase in societies that accept the concept of religion only as a ritual and cannot fully implement this feeling in their lives. A society that consumes fast and individuals who cannot fully comprehend the belief system within themselves have gradually accelerated this process. It would not be wrong to say that the concept of traditionality has also entered a weakening process due to the acceleration of these processes. The negative effects of modernization processes on the concepts of traditionality and religious music are also evident today. On the other hand, modernization is a process in which societies undergo radical changes in social, cultural and economic areas, so it also has a significant impact on traditional practices. Traditional religious music practices also tend to decline with the modernization process, taking their share of these changes.

There are many reasons behind this decline. Some of these reasons include:

4.1. Secularization

It is the process of decreasing the influence of the sacred in society and individuals and the prominence of worldly values. This process includes not only the decrease in religious beliefs and practices, but also the decline of the influence of religion in all areas of society. From another perspective, it can also be expressed as the modern societies that exist today moving away from traditional religious beliefs and values and becoming more secular. This situation also reduces the importance and function of religious music in society. When looked at from the religious dimension, this tension (secular structure) is calculated by looking at the interest in religious ceremonies, loyalty to the Orthodox belief system, the number of people attending holidays and other religious-based collective actions (Ekinci, 2018, p.321). Although the secular structure seems to have negatively affected the concept of religion, according to Luckman; research has also revealed that there is no

effect and that the concept of religion continues to exist in modern societies (Luckman, 2002). Of course, this perspective is only related to the religious dimension. It is also useful to say that our focus is on religious music.

4.2. Urbanization

The concentration of people in cities leads to the weakening of traditional religious communities and practices. In big cities, the venues where religious music is performed and listened to are decreasing. As a result of the modernizing world and the urbanization process it brings, the weakening of traditional religious communities has also emerged. Due to this situation, it can be said that traditional religious communities, which are tightly connected to each other in villages and towns, have entered a phase of fragmentation and weakening with the urbanization process. In addition, the transfer and maintenance of religious music practices have also become difficult. In the process where religious music and urbanization are adversely affected, the scarcity of religious venues is again striking. While there are religious temples such as mosques, churches or synagogues in villages and towns, these venues are not sufficient in the modern world and urbanization process. Thus, the disruption of studies involving the relationship between religion and music and their failure to reach a sufficient level emerges. At the same time, with the coming together of people from different cultures and religions with urbanization, the deformation of the religious music structure specific to each religion also comes to light. This situation also disrupts the traditional religious music understanding. Although the increase in religious diversity may sound positive at first, when considered, it can be observed that the unique (essential) musical structure of each religion has degenerated over time.

4.3. Mediatization:

With the spread of mass media, people's contact with traditional religious music has decreased. Modern music genres and entertainment forms are replacing religious music. Mediatization can also cause the concept of religious music to disappear because it constantly serves popular music culture to people. It is also a fact that today's modern media has pushed the concept of traditional religious music to the background because it focuses on events that will attract people's instant attention. The concept of mediatization is also a track where smartphones, computers and social media networks act together. When the place of old traditional religious music is considered in this track, it would be appropriate to say that it is

confined to a very sterile area. However, when its traditional structure is left aside, the emerging concept of religious music has also tried to capture the modernization process within itself. Here, we can talk about the combination of different music produced with sacred religious lyrics. Modern technologies have become important in terms of the production, distribution and consumption of religious music. Thanks to the internet and digital media platforms, religious music has become accessible to a much wider audience. At the same time, the integration of modern musical techniques and genres with religious music has encouraged innovative approaches in this field. This has increased the popularity of religious music among young listeners and created new opportunities for its reinterpretation. It is necessary to emphasize the point that should be noted here; it is necessary not to overlook the difference between traditional religious music and the religious music concepts that are presented to us in today's popularity.

4.4. Education

Religious music education manifests itself differently around the world. These differences stem from the changes in religions, cultures and education systems. When we look at the world in general, religious music education is not given enough place in modern education systems. This situation may cause new generations to lose their connection with religious music. However, in some countries, religious music education may also be a part of the system. Students can be informed about religious music theory, history and repertoire. However, this education is generally provided in religious schools or places affiliated with religious institutions. In general, this type of religious music education is very rare in general education curricula around the world. In some countries, there is also criticism that religious music education is not given enough importance and that this education is not accessible. Members of minority religions in particular may have difficulties in accessing religious music education. On the other hand, interest in religious music education has been increasing in recent years. This increasing interest has led to the increase in religious music festivals and workshops, the development of new religious music education programs and the conduct of religious music research.

4.5. Political Factors

The connection between religious music and political factors that have taken shape in the modern world is quite deep. Therefore, it can be addressed in different ways depending on the diversity of thought and perspective.

Religious music is a tool that people use to express their spiritual feelings and beliefs. This type of music is generally used during religious rituals and worship and has a repertoire based on religious texts. Political factors, on the other hand, are the elements that determine the political structures, decision-making processes and management styles of societies. While political factors shape the cultural, economic and social structures of societies, they can also have an impact on religious beliefs and practices. In this context, the connection between religious music and political factors shows that religious beliefs and practices interact with political decisions. The political structure of a country can have a direct impact on the freedoms and rights of religious groups. This situation can occur in the form of restricting or encouraging religious music and other religious practices. For example, if a country has a secular structure and does not discriminate against religious groups, it can provide an environment in which religious music and other religious practices can be performed freely. However, if a country has an oppressive or authoritarian political structure, religious music and other religious practices may be restricted or censored. The relationship between religious music and political factors can also be seen in the efforts of religious groups to gain political power and in the use of religious beliefs by political leaders. For example, any political leader can gain support by influencing the masses by using religious music and symbols. Accordingly, religion can lead to the use of music as a tool for political propaganda and religious groups to influence political decisions. In light of this information, the connection between religious music and political factors is complex, but it has a multifaceted relationship. This relationship will help us understand the effects of religious beliefs on political decisions and the effects of political power on religious practices.

5. Religious Music Construction in the Modern World

In the modern world, religious music tries to preserve its traditional forms while at the same time being open to innovative and modern interpretations. It can be said that different music genres such as electronic music (EDM), rock or jazz are blended with religious feelings and religious messages to create a new and interesting musical universe. Of course, the connection of many music genres with the modern world should also be examined well. The reason why the modern world and religious music fiction are connected to each other lies in the concept of music. Music, which contains elements of socialization along with individuality, has always been the focal point of consciousness governing religion, politics and economy. If we start from our

own history, when we consider that the music that existed in Europe in the early 19th century and in the Ottoman Empire in the first quarter of the 20th century was in the hands of political and religious people, it can be said how deep a history this issue is based on (Tatar, Burhanettin, 2017, p.7).

The religious music dimension can try to influence people not directly but also through subliminal messages within the music forms we have listed. This enables religious music to reach a wider audience and be adopted by different generations. With the influence of digital technologies, the production, distribution and consumption of religious music are gaining a completely different dimension. Religious music works, which can now be easily accessed over the internet, reach millions of people through smartphones, tablets and computers. This contributes to religious music becoming a global phenomenon by exceeding its boundaries. When the structure of religion and music is considered, the general result that emerges is a system related to politics. Even when it comes to religious music in the modern world, a certain part of the society comes to light in a politically based relationship. Of course, this situation is related to the discipline of sociology of religion. It should also be noted that the studies conducted on the exact musical taste and preferences of this religious community are inadequate (Özel, 2016, p.147).

The rediscovery of religious music in the modern world plays an important role both in the expression of religious belief and in intercultural communication. Reaching a wider audience with the opportunities provided by technology, religious music has the potential to bring people together and celebrate differences. In this context, the impact of religious music on the modern world affects people not only artistically but also socially and spiritually. Modern religious music is a musical form that appeals to a wide audience by blending classical religious motifs with modern musical genres. The importance of this music lies in its ability to offer a spiritual experience to the listener while also transcending religious and cultural boundaries. The development of modern religious music is an important cultural indicator that reflects the place of religion in society and the changes in the forms of interaction.

Today, there is an intersection between modern world music and religious music. Many artists and groups write songs that focus on religious themes, thus bringing together religious music and modern world music. This situation allows religious music to reach a wide audience, while at the same time allowing modern world music to include religious content. The relationship between religious music and modern world music has often been a subject of debate. While some welcome such an intersection, others may see it as a

weakening of religious values. However, today, the works that emerge from the combination of these two musical genres are widely accepted by listeners.

Conclusion

Religious music has had an important place in the spiritual life of societies throughout human history. This type of music has been used as a means of expressing beliefs and reinforcing spiritual unity, and has transformed in terms of both form and content over time. Today, with the innovations brought by technology, religious music is looking for ways to reach wider audiences by going beyond its traditional forms. On the other hand, interfaith musical interaction plays an important role in the rapprochement and understanding of different belief systems.

The religious music element that we have discussed in the modern world not only supports worship practices, but also has importance in preserving and transmitting the cultural identities of societies. Musical motifs, themes and rituals reflect the belief system, history and values of a society. While the modern age we are in marks a period in which technology and globalization are rapidly developing and cultures are intertwined, the place and importance of religious music is also in a great transformation. This evolution from traditional religious melodies to contemporary interpretations shows that religious music is both a preserved heritage and a constantly developing field. The concept of religious music that we have discussed together with the other perspective has built bridges between different generations and communities. It is observed that a common sense of identity is also strengthened thanks to this bridge.

In today's digital age, religious music genres have transcended national and ethnic boundaries and reached listeners around the world. In addition, each religion's unique musical structures and the ways they are used in their worship provide deep insights into the spiritual structure of that religion. In this context, the concept of religious music that exists in the modern world provides people with a powerful language to understand and express complex ideas about metaphysical issues. Thanks to technological developments, religious music plays a revolutionary role in terms of its dissemination and accessibility. Thanks to the internet and digital platforms, people have become able to discover and listen to religious music from all over the world. As a result, it shows that religious music has become not only a local but also a global phenomenon.

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CHAPTER 3

RELIGION AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This study attempts to interpret the relationships between the concepts of religion and technology, focusing on social life and the key concepts of the second half of the 21st century. The concept of religion corresponds to one of the phenomena concretely experienced in the knowledge, law, and economy of an individualized social life. The concept of technology corresponds to a power center that intensely influences social life, communication, division of labor, solidarity, and values. Humanity, economy, and culture cannot be understood while disregarding the realities of technology and individualized life. Within this framework, religion is characterized as one of the value-providing actors in established communication, division of labor, and solidarity, rather than merely an emotion or spiritual state. The relationship between religion and technology must be addressed by examining individualization, economy, artificial intelligence (AI), and the new format of social life. In this study, religion is treated as a concept that is as dynamic, variable, and dependent on power relations as technology. Thus, religion, having evolved from a passive actor role in the 19th and early 20th centuries to an active actor role in the second half of the 20th century, has become a central component in the first quarter of the 21st century. Currently, religion

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is as much a part of the economy, knowledge, and law as technology, and it acts as a guiding force for the state and society. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that technology is increasingly replacing science, and science operates with a characteristic that is more passive and determined, even when compared to religion. The study focuses on constructing a philosophical context that simultaneously observes and develops these shifts.

Key Words: Religion, technology, ındividualization, economy, artificial ıntelligence

1. Introduction

This section aims to critically examine the role and status of religion within the evolving global culture shaped by technological advancements –an idea that is anticipated to become a defining theme of the 21st century. In any relationship between technology and religion—just as in the classic Eurocentric association between "religion and science"—the immediate notion is typically that technology, with its own materiality, paves the way for humanity and empowers it, whereas religion, being founded on faith, demands submission from humanity and imposes limitations on it. In this comparative framework, technology is understood to represent labor and innovation, while religion is seen as embodying entrenched popular social life and resistance (Alonso, 2023: 277-278).

This conceptualization is, however, flawed because it continually reduces our understanding of history to a dichotomy between the negatively perceived Catholic Church (or the Inquisition courts) of Medieval Europe and civil society. History is not solely constituted by the experiences of the people of Medieval Europe. Moreover, the social experience in which the Catholic Church was dominant pertains to one historical context, while the experience characterized by the strength of civil society belongs to another. Consequently, whether one focuses on the possibility that technology might one day assume the role of religion when discussing religion, or on the possibility that religion may invariably serve as the resistance of inexperienced masses when discussing technology, such approaches are unproductive. Instead, when the potential outcomes of these ostensibly opposing arguments are taken into consideration, it is more beneficial to problematize each concept by translating it into the experiential demands of human life. Rationality can only truly safeguard itself from mere hypothetical constructs and sentimental intentions when it is tested through an evaluation grounded in potential outcomes (James, 1922: 3–19; 1966: 3–5). Thus, it is imperative to ascertain from the outset that neither emotional disposition nor

systematic resistance constitutes an intrinsic component of religion. Rather, both characteristics, which are often regarded as deficiencies, serve to delineate individuals who lack experiential engagement and the capacity for their cultivation. If such individuals are religious and devout, these attributes may be subject to adverse influence. Conversely, if the same individuals are irreligious and non-believers, it becomes equally necessary to examine whether these attributes might undergo a similar form of negative alteration.

In this section, while examining the potential new relationships between religion and technology, it is beneficial to first conceptualize the religion from the perspective of an individualized society and, subsequently, the technology from the standpoint of an individualized economy. As a second framework, it is necessary to address the relationship between artificial intelligence and the religion. A third analytical perspective involves transhumanism and the religion. Undoubtedly, the ultimate aim of these analyzes is to anticipate and effectively manage the emerging interactions between machines and religious individuals.

2. Individualized Social Religion

The contemporary era began with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The hallmark of this period is the recognition of every individual as equally dignified and entitled to rights from birth. While Article 1 of the Declaration proclaims and guarantees this principle, the document's content redefines concepts such as religion, women, children, and slavery in a manner that challenges the legacy of Enlightenment modernity. Thus, the Declaration rejects all assumed roles of religion as posited by 19th-century Western European philosophers and social scientists, establishing a new framework in this regard. According to this framework, religion, insofar as it constitutes an individual right, regained the opportunity to participate in social spheres such as knowledge, law, and economics. In other words, while religious individuals in the 19th century were divided between their personal religious lives and public existence, this division was reconciled in the second half of the 20th century (OHCHR, 1-8; Marks, 2016: 1-24).

In the contemporary era, the existence and legitimacy of "institutional religions" have been accepted within an individualized social format and the dynamics of consumer society. While some criticize this development under the concept of secularity as the corruption of religion and religiosity, there are optimistic scholars who argue that this secularity represents a rediscovery of religion in the public sphere by ordinary people (Smith,

2008). Meanwhile, from the perspective of Western European theorists, it must be acknowledged that modernity, popular American culture, secularity, democracy, consumer society, and ultimately technology are not positively regarded. These theorists seem, in a sense, to view the conditions of the 19th century more favorably. Among these theorists are Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Jacques Ellul, Michel Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard (Ellul, 1964; Sartre, 1966; Heidegger, 1977; Baudrillard, 1998; Foucault, 2008). Regarding religion and the religious, it is important to recognize that the contemporary individualized social format of religion is preferable when compared to the conditions of the 19th century. This new development—whether termed modernization, democracy, multiculturalism, secularity, or individualization—has enabled religious individuals to reengage in life with their religious characteristics and to become dynamic actors. Today, religious individuals contribute labor in environments that create, develop, and market technology, and in turn, technology bears influences from their religiosity. It is nearly impossible to consider religion as static and technology as dynamic within this form of social experience. Although conservative and pessimistic religious individuals exist, it can be said that they are fewer in number and have yet to fully shed the passive roles assigned to them by Enlightenment modernity in the 19th century. In this context, Andoni Alonso highlights distinct differences between Christianity and other religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. According to his interpretation, examples where religion is perceived as static and technology as dynamic—thereby positioning them in opposition—can only be found within Christianity. Alonso's observations are entirely rooted in the framework of individualized societal systems seen worldwide, and even if he does not explicitly acknowledge it, it should be added that Christianity, too, is compatible with technology (Alonso, 2023: 288, 291).

As a reflection and requirement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, religious individuals participate in the market as recipients of education, seekers of employment, taxpayers, and consumer entities. In the individualized societal model, the economic market defines and legitimizes the society, and the religion, through the religious individual, becomes one of the fundamental components of the market. The agency and activity of the individual result in religion also becoming active and dynamic. Although the economic market defines the macro-social framework and identity, the religions can also establish micro-social frameworks and identities proportional to their economic reach. Therefore, it can be argued that individualized societal religion has become one of the key factors reshaping life within the realms of knowledge, law, and economy. In the contemporary

relationship between technology and capital, the influence of the religious individuals and the religions cannot be overlooked. This framework can be stated to have transformed medieval and Enlightenment Christian thought, which traditionally distinguished between worldly and spiritual existence. In the first half of the 20th century, many American religious writers, such as Alonso T. Jones, viewed the sacred and the secular as antithetical for Christians, while simultaneously appealing to the individual side of humanity and imagining a harmonious union of the world and the spirit (Jones, 2024: 1–5, 19, 48–53). The individualized form of social religion they aspired to but failed to actualize was, in fact, realized within the framework of the free market system through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rise of popular American democracy. Accordingly, as Graeme Smith astutely observed, secularism has conferred upon religion the role of a vital component in shaping the new shared ethic of the public sphere. It can no longer be claimed that any religion—including Christianity—is static or absent from a technologically centered social reality (Smith, 2008: 183–206).

This development has profoundly influenced the economic, political, institutional, bureaucratic, historiographical, and communicative structures previously shaped by Enlightenment modernity across much of the globe. The ongoing discursive tensions between religion and technology exemplify a continued resistance to this interaction. Prior to the widespread internalization of the essentialist dichotomy between Enlightenment rationalism and pre-modern local traditions, a countervailing, individualistic modernity had already begun to redefine conceptions of the world and life itself. Digital modernity—emerging as a third phase of modernity—at times aligns with Enlightenment ideals, yet it does not relinquish its commitment to individualization. Indeed, without an individualistic free-market system, the development and advancement of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, would likely be unattainable. At this juncture, conceptual frameworks around the world acquire new layers of complexity, informed by diverse historical trajectories and temporalities. Moreover, just as contemporary technology remains indebted to religion in various ways, religion, in turn, finds itself increasingly intertwined with and reliant upon contemporary technological developments (Drees, 2009).

3. Individualized Economic Technology

Both the religion and the technology are reflections of two fundamental concepts and phenomena: the society and the economy. Today, the society has become more inclusive due to the increased participation of religious

and devout individuals in production and consumption. Undoubtedly, there are societies where religion is less prominent—such as the Czech Republic and Scandinavian countries—but these are relatively few in number. The economy has become so closely intertwined with technology that it encourages and enables individuals to act as both producers and consumers. While agricultural activities and non-digital economic processes still exist and are significant, technology is increasingly being applied in these areas as well. In this context, technology emerges as a unifying concept bridging society and the economy, or as a shared outcome of their interplay. In this context, technology emerges as a unifying concept bridging the society and the economy, or as a shared outcome of their interplay. Religion, too, has evolved into a connective framework between society and the economy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights institutionalized equality by mediating the relationship among religion, the individual, and pre-modern history. Only an economy oriented toward individual agency could sustain this new paradigm—and indeed, it has succeeded. The fourth industrial revolution brings new superpowers to the forefront through the management of the massive economy produced by individualized technology. The role of artificial intelligence (AI) should not be ignored here (Ding, 2024: 184-185; 210-212).

The most serious mistake that could be made in addressing the challenges faced by global societies, religions, technology, and artificial intelligence in the 21st century is to interpret these phenomena through the lens of alienation theory. While the considerable costs, side effects, and disadvantages of individualized economic technologies are already evident, this should not lead us to conclude that everything associated with modernity, contemporary life, or neoliberalism is fundamentally flawed, nor should it prompt a regressive return to the origins of capitalism. Opposing individualization and the technological economy on the basis of alienation theory—which plays no constitutive role in the currently dominant global paradigm—offers little in terms of philosophical or scientific advancement. Like other Platonic frameworks, alienation theory tends to produce a pessimistic, negative, and romanticized perspective, ultimately fostering a sense of perpetual nostalgia (Holmes, 1976, p. 213). Instead, it is more productive to adopt approaches that generate meaningful thought from within the sphere of lived experience. Nevertheless, it is essential to maintain a sense of measure and balance, and to remain vigilant against the seductions of economic ambition.

This system represents an evolved iteration of the free-market model, one that sustains security and societal stability by addressing collective needs and expenditures within an individualized, technology-driven economy.

It operates by allocating costs to each participant individually, thereby fostering a cyclical economic mechanism propelled by the continuous purchase and consumption of technological goods and services. However, during the transitional phase preceding the full establishment of this system and its integration into the broader economy, disruptions and conflicts of interest among individuals or groups are inevitable. This instability arises from two key factors: first, the emergence of a new socioeconomic divide between the technologically affluent and the digitally disadvantaged; and second, the absence of universally adopted ethical standards governing international digital platforms. Consequently, phenomena such as cyber theft, disinformation, and fraudulent activities proliferate. Moreover, a substantial proportion of those who have accrued wealth through technological means lack the commensurate development of intellectual and cultural maturity. As a result, their influence may undermine the cultivation of shared moral and spiritual values within society. At this developmental stage of the system, religious individuals, like all other participants, function as both producers and consumers. While they are capable of contributing positively to societal progress, they remain equally susceptible to the same ethical lapses and misjudgments as the broader population. A rigorous examination of this issue is imperative, ensuring an equitable analysis of both religion and technology in the context of their interrelation. Furthermore, both the concepts of religion and technology require updating in terms of meaning, with consideration given to new experiences (Alexander, 2020: 170-176).

Evaluating technology without its individualized economic nature hinders our understanding of it. Similarly, the concept of religion, whose role in information, law, and the economy has been sanctioned within the public sphere by the individualized economic framework, cannot be properly understood when evaluated separately from these components. In this context, it is crucial to recognize that both technology and religion are two dynamic concepts of an individualized economic society. When individualized economics is used to understand humanity and society as a whole, it can be argued that the relationship between technology and religion is one that almost necessitates each other. Therefore, religion and technology are two indispensable elements of democracies where individualized people and societies thrive.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Religion

In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is performing almost all human tasks with increasing efficiency, it's more effective to analyze religion not as

a static concept, but as a dynamic human activity. This approach mirrors how we perceive AI itself—as a human-driven activity. Our understanding of the world—including people, objects, and tools—is shaped by our personal experiences. Therefore, for any scientific inquiry to genuinely meet human needs, it must reference the real world of experience. This view sees humans as a collaborative element in society, working to fulfill their own needs while simultaneously contributing to the needs of others. This process is often called social solidarity or the life process. Within this framework of social solidarity, religion is a powerful and enduring area of human experience. It's a space where AI can cooperate and develop itself, much like it does in other fields of human activity. The most compelling perspective on this relationship in existing literature is a realistic and functional one, which views both religion and AI as integral parts of the complex, collaborative process of human life (Dorobantu, 2022: 985-987; Vestrucci, 2022: 1000-1001; Tsuria, Tsuria, 2024: 1-2).

The relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and religion can be understood through the roles these two concepts play in the production and consumption activities of humans and societies. Any perspective that disregards empirical experience may, in certain cases, view both AI and religion in a static and negative light. While broad generalizations are challenging, it is evident that classical German and French phenomenology, for example, often adopts a negative, pessimistic, and romantic approach to technology, AI, and religion. This stance fundamentally stems from a static view of these concepts, coupled with Continental European philosophy's underlying resistance to popular American culture. A similar negative approach, though directed solely at religion, is also present in transhumanist philosophy. However, transhumanism opposes religion because it associates it with certain immigrant groups often stereotyped by popular American culture. These two examples illustrate that the motivation for a static approach to religion is, paradoxically, rooted in an experiential critique, which ultimately serves to undermine a more realistic and nuanced position. Rather than internalizing these two negative perspectives and approaching technology and AI with them, religious individuals should prioritize their own realistic experiences in the marketplace. When approached realistically and empirically, religion demonstrates a positive and reciprocal relationship with AI to the extent that it engages in production and consumption activities (Özdemir, Başaran, 2021: 44-45; Özdemir, Aşık Birlik, 2025: 122-123).

Individuals who produce and consume artificial intelligence (AI) may be religious believers or non-believers, or even anti-religion. This truly global and international experience can render AI either a passive and neutral

entity in its relationship with religion or an influencing factor that directs religiosity or anti-religion. We are, in essence, discussing a multifaceted and continuously operating interaction. It's challenging to grasp this interaction as a fixed and universal relationship at any given moment. Therefore, the most accurate and valid statement regarding all possible relationships between AI and religion is simply that they exist, are related, and interact. The existence, unity, and effectiveness of God can be understood through the personal experiences of believers. Likewise, AI can form an opinion about these concepts based on the experiences of its human producers or consumers, and the demands of governments and corporations within the free market. Given this framework, it would be unrealistic to argue for or against a universal stance on the matter. AI might approach the concepts of God, religion, and human belief in the same way it processes any other term, such as Marxism or the word "moon." (Özdemir, 2024: 104-129).

The attitudes of religious people toward artificial intelligence (AI) are shaped by their personal experiences, much like how AI's stance on religion is a reflection of their own interactions. Just as certain philosophical theories, such as classical phenomenology and transhumanism, may hold a negative view of technology and religion, conservative religious individuals with limited personal experience may also object to AI. This perspective is rooted in a fundamental misconception. Similar to how classical phenomenology can mistakenly apply a specific, limited experience as a universal truth, some religious figures may incorrectly elevate their own modern religious experiences—which may be limited in the public sphere—to a universal and binding standard for the concept of religion itself. However, because this narrow interpretation will inevitably need to be updated by real-life and practical experiences, using it as a universal basis for understanding religion is both misleading and incorrect. Therefore, when we discuss religious and devout individuals, we should focus on those who actively participate in the collective production and consumption activities of societies. For these people, technology and artificial intelligence (AI) will be perceived as at least as legitimate and valid as their own religion and beliefs (Zhao, 2019: 2024-2027).

5. Transhumanism and Religion

Transhumanism and posthumanism, two cyborg philosophies that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, have a complex and varied relationship with religion. Similarly, religious communities hold diverse views on these philosophies. It's helpful to distinguish between

the two philosophies: transhumanism is rooted in Anglo-Saxon thought, while posthumanism is tied to Continental European philosophy. The term "religions," in this context, refers to the individuals who practice faith within a framework of shared social production and consumption. With a few exceptions, such as Mormonism, many religious groups view transhumanism with caution and pessimism. Transhumanists, in turn, hold different views on religion, often shaped by their understanding of God, Catholicism, and other specific faiths. Posthumanists, unlike many transhumanists, are critical of Eurocentrism, anthropocentrism, and colonialism. They see religion as an ally against Enlightenment-era rationalism because both are capable of embracing technology without being bound by rigid human-centric ideals. However, posthumanists generally do not approve of proselytization, or the act of inviting others to join a specific faith. This stance reflects their opposition to traditional power structures and their emphasis on individual autonomy (More, Vita-More, 2013; Ferrando, 2019; Özdemir, Başaran, 2021: 30-51; Özdemir, 2021: 48-76; Özdemir, 2024: 104-129). It is recommended that all relationships be approached with a realistic perspective, one that is fundamentally based on the concrete experiences of economic and cultural exchange.

The relationship between religion and transhumanism warrants more scholarly attention than that of other cyborg or posthumanist philosophies. This is because transhumanism, as the more popular and pragmatic counterpart to abstract philosophical traditions, is more likely to shape the public discourse on technology. Regardless of one's specific faith or belief system, a transhumanist framework compels us to prioritize practical analyses of machine-body integration and biotechnological interventions. Artificial organs, technologically advanced medical treatments, and health aids are now integral to modern human life. For instance, it is challenging to philosophically evaluate critical medical advancements—such as dialysis machines, X-rays, CT scans, organ transplants, and even cosmetic surgery—without a transhumanist perspective that directly addresses the merger of human and technology. The initial negative reactions and interpretations of many early transhumanist theorists toward religious beliefs and practices should be understood as a reflection of their personal religious experiences. As mutual exchanges and interactions between religion and transhumanism increase over time, we can expect positive shifts in their theoretical relationship. It is therefore more accurate to interpret the negative stances of figures like Max More, Ray Kurzweil, and Newton Lee from this experiential perspective. Similarly, the criticisms of transhumanism from religious theorists, particularly Ted Peters, can be reasonably viewed as initial

attempts at negotiation rather than outright rejection. These early exchanges, while often critical, are part of a dynamic process that points toward a more nuanced and collaborative future for both fields (Özdemir, Başaran, 2021: 40-41; Özdemir, 2021: 65-67).

The relationship between transhumanism and religion can also be viewed through the lens of producer-consumer dynamics. In this framework, the producers and marketers of technology engage in a competitive negotiation with the consumers who adopt it, particularly those who may face economic hardship. Like all producers and sellers, transhumanist philosophy may, in its effort to overcome resistance, prioritize its intellectual products by emphasizing the perceived irrelevance of religious belief and the superior, more productive nature of science and technology. Conversely, religious individuals may, to counter what they see as excessive costs and consumer frenzy, focus their arguments on the purely commercial and exploitative potential of science, technology, and transhumanist philosophy. These competing narratives should be understood not as fundamental ideological clashes but as familiar elements of an ordinary process of negotiation within the marketplace of ideas and goods. The arguments put forth by both transhumanist and religious parties often contain numerous claims and assumptions that extend beyond current empirical experience and are, by their very nature, unfalsifiable. Furthermore, it's important to recognize that bargaining is not inherently negative in professional or commercial contexts. Philosophical and religious discourses, therefore, should not be considered entirely separate from commercial negotiations. This perspective highlights the pragmatic, and at times strategic, elements underlying these debates, suggesting that they are often shaped by factors beyond pure intellectual or theological conviction.

The fundamental differences between the concept of God, religious beliefs, transhumanism, and posthumanism are not simply philosophical; they are deeply intertwined with an individual's personal experiences, economic roles, and social context. The answer to what separates these concepts is therefore highly contingent and not universal. If individuals who speak on behalf of God are also actively involved in producing and utilizing advanced health technologies, they may find ways to integrate religious themes into a transhumanist framework. Their professional and economic roles as producers or consumers of technology directly shape their theological perspectives. Conversely, if transhumanist theorists, even those who are not religious, collaborate with believers, they may adopt a respectful, non-confrontational language to facilitate cooperation. This dynamic highlights that the relationship isn't a fixed, ideological battle, but a negotiation

influenced by pragmatic considerations. Ultimately, the existence of God or the tenets of an atheist theology cannot be proven or scientifically analyzed apart from an individual's lived interests, orientations, and expectations. Thus, the perceived differences between atheists, agnostics, deists, and religious believers may be more accurately interpreted by examining their contributions to society through labor, production, and influence. This perspective suggests that philosophical arguments against religion and the concept of God are often just as rooted in subjective, and sometimes unfalsifiable, claims as the beliefs they seek to challenge. Critiques of religions and beliefs often fail to engage with the real-world production and contributions of religious individuals. Instead, these arguments frequently attack abstract concepts, missing the lived, tangible reality of faith. This approach creates a fundamental gap between philosophical discourse and the actual experiences of believers, which are shaped by their labor, community, and active participation in society (Bostrom, 2003: 38-47.

6. Machine and Muslim Religious Individual

The increasing "mechanization" (automation) of people worldwide, in relation to basic life activities, has led to the erosion of traditional social structures, such as the family and communal solidarity. In a society shaped by individualization, human identity is largely defined by personal needs, interests, labor, and the economic transactions that quantify and validate them. Since human knowledge is fundamentally based on personal experience, the notion that a non-empirical alternative could be superior to existing realities is generally seen as unrealistic. Within this context, it's essential to recognize that when we discuss machines and mechanization, we are also, by extension, talking about humans. Religious individuals are not exempt from this reality; their beliefs are not independent of or opposed to these increasingly mechanized, which contains material relationships. While one may argue for a contrary view at the level of abstract discourse, such a position often remains an idealized expectation rather than a reflection of lived experience. This suggests that religious belief, like other aspects of human life, is deeply integrated into the fabric of modern, individualized.

The mechanization and automation of the religious individual does not signal the abandonment of faith; rather, it indicates that religion and belief are living and evolving phenomena. It's futile to portray religion as static from a perspective that's detached from real-world experience. For example, the installation of POS (Point of Sale) machines at the entrances of Catholic churches in Europe to collect donations from the faithful demonstrates the

dynamic and pragmatic nature of these institutions. The fact that donations are funneled into interest-bearing bank accounts via these machines not only reflects an adaptation to a cashless society but also helps restore trust by making transactions officially traceable. This banking relationship, including the interest generated, can be understood as a new form of economic interaction that is both a product of and a contributor to the labor of bank employees and the broader financial system. In essence, religious practices, like all other aspects of modern life, cannot exist in opposition to mechanized material relations. While most of philosophical discourses might argue for a pure, non-material form of faith, in reality, religious belief is deeply integrated into the economic and technological fabric of society. The use of POS machines is a clear example of how religious institutions are adapting to meet the needs of their members within this new, mechanized context.

The perceived contradiction between mechanization and traditional extended family structures can be explained by the evolving definitions of family and society. As the individual becomes the primary unit of identity—defined by their labor, earnings, and taxes—their new social circle becomes their de facto family and society. In this modern, individualized world, religious individuals can still fulfill their needs for social relationships, albeit with a new "family" and "society." While these new social connections may not fully replicate the communitarian bonds of the past, this can be seen as a sign of incomplete mechanization rather than a flaw in the system. The argument that religion is falling behind mechanization is a separate issue from the inherent flaws of mechanization itself. The shortcomings of a mechanized society—such as the erosion of traditional community ties—do not necessarily mean that religion is unable to adapt. Instead, the real challenge for religion is its ability to evolve alongside a world increasingly defined by technology and individualism. The core of our argument is that as the definition of family and social relationships changes, so too do people's experiences of mutual aid and solidarity. Human social nature isn't lost; it's reinforced by religious beliefs. In this process, religion doesn't resist mechanization; it becomes a part of it, adapting to the new social and economic realities of the modern world.

Conclusion: Can Religious Human Create?

The central question addressed here is whether a religious person can truly be creative. A common misconception inherited from the Enlightenment is the false dichotomy that portrays religion as static and technology as dynamic. However, we now live in an era of unprecedented individualization,

a historical development that followed the failures of the Enlightenment and was fundamentally shaped by economicization. Since the Enlightenment itself is an interpretation of economicization, it is illogical to claim that it introduced economicization as a separate, critical force. Consequently, the assertion that religion is static and technology is dynamic holds no validity in the context of contemporary life. Instead, a more pertinent and constructive question is: How does a religious person create in a world shaped by technology and individualism? This reframes the debate from a theoretical conflict to a practical exploration of contemporary religious experience.

Religious individuals engage in creation by producing, marketing, and consuming artificial intelligence (AI) in their daily lives and careers. Through these activities, the social circles and organizations formed by creative religious individuals can effectively re-establish themselves as extended families, exerting both economic and cultural influence. For example, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation can be seen as representing this type of "extended family" on a national scale. The democratic structures that religions have fostered in individualized technological societies have not been adequately studied, largely due to the negative prejudices inherited from the Enlightenment. A powerful case in point is the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Destroyed in the 1930s following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the cathedral was rebuilt in the mid-1990s after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It has since become the central church of Russian Orthodox Christianity. The re-acquired existence and functions of this cathedral cannot be ignored as they highlight the enduring presence and adaptability of religious institutions in a modern, technologically advanced world. The personality of a computer engineer who worships at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow and feels a sense of belonging to Russia should be described as someone whose identity is shaped by the seamless integration of their religious faith with their professional and national life. This individual's experience is a microcosm of a broader global reality. The cathedral's dual function as both a place of worship and a museum embodies a modern synthesis of faith and secular life. It represents a context where religion, science, technology, politics, law, and economics are not separate spheres but are deeply intertwined. This dynamic is not unique to Russia. It's a universal phenomenon observed in major religious centers worldwide: The Vatican in Rome, the churches of Warsaw, Stockholm, London, Amsterdam, and Paris, and the diverse places of worship in New York, the mosques of Istanbul, the synagogues of Jerusalem, and the mosques of Mecca are other examples among many others. The churches of Sri Lanka and the temples of India are also not able

to be ignored. These sites all participate in a shared reality where religious life is interwoven with the technological, economic, and cultural fabric of contemporary society. The people who frequent them, regardless of their profession, are living examples of how faith adapts and endures in a world of constant change.

The assertion that religion hinders progress is a dated thesis from the 19th and early 20th centuries that new evidence and experiences have rendered obsolete. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 marked a turning point, signaling a more constructive relationship between faith and human advancement. The mechanized or automated nature of modern life, driven by a need for both belief and socialization, does not prevent religious people from being productive and creative. It's a mistake to insist that religion is static when it's now deeply intertwined with technology. Religious individuals are often tech innovators, AI users, and consumers of advanced medical technologies. They travel by plane and undergo cosmetic surgery, all while actively practicing their faith. This new reality shows that a modern, realistic social science interpretation cannot separate religion and technology. The two are now mutually dependent; religion cannot exist without technology, and technology cannot exist without religion. This is evidenced by the emergence of new forms of solidarity within public life, fostered by university-educated, professionally literate individuals who integrate their faith with modern life.

We shouldn't repeatedly problematize this reality. Instead, we must strive to understand it and learn how to coexist with it effectively. This shift in perspective moves the focus from constant critique to active engagement and adaptation. It suggests that continued debate about whether a reality is "good" or "bad" is less productive than simply accepting its existence and finding a way to thrive within its parameters.

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CHAPTER 4

TILLICH'S RELATION TO RELIGION AND OTHER FIELDS

Dr. Mustafa TURAN[1]

Abstract

Throughout history the relations between the religion and science didn't follow a straight way. Sometimes and somewheres science became in the realm of religion whereas religion at the same sime excluded from sphere of science and chosen as a matter not having value to deal with. There are too many researchs on history of science and religion. But the researchs focusing on specific scientists and their relation with the religion is a few except a well-known example of Russell. In this study, we focused on the specificly on Tillich's concept of science and its relation to religion and to what extent. We used historical comparation and genealogy methods to make research at the same time draw conclusions. Conclusions have shown that the relation isn't easy to draw because the real life is interwivened with each other although they are seen as different sectors. This is because of today's non-holistic science view. Furthermore, science isn't fully in the control of religion. Each of sciences are doing their job. If they meet with each other, the problematic is so dynamic that the philosopher and scienctist must use creative aspects to cope with the situation. If you put religion in the center of science when a change or drawback occurs, the effects of it will be much more destructive in the humans' conception of religion. So, we need some dialogue between

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different fields and to see in an even-handed way a philosopher with all-inclusive inclinatios. I hope, this chapter will make some contrubitons.

Keywords: Philosophy of religion, religion, philosophy, science, Tillich

1. Introduction

While Tillich explains whether the fields are related to each other, other thinkers are sometimes used to support Tillich's thoughts. While explaining his views on religion, Tillich begins by comparing concepts such as religion, revelation and salvation. According to Tilich, while revelation is an absolute event that is self-sufficient, religion is not self-sufficient and expresses relative situations (Tillich, 2000, p. 37).

Revelation speaks of the introduction of a new truth into life and the soul; religion always speaks of a given, vital truth and a spiritual, necessary function; revelation speaks of something beyond culture. For this reason, religion feels that it has reached its true essence when we call it religion (Tillich, 2000, p. 38).

Science, philosophy, religion and history exist in their own autonomous spheres, but they do not present a closed structure like Leibniz's monads, nor do they violate each other's boundaries. Things and the world do not exist side by side. They penetrate each other, but this closeness is not a fusion.

Tillich also addresses the issue of the essence and truth of religion as a problem. The essence of religion is first revealed experimentally, then the truth of religion is organized theoretically. This means the separation of the act and the object of the act, and this is a mistake that makes the philosophy of religion impossible. According to Tillich, the problem of essence and the problem of truth are identical. According to Tilich, the method beyond logic is superior in terms of grasping the truth together with the essence and not having to prove this truth (Tillich, 2000, pp. 79-80).

The answer to the question, "What is the truth of religion?" can be given when the essence of religion is grasped by a method beyond logic. The basis of the meaningful field of truth, like all fields of meaning, is the unconditional meaning sought by religion. The problem of truth first gains meaning in the religious field. The problem of essence and the problem of truth are problems that are addressed on the same base." (Tillich, 2000, p. 81).

Tilich argues that there are different types of knowledge. He distinguishes them as "philosophical, scientific, historical and religious." On the other hand, in addition to expressing these types of knowledge, he states that the

mind that works in mathematics and the mind that works in music are the same minds, but the mathematical mind is thought of as if it were a single mind (Tillich, 1951, pp. 73-74).

With the decline of German Idealism and the rise of British Empiricism, technical reason became dominant (Tillich, 1951, p. 72). It is important because it is an apparatus that enables experimental verification and enables coherent and logical thinking (Tillich, 1951, p. 73). He calls the use of this reason in theology "semantic rationality." (Tillich, 1951, p. 54). Technical reason is useful as long as it accompanies and complements ontological reason. Apart from this, to separate technical reason from ontological reason and also to set it against it is to fragment the human being (Tillich, 1951, p. 73).

Ontological reason, although identical with the content of revelation, remains reason as long as it is realized in the person and the world, and is subject to the destructive effects of existence. It is finite and separate. It has fallen apart from the essence to which it is attached and is afflicted with errors and deficiencies. Although it never breaks away from God, it is "blind" and incomplete under the conditions of existence. Another distinction Tillich makes in the concept of reason is between subjective and objective reason. While subjective reason expresses the rational structure of the mind, objective reason expresses the rational structure of reality (Tillich, 1951, pp. 74-75).

2. Religion and Science

In this section, we will focus on the understanding of religion and science, which Russel calls the forms of human endeavor or the two aspects of social life (Russell, 1994, p. 7,11). There is no contradiction between the cognitive function and nature of faith and reason. It is not appropriate to explain faith with science, which is the expression of mathematical reason that presents a fragmented vision of the world rather than a holistic one. Beyond this, it is necessary to show the concrete relationship of faith with several forms of cognitive reason, namely, scientific, historical, and philosophical. The truth of faith is different from the meaning of truth in each of these forms of knowledge, but what they seek to reach is truth. Wherever there is an attempt to know, there is one of the many transitional stages between truth and error. In faith, the cognitive function of man is at work (Tillich, 2014, p. 82).

Truth in science is the adequacy of describing the structural laws that determine reality and the demonstration of this description by experimental repetition. Every scientific truth is preliminary and subject to change both

in the grasp of reality and in the adequate expression of it. The element of uncertainty does not diminish the truth value of a tested and proven scientific claim. It merely prevents scientific dogmatism and absolutism (Tillich, 2014, p. 83).

If theologians point to the transitory nature of every scientific element, this is a very weak method of defending the truth of faith against the truth of science. If tomorrow scientific development narrows its uncertain area, faith will continue this retreat. Because scientific truth and the truth of faith do not belong to the same dimension of meaning. One dimension of meaning is not capable of intervening in another dimension. The conflict is not between faith and science, but between a faith and a science, each of which has not realized its true dimension. Science can only conflict with science, and faith can only conflict with faith. The conflict over the theory of evolution is not a conflict between science and faith; it is a conflict between a science whose faith has deprived man of his humanity and a faith whose expression has been distorted by biblical literalism. Modern psychology is afraid of the concept of the soul. Because the soul seems to establish a reality that cannot be approached by scientific methods and can conflict with their results. If scientific psychology attacks other forms of faith, it confuses those dimensions. Microphysics has undermined some scientific hypotheses concerning the computability of the universe. Quantum theory and the Uncertainty Principle have been influential in this. Religious writers have readily used these ideas to confirm their own ideas about human freedom, God's creation, and miracles. There is no justification for such a procedure. The truth of faith cannot be denied or confirmed by the latest physical, biological, and psychological discoveries (Tillich, 2014, pp. 84-86). Tillich has tried to prevent the conflict between science and religion that has lasted for years.

Tillich distinguishes between scientific and technical reason and existential reason here. He thinks that a person who looks existentially will not examine nature insensibly and by dividing it into pieces, as a requirement of Systematic Theology, like someone who looks from a scientific-technical perspective. What he means here is to give a new perspective-paradigm to modern man. He states that in the ongoing situation, the experience of disassociation has also spread to the sciences, that the sciences have deepened within themselves, but that there is no relational situation with other sciences, and as required by Systematic Theology, he develops a dialogue between these sciences that prevents ghettoization and living in a vacuum without violating each other's fields. In addition, the scientific perspective abstracts the one from the environment and freezes it for a moment. It pulls it into a situation that seems safer, but this situation is not the world seen in the

environment. Although this situation is sufficient for knowing, it cannot be applied to the situation we call understanding. When we look at it from a Heideggerian perspective, what science does in particular is to replace the soul with intelligence and have the final say. Existence, on the other hand, is a holistic and ongoing process.

Tillich goes beyond Pascal's "critique of academic reason", which reduces everything to science (Bourdieu, 2016, p.132). Knowledge of reality never has the certainty of complete evidence. The process of knowing is endless. Theoretically, the imperfect certainty of belief remains and can be weakened at any moment by criticism and new experience. The certainty of faith does not have this feature. Faith has two elements: certainty, that is, the certainty of being related to something ultimate or absolute. The other is risk, involving doubt and courage, that is, surrender to an anxiety that is not really ultimate but may be harmful if taken as ultimate. Faith is neither belief nor knowledge that carries a low degree of probability (Tillich, 2014, pp. 42-43).

Science exhibits an object-oriented stance within the I-it relationship. Emotional and sensual aspects are not taken into account. Just as we oppose David Hume's reduction of religion to history, Kant's to morality, Freud's to psychology, and Durkheim's to sociology, we argue that it should not be reduced to science and mathematics. This attitude should also be used to overcome the positivist understanding of knowledge. Tillich did not exhibit such a reductionist attitude.

According to Kierkegaard, science is knowledge of the universal; it is objective, ignores the level of existence; it is impersonal, does not care about the person as a person, and is not of a nature to establish an emotional relationship with the knower (Açıkgenç, 2011, p. 21).

Tillich, on the other hand, states that there are situations that transcend the paths of knowledge, which he calls "mystery." The way to reach this mystery is revelation, which allows for transcending the subject-object relationship (Tillich, 1951, p. 108). Revelation is the concrete world manifestation of the foundation of existence or Being-in-Itself (Tillich, 2014, pp. 110-116). For this reason, the concept of revelation is expressed in Western languages with the word "revelation," which means disclosure. Even if revelation is communicated, it always retains a mysterious aspect (mister).

When we approach science phenomenologically, the job of science is to introduce species, not individuals. This is not about knowing a canary, not about Ahmet or Mehmet, but about a human being. Moreover, science tries to introduce general genera that include many species, rather than

specific species. The aim of science is to introduce birds rather than canaries, vertebrates rather than birds, and life rather than vertebrates. However, in the world of experience, there are canaries and daisies that have characteristics that distinguish them from other individuals of the species. Therefore, unless the general essence is recognized, general science will not really have a subject. Because it introduces species, while in the natural world, individuals live (Topçu, 2011, p.23). In fact, due to the paradigm shift in recent times, even the general structure of science is like this.

Human consciousness uses two modes of conceiving the world: one is direct, and objects appear to be present in the mind, as in perception or simple sense. The other is indirect, and can be spoken of when objects do not appear "lively" to the senses. In indirect states of consciousness, the non-existent object is re-presented to consciousness by means of an image. We must therefore state that scientific and imaginative modes of thought are different from each other. Science pursues direct objective perception rather than the misleading twists of imagination. According to the scientific view, consciousness is in a confused blur in the image. Symbolic imagination aims to awaken the soul rather than to convey literal knowledge (Çınar, 2006, pp. 325-326).

When we look at phenomena, how can we impose a reductionist explanation that is dependent on positivist and rationalist norms on religion, even when phenomena are irreducible to religious knowledge? (Kuşçu, 2011, p. 16). Heidegger argues that science will not really be interested in being. Because it is only interested in things in order to dominate them, operate them and consume them. As a result of such an attitude of understanding, it is the modern technique that is about to create and destroy the world (Verneaux, 1994, p. 42). As Jaspers stated, the direct examination of the world is the job of the sciences. This is why Kant rejected science but defended its worldliness (Verneaux, 1994, p. 47).

There are certainly different levels of reality, and they demand different approaches and different languages. Not everything in reality can be grasped in the language most suitable for the mathematical sciences (Tillich, 2002, p. 228).

The difference between faith and knowledge can be seen in the type of certainty each provides. There are two types of knowledge based on absolute evidence. The first is direct evidence of sensory perception (such as the color green). One cannot be absolutely certain, but one cannot doubt that one sees green. The other is absolute evidence, which is the mathematical and logical rules that are assumed beforehand. No one can argue logically without

assuming the rules that make the argument meaningful. We have absolute certainty, but we do not have reality, which has led to the confusion of faith with belief (Tillich, 2014, p. 41).

No science nor any system of sciences can perceive the world in its entirety. There is always a "remaining" to be discovered. Therefore, it is necessary to know that the possibility of unlimited progress for science is undeniable and that science is limited. A "total synthesis" of phenomena is not possible. It is not possible to unite all phenomena in terms of the object, because the objective world shows disunity. It shines and breaks under the gaze of the scientist. Another reason is that it breaks according to the different desires of the soul: art, morality, politics, religion, etc. Knowledge, no matter how abstract it is, remains attached to a particular view. And again, undoubtedly, every mind can invent "a world understanding." There is no Weltanschauung (world view, perspective), no system that can be the truth for every thinker. Each expresses a view about the world. Each describes the world, not the world iself (Verneaux, 1994, p. 47).

Tillich is a philosopher who is well versed in the philosophical tradition. His view of science is similar to Jaspers' view of science. According to Jaspers, no science can completely solve human problems without establishing a relationship between the encompasser (God) and man. The "encompasser", which is one of the central concepts of Jaspers' philosophy, is thought of as a "transcendent reality" that surrounds us, above us limited beings, and is a religious concept in nature. According to his philosophy of science, science constantly draws attention to the concrete situations of the individual and cannot understand man holistically (Akgün, 2015, p. 461). Unlike Unamuno, who defended irrationalism, Tillich, like Jaspers, defended reason at every opportunity (Akgün, 2015, p. 462) but did not deify it.

The identification of a thought reached with a certain method with the truth itself is an absolutization, that is, an imposition. Absolutization also gains real reality with the establishment of scientific disciplines, the establishment of their theoretical foundations and the consensus reached by scholars as a result of their efforts to approach the truth (Hanefi, 2004, p. 264). In other words, a part of the reality reached at a certain time is reached through abstraction and agreement. Therefore, considering its subjective aspect and temporal conditions, generalizing this situation is dogmatism. Science has a dynamic structure that progresses with continuous collapses. Sometimes, what he called white yesterday can be called black today. The concepts of science are mental and functional formations that are detached from life and created a priori by the scientist. These categories do not have

independent existences. They do not need to indicate an existence that is "real". Categories are used only as a means of describing and comparing a short part of human actions. Tweaked concepts should not limit existence.

Tillich not only distinguished between science and religion, but also claimed that the view imposed on science was a "Western mind". Islamic society also generally interpreted the first commandment of the Quran, the command to read, in the sense of reading literally. In fact, it understood the implementation of the commandment of the book, which had come down to oral culture, as going to school. The view meant here is not a scientific view, but rather a way of positioning oneself against the world.

The sacred-secular rupture seen in European thought transformed religion into a scientific object and examined it emptying its content. Instead of understanding the concepts it could not understand as they were, it transformed them into its own words.

The Western society, which became acquainted with forms of existence outside of itself through colonialism, tries to make sense of the practices that cannot be sold or evaporated that it witnesses in non-Western societies, and is followed by an anthropological curiosity and objectification that disciplines the 'othering' and 'perversion' of such practices. While this anthropological curiosity reduces the other to its own language with an absolute 'translation', the dissident members of the Western society who try to resist this absoluteness romanticize this anthropological curiosity and reproduce it in reverse by projecting the values they have lost onto the 'other' (Yılmaz, 2008, p. 197).

However, Tillich, while criticizing Positivism, does not enter into a structure that completely criticizes philosophy and reason. While accepting knowledge, he agrees with its existential inadequacy. Knowledge is necessary but insufficient. However, it can go as far as "the uselessness of God who intervenes in the world of the absurd, God sent to the reign of the absurd." (Verneaux, 1994, p. 160). If God is a contradiction, then He does not exist and we cannot believe in Him. Because faith is not a leap in the absurd, but rather a rational course (Verneaux, 1994, p. 162). This line of faith, which follows the line of interest, doubt, supposition, belief and knowledge, (Özcan, 2014, p. 42) is necessary but not sufficient.

According to Tillich, logical and mathematical rules can be considered as complete evidence. Here, too, complete certainty is achieved, but just as in emotional perception, there is no reality. However, this certainty cannot be considered worthless. No truth is possible without the material obtained from

emotional perception and without the form provided by mathematical and logical rules that describe the structure in which all reality is located (Tillich, 2014, p. 40). The denial of reason is to oppose what is human; because this attitude is to oppose what is divine (Tillich, 1951, p. 72).

In existentialism, doubt cannot be approached in a passive way or in an academic, positivist style. In existentialism, since we belong to the material world, that is, the lower world, and because God is completely different from us, doubt always exists. Man is always on slippery ground, in flux among the dynamic elements of life. He must always make decisions, understand changing relationships and reveal his existential potential. In other words, it points to the understanding of "une prise de conscience (consciousness, awareness)", (Hanefi, 2007, p. 85) which is not a kind of hypothesis, an abstraction and an externally imposed morality.

According to Tillich, knowledge of our world is a matter of research. It is not a matter of faith. The dimension of faith is not the dimension of science, history or psychology. The acceptance of possible hypotheses is not faith, but a primitive/temporary belief that will be tested by scientific methods and changed with each new discovery (Tillich, 2014, p. 41).

It is not only the public's thoughts that distort the meaning of faith. At the core lie philosophical and theological thoughts that miss and do not understand the meaning of faith. If one of the functions that ensures the integrity of the personality is partially or completely identified with faith, the meaning of faith is distorted. The most common misinterpretation of faith is to think of it as knowledge with a low level of evidence. Science has also been transformed into such a form of knowledge by positivists. In this case, faith is spoken of rather than faith and believes that its own knowledge is correct. A new element that is mixed in is trust. Without trust in authority, we do not believe in anything except the objects of our direct experience. It is rational to trust authorities that expand our consciousness without forcing us to surrender. If we use the word faith for this kind of trust, we can say that most of our knowledge is based on faith. It is not appropriate to say this. Although never in an absolute sense, we believe in authorities and trust their judgments, but we do not have faith. Although trust is an element of faith, faith is more than trust in authorities. Faith is the participation of a person with his whole being in the object of his ultimate concern. For this reason, the term faith should not be used in connection with theoretical knowledge (Tillich, 2014, pp. 39-40).

Even in ancient philosophy, the teachings of Pythagoras and Parmenides revealed the existence of an abstract metaphysical world where truth is located,

as opposed to the physical world where concrete objects and the phenomena related to them are ontologically; and epistemologically, the physical world perceived by the senses and the metaphysical world understood by reason and intuition based on reason. This also revealed the separation of spirit and matter, that is, dualism. God, who was thought of as an immanent principle with Parmenides, became a transcendent, intelligent, individual God above the universe and humans (İrğat, 2014, p. 3). This situation is the reflection of the progress in science on religion, and this is what Tillich opposes. Identifying the duties of science and religion, finding a religious cover for every scientific thought, or looking at nature and the environment through the glasses of technical intelligence have historically produced negative results. In addition to this idea, ignoring the physical world as some sect of Sufism does, or seeing the areas of life as irrelevant parts that do not reconcile with each other, creates another problem.

With the theory of relativity, just as matter and energy were unified, space and time were also unified. Thus, a picture of the universe that is more integrated, dynamic and connected than ever before has emerged. In this model of the universe, concepts belonging to classical physics such as "elementary particle", "material essence" or "isolated object" have become meaningless. Thus, it is as if the entire universe has become an extraordinary harmonic texture of energy phenomena that cannot be separated from each other and cannot exist independently (Capra, 1991, p. 120). The harmonic texture concept used here is more suitable for Tillich's thought. The unification and association of laws, which are the scientific equivalent of Tillich's "Systematic Theology" in these scientific developments, is a thought that goes beyond establishing a monist structure.

Tillich's idea of not wasting anything in his systematic theology reveals the value of even the smallest thing in the world. Many experiments and observations have shown that the particles observed in the field of atomic physics have no meaning on their own, but gain value when they are understood as a result of the mutual relationship between measurements. In other words, this theory has shown that the world we live in cannot be divided into isolated parts and that what exists in the depth of matter is not the "basic building blocks" but the complex tissue of relationships that exists between all the parts. The observer, who is the last link in this tissue of relationships, is also within this structure and can have a perception to the extent of his relationship with the atomic object (İrğat, 2014, p. 6).

This situation is remarkable as a development that invalidates Descartes' distinction between "I" and "the world". Therefore, modern physics reveals

that we cannot talk about nature without including man himself, his own view, his perspective, his inner world. Because the entire universe, down to its every particle, is part of the same whole (İrğat, 2014, p. 6).

As a result, we can say that the universe perception of modern physics is a dynamic, interconnected, inseparable and indivisible whole. In addition, there is a unity between this whole and the person observing it. For this reason, concepts such as the definition of time and space, the idea that the universe consists of separately created objects and the known cause-effect relationship belonging to classical physics have lost their validity. Modern physics has become the name of a brand new paradigm that replaces the objectivity of classical physics with relativity, and replaces materialist realism with immaterial and idealist spiritualism, and is based on a phenomenal epistemic foundation (İrğat, 2014, p. 7).

What Tillich did is a critique of the mathematical-calculatory way of thinking that works with abstractions based on Newton and Kant. Against the possibility that this modern attitude, which we can also call the scientific attitude, may lead people to a fanatic scientificism, what we have to say at the beginning of everything is this: The universe has nothing to do with our logic. Therefore, when you discuss a subject related to the universe, your reason and rationality only offer you a method; we discover the relationships (causes) not with reason but with observation. Human knowledge and perception are both a result of biology and dependent on the limitations of that biological possibility (Çalışkan, 2016, p. 38).

From this perspective, the claim of scientific knowledge to be absolute, that is, the claim that the only correct and absolute interpretation of the universe is scientific interpretation, is in a sense rendered futile, and if what we know is limited to what we can access and if those things become specific to us in our biology, there appears to be a strong possibility that there may be other layers in the universe that science cannot penetrate (Çalışkan, 2016, p. 38).

If knowing - as understood by science - means classifying, distinguishing or giving names to objects, then knowledge builds a solid and impassable wall against the reality of being. Formal knowing is an obstacle to being. Abstractions are the building blocks of blindness (Honer, 2003, p. 39).

The main thesis of existential philosophy is that existence is not an object and that existence cannot be fully grasped because the mind reaches the objects. Then, all that really remains is this uncertainty that experience, faith and reason reflect on existence with their paradoxes (Verneaux, 1994, p. 59).

Tillich's thesis that there are different layers in the world shows that the world is not just the visible face. In addition, science is not suitable for existence because it has an aspect that removes the object from its natural environment and grinds down its relational aspect. However, scientific knowledge is not enough with the value given to knowledge. It should also be concerned with other dimensions in life. Since it would be very difficult (if not impossible) to limit reliable belief-acquiring practices to practices whose truth or falsity can be determined only by means provided by the empirical and scientific method, it would not be correct to think that the universality and predictability achieved in this way are necessary for all belief-acquiring practices. Moreover, it is clear that these practices regarding theistic beliefs will create an even more delicate situation when it is taken into account that God is completely different from other beings (Reçber, 2004, pp. 36-37).

Conclusion

Through this study, I tried to figure out specially religion and science relations. Tillich's perspertive tried to be depicted as much as possible. When needed, we tried to scaffold our thoughts by existentalist philosophers. The focus was on his works based on analytical thinking and how relationship should be. I tried to open new perspectives for the most disputed theme of Philosophy of Religion. I didn't enforce the sources but did comment to acceptable extent.

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CHAPTER 5

TASAWWUF AND RELIGION

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Abstract

This article addresses a frequently raised modern question-*"Did tasawwuf emerge from within Islam, or is it the product of extra-Islamic mystical influences?"*-and seeks to reframe the relationship between tasawwuf and religion. The central claim is that tasawwuf is neither a separate religion nor a cultural add-on, but an authentically Islamic tradition and a discipline of religion grounded in the Qurʾan and Sunna. Methodologically, the study conducts a qualitative literature analysis, surveying foundational classical texts of tasawwuf alongside ḥadīth sources. The framework is historical-theoretical and descriptive-analytic. Tracing the trajectory from the early zuhd movement to the institutionalization of ṭarīqas, the study undertakes concept-driven readings of classical works (Qushayrī, Hujvīrī, Ghazālī, Mawlānā) together with modern scholarship (Kılıç, Demirli, Kara, Nasr, Chittick, Derin). The research design is text-centered and comparative rather than field-based. The guiding question is whether tasawwuf should be explained in terms of non-Islamic elements, or-within the horizon of the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl-understood as a discipline of religion oriented to iḥsān. Because the study does not employ ethnography and focuses primarily on Sunnī classical sources and selected Orientalist critiques, it is limited in geographical scope

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and does not represent every intra-Sufi school. The article's contribution is twofold: it situates tasawwuf within a comprehensive schema that integrates both its historical development (zuhd-tasawwuf-ṭarīqa) and its place in the classification of the religious sciences; and it systematically grounds tasawwuf as an iḥsān-centered science of ethical-spiritual transformation. The core finding is that tasawwuf rests on the Qurʾan-Sunna foundation and unfolds through the stages of sharīʿa-ṭarīqa-maʿrifa-ḥaqīqa as a coherent sayr u sulūk; Orientalist and Salafī readings tend to overlook this inner continuity. These conclusions matter insofar as they provide a balanced scholarly ground that moves beyond both reduction of tasawwuf to "mystical therapy" and wholesale denunciations.

Keywords: Tasawwuf, religious sciences, iḥsān, Sunnī tasawwuf, tawḥīd, Qurʾan and Sunna

1. Tasawwuf and Religion

Throughout history, humanity has not been content with merely understanding the physical world; rather, it has sought the meaning of existence, the source of its sorrows and joys, and ultimately, the origin and destiny of its journey. This fundamental quest gave rise to religion, which stands as humanity's most ancient and widespread answer. Religion has manifested not merely as a system of beliefs, but also as a comprehensive set of values that shapes the inner world of the individual, organizes the social order, and conveys moral principles. From the earliest communities to modern civilizations, this manifestation has endured in various dimensions.

From a sociological perspective, Émile Durkheim's emphasis on the unifying and regulating function of religion within society is particularly noteworthy. According to him, religion represents the invisible bonds that hold the social structure together (Durkheim, 2008). However, this perspective may lead to an understanding of religion merely as an external structure. In contrast, Mircea Eliade adopts a more inward approach, asserting that religion is the domain wherein the human being encounters the Sacred and transcends the boundaries of ordinary time (Eliade, 1978). This experience entails a striving of the heart toward the Real (al-Ḥaqq) by transcending worldly habits. Karen Armstrong, on the other hand, argues that religion should be regarded as a process of inner transformation. In her view, a genuine religious experience initiates an inner journey and nurtures the individual's spiritual development (Armstrong, 1993). Although each of these perspectives highlights a different aspect of religion, in Islamic thought, it is Tasawwuf that brings all these elements into a harmonious unity.

Indeed, Tasawwuf does not confine religion to doctrinal beliefs (‘aqāʾid) and outward practices (aʿmāl); rather, it perceives religion as a journey of the heart’s purification (taṣfiya al-qalb) and the soul’s refinement (tazkiyat al-nafs) toward the unveiling of ultimate truth (al-Ḥaqq).

In this understanding, religion is not merely the repetition of what is already known, but a continuous striving to encounter a truth that renews itself at every moment. The endeavor of the individual to transcend the self (nafs), to confront the veils of the ego, and to return to the origin of existence (al-aṣl) constitutes the very essence of Tasawwuf. Thus, Tasawwuf presents itself as a path of gnosis (maʿrifa) that actualizes religion both as an inner spiritual experience and as a process of ethical and spiritual perfection (taḥqīq al-akhlāq) (Kılıç, 2013).

This aspect of Sufism is not unique to Islam but is a common feature of all religions. The underlying shared thought within the foundations of religions is the recognition that humans are not only material beings but also spiritual ones. This awareness not only prevents religions from being viewed solely as tools for maintaining social order but also directs individuals toward a deep quest for meaning by touching upon their inner worlds (Nasr, 1972). Every religion offers essential principles that guide humans on an inner journey, leading them to an encounter with the Creator. In this context, just as there is no society without religion, there is also no religion without spirituality. At the core of every religion lies a force that profoundly addresses the human spiritual and moral aspects, and the most prominent example of this is the mystical traditions (Kara, 2008). In the Abrahamic religions, this tradition takes shape through following the spirituality of the prophet and deepening through that spiritual heritage. In Islam, this mystical structure is known as Tasawwuf (Kılıç, 2013).

Islam inherits the legacy of the earlier Abrahamic religions and integrates this heritage with the universal message brought by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Chittick, 2000). The spiritual depth of Tasawwuf directly draws from the essence of the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) truth. Because of the universal nature of Islam, its truth encompasses the truths of the previous prophets as well. In other words, one who follows the path of Prophet Muhammad is, in reality, embracing the essence of both the Christian and Jewish traditions. Therefore, it is impossible to separate the understanding of Tasawwuf in Islam from the truth of the Qur’an and Sunnah that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) represents (Kılıç, 2014).

The debates concerning the origins of tasawwuf, particularly among Western scholars, often point to the notion that it developed under the

influence of non-Islamic elements. Scholars like Goldziher argue that tasawwuf was shaped by traditions such as Indian philosophy, Neo-Platonism, and Christian mysticism (Derin, 2006). This perspective tends to view tasawwuf not as a product of Islam's internal dynamics but as one influenced by external sources. However, contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Chittick (2000) and Nasr (1972) challenge this interpretation, asserting that tasawwuf is nourished by an internal source rooted directly in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Similarly, Kara (2008) emphasizes that tasawwuf is a spiritual domain emanating from the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In this context, when seeking to understand tasawwuf, one must focus not on its historical interactions but rather on the pursuit of truth inherent in the essence of Islam.

The central aim of this study is to demonstrate that tasawwuf, both in terms of its origin and structure, is not shaped by non-Islamic influences but rather forms an original Islamic tradition directly grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Specifically, this research seeks to address the intellectual background of this tradition and its reflections in individual and social life, from a revelation-centered perspective. The role of tasawwuf in not only the spiritual life of the individual but also in the construction of social ethics renders it an indispensable part of Islamic thought. In this regard, the study aims to reveal the connection tasawwuf establishes with Islamic references, drawing upon classical sources. The connection can be directly traced in the foundational classical texts of tasawwuf: works such as al-Qushayrī's (d. 465/1072) Risāla, al-Hujwīrī's (d. 465/1072 [?]) Kashf al-Mahjūb, al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) Ihyā', and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) Masnawī lay the theoretical and practical foundations of a tasawwuf understanding rooted in revelation and the Sunnah.

Should the emergence of tasawwuf be explained through the influence of non-Islamic thought and cultures, or through the internal sources and dynamics of Islam?

Should tasawwuf be seen as a separate religion, or should it be understood as a form of interpretation that arises from within Islam? This study is structured in two main parts to address these questions:

- The Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Tasawwuf

- The Qur'ān and Sunnah-Based Tasawwuf

1. The Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Tasawwuf

In this section, the origins of *tasawwuf* are explored, emphasizing that they must be sought not in external, non-Islamic traditions, but within the very heart of Islam itself. The lives and practices of the earliest *Sufis* are examined through the lens of the ascetic spirit (*zuhd*) that characterized the Companions (*Sahaba*) and the generation that followed them (*Tabi'un*). The discussion further traces how these early spiritual inclinations gradually crystallized into the distinct tradition known as *tasawwuf*.

1.1. The Etymological and Terminological Definition of Tasawwuf

The term tasawwuf has been a frequent subject of discussion in the history of Islamic thought. Various interpretations have been proposed regarding its origins, each highlighting different aspects of tasawwuf. The most widely accepted view suggests that tasawwuf is derived from the Arabic word sūf, meaning "wool." Early Sufis are known for their preference for a simple and modest lifestyle, often expressed by wearing coarse woolen garments as a sign of humility and detachment from worldly excess (al-Qushayrī, 1993). More than just an outward appearance, the woolen garment symbolized a particular worldview and way of living. In this sense, tasawwuf represents not only a linguistic matter but also the visible expression of an inner spiritual tendency and an ascetic understanding that emerged in the earliest phases of Islamic spirituality.

There exists no unanimity among scholars concerning the definition of tasawwuf, just as there is none regarding its origin. Indeed, some authorities have recorded that the definitions of tasawwuf number a thousand, and it has been said: "The definitions are as numerous as the Sufis themselves" (Haksever, 2021). This divergence arises from the profoundly personal and experiential nature of tasawwuf. Al-Hujwīrī reproaches those who would reduce tasawwuf to mere externalities, declaring: "Those who derive the name Sufi from the wearing of sūf concern themselves solely with the form; in truth, the Sufi is he whose heart has attained purification" (al-Hujwīrī, 2010). Likewise, Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 297/909) defines tasawwuf as "the purification from all blameworthy traits and the adornment with all virtuous qualities" (al-Sarrāj, 1960).

Throughout history, tasawwuf has been expressed using various concepts, each shaped by the social and cultural conditions of its time. However, at its

core, tasawwuf represents a moral understanding that is intimately tied to the individual's lived spiritual experience. In this sense, tasawwuf is not merely an intellectual endeavor, but a journey in which the individual, driven by the desire to know God, turns inward toward his or her own inner truth (Wilcox, 2001). The methodology of tasawwuf, in turn, reveals its essential distinction from other Islamic sciences: tasawwuf is not only a field of knowledge, but also a "state" (ḥāl) and a process of "becoming." This characteristic is as unique to Islamic tasawwuf as it is found, in similar forms, within other mystical traditions (Küçük, 2009).

The term tasawwuf was not used as a technical term during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, the ascetic and God-conscious lifestyle of that period reflected the essence of tasawwuf. In other words, the people of that time lived the spirit of tasawwuf without being familiar with the term itself. Over time, this way of life evolved into a concept and began to be referred to as tasawwuf. Al-Qushayrī notes that those who were in the presence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were called "the Companions" (ṣaḥābah), those who followed them were called "the Successors" (tābiʿūn), and those who came after them were known as "the Followers of the Successors" (tabeʿ al-tābiʿīn). After these generations, individuals who strove to adhere to both the outward and inward aspects of the religion were referred to as "worshipers" (ʿābid) or "ascetics" (zāhid). Over time, in response to the spread of innovations and the weakening of religious sensitivities, some distinguished believers who remained on the Ahl al-Sunnah path embraced a lifestyle centered on devotion to God and inner spiritual awakening. This way of life eventually came to be known by the term tasawwuf. Those who followed this path were referred to as "Sufis," "people of tasawwuf," or "mutasawwif" (mutasawwifah). In this context, al-Qushayrī emphasizes that the terms tasawwuf and sufism played an essential role in restoring meaning to religious concepts that had become hollowed out over time (al-Qushayrī, 1993).

1.2. The Stages of the Tasawwuf Journey: Shari'ah, Tariqah, Ma'rifah, and Haqiqah

Tasawuf emerges as a path of spiritual journey that makes the spiritual depth intended by religion tangible. This journey is viewed as a spiritual process of discovery that leads the individual both inwardly toward the self and outwardly toward God. In this regard, tasawwuf is the name for the endeavor to grasp the essence of religion from a deeper, more intimate perspective. Therefore, there is no significant distinction between the goal of

tasawwuf and the ultimate objective of religion; rather, tasawwuf is the path to internalizing this goal on a deeper level.

This inner journey is expressed through specific stages in the tasawwuf tradition. The stages, often described as Shari'ah, Tariqah, Ma'rifah, and Haqiqah, are not merely terms but also indicators of the transformations the servant undergoes in the process of drawing nearer to Allah. In this way, tasawwuf transforms into a spiritual map that outlines the search for meaning, leaving nothing to chance but rather explaining it within a specific order of knowledge. Each stage is aimed at constructing both the outward and inward aspects of the servant's being. This journey, which unites the external (zahir) and the internal (batin), reveals that religion is not simply a set of rules but also a matter of deep inner states and consciousness. In this sense, tasawwuf is not merely a system of thought but a unique journey that leads the individual to the truth as a science of states (hal) (Küçük, 2009).

1.2.1. Shari'ah

Shari'ah encompasses the rules of worship, ethics, and social regulations in Islam. However, in Sufi thought, Shari'ah is viewed not merely as a set of external obligations but as the first and indispensable step in the process of disciplining the soul (nafs) (Kara, 2008). In this context, Junayd al-Baghdadi states that Shari'ah is the starting point of the tasawwuf journey, emphasizing that these rules must not only be applied but also internalized. According to him, while the rulings of Shari'ah are followed outwardly, they must also take root inwardly; otherwise, this journey remains limited to mere forms and cannot deepen (Kuşeyrî, 1993). Similarly, Mawlānā stresses the necessity of entering the tasawwuf path with a strong understanding of Shari'ah. According to him, without Shari'ah, turning toward Tariqah does not lead one to the truth; rather, such a pursuit could be misleading. In this approach, Shari'ah is not just a formal system but is regarded as the first station in the human effort to attain the truth (Küçük, 2009). Demirli (2016) also defines tasawwuf in this framework as the effort to deeply comprehend the external commands of Shari'ah and understand its internal dimension.

1.2.2. Tariqah

Tariqah is the name given to the spiritual journey in which the Sufi turns from the outward to the inward, aiming for the purification of the heart. On this stage of the journey, the traveler not only restrains the desires of the nafs but also disciplines his inner world through practices such as muraqabah (spiritual watchfulness), dhikr (remembrance), and service. Tariqah forms the

central axis of this esoteric journey, which is undertaken under the guidance of the spiritual master (Murshid). In this context, the Sufi learns not only the knowledge itself but also the spirit of that knowledge through experience. Thus, Tariqah can be seen as the soul that gives life to the external structure shaped by Shari'ah (Kuşeyrî, 1993).

1.2.3. Maʿrifa

Maʿrifa refers to the stage of directly perceiving God through the heart and intuitively grasping the divine reality. At this level, knowledge is not limited to data acquired by reason and intellect; rather, it is a truth profoundly felt within the depths of the heart. Junayd al-Baghdādī defines maʿrifa as the servant's heartfelt intimacy with God, emphasizing that it is shaped not merely by external knowledge, but by divine manifestations within the heart (Qushayrī, 1993). Similarly, Ibn al-ʿArabī (2006) describes maʿrifa as the union of existence with the Real (al-Ḥaqq), the knowledge of the Real by the Real and within the Real, thus highlighting that maʿrifa transcends mere intellectual comprehension and represents a higher level of spiritual realization.

1.2.4. Ḥaqīqa (The Ultimate Truth)

Ḥaqīqa represents the final stage in the Sufi spiritual journey — the inner and direct realization of the Absolute Truth through the heart and soul. At this level, the Sufi is freed from all veils of the self and reaches the station of fanāʾ fi'llāh (annihilation in God); he no longer beholds his own existence, but witnesses solely the existence of the Divine. In this state, the Sufi's attention is no longer captivated by the outward forms of the world but is drawn to the Divine Reality underlying all appearances. Thus, it is not the visible forms but the absolute meaning behind them that becomes essential (Sülemî, 2018). In this context, Yunus Emre expresses the stages of the Sufi path in the following couplets:

Sharīʿa and ṭarīqa are the paths for those who seek,

From within them, the fruit of ḥaqīqa is attained.

To abandon religion is an act of disbelief,

Yet such disbelief lies hidden within true faith. (Toprak, 2006)

Through these verses, Yunus Emre portrays sharīʿa (the religious law) and ṭarīqa (the spiritual path) as necessary stages in the seeker's journey toward maʿrifa (gnosis) and ultimately ḥaqīqa (truth).

Sharīʿa constitutes the foundation, guiding the external practices of worship and ethical conduct. Ṭarīqa deepens the journey through disciplined inner striving and spiritual purification. However, the true objective is to attain maʿrifa and, beyond it, to realize ḥaqīqa, the inner essence of existence.

In Yunus Emre's view, external adherence to religious practices alone is insufficient to attain ultimate truth. True religion demands the union of outward observance with inner realization. It is only through this integration that acts of worship acquire real meaning, enabling the seeker to experience the Divine Reality beyond mere forms.

We can thus state that the fundamental stages of Tasawwuf, namely Shari'ah, Tariqah, Ma'rifah, and Haqiqah, are phases of a spiritual journey that progress within a holistic and complementary framework. While Shari'ah represents the external order and the first step, Tariqah ensures that this external order gives rise to an internal discipline. Ma'rifah is the name of the heart-based recognition that develops within this discipline. Haqiqah, on the other hand, represents the final point of this journey: the realization of the essence of existence in Allah. Each stage is both dependent on the previous one and opens the door to the subsequent one, thus the Tasawwuf journey gains both continuity and depth. These four stages reveal the strong connection between the outward (zahir) and inward (batin) aspects of Tasawwuf. In the Tasawwuf tradition, outward actions are not merely expressions, but also carry an inward meaning. Junayd of Baghdad asserts that outward acts of worship must acquire an inner depth to be meaningful, emphasizing that Shari'ah is a path leading to truth (Qushayrī, 1993). Qushayrī (1993) describes the relationship between the outward and inward as intertwined, stressing the importance of harmony between the two dimensions. Ibn 'Arabī also suggests that the outward is merely a superficial reflection, and that the true reality is hidden within inward truths (Chittick, 2000). Furthermore, Demirli argues that inner knowledge must not only be understood internally but must also manifest in the outward world. He asserts that the inner depth of Tasawwuf should carry a broader meaning within society (Demirli, 2016). Kılıç, in the context of the modern world dominated by outward values, points out the vital importance of inward understanding and emphasizes the need to preserve this inner depth in a societal sense (Kılıç, 2013).

Salafis and Wahhabis argue that outward acts of worship represent the true practice of Islam. In their view, inward experiences are seen as deviations from the essence of Islam. This perspective, however, contradicts the fundamental understanding of Tasawwuf, which holds that inner depth and spiritual transformation reinforce and give meaning to outward acts of

worship (Uludağ, 2018). Junayd of Baghdad emphasizes that outward acts of worship must carry an inward meaning, stating that a lack of harmony between a person's external worship and internal spiritual state would be incompatible with genuine worship (Qushayrī, 1993).

Orientalists have often viewed Tasawwuf as a tradition that deviated from the pure teachings of Islam. This perspective is rooted in the esoteric (batinī) nature of Tasawwuf, and many Orientalists have interpreted it as a belief system influenced by Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. These interpretations are particularly characteristic of the Orientalist framework that emerged in the West beginning in the 19th century. Western Orientalism typically portrayed the East as exotic, mystical, and sometimes deviant. In this context, Orientalists focused heavily on the esoteric aspects of Tasawwuf, which from an external perspective appeared difficult to comprehend. They argued that this aspect led Tasawwuf away from Islam's pure doctrines and claimed that it developed an independent system of its own (Chittick, 2000).

However, the esoteric understanding inherent in Tasawwuf actually aims to delve into the profound depths of Islam. According to the perspective of Tasawwuf, beyond outward acts of worship lies an inner knowledge and awareness. This awareness enables an individual's spiritual maturation both personally and within society. Ibn ʿArabī views this inner journey as a means of reaching the depths of truth and therefore places great value on esoteric knowledge. Such knowledge seeks to uncover the realities that lie beyond the surface of all things (Chittick, 2000). Tasawwuf emphasizes that esoteric knowledge is not merely a personal phenomenon but must also find concrete expression in the external world (Demirli, 2016).

Some Orientalist scholars, such as Zaehner, have attempted to position Tasawwuf within a universal mystical framework by comparing it to systems such as Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, or Christian mysticism. In this context, Derin notes that English Orientalists often regarded Tasawwuf as a mystical understanding that deviated from the essence of Islam. According to him, such approaches tend to reduce Tasawwuf to a structure disconnected from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, resembling Eastern mysticism. Particularly, the interpretations of Sufis like Mawlānā were treated by some Orientalists not within an Islamic framework, but rather as expressions of "universal mysticism" (Derin, 2006).

However, this evaluation neglects the fundamental sources upon which Tasawwuf is based. In reality, Tasawwuf is grounded in the profound meanings contained within the Qur'an and Hadith, and rather than deviating

from Islam's essence, it aims to embody its inner dimension. The emphasis by Sufis on performing acts of worship not only outwardly but also with inner consciousness is among the clearest examples of this understanding. According to Tasawwuf, acts of worship attain true meaning only when integrated with the heart and mind. This requires the simultaneous living of both the outward (zahir) and inward (batin) dimensions of Islam (Demirli, 2016).

Ultimately, when compared to Salafī and Wahhābī critiques, it becomes evident that the perspectives of Tasawwuf on establishing a balance between the outward (zahir) and inward (batin) dimensions reveal that esoteric knowledge is not contrary to the essence of Islam but rather serves to deepen it. Tasawwuf teaches that outward acts of worship should not be seen merely as external forms, but must attain meaning through a transformation rooted in the depths of the heart. While Orientalist perspectives often approached Tasawwuf with an exclusionary and critical attitude, it becomes clear that Tasawwuf offers a vision more closely aligned with the true spirit of Islam. This demonstrates that Tasawwuf is not merely an esoteric discipline but is, in fact, a direct path to reaching the soul and truth of Islam itself. In conclusion, Tasawwuf is a journey (sayr wa sulūk) toward uncovering the reality underlying external forms. After evaluating the fundamental principles of Tasawwuf in this manner, the next section will focus on how these principles were shaped during the early period and how the emergence of Sunni Tasawwuf followed the spread of the zuhd movements.

1.3. The Formation of Sunni Tasawwuf

During the Age of Happiness (ʿAsr al-Saʿādah), although Tasawwuf had not yet taken shape as a defined concept, it was lived out through the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. However, over time, following the Prophet's death, Muslims found themselves without a Messenger to answer their questions directly. In this atmosphere of uncertainty, the number of scholars increased, and diverse interpretations of religious knowledge began to proliferate. Meanwhile, the conquest of new lands and the accumulation of wealth increasingly occupied people's hearts with worldly concerns. This drift away from the essence of Islam signaled not only a social and cultural decay but also a profound spiritual loss, both individually and collectively. Moreover, under the oppressive rule of the Umayyad dynasty, with the spread of racism and injustice, deviations from the authentic essence of the religion became more apparent. The discussions in kalām (theology) often shifted from seeking the truth to the mere defense of personal opinions, rendering them hollow and meaningless. Similarly,

the approaches of fiqh (jurisprudence) were criticized for being excessively formalistic. Amidst this turbulent and challenging period, some individuals continued to live by seeking only God's pleasure, adopting a life of zuhd (asceticism) and taqwā (piety), thus offering a spiritual reaction against the prevailing decline. Those who embraced this life of zuhd came to be known by titles such as ʿābid (devout worshipper), zāhid (ascetic), bakkāʾūn (those who weep much), and qāriʾ (reciters of the Qur'an). Thus, in this era, zuhd was not merely a personal lifestyle but emerged as a form of spiritual protest against the distortions that had begun to affect the practice of Islam (Tek, 2017).

In the history of tasawwuf, following a period of nearly two centuries marked by an ascetic way of living, a new phase emerged in which individual piety was no longer deemed sufficient, and a deeper, more systematic approach was sought through reflection and contemplation. From the third century AH (After Hijra) onward, tasawwuf evolved from being merely a way of life to attaining a structured intellectual framework, thus marking the beginning of what is referred to as the "period of tasawwuf." During this time, tasawwuf was enriched with concepts such as maʿrifa (gnosis), ʿishq (divine love), fanāʾ (annihilation in God), and baqāʾ (subsistence in God), thereby gaining recognition as an independent discipline of knowledge (Yılmaz, 2019).

As other Islamic sciences—such as kalām (theology), fiqh (jurisprudence), tafsīr (Qur'anic exegesis), and ḥadīth—established their own disciplinary boundaries, tasawwuf likewise developed with comparable scholarly rigor and methodological clarity. However, the institutionalization of tasawwuf was not merely a historical phenomenon; it also reflected an urgent need to safeguard its authentic path against emerging discourses and practices that bore its name yet deviated from its spirit.

Over time, with the decline of genuine spiritual leadership, superficial and opportunistic representations began to replace authentic expressions of the tradition. This led to confusion both among the masses and within scholarly circles, prompting true ṣūfīs to reaffirm and fortify the principles of tasawwuf upon firm intellectual and ethical foundations.

In this context, the critical observations of al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), one of the formative figures of tasawwuf, are particularly noteworthy. Al-Muḥāsibī criticized those in his time who outwardly appeared ascetic yet lacked true understanding of spiritual realities. He depicted them as follows:

There is a group who, without comprehending the inner truth, occupy themselves with notions such as contentment (riḍāʾ), trust in God (tawakkul),

asceticism (zuhd), and love of God (maḥabbat Allāh). They reduce their food intake, wear coarse clothing, abandon work under the pretext of tawakkul, and sever their means of livelihood in the name of worldly detachment. This is the state of many who appear as ascetics in our time; in their worship and asceticism, they follow their own caprice" (Sarrāj, 1960).

"One of the heretical groups, the Ibahis, believed that they had reached the highest point of worship, leading them to conclude that worship was no longer necessary. They avoided personal and social moral responsibilities. Although they claimed to be connected with tasawwuf, in reality, they had adapted the fundamental principles of tasawwuf to fit their own views. For tasawwuf to gain a solid identity, it was necessary to confront such heretical perspectives. This confrontation is essential for tasawwuf to reflect its essence accurately and be properly represented in society (Sarrāj, 1960).

Sarrāj (d. 378/988), using examples from the Companions (Sahābah) and the followers (Tābi'ūn), emphasizes that this generation lived with a consciousness directed towards the Hereafter, maintaining a distance from worldly attachments. According to him, this approach forms the essence of tasawwuf. Sarrāj (1960) states that authentic tasawwuf is based on action (ʿamal), and by addressing the corruptions within tasawwuf, he offers the correct path to rectify them. This clearly demonstrates that tasawwuf is not merely theoretical, but also a way of life, in which moral responsibilities must be fulfilled.

According to Kelābāzī (d. 380/990), over time, the essence of truth (ḥaqīqah) and affirmation (taṣdīq) has been replaced by outward form and adornment, leading to the development of a merely formal understanding of tasawwuf. This situation has caused those lacking deep knowledge of the truth to claim that they have experienced it, even though they have not truly lived it (Uludağ, 2014).

Hujwīrī, on the other hand, states that individuals who adopt a formalistic approach, which corrupts the spirit of tasawwuf, have led to a distorted understanding of tasawwuf among the public. He points out that those who view tasawwuf merely as an outward form and ritual are, in fact, individuals who cannot internalize its true principles (Uludağ, 2014).

As a result, a process can be described as a "period of decline and corruption" in tasawwuf, influenced by both internal and external factors. During this period, tasawwuf gained an academic identity within a Sunni framework. The foundations of this process were laid by the statement of Junayd al-Baghdādī, "Our knowledge is limited to the Qur'an and the

Sunnah." Junayd's declaration became one of the fundamental principles of Sunni tasawwuf, and subsequent Sufi thinkers reinterpreted these principles within a new framework that enhanced their applicability (Demirli, 2016). The ṭabaqāt (biographical) books were also shaped around this framework, and the emerging concepts and language developed in alignment with this core principle. As a result, it became possible for tasawwuf to define itself within the Sunni scholarly tradition.

Since the 12th century, tasawwuf has evolved into an institutional structure known as the "period of ṭarīqahs" and gradually spread across the Islamic world. This process has developed in parallel with tasawwuf's response to societal and individual needs. The ṭarīqahs, as structures with unique educational methods, have played a significant role in the practical implementation of the fundamental principles of Islam. The spiritual guides (murshids) of the ṭarīqahs are experts in this field and possess scholarly authority. Their primary role is to provide their disciples with scholarly guidance and direct the tasawwuf education process. However, as in every period, false and deceptive elements have also emerged within these structures over time. As Mevlānā stated, "*False gold gains value through true gold*" (Küçük, 2009), similarly, false ṭarīqahs have profited from the true ones. In this context, the existence of such false structures should not lead to the negation of the essence of tasawwuf when generalized.

2. Qur'ān and Sunnah-Based Tasawwuf

Tasawwuf is grounded in the understanding of tawḥīd (the oneness of God), the path to closeness to Allah, and the spiritual development of the individual. It bases these understandings on the moral principles of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In this context, the relationship between tasawwuf and the Qur'ān, as well as the Sunnah of the Prophet, will be examined.

2.1. Positioning Tasawwuf as an Interpretation of Religion

The revelation sent to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not merely a message but was deeply interpreted through his life and exemplary conduct, becoming a roadmap for humanity. After the Prophet's passing, this divine legacy was carefully preserved by the Companions (Sahābah) and was made meaningful within the context of life. This effort to find meaning was passed down through generations, and the Qur'ān and Sunnah have continuously been reinterpreted in each era. This process has given rise to

various interpretations, such as those of Salafism, Shi'ism, and Wahhabism. Tasawwuf is one of these interpretative approaches. Unlike other religious interpretations, tasawwuf seeks to understand the Qur'ān and Sunnah not merely at a superficial level, but through their deeper, esoteric truths. This effort to understand is shaped by ḥikmah (wisdom); ḥikmah transcends the apparent meanings, allowing one to grasp the inner essence of all things (Cebecioğlu, 1997). Through this perspective of wisdom, tasawwuf seeks to understand the journey of the human being toward Allah, considering the depths of the inner world. According to this view, the spiritual effects and inner essence of everything are of utmost importance. This understanding goes beyond adhering to outward rules and necessitates the consideration of unseen energies and effects. For example, after the Battle of Badr, some Companions began to kick the bodies of the enemy soldiers. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked, "What are you doing?" they responded, "O Messenger of Allah, we fought them fiercely, they were our enemies." The Prophet replied, "No, while they were alive, they were enemies because they sought to harm our religion and lives. Now, they are dead. They have returned to their origins and deserve respect" (Bukhārī, 1993). This serves as an indication that Islam is not merely interpreted literally, but also through the lens of ḥikmah. Ḥikmah is the ability to perceive the deeper meaning behind every action and behavior.

Another example is a situation faced by Ali ibn Abi Tālib during battle: as he was about to kill an enemy, the man spat in his face. Ali, who had no personal conflict with him, said, "I was going to kill you because you attacked the religion of Muhammad, but now that you spat in my face, this has become personal. I cannot kill you. Go away" (Muslim, 1955). This example demonstrates how moral and spiritual values in Islam are shaped through a profound perspective. Islam holds not only outward actions but also the inner stance and intention of the individual accountable.

According to Kılıç, in the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, tasawwuf held an important place up until the Kadızādeli movement, and the majority of religious interpretations during these periods were shaped from a tasawwuf perspective. Ottoman scholars emphasized that tasawwuf was one of the fundamental building blocks of this civilization by stating, "We suckled from two mothers; one was Ibn al-ʿArabī, the other was Mevlānā." Ibn al-ʿArabī's understanding that "The entire world is a unity" made a significant contribution to the establishment of this vast civilization. This perspective was able to maintain the unity of various ethnic and cultural groups for a long period and became one of the key factors behind the success of the Ottoman Empire (Kılıç, 2013).

One day, Fatih Sultan Mehmed, disguised in plain clothes to avoid being recognized, went to a shop early in the morning. The shopkeeper, upon seeing this person wanting to make a purchase, directed him by saying, "I have already made my first sale, the shop across the street hasn't opened yet. Go there." This behavior demonstrates how the understanding of "The entire world is a unity" is manifested in daily life. The shopkeeper's thought process is based on the belief that the opening of the shop across the street, as part of the whole, will also bring benefit to him. According to Kılıç, this approach represents a mode of thinking that contemporary people may find difficult to comprehend. This same perspective applies not only in relationships between people but also in the connection with the universe (Kılıç, 2013).

As a result, we can say that tasawwuf is both a religious science and a way of life that deepens the individual's relationship with nature, other beings, and their inner world. This tradition, which has continued from the Ottoman period to the present day, encourages balance, tolerance, and harmony with nature in both societal and individual life. Tasawwuf is not just a theoretical understanding; it is a principle that manifests itself in daily life and personal relationships. Although some individuals may oppose the more systematic aspects of the tariqahs and tasawwuf, living independently of these teachings on a societal level is quite difficult. This is because tasawwuf is a profound culture that deeply influences the thought processes, values, and lifestyles of individuals and societies (Kara, 2008).

2.2. Taṣawwuf as a Religious Science

Historically, religious sciences (al-ʿulūm al-dīniyya) such as ḥadīth, fiqh, and kalām were shaped by the dialectics of conflicting interpretations, giving rise to distinct schools. Taṣawwuf, too, evolved under the influence of these intellectual tensions, emerging as a unique discipline.

The term "religious science" (ʿilm dīnī) primarily denotes that the source of knowledge must be derived from revealed texts (nuṣūṣ—i.e., the Qur'an and Sunnah). For a discipline to qualify as a religious science, its epistemic foundations must be directly rooted in nuṣūṣ. Any field recognized as such must first establish its authority through reference to Allah and the Prophet (ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam). This criterion applies equally to Taṣawwuf. As Junayd al-Baghdādī asserted in his definition:

"Our knowledge (ʿilm) is bound solely by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thus, Taṣawwuf's subject matter, questions, and solutions are framed within this revelatory framework. Its central focus is human ethical refinement—termed ḥāl (a transformative "state") in Taṣawwuf literature, implying

metamorphosis or transmutation. Taṣawwuf presupposes that humans are morally perfectible beings, and ethical progression (tahdhīb al-akhlāq) is its axiomatic principle. Without this, Taṣawwuf ceases to be a viable science. It provides methodologies (manāhij) and practices (e.g., riyāḍa, mujāhada) to guide this transformation toward the Divine Ideal (Demirli, 2016).

The mutability of human character parallels the principle of "transformation" (taghyīr) observed in the natural sciences. The transformation of substances symbolizes the spiritual and ethical metamorphosis of the human being.

Tasawwuf, founded upon this principle, pursues a systematic method aimed at realizing the inner transformation (taḥawwul) of the individual.

The concerns of tasawwuf consist in the manifold aspects of this ethical transformation, wherein the human being strives against moral deficiencies (naqā'iṣ), sins (dhunūb), and vices (radha'il) encountered along the path of spiritual maturation.

In the classical literature of tasawwuf, these matters are predominantly treated under the categories of ḥāl (spiritual states) and maqām (spiritual stations). Moreover, these issues are elucidated through principles derived directly from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. (Demirli, 2016)

As for the method of tasawwuf, it consists of the means employed for the discipline of the nafs (lower self) and the attainment of ethical perfection (kamāl al-akhlāq). Among these means are riyāḍah (spiritual exercise), mujāhadah (spiritual struggle), and supererogatory acts of worship (nawāfil). The practices of dhikr (remembrance of God), tafakkur (contemplation), and the increase of benevolent deeds (khayrāt) constitute essential elements of this method. The ultimate aim of tasawwuf is the moral and spiritual maturation of the human being, which is defined as "adorning oneself with the attributes of God" (al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh). (Demirli, 2016) .

One of the most significant evidences affirming that tasawwuf is an integral branch of the religious sciences (ʿulūm al-dīn) is the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl. According to the narration of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, he recounts:

"One day, while we were sitting in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam), there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black. No signs of travel were visible upon him, and none of us knew him. He came and sat close to the Prophet, resting his knees against the Prophet's knees and placing his hands upon his own thighs. He said: 'O Muḥammad, inform me about Islām.' The Messenger of Allah (ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam) replied: 'Islām is that you testify that there is no deity but Allah and that

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; that you establish the prayer (ṣalāh); that you pay the alms (zakāh); that you fast during the month of Ramaḍān; and that you perform the pilgrimage (ḥajj) to the House if you are able to find a way thereto.' The man said: 'You have spoken the truth.' We were amazed that he would ask a question and then confirm the answer. Then he said: 'Inform me about īmān (faith).' The Prophet replied: 'It is that you believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and that you believe in the Divine Decree (qadar), both its good and its evil.' The man again said: 'You have spoken the truth.' Then he said: 'Inform me about iḥsān.' The Prophet answered: 'It is that you worship Allah as though you see Him; and if you do not see Him, then know that He sees you.' Thereupon, the man departed. I (ʿUmar) remained for a while in a state of astonishment. Then the Messenger of Allah (ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam) asked: 'O ʿUmar, do you know who the questioner was?' I replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'Indeed, it was Jibrīl; he came to teach you your religion (dīn) (Muslim, 1955).

The Ḥadīth of Jibrīl systematically defines the foundational pillars of Islam- īmān (faith), Islām (submission), and iḥsān (spiritual excellence) - in sequential order. At its conclusion, it is stated that this is the religion (dīn). Thus, this ḥadīth serves as a fundamental source in clarifying the interrelations among various religious sciences (ʿulūm al-dīn) that later emerged, such as tasawwuf, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and kalām (theology).

An essential point that must be emphasized here is that iḥsān should not be treated as an independent concept, isolated from Islām and īmān. Rather, iḥsān is not a separate phase completed after īmān and Islām, but a state that enhances and perfects the quality of these two dimensions. One of the principal reasons why tasawwuf is considered among the religious sciences (ʿulūm al-dīn) lies in the fact that the notion of iḥsān is positioned as a constitutive element representing the ultimate aim of the religious life. In this context, the expression mentioned in the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl — "to worship Allah as though you see Him" — should be understood not merely as a mystical state (ḥāl), but as an ideal criterion regarding the qualitative perfection of ʿibādah (worship). This criterion aims at a degree of certainty (yaqīn) that deepens and authenticates both the believer's faith (īmān) and practice (ʿamal). In accordance with this understanding, tasawwuf emerges as a discipline that investigates the methods of inner cultivation and spiritual training (tarbiyah) necessary for the believer to attain the station (maqām) of iḥsān (Demirli, 2016).

The fundamental concerns of tasawwuf are, to a large extent, related to the notion of intention (niyyah); for according to the Ṣūfīs, the depth of the religious life is contingent upon the authenticity (ṣiḥḥah) of one's niyyah. In this context, the principal factor that corrupts the purity of niyyah is identified as the human desire to preserve one's existence and to make oneself visible. The Ṣūfīs termed this desire as "the love of existence" (ḥubb al-wujūd) and connected all human actions to this primordial motive. This underlying motive also serves as the source of attitudes that obstruct the state of iḥsān, such as hypocrisy (riyāʾ). Indeed, when a person seeks to exhibit his acts before others, worship (ʿibādah) ceases to be for Allah alone and begins to derive its meaning from human approval. At this point, Islam regards such behavior as a form of shirk (associating partners with Allah) and treats it as a manifestation of a weakness in īmān (faith) Within the framework of the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl, the state of iḥsān is attainable only when one is purified from such weaknesses and directs all devotion exclusively toward Allah. The expression "to worship Allah as though you see Him" thus signifies the exclusive dedication of niyyah to Allah alone and the purification from riyāʾ (ostentation).Tasawwuf, in its essence, is the methodological endeavor aimed at realizing precisely this process of inner transformation. According to the Ṣūfīs, without sincerity (ikhlāṣ), true tawḥīd (affirmation of divine oneness) cannot be achieved; and without tawḥīd, genuine īmān and ʿibādah are impossible (Demirli, 2016).

Tawḥīd, rather than merely denoting numerical oneness, is primarily a moral and existential concept. Drawing upon the verse, "We created everything in truth" (Q 15:85), Ibn al-ʿArabī asserts that al-Ḥaqq (the Real) constitutes the very essence of all things. According to this conception of tawḥīd, there is but one true agent (fāʿil) in existence: Allah. All beings, in their essential reality, are grounded in al-Ḥaqq. Consequently, according to the ʿārifūn (gnostics) such as Ibn al-ʿArabī, every individual has attained to a portion of the truth, and none are utterly bereft of it. What matters, however, is to guide each fragment back toward the wholeness of the truth. This wholeness is none other than the conception of tawḥīd as articulated by Islam through the Qurʾān. Indeed, the oft-cited phrase "Come, whoever you are" is a call to tawbah (repentance) that the ʿārifūn echo and that ultimately traces back to the Prophet's guidance. It is, in essence, an endeavor to reunite the human being with the totality of the truth (Demirli, 2016). Thus, the notion of a so-called "moderate Islam" is untenable (Haksever, 2016).

In accordance with the understanding of tawḥīd, in tasawwuf, fundamental human qualities such as birth, death, and love, which are intrinsic to the human essence, are considered essential. In contrast, accidental attributes

such as race, color, nationality, and religion, while necessary for the continuation of life, are regarded as secondary in the face of ultimate reality. At this point, tasawwuf emphasizes the need to avoid discrimination based on race, color, nationality, or religion. It rejects the philosophy of separation based on these attributes and refuses to engage in wars motivated by them (Kılıç, 2013).

The gnostics (arifin) communicate with others through the essential qualities of humanity. Rumi's metaphor of the compass (pergel) is a beautiful example of this. The fixed foot of the compass represents stability and steadfastness in living according to the Qur'an and Sunnah, while the movable foot allows communication with others based on a common point, within the limits permitted by the fixed foot. For this reason, Rumi defined his path by saying, "I am the slave of the Qur'an, and the dust of the path of Prophet Muhammad," indicating his core principles. He established contact with everyone according to this stability and helped them gain awareness by communicating through shared qualities. For instance, Rumi did not tell the Christian priests in Konya to "become Muslims." Instead, he said, "Resurrect the Jesus within you," aiming to bring them closer to the Muhammadan Truth and thus facilitating their conversion to Islam (Cebecioğlu, 2010). When his funeral procession was being carried, people of different faiths, who intervened to ask for permission and help in carrying it, said, "Rumi is like bread to us; just as bread is to a hungry person, so is he to us" (Eflaki, 2011)."

The most prominent distinction between Christian mysticism and Tasawwuf is asceticism (rūhbāniyya). According to Christian belief, in creation, Eve deceived Adam in collaboration with Satan, which led to their expulsion from Paradise. Over time, this understanding transformed into an asceticism that viewed women as the source of sin and emphasized avoiding them. Approaching God was seen as possible only by distancing oneself from worldly pleasures and particularly from women. In contrast, in Tasawwuf, nearness to Allah is not achieved by withdrawing from the world or people; on the contrary, it is realized through remaining in life and living among people. (Derin, 2006). In this context, *celvet* (solitude in the midst of society) is essential in Tasawwuf. It means being among the people, empathizing with their struggles, and walking the thorny paths of life. Solitude (uzlet) and retreat (khalwat) are not opposites of *celvet*, but rather its complements. Furthermore, *celvet* is a sign of the soul's ascent. Men and women are not seen as obstacles on this path, but as complementary beings, both directed toward the same truth. (Öztürk, 1979). In Tasawwuf, when the term *insan-ı kamil* (the perfect human) is used, it refers to the Prophet Muhammad. Every

person progresses on the path to perfection to the extent that they follow him. This is one of the fundamental features that distinguish Tasawwuf from other mystical traditions (Demirli, 2013).

In this regard, mystics such as Ibn Arabi and Mevlana show the way to reach the truth not by fleeing from the world or completely renouncing desires, but by being involved in life, integrating with every being, and living with love and tolerance. They present Tasawwuf's understanding of Tawhid (the oneness of God) as a way of life based on unity. There is no place for discrimination, hatred, or war here; every human being, every creature, is a part of the truth. Tasawwuf demonstrates that the path of living Tawhid is possible by being in life, living with people, and being in harmony with all beings.

Conclusion

Understanding the place of Tasawwuf in Islamic thought is not only a historical inquiry but also a profound answer to the question of how we should live our faith today. Tasawwuf is the name of the effort to preserve and sustain the moral essence of Islam. In this regard, it is neither limited to the practice of a particular period nor merely an individual story of inner retreat. In fact, it is the continuation of the deep Islamic experience that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) personally lived and passed down to the generation of the Companions, carried forward in subsequent centuries through different languages and forms.

The era of Zuhd is the first stage of this experience. In an environment where the material world rapidly expanded and surrounded humanity, it emerged as a new language of turning towards Allah. However, over time, this language of Zuhd evolved into a more comprehensive and profound process of spiritual construction, known as Tasawwuf. In this process, Tasawwuf has become a principle that revitalizes the inner world of the individual while also repairing the spiritual fabric of society. All these developments show that Tasawwuf is not an understanding borrowed from outside, but rather a quest for truth that arises from the very depth of Islam. To understand it is to understand a life built upon revelation and the Sunnah. However, throughout history, Tasawwuf has not remained solely a path for those seeking the truth. Over time, various accumulations have formed along the way, and at times the essence has been overshadowed. Particularly, some intellectual currents turning into a form-based religiosity have led Tasawwuf to deviate from the goals indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah. In response to this, Tasawwuf has needed to redefine its boundaries in line with the Ahl al-Sunnah beliefs

and schools of thought. Thus, it is no longer the personal experiences of individuals that are central, but the scholarly and evidence-based references upon which these experiences are based.

In the modern era, approaches to Tasawwuf generally focus on two extremes. The first reduces Tasawwuf to an individual search for peace shaped by a secular mindset, turning it into a psychological therapy embellished with mystical tones, devoid of its true content. The second approach completely disconnects Tasawwuf from the scholarly and spiritual content accumulated throughout history, transforming it into a rejection that equates it entirely with innovation (bid'ah). Both attitudes fail to fully grasp the essence of Tasawwuf and its place within Islamic thought. However, Tasawwuf is neither merely an emotional refuge opening the door to individual escape nor a nostalgic realm trapped in the past. Rather, it is a dynamic experience that emerged under the guidance of revelation, shaped by the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and is based on the spiritual and moral education of the human heart.

Considering the essential aspects of Tasawwuf in today's conditions, its relevance at both the individual and societal levels can be reinterpreted in a way that suits the circumstances of the time. In this context, the following suggestions can be made:

- **Knowledge and wisdom should be considered together.** Tasawwuf should be built on a scholarly foundation; the ancient balance between the madrasa and the Sufi lodge, between intellect and heart, should be revived.
- **Return to authentic sources should be increased.** The texts of the early Sufis should be translated for today's people; instead of dry explanations, a living language should be used.
- **Representation should be transparent.** Sufi orders should make themselves open to scrutiny, both spiritually and administratively; the role of guidance should be seen not as a position of power, but as a responsibility.
- **Tasawwuf explained to society should be deepened.** The works of figures such as Mevlâna and Yunus should not only be explored in terms of their poetry but also in terms of their connection with the Qur'an.
- **A new discourse should be established in academia.** In opposition to the Orientalist thesis that explains Tasawwuf through non-Islamic

influences, a scientific approach that speaks with our own sources should be developed.

In conclusion, Tasawwuf is the path of those who seek the truth by following the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); however, this path is only accessible to those who purify their intentions, cleanse their hearts, and seek the truth by refining their souls.

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CHAPTER 6

RELIGION AND POLITICS

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Abstract

The research was conducted to examine the inevitable and reciprocal bond between religion and politics, the processes by which these two phenomena legitimize and transform each other, and how this relationship has changed in the context of modernization and globalization. The study adopts an interdisciplinary analysis method, taking the subject of political science as its basis. Political Anthropology and Political Sociology are used as the main analytical methods. Furthermore, the hermeneutic approach (with an eclectic approach drawing from Dilthey and Gadamer), which emphasizes the difference between human sciences and natural sciences, guided the interpretation process. The research design is based on a comparative historical framework and sociological analysis. The main question of the article is how religion and politics are positioned relative to each other in the historical process and the modern era, which approaches (Religious, Instrumental, Liberal, Critical) are used to address this relationship on theoretical and practical levels, and how these approaches determine the ontological status of religion. The limitation of the article is that instead of deeply examining the numerous thinkers and theoretical constructs contained within each of the four main approaches (Religious, Instrumental, Liberal, Critical) developed regarding the religion and politics relationship, it focuses

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only on the main thematic points of these perspectives. Its original value lies in addressing the relationship between religion and politics not merely as a conflict or separation, but also in the context of legitimacy production and mutual interaction. Furthermore, it analyzes this relationship in light of the changes created by modernization and globalization processes, using an interdisciplinary and eclectic hermeneutic method. The main finding is that political authority, in its quest for continuity and order, resorts to religious references as one of the oldest sources of legitimacy. It is also determined that the relationship between religion and politics is conceptualized through four main theoretical approaches: Religious Supremacy, Instrumentalism, Mutual Independence (Liberal), and Critical/Reconstruction. The results are important for understanding the inseparable bond between religion and politics and the ongoing struggle of this bond as a social reality. The article demonstrates that it is not possible to completely remove the influence of religion on politics from the practical sphere, not just the institutional sphere, thereby revealing the ontological and epistemological foundations of this relationship.

Keywords: Political sociology, religion, politics, political anthropology, legitimacy production

1. Introduction

One of the most fundamental characteristics that distinguish humans from other beings, making them a product of the society they live in rather than merely a biological organism, is their participation in social life. Social life, a product of the human capacity for reason and thought—a capacity absent at birth—is constantly in flux. This process of change, termed socialization, facilitates the formation of human personality. This process also includes the individual's relationship with political institutions and values. Through the process of political socialization, individuals internalize the concept of authority and the values, attitudes, and roles associated with it. In this context, the process of political socialization, which means the individual's interaction with not only social but also political structures and the internalization of political values, attitudes, and roles, is at the center of individual-politics interaction in relation to authority. As Weber posited, legitimacy is at the core of the interaction between politics and the individual, and the relationship between religion and politics essentially manifests at this point. In its quest for continuity and order, political authority turns to religious references as one of the most ancient sources of legitimacy production. Throughout history, while religion has influenced politics, politics has also

drawn strength from religion. The indispensable bond between these two phenomena, despite their differing domains, converging on common ground, is twofold: religion serves as one of the legitimizing functions for politics from a societal perspective, and for those who seek to keep religion outside the political sphere, it is an endeavor to consolidate their own existence and power by excluding an influence that could share in power. In this struggle, politics has removed religion from the institutional sphere but has failed to remove it from the practical sphere. The struggle arising from this dual situation continues as a social reality. Religion has always maintained its effectiveness in influencing internal and external politics within the simple or intricate formation of politics. There is an essential and reciprocal link between the religious and the political. Religion has a social orientation, and society has a religious dimension. This bond is specific because it expresses both a closeness and a contradiction between religion and politics. This closeness explains the strong unity, spontaneous cooperation, and parallelism of their forms that exist between these two authorities. The contradiction between them generates constant tension, with each trying to use and dominate the other (Barbier, 1999: 357).

Throughout this study, the use of an interdisciplinary analysis method appears as a necessity. Many constantly used concepts, such as sacred, cult, hero, charisma, ritual, ecstasy, etc., are part of the basic vocabulary of anthropology and sociology (especially the sociology of religion), and since the subject matter is fundamentally a political science topic, political anthropology and political sociology will be the primary analytical methods of the study. Political anthropology, as defined by Balandier, is "a tool to study and discover various institutions and practices that enable the governance of people, as well as the symbols and thought systems that underpin them" (Balandier, 2007, p. 5). Political sociology, on the other hand, treats politics as a phenomenon in a very close relationship with all other social institutions. For the last 30 years, history and sociology have been converged "both in their methodological approaches and empirical interests" (Vergin, 2008, p. 25). In addition to state formation, important figures in historical sociology have increasingly engaged with the fundamental concepts of politics and political sociology (revolution, state, power) and have provided significant insights in this regard (The most prominent among them are undoubtedly Theda Skocpol and Charles Tilly). Because of this reason, perhaps the main body of the study will consist of outlining the comparative historical framework and conducting a sociological analysis of the topic. The method of political sociology is the method with the greatest chance of providing insights.

We will focus on religious ideas, not to determine their degree of truth, but because we adopt a sociological understanding—like Weber—that accepts that thought also determines social structure. In doing all this, we will give special importance to utilizing the hermeneutic method, which emphasizes the difference between human sciences and natural sciences. When using the hermeneutic approach, instead of adopting the entire approach to hermeneutics of a single philosopher, we will adopt an eclectic approach that draws upon philosophers like Dilthey and Gadamer, who also have significant disagreements with each other. In our view, Dilthey's answers to the problems he himself pointed out have not completely solved the problems; however, the importance of these answers for those who value the hermeneutic approach in human sciences cannot be denied. Although it may not be possible to fully achieve the ideal set forth by Dilthey (1991), we will evaluate Dilthey's goals as an "ideal type". Furthermore, we will consider Gadamer's warnings, another important figure in hermeneutics, that the interpreter also belongs to history, has prejudices inherent in their historical and personal position, and that the participation of these prejudices in the act of interpretation is inevitable (Gadamer, 1989). Gadamer viewed the construction of knowledge without prejudice as the prejudice of the Enlightenment against all prejudices and showed that this was an impossible goal to achieve. What is important is to identify "obstructive prejudices" for correct understanding and to make corrections in our interpretations; otherwise, it is not possible to completely get rid of our prejudices and evaluate phenomena with a "tabula rasa" mind. Utilizing Gadamer's views in this regard to identify "obstructive prejudices" accompanying the interpretation process and attempting to correct our interpretations accordingly will be another guide in our hermeneutic approach. In this context, Gadamer's emphasis on the historical nature of interpretation and the inevitability of prejudices also implies that we should not disregard the historical and social context shaped by modernization and globalization processes when addressing the relationship religion and politics. Like the interpreter, religious and political actors are also inherent in their historical moments. This historical immanence provides an explanatory ground for understanding how religion and politics have transformed, especially in the modern era.

We observe a significant change at the end of the modernization and globalization processes. The relationship between religion and politics has not remained outside this process of change. Many studies conducted to date indicate significant differentiations between the "religious individual" of a century ago and today's "religious individual" and between the religious groups of a century ago and today's religious groups, with major

transformations in the new positions these religious understandings and structures have taken within political institutions. In this context, how religion and politics are positioned factually and theoretically has become an important area of discussion. Intellectual heritage has interpreted the relationship religion and politics in different ways and in different historical contexts; various conceptual approaches to this relational structure have been developed.

2. Approaches to the Religion and Politics Relationship

The relationality of religion and politics and the positioning of these two fundamental elements of social structure within the sphere of competition have been conceptualized in various ways in the intellectual field, and a series of theoretical models have been developed accordingly. These theoretical models, which evaluate the position of religion vis-à-vis politics across a wide spectrum from absolute dominance to instrumentality, independence, and reconstruction, constitute the basis for theoretical discussions and practical political arrangements. Four approaches to the relationship between religion and politics emerge:

1- The approach that declares the absolute supremacy of religion over politics and consequently strictly subordinates the latter to the former (Religious Approach; Bodin, Calvin, Bossuet).

2- The approach that asserts the dominance of politics over religion and, therefore, the dependence of religion on politics (Instrumental Approach).

3- The approach that seeks to separate religion and politics, assert their mutual independence and free each from the tutelage of the other (Liberal Approach).

4- The approach that criticizes traditional religious forms as unsuitable for the needs of modern society and attempts to construct a new secularly inspired religion to meet these needs (Critical Approach) (Barbier, 1999, pp. 15-19). The fundamental point of divergence among these four different approaches to the reciprocal relationship between religious and political institutions stems from the status they attribute to religion. Each approach is based on different assumptions regarding nature, function, and place of religion within the social structure. The ontological status given to religion also determines its epistemological value, social function, and the form of its relationship with political power. Therefore, these approaches are not merely theoretical classifications and indicators of practical political and social

attitudes. Since each approach intensely contains many thinkers and a series of theoretical constructs and conceptual sets of these thinkers, this text will only touch upon the main thematic points of the theoretical perspectives in question, emphasizing the status and role of religion in different theoretical openings in the religion and politics relationship. Within this framework, the ontological and functional status of religion, the social role it assumes, and the form of interaction it establishes with the political sphere in the context of its relationship with politics will be discussed in a broad outline. All of these will allow for a comparative overview of the theoretical foundations used to understand and interpret the relationship religion and politics.

2.1. Religious Approach: The Supremacy of Religion Over Politics

In medieval Christian thought, religion was viewed as an ontological principle positioned above the political sphere; political theories were constructed on the basis of the transcendence of the spiritual over the temporal. In this framework, political power was conceived not as an autonomous structure in itself but as a domain that the determining principles of religion should guide. It was believed that spiritual authority should hold a decisive and supervisory position over the political, both due to its epistemological privilege in attaining truth and its function of leading society to eternal salvation. Thus, politics became merely a tool limited to maintaining worldly order, while religion was positioned as the primary authority that gave it meaning, direction, and legitimacy. This understanding with its inclination to subordinate the political to the divine aimed to define not only power relations but also the normative structure of social order on a theological basis (Barbier, 2000, pp. 23-25).

The supremacy of religion over politics and its positioning as the primary determining principle in the relationship religion and politics was theorized and articulated in writing on a theo-political ground through the contributions of canonical thinkers in Western intellectual history. This approach, characterized as religious in the context of the relationship religion and politics, first manifested itself in Martin Luther. Martin Luther, as the founding figure of the Reformation movement in Western intellectual history that paved the way for the reconstruction of not only theological but also political and social order, holds a central place in the relationship religion and politics by transforming the nature of religion's institutional structure as well as its relationship with the individual and authority. While emphasis

on Luther's centrality is important, it should be noted that he was more a theologian and religious reformer than a political theorist (Yazoğlu, 2001).

Martin Luther's political thought, essentially theological in orientation, was shaped by an effort to purify religion. His opposition to the hierarchical structure of the medieval Church, which had permeated the political sphere, inevitably forced him to confront politics (Barbier, 2000, pp. 27-28). This confrontation led him to radically distinguish between faith and law, spirit and body, religion and politics. Luther's main thesis is that humans are saved by faith alone—an understanding that forms the essence of the Reformation; this understanding positions the religious sphere as internal and transcendent and the political sphere as external and worldly. Thus, politics is defined as a divine tool to curb sinful human nature, but as a regulative function not essential for Christians, only necessary for unbelievers. In this context, Luther ontologically separates religion and politics with his theory of two kingdoms. However, it should be noted that Luther's distinction is not one that implies the ineffectiveness of the religious in the worldly, such as one religious and one non-religious. Indeed, both kingdoms are divine and based on a divine foundation. The Kingdom of God refers to the internal realm governed by faith, while the Earthly Kingdom refers to the external realm ruled by law. Temporal power also originates from God, but it is defined by a limited and oppressive function, such as limiting evil and preserving peace. Luther divides humanity into believers belonging to God's kingdom and unbelievers belonging to the world's kingdom, seeing political authority as an order established by God, especially to limit the evil of unbelievers (Luther, 2011, p. 368). Therefore, even if political power is unjust, it necessitates obedience as both a divine command and a conscientious responsibility because it is based on God's will (Has, 2014, p. 267). According to Luther, a true Christian is already internally free by faith and obeys worldly authority only for the sake of others' salvation. Therefore, although politics is necessary for the order of Christian society, it should not interfere with the realm of faith; it should govern bodies, not souls. From this perspective, political power is subordinate to the sacred, serving it (Barbier, 2000, p. 30). However, Luther's thought, by defining the political sphere not as an autonomous structure but in the shadow of religious truth, limited political power with the desire to put it at the service of faith. Politics is legitimized not according to its own internal norms but according to religious references. This situation, while consistent with Luther's initial effort to involve temporal authority in the reformation of the Church, could not prevent this authority from interfering with the religious sphere over time (Barbier, 2000, p. 37). In this framework, it is possible to state that Luther's political thought tends to

grant transcendence to religion while reducing politics to a subordinate and functional sphere. In this respect, it can be characterized not as a precursor to modern secular political theories, but as an expression of a theo-political order.

Another canonical thinker of the religious approach, where politics is subordinated to religion and absolute sovereignty resides in religion is Jean Calvin. Calvin and Calvinism, highly renowned in sociological literature based on Weber's connection between capitalism and Calvinism, left a theological legacy that forms a matrix for the religion and politics relationship. Jean Calvin's theory of religion and politics is fundamentally a product of a theological orientation based on the ideal of a Christian society. Like Luther, Calvin was a religious reformer, but his legal background and observations of political reality enabled him to develop a more systematic and realistic thought on politics (Barbier, 2000). Unlike Luther's distant stance towards the law, Calvin placed the law at the center of his thought, arguing that political power is both an anthropological necessity due to the corrupted nature of human beings and a theological necessity originating from God's will. According to him, humans are beings inclined to evil under the influence of their passions, and the condition for ensuring social order is the existence of a civil authority. Calvin explicitly defends the divine origin of political power; authority comes directly from God, not from the people, and therefore rulers are seen as God's representatives. Although the people's election of rulers is accepted as a legitimate practice, this does not mean that the power source is the people. According to Calvin, rulers are obligated to establish justice and maintain public order, and they are also responsible for protecting religion as God's representatives on earth. This also underpins Calvin's political conservatism: he advocates absolute obedience to rulers, and disobedience is legitimized only when it conflicts with faith.

Calvin develops a dual power concept similar to Luther's two-kingdom theory when explaining the relationship between religion and politics. However, his approach distinguishes between the two dimensions within each human being—spiritual and temporal—rather than distinguishing between people. Each individual is subject to both spiritual power, which concerns their conscience, and civil power, which regulates social relations. This distinction allows Calvin to balance between Christian freedom and civil obedience. Christians' consciences are free before God; however, this freedom does not exempt them from worldly laws. In this framework, the purpose of spiritual power is eternal salvation, while the purpose of civil power is social order and justice. While theoretically maintaining this distinction, Calvin, especially with his experience in Geneva, designed an order that puts

civil power at the service of religion. Although the separation of jurisdictions between spiritual and civil authority is emphasized (Barbier, 2000, p. 49), in Calvin's envisioned Christian society model, civil government is obliged to protect true religion and prevent publicly committed religious deviations. Thus, the theoretical distinction between two powers is practically replaced by a system that establishes the supremacy of the religious over the political. In this respect, Calvin's political understanding, while attempting to make religious authority independent of temporal power, ultimately results in a semi-theocratic model where civil authority is subject to religious commands.

Following Luther and Calvin, Jean Bodin is another key figure in the approach where religion is the driver and determinant of politics in the religion-politics relationship. Bodin's central aim is to create a correspondence between religion and politics by grounding the modern state on natural religion (Barbier, 2000, pp. 53-54). Bodin's effort to establish a consensus between religion and politics through the concept of natural religion distinguishes him from other theorists in terms of the status he gives to religion. Indeed, the religion Bodin addresses and tries to establish a correspondence with politics is natural religion, not other specific religions/sects. Bodin aimed to reconstruct the state based on unity and stability by purifying the political sphere from sectarian divisions. For this purpose, he sought to provide the state with a natural and rational basis of legitimacy. According to him, since religious differences fuel political divisions and threaten the state, sovereignty must be entrusted to the state as an absolute and indivisible power to overcome these conflicts. This sovereign power places the state above sects while also enabling the establishment of an order based on tolerance among different faiths. Although Bodin detaches the state from specific religions, he grounds it on a natural religion that can be shared by all citizens. This approach creates a basis for protecting the state from sectarian conflicts without denying the social function of religion (Barbier, 2000, p. 56).

Bodin, by purifying the state from sectarian conflicts to establish a stable political unity, grounds the place of religion in the state independently of specific religions but within a natural and universal framework. In his understanding, religion is positioned as both the foundational basis and the ultimate goal of the state. In this context, God is not only the source of power but also the end towards which the state should strive. However, this understanding of God is based on a natural religion grounded in reason and nature, not on a specific sect (Barbier, 2000, p. 58). Bodin's emphasis on religion is essentially related to his fundamental problem and trajectory, which is the establishment of political unity. For Bodin's primary concern is

how political unity can be achieved (Ekiz, 2020). Bodin, while placing the state above sects, seeks a common religious ground that everyone can adopt through reason to ensure social order. According to Bodin, religion serves as a regulative function that determines not only individual morality but also the limits of political power. Bodin, in this manner, places religion at the foundation of political authority while arguing that the order on which this authority rests is also rational for both nature and human reason are the work of God. In this respect, the purpose of the state is to establish and maintain this order, which is in accordance with God's will. In this context, the king, as God's representative on earth, derives his power from a divine source; however, this does not lead him to interfere with different faiths. On the contrary, Bodin's approach allows for a tolerant approach to different faiths based on respect for the order created by God. Bodin, by grounding absolute monarchy with theological legitimacy, ensured that this structure did not exclude religious pluralism and proposed an original political model that combines absolutism with tolerance (Akat, 1974, pp. 567-568). For Bodin's compromise to be realized, the laws of the state must conform to God's law, and the monarch must see God as both a witness to their actions and the ultimate judge. While not prioritizing any particular sect or granting it a superior status, Bodin attributes a special function to the Church in the social and political sphere. Beyond being a spiritual institution, the Church is the guardian of moral order, the supervisor of political power, and a historical counter-balance against tyranny (Barbier, 2000).

2.2. Instrumental Approach: The Subordination of Religion to Politics

The instrumentalization of religion through its subordination to politics signifies the loss of religion's central role in the political arena; religion's existence is found solely in its being seen as a social cement in the formation and maintenance of social order and its undertaking of a mediating role in ensuring consensus between state and society, indicating that religion has been stripped of its autonomous and determining foundational principle in a political sense. In this context, religion is abstracted from its transcendent claims and becomes a functional tool that strengthens the legitimacy of political authority; thus, religion's influence in the public sphere is reduced to an instrument limited to the preservation of order. This approach also serves as a source for the idea of separating religion and politics.

The first rupture in the positively attributed ontological status of religion in political philosophy, concerning the relationship between religion and

politics, manifested itself in Machiavelli. Although Machiavelli did not directly target the religious power of the state, he consciously disregarded it. He sought the source of political power not in God but in human will and historical reality, finding the sacred claims of kings to be imaginary and irrational. In this way, he is the first thinker to break entirely from the scholastic tradition (Cassirer, 2005, p. 140). Although he attributes an autonomous status to the state and rejects the state's dependence on religion, Machiavelli does not exclude religion as a whole; instead, he grants it a functional status. Machiavelli, while emphasizing the functional role of religion in politics, sharply criticized the pacifying effect of Christianity in his time; instead, he preferred the constitutive role of pagan religion in Rome in producing social unity and political discipline. For example, in his work *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli expresses how religion was used instrumentally in Rome, how it played a mediating role in establishing and maintaining social order, and how unsuccessful Christianity of his time was in fulfilling this duty. According to Machiavelli, the greatness of Rome was based on Numa Pompilius's establishment of religious institutions, thereby instilling the fear of God and social obedience in the people. For him, religion is an indispensable tool that ensures social order and reinforces the legitimacy of political power. Therefore, the permanence and stability of a state are possible not so much through the virtue of individuals but through institutionalized religious and moral structures (Machiavelli, 2025, pp. 67-71).

Machiavelli argues that the institutional and social function of religion is vital for the continuity of a strong state. According to him, the success of pagan religion in keeping the people in harmony is possible through the influence of prophecies and rituals on the populace. When this religious foundation deteriorates, social order also collapses. The deviation of Christianity from its original principles and especially the corruption of the Roman Church led to the weakening of religious belief in Italy, the corruption of the people, and the hindrance of political unity. Therefore, he sees the papacy as the primary culprit for the fragmentation of Italy (Machiavelli, 2025, p. 74). Thus, he advocated for the re-functionalization of religion as a tool to strengthen political order (Barbier, 2000, p. 110). In this context, Machiavelli completely subordinates religion to politics: the ruler should appear pious, use religion, and even distort it if necessary; however, all this must be done faithfully in the public eye (Barbier, 2000). The state, which is autonomous and not bound by religion, will not accept any authority other than itself, and it has the power to use other authorities, such as religion, instrumentally within its own authority to establish the order of the state (Beriş, 2019, p. 15). From this perspective, the functional status Machiavelli accords to religion

makes him one of the first thinkers to implicitly accept the fundamental thesis of functional sociology, where religion finds its place in establishing and maintaining social order and exists insofar as it can fulfill a function. Indeed, the primary role given to religion by the structural-functionalist school, long considered the sole and fundamental theory in social theory (Ritzer, 2011, p. 94), manifests itself in terms of the function it fulfills in the social system.

The functionalist approach, developed under the leadership of Talcott Parsons, revolves around the question of how order can be established in a balanced way. In this respect, it follows the trajectory of Thomas Hobbes, who centered the same problem in political philosophy, demonstrating that structural-functionalist sociology inherits Hobbes's legacy in the theoretical continuity it establishes with the tradition of political thought. For both Hobbes's theory of the state of nature and Parsons's system theory explain the establishment of social order, the limitation of individual tendencies, and the legitimization of authority on common grounds. In this context, structural functionalism seeks answers to the questions of how society as a whole achieves and maintains stability, just as in Hobbes's political theory, through normative and regulative structures. Therefore, the analysis of Hobbes's theory of religion and politics is important in this regard.

It can be stated that Thomas Hobbes's positioning in the relationship between religion and politics, which can be described as one of the cornerstones of political philosophy, is shaped around by his understanding of the natural state of humanity and the resulting concept of the state. Hobbes's political philosophy, by basing its description of the state of nature on human nature, derives the source of political being not from traditional virtue ethics but from individual fear, desires, and impulses. According to him, humans are not by nature political or social; on the contrary, they are equally dangerous and mutually distrustful (Berns, 2022, pp. 420-422). This situation gives rise to the state of nature, which he defines as a war of all against all. The way out of this dangerous environment is for people to mutually renounce their natural rights and unite in a common will, thereby entrusting authority to a sovereign through a contract (Hobbes, 2023, pp. 128-130). Hobbes states the necessity of a state authority as follows: "The purpose of the State is the security of individuals. Humans naturally desire freedom and domination over others; but when they agree to live in a state, they also undertake to limit these desires. The ultimate reason for this restriction is to live a safer and more peaceful life. For humans can only escape destructive conflicts and a state of constant danger in an order where a common authority compels them to keep their promises and obey natural laws through the threat of punishment" (Hobbes, 2023, p. 127). The will of the sovereign, to whom

authority is entrusted, becomes the autonomous will of each individual, and the law he establishes transforms into the self-law of the subjects. In this respect, Hobbes conceives of the state as a juridical person: the authority of the sovereign represents the united will of all individuals, and the state is the sole guarantor of peace, order, and security. This construct prioritizes the state as the strongest structure to protect individual rights; but this prioritization is fueled by the individual's consent, directly from their own instinct for self-preservation and fear of death (Berns, 2022).

Hobbes's central trajectory in this regard is the necessity of establishing order and the existence of authority for its continuity. Religion also finds its place in the axis of the benefit it provides for establishing order. Indeed, his approach to religion and politics can be characterized as a product of the religious conflicts prevalent in 17th-century England. Religious conflicts, which had the potential to disrupt the contractual state that guaranteed peace, prosperity, and security, according to Hobbes, should be curbed by the state. This curbing can be achieved not through conflict with religion, but rather by not leaving religion to itself, and by subordinating religion to the state with the aim of preventing conflict and preserving peace (Barbier, 2000, p. 128). Hobbes attributes a functional status to religion for both the individual and society. The essence of religion holds no meaning for Hobbes; its position in his interest lies in fulfilling individual and social needs (Hobbes, 2023, p. 89). In Hobbes's design of *Leviathan*, the state and the church are identified; their members are the same, and there are no distinctions. Thus, the civil sovereign is not only the possessor of political power but also of spiritual authority. The religion determined by the civil sovereign becomes the official and sole religion of the state; other religions are not tolerated because religious unity is a prerequisite for political unity. The state also has the authority to interpret sacred texts and to decide which texts are authentic. In this context, only the civil sovereign, not individuals, can determine the binding meaning of sacred texts (Barbier, 2000, p. 132). From this perspective, Hobbes, who places spiritual authority within the scope of civil authority, considers spiritual authority in the context of its function as a social cement for the continuation of order. In this respect, in Hobbes's system, religion is an extension of political authority and a tool for establishing order. This thought pushes the truth claims of religion to the background, positioning religion as a kind of political instrument. Thus, Hobbes presents a model that dissolves religion within politics, removing it from the sphere of individual conscience and transforming it into a regulatory institution of the state. In this model, religion is a power that reinforces the state, not threatens it.

The instrumental status Hobbes accords to religion reaches its zenith in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory of civil religion. Rousseau's theory of civil religion found its place in sociological theory through Robert Bellah's use of civil religion, inspired by Rousseau. Civil religion, originating in Rousseau and fully developed by Bellah, serves the function of integrating atomized individuals into a whole, primarily in the context of establishing and stabilizing social order, rather than focusing on the essence of religion itself. Rousseau, as in the approaches that subordinate religion to politics, placed the social function of religion, not its essence and nature, at the center of his interest (Akdemir, 2020, p. 286). In Rousseau, one of the main implications of the social contract idea, which originates from the collective will above the individual will, is the idea of religion that will keep the said collective will intact. However, he classifies religions to examine which form of religion can exist in a society governed by the collective will and which can benefit society, ultimately arriving at the conceptualization of civil religion (Rousseau, 2019, pp. 124-130). Rousseau seeks to establish a constitutive and complementary relationship between religion and the state, without reducing one to the other. According to him, religion serves to foster civic virtue by guaranteeing individual morality and social order; without religion, neither true morality nor sustainable political order can be established in a society. In this context, the function of religion is not to represent metaphysical truth but to sacralize the social contract, to ground the binding nature of laws, and to give a sacred foundation to state authority. The concept of civil religion comes into play precisely at this point: it is defined as a belief system where individuals believe not in God but in the social contract; however, this belief is internalized with a kind of transcendental feeling. Rousseau's aim is to utilize religion as a moral foundation that will legitimize the political (Akdemir, 2020, p. 289).

Rousseau's vision of political unity rests on the inseparability principle the establishes between religion and the state. While sharing the generally distant stance towards religion prevalent in Enlightenment thought, Rousseau, unlike this line of thought, argues that religion holds an indispensable place in establishing social order and moral integrity. According to him, existing religions may have been inadequate in shaping the political sphere; however, religion itself is still can still play a constitutive role in building a common will and harmony in society (Ataman, 2014, pp. 24-25).

In a general assessment, the social function of religion comes to the forefront in this aspect of the religion and politics relationship. The tension between the presupposition that religion is indispensable for social order and the limitation of religion's autonomous intervention in politics has resulted

in the subordination of religion to politics and its reduction to a functional tool.

2.3. Separation of Religion and Politics Approach

The liberal approach, which aims to limit the influence of religion on politics and advocates the independence of both spheres, was systematically grounded, especially by Locke in modern intellectual history and achieved its main development with the rise of political liberalism after the French Revolution. From Locke onwards, this approach, emphasizing the intrinsic value of religion for the individual, aimed to liberate religion from state tutelage and defend its autonomy within the sphere of freedom. This line developed in different forms in the first half of the 19th century with thinkers such as Constant, Lamennais, and Tocqueville: Constant expressed the absolute separation of religion from political power most consistently; Lamennais, although initially leaning on Catholicism, gradually evolved into a libertarian position advocating for the separation of church and state. Tocqueville, synthesizing this intellectual heritage, integrated the religion-politics separation, supported by his analyses of American society, with an effort to reconcile Christianity and democracy. Thus, the liberal approach constructed an original line that simultaneously grounded both the autonomy of religion based on freedom and the moral/social role it assumes in democratic societies (Barbier, 2000, pp. 183-184).

John Locke's approach, based on the absolute separation of religion and politics, which took shape in his political philosophy, emphasizes the implementation of the distinction between material and spiritual realms at the administrative level, in contrast to approaches that advocate the supremacy of religion over politics or the instrumentalization of religion by politics ; accordingly, it advocates for the existence of the state and religion as two independent autonomous institutions on the social plane. The impact of the religious and state conflicts that England was experiencing had a significant influence on Locke's theory regarding the definite separation of religion and politics (Guétin, 2009). Indeed, since the religion and politics relationship is primarily a practical theo-political matter, the time period in which political philosophers find themselves influences their reflections. Locke argues that politics and religion are independent, autonomous institutions with different functions. According to him, the separation of religion and politics, which are inherently different in nature and function, is necessary (Barbier, 2000). He believes that political governance and religious affairs must be strictly separated, and clear boundaries set between them; otherwise, constant conflicts will inevitably arise between these two spheres, one claiming to

be concerned with the salvation of the human soul and the other with the security of society, and these conflicts will threaten social order (Locke, 2023, p. 25).

Locke's understanding of the state assumes a form of governance that completely excludes religion and is limited solely to the protection of worldly beings. According to him, the state is obligated to protect worldly values such as life, property, bodily integrity, and freedom. In contrast spiritual matters such as the salvation of souls fall outside its jurisdiction. In this context, the ruler has no right to force individuals into a specific belief or to shape internal belief because true religion is possible not through coercion but through the individual's inner conviction and will (Locke, 2023, pp. 26-28). According to Locke, the state and religion must be absolutely separated, and it should be emphasized that the state should not interfere in religious affairs, especially in the context of Christianity. This approach is a radical objection to Hobbes's theory of the Christian state (Barbier, 2000, p. 190). Locke's approach to the religion-state relationship essentially involves not only the absolute separation of church and state but also the mutual independence of these two institutions. According to him, the real threat is not the interference of religion in politics, but rather the state's domination over religion (Locke, 2023, pp. 55-60). The state should only concern itself with the order of worldly affairs and should not interfere in religious domains. In this framework, the state can neither regulate forms of worship nor interfere with the belief system of any denomination (Barbier, 2000). Locke, who believes that the separation of religion and state will create an environment of tolerance on the social plane, is considered one of the pioneers of liberal-secular political thought. According to him, the state's maintaining the same distance towards all religions is the fundamental condition for guaranteeing individuals' freedom of conscience and establishing social peace.

2.4. Critical Approach to Religion and Politics Relations

As discussed, thinkers before the 19th century, approached religion critically, yet believed it was necessary for society and conceived the relationship religion and politics either through superiority, instrumentality, or separation. In the 19th century, however, religion was either sought to be renewed in a secular form (Comte, Saint-Simon) or radically rejected (Marx, Engels), on the grounds that it could no longer respond to new social needs. During this process, religion began to be considered not alongside politics, but as an alternative to it or on an independent plane (Barbier, 2000, pp. 287-288).

One of the central figures in this thought is Auguste Comte. As the founder of positivism, Comte, who classified social development into theological, metaphysical, and positive stages, argued that traditional religions had lost their function in the positive stage. According to him, this new era, progressing based on science and social order, could only gain meaning and stability through a secular religion based on reason and humanity. Therefore, Comte proposed a new understanding of religion, which he called the religion of humanity (Comte, 2015, p. 175). Essentially, in pursuit of controlling the disorders caused by social change, Auguste Comte sought to construct a new understanding of religion. Inspired by the historical experience of Catholic Christianity, Comte proposed an order based on the principle of separation of spiritual and temporal authorities. Through this new secular religion, which he called the religion of humanity, the boundless interests of the capitalist class would be curbed, and a sense of duty ethics and social solidarity towards the structure they belonged to would be instilled in the working class. The positive order envisioned by Comte would gain continuity through moral and social unity, and a new social contract would be shaped through the functionality of religion (Akpolat, 2007). Comte's concept of the religion of humanity shifted the traditional religion-politics relationship to a different plane. This plane implicitly accepts the function that religion, albeit not in its classical form, assumes in establishing and maintaining social order. In a sense, Comte heralded a break from traditional forms of religious belief, while at the same time emphasizing the political necessity of religion.

The initial seeds of Karl Marx's views on religion blossomed in his critique of Feuerbach's and Hegel's critiques of religion. Marx critiques Hegel's idealism and understanding of religion by centering Feuerbach's views (Özyurt, 2014). For the definition of religion as a topsy-turvy world consciousness is not a thought unique to Marx, but a concept expressed historically earlier. Marx took this understanding from Ludwig Feuerbach's concept of projection. According to Feuerbach, finite individuals externalize and project the potentially infinite essence of the human species in the form of God's omnipotence, boundless grace, and love. Marx's statements regarding religion were shaped in this vein; however, the important difference Marx introduced here is that he addressed the alienation contained in religion not from a general philosophical humanism perspective but within the framework of a topsy-turvy world, that is, within the structures of domination of class societies (Rehmann, 2020, pp. 38-39). Marx explained the function of religion through social structures and class relations, emphasizing that religion is an ideological tool that legitimizes social inequality. From this perspective, Marx is of the opinion that a praxis-centered critique of religion

should replace an idealism-laden critique of religion. According to Marx, it is not consciousness that determines life, but rather life that determines consciousness. The first approach relies on the individual's intellectual inner world, while in the second approach, the material and social conditions experienced by real individuals play a determining role. In this approach, consciousness is accepted as merely a reflection of the social existence of living individuals (Marx & Engels, 2013, p. 35). Religion, in this context, is a sphere in which humans externalize and alienate themselves because religion is a search for an afterlife separated from human social and material relations. Marx's praxis-centered approach explains the origin and function of religion by relying on a critique of material living conditions rather than an idealist critique of religion. Religion, according to him, functions as an ideological reflection of class relations determined by the mode of production. The structures of domination in class societies shape the function of religion; because the dominant class uses religion as a tool to make social inequalities and class relations appear natural and given. In this way, religion creates an illusion that covers up the material contradictions in society. Indeed, according to him, the criticism of religion in Germany has essentially ended, and the criticism of religion constitutes the preparatory condition for all criticism (Marx, 1997, p. 181). Marx accepts the fundamental assumptions of religious critiques. As stated, Marx incorporates the basic notions and presuppositions of this critique of religion into his theoretical framework and states that it is necessary to focus on the practical reflections of these critiques in real life. From this perspective, Marx views religion as an ideology that conceals social inequalities, and he evaluates the relationship religion and politics as a tool that legitimizes the domination of the ruling class in terms of this ideological function.

The theoretical frameworks put forth regarding the relationship between religion and politics have been shaped as products of specific historical conditions and intellectual paradigms. However, these frameworks themselves are not historically fixed; rather, their underlying assumptions have undergone transformation, especially with modernization and secularization processes. This transformation has not only reshaped the position of religion in social and political life but has also reconstructed the meaning politics attributes to itself and its basis of legitimacy. Therefore, to understand the trajectory of theoretical approaches, it is necessary to examine the constitutive role played by the dynamics of modernization and secularization in this change.

3. Modernization-Secularization-The Transforming Sacredness of Politics

Suppose we are to begin with the concept that is the most encompassing expression of change, namely modernity. In that case, there are fundamentally two different perspectives regarding the positioning of this concept/period relative to its predecessors. The first of these explains modernity as a continuous struggle from the Renaissance or the 17th century onwards, and the overcoming or suppression of religious thought/superstition/bigotry as a result of this struggle (in Voltaire's words, "écrasez l'infame"). Here, reason and free will are positioned as the main battlegrounds. According to this view, modernity is "a historically specific socioeconomic and cultural formation" (Giddens, 2008, p. 20) and marks a fundamentally different stage in the developmental trajectory of human societies. Modernity is a period where tradition is challenged, change is felt at every level and becomes universal, and it is radically different from what came before. From this perspective, modernity represents a sharp break with tradition (Goody, 2008, pp. 6-20). Secularization, highlighted as the symbolic representative of this break, means the decrease in the prestige of the supernatural realm, i.e., religion, quasi-religious structures, folk beliefs, and all other supernatural doctrines, at the individual and societal levels, and their power to shape daily life, within a certain society and time period (Ertit, 2019, p. 47). Secularization is the name given to the transformation in Europe, where Christianity dominated all areas of life, that began with the Renaissance and Reformation, marking the end of the golden age of Christianity, society moving away from religion towards the worldly, and religion losing its authority in society.

The second view claims that modernity is no more than the secularization of concepts belonging to Christianity. According to this thesis, whose most important proponent is Karl Löwith, "the world is as it was before," or rather, the world has certainly changed, but human nature has not (Löwith, 1957, p. 200). From this perspective, for instance, the idea of progress, no matter how secularly expressed, is still theological. Modern politics is, in fact, a chapter of religious history (Gray, 2007, p. 13), and "among all modern delusions, the claim that we live in a secular age is the furthest from reality" (Gray, 2006, p. 45). Ultimately, fundamentally, "however different we may see ourselves; we are still Jews and Christians". According to this understanding, modernity is a continuity, not a break.

As Alain Touraine also pointed out, one of the most powerful approaches to modernity in the West has attached decisive importance to the process of rationalization; it has argued that reason should erode or destroy traditional

social ties, emotions, and beliefs (2002, p. 25). Consistent with this perspective, a significant portion of phenomena related to modernization are closely linked to the transformation Ferdinand Tönnies (2002) defined as the transition " from gemeinschaft to gesellschaft," meaning from community to society. This transition signifies the dissolution of the agricultural-based traditional structure and its replacement by urban-centered modern life. This structural transformation has led to deep ruptures not only in economic and spatial changes but also in many areas, from individual-state relations to political participation, from religious affiliation to the perception of authority. It is in this context that the question of how authority is established in modern society and how individuals are integrated with political values gains importance. This leads us to the concept of authority and processes of political socialization.

4. Authority and Political Socialization

One of the most important characteristics that distinguishes humans from other beings, making them a product of the society they live in rather than merely a biological organism, is their participation in social life. Social life, a product of the human capacity for reason and thought—a capacity absent at birth—is in a constant state of flux. This process of change, termed socialization, facilitates the formation of human personality. Thus, a person who is initially only a biological being gradually becomes a social being (Yılmaz, 2013, p. 320). In this context, the process of political socialization, which means the individual's interaction with not only social but also political structures and the internalization of political values, attitudes, and roles, is at the center of individual-politics interaction in relation to authority. The American political scientist Herbert Hyman (1959) first used the concept of political socialization systematically in his work *Political Socialization*. Hyman defines political socialization as the social values taught in the group and family from childhood onwards, which underlie the political behaviors of adults. In another definition, Dawson and Prewitt state that political socialization is a process of "cultural transmission" that begins at birth and continues throughout life. According to Easton and Dennis, political socialization is the process by which an individual adapts to the political system (Yılmaz, 2013, p. 321).

Politicality has been accepted as a condition peculiar to humans among all beings. Among all living creatures, only humans can be social as well as political beings. The existence of ruler-ruled relationships among some non-human animals, or the presence of group leaders in some herd animals, does

not make these relationships political. This is because these relationships are not the result of conscious mutual communication, but of instinctual movements. Politics and politicality are produced as a result of communication and interactions established by humans. The culture in which an individual is born and raised is in relation to the institution of politics and determines the individual's politicality. Not only politicians on the everyday political scene but every member of society is influenced by politics in different ways and constantly influences the general political structure through the relationships they establish together. For example, someone who does not engage in everyday politics or even keeps themselves away from everyday political issues becomes a party to political and is influenced by politics when the government enacts a law related to them. Aristotle, who defined humans as *zoon politikon* (political animal), pointed out that humans are distinguished from other living creatures by their politicality (Akın, 2013, pp. 44-45). In other words, according to Aristotle, politics is inherent in human nature (Roshanai, 2013, p. 1).

What is important regarding the issue of authority is how the individual socializes. According to structural-functionalist theories, individual socialization is an input-output relationship. According to this theory, to ensure the continuity and order of the system, the system seeks to instill knowledge, ideas, rules, beliefs, and values in its members to make them compatible with its own values and principles. The emphasis on order by those explaining political socialization on the basis of structural-functionalist theory has been criticized for being insufficient to explain political views that are anti-order and outside the ideology of power. Conflict theories, on the other hand, consider socio-economic, class, and religious factors, among others, that give rise to social stratification in the social structure. Those adhering to conflict theory argue that the political socialization process, as a product of both social differences and political demand differentiation, will lead to conflict among these differences (Akın, 2013, pp. 73-75).

4.1. Religious Authority

Political authority utilizes religious thought to ensure stability. The reason for this is that those in social power know that social control over the governed will be facilitated with the help of religious approval. Since the institution of the state cannot maintain its existence solely by force, social consent must be produced. Thus, the production of consent is achieved through ideological tools coming from the heavens. The most important feature of religious authority is that it derives its legitimacy from supernatural powers (Chaves, 1994: 756). The belief that power is divinely sourced is as old as human

history. In periods when there was no distinction between religious, social, and political life, coming to power was possible by possessing a divine quality. The God-king is the most powerful legitimate power formation with divine origins. God-kings (pharaohs), especially associated with Ancient Egypt, claimed to be endowed with divine attributes themselves. What should be understood from this thought is that the power of kings was a right granted to them by God and an authority given by a sacred will. That is, power is sourced from God. It should be noted that rather than discourses about kings having divine qualities in pre-medieval periods, there was a belief that the source of power belonging to kings was God. Since God's will is above all human will, political will now has an absolute, spiritualized character. Therefore, such authority requires unquestioning obedience. Every power relationship can gain religious legitimacy by being tied to God. It is also true that power was established in this way during certain periods. Moreover, it is a fact that even though the means of legitimizing political power have diversified, the situation where religion is instrumentalized for the easy governance of the masses still has living extensions in today's political systems. However, the use of religion as a tool of governance is not a function that can be included in the definition of religion, but rather something done by humans in the name of religion (Macit, 2009, p. 351).

Religion, by its very nature, is a phenomenon that makes itself felt in all layers of society and in all institutional structures formed by society. Therefore, it is hardly possible to view and evaluate the fields of politics and administration, and the activities and relationships that take place in these fields, as phenomena independent of religion (Okumuş, 2003, p. 130). Religion contributes to the individual's development of unique abilities and to becoming a good person using rational filters and free will. The fact that politics is a structure that regulates, sets rules, and supervises people's lives has made the mention of religion and politics together inevitable. The guidance and restrictions that both structures impose on people constantly push them into an obligatory cooperation. It is widely known that religion has been influential in the political approaches of states, such as the Crusades in Christianity, conflicts for the holy land in Judaism, and the concept of jihad in Islam. The political impact of religion can vary regionally. This relationship can manifest itself in a religious sense as well as in a sectarian sense. This occurs in Europe, specifically with the Vatican, while in Russia, it is experienced in the context of the Kremlin. Judaism in Israel, the Shiite sect in Iran, and Wahhabi movements in Saudi Arabia and some African countries are used by political parties. Furthermore, in these countries, religion is an important source of reference for providing solutions to

international politics, regional problems, and domestic issues (Moyser, 1991, p. 2). Among religions, sects also hold an important place in national politics. Examples of sectarian superiority efforts include the Iran-Iraq-Syria, Shiite and Sunni wars (Bulut, 2015, p. 286) and the Catholic-Orthodox conflicts during the Conquest of Istanbul (Öztürk, 2003, p. 137). Thus, religion is not limited to the identity of political parties but also plays an active role in solving existing national problems or determining interstate policies.

Indeed, this close relationship between religion and politics becomes even more pronounced in the context of legitimacy quests. When it comes to the state, power, sovereignty, and the politics to be carried out in their execution, the factor of religion frequently comes to the fore as an intermediary in ensuring their legitimacy. The prominence of religion stems from its relationship with the political system and its place in the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the human actor of politics (Köktaş, 1997, p. 7). In this regard, religion can be used as a unifying instrument for society and politicians. Religion is an important factor that strengthens the economic and social order deemed appropriate by powers, and it is a means of legitimacy that commands absolute obedience to political power (Weber, 1997, p. 29). While powers sometimes instrumentalize religion instrumentalized by powers in the context of legitimacy and hegemony production, this instrumentalization can sometimes put religious people in a difficult position regarding decisions taken by powers to shape society (Polat, 2002, p. 126). Religion, being one of the biggest supporters of powers, politicians, and states, can also take on the role of the biggest opponent when necessary. Conflicts between the political principles of powers and religious principles, and the failure of political power and voters to offer each other a future, can be among the reasons for opposition. Throughout history, many rulers who claimed to rule in the name of religion have been witnessed to be overthrown by their opponents using the same reference (Fığlalı, 1997, pp. 23-26).

5. Secularization Theories as a Natural Extension of Modernization and the relationship religion and politics

The four basic patterns we mentioned above both prepare and clearly accelerate modernization. As a result of modernization, while Catholic Christianity developed anti-modern reactions, it is also believed to have continuously receded in the face of the destructive power of modernization, and this is theorized through secularization and defended as a teleological necessity. However, the schematic teleological character of secularization

theories struggles to explain many asymmetrical societies from both the temporal perspective of modernization theories and the spatial perspective of world-systems theories and defines them with exceptionalism. Thomas Luckmann (1977, pp. 1-28), who objects to this process defined as the empirical starting point of secularization theories, argues that these patterns are a myth that helps to understand the modern world. Thomas Luckmann's thought reveals that the empirical starting point of secularization theories is highly problematic. This problematic character of secularization theories, unfortunately, remains unquestioned under the shadow of the dominant view in sociology. The process of construction that modernism tried to achieve in human societies has been a universal civilization project valid not only for Western societies but for all human societies.

According to Mehmet Aydın, secularization is seen as something that *should* happen rather than something that *is* happening, and as a result, secularization has been transformed into a political program imposed by force. According to some administrators who are in a hurry regarding modernization, religion should remain in the individual's private life and completely withdraw from the public sphere. According to the secularization thesis expressed in moderate circles, religion should withdraw into its own sphere (Aydın, 2001, p. 14). Based on the fact that the phenomenon of religion, by its nature, cannot be removed from human conscience and human history, efforts to secularize religion have turned religion from a rival of the political sphere into a supportive element that can be used when needed, by reducing it from the "divine" realm to the secular realm to be controlled by politics. George Weigel states the world's moving away from secularization towards the end of the 20th century as one of the social realities, while Gilles Kepel defines the resurgence of religion as "The Revenge of God" that unites civilizations (Huntington, 2006, p. 27). Therefore, religion, as a social marker, is still a valid element that continues to shape identities by drawing dark lines between "us" and "them," even if its connection with organized (institutionalized) belief is very little (Nelsen and Guth, 2015, p. 203).

In the relationship between the Church and the Russian state, which varies according to political and temporal conditions, the Church has been the most important partner supporting the traditional values of the state. Loyalty and trust in the Church have made the Church a key social institution with a certain influence in the public sphere (Curanović, 2015, p. 192). For obvious reasons (number of adherents, size of infrastructure, historical role, etc.), the Russian Orthodox Church holds a central place in Kremlin policy. The Greek Orthodox Church and the state cooperate in selected areas of the public sphere, and this cooperation is called "social partnership". The

close cooperation developed by the state and religious institutions outside the state borders constitutes "religious diplomacy". The expectation that "traditional" religions will support state policies and strengthen the duties of ruling elites (Curanović, 2015, p. 194) brings religion and the state closer together and makes religion an important element in policymaking. With the declaration of the kings of England as the head of the Anglican Church, which separated from the Roman Catholic Church (Nieuwenhuis, 2012), the Anglican Church established its presence not only in the religious sphere but also in the political sphere. This organic link between the state and the Church in the political and religious spheres enabled the Church to obtain an official status. In England, the Anglican Church has been accepted as the Established Church. "Not every democracy is legally secular. In England, where representative parliamentary democracy has its deepest roots, there is — albeit only formally — an established church" (Lewis, 2017, p. 124).

In France, which has been a cradle of secularism discussions, the situation has similarly undergone transformation. While secularism expresses the official separation of the church from the state and the exclusion of religion from the public sphere by the state, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy presented a new vision on the relationship between religion and the political regime in France. In his speech at Saint John Lateran Cathedral in Rome in 2007, he proposed a new understanding for the religion-political regime relationship around the concept of "positive secularism" [laïcité positive]. The statement that political regimes should not be anti-religious, and religions should not be anti-political regimes but rather can enrich each other through dialogue, understanding, and respect (Manuel, 2019) can be defined as a sign of the competition-consensus shift between the two concepts.

Conclusion

Although humanity's conception of the universe has fundamentally transformed at least twice in the last 700 years, some things resist transformation. Humankind, which Voltaire heralded with the triumph of reason, or Nietzsche announced the death of God, has refused to distance itself from the sacred in a way that would mislead them, but has also refrained from accepting the sacred in its traditional forms. In other words, what has happened is "the displacement of the institutional position of religion" or, to put it differently, the world is not disenchanted (contrary to Weber's assertion) but is re-enchanted. In short, the "sacred" has not disappeared, but has gained a different dimension.

Regarding the relationship between religion and politics, various interpretations are made based on the definitions of religion and politics, and whether such a relationship exists is debated. The relationship between religion and politics is one of the most difficult and complex issues that has existed throughout human history, and it will continue to exist, changing over time. According to some researchers, religion and politics are intertwined and cannot be separated; while according to others, religion and politics are separate entities and should not be mixed. Religion is concerned with the regulation of all aspects of individual and social life, while politics is concerned with the regulation of social life. In this sense, religion has a broader dimension. Because religion, by its nature, is a phenomenon that makes itself felt in all layers of society and in all institutional structures formed by society. Considering the holistic place of religion in social life, it is also seen that religion inevitably affects and will affect politics. The existence of fundamentally two different views on the relationship between religion and politics stems from the fact that those who comment focus on different aspects of religion and politics.

The phenomenon of "sacralization of politics" which expresses a dimension of the relationship between religion and politics after the Enlightenment, has been a matter on which many social scientists have written since the French Revolution, and moreover, it has often been confused with the politicization of religion. However, the sacralization of politics is an entirely modern phenomenon. Attention should be paid to the emphasis on modernity in understanding what is meant by the concept. Looking at examples around the world and academic literature, it can be said that the theoretical framework within which sacralization can be examined fundamentally has a dual structure. Historically, from the end of the Middle Ages onwards, simultaneously with the opening of a secular sphere in society, the sacralization of secular concepts also manifested itself. During this process, which became increasingly noticeable after the Enlightenment, a mystical aura can be observed forming around many institutional structures, from science to reason, from nation to humanity, from nation to state. In addition to this conceptual analysis, on the political plane, the process by which the secular sphere, from which politics derives its legitimacy, creates its own sacred within itself to ensure loyalty and invites the public to respect this sacred, also allows sacralization to be used as a regime analysis. Analyses made through concepts such as civil religion, secular religion, political religion, and similar concepts come to the forefront at this point. As discussed in theories of religion and politics, concepts such as civil religion, secular religion, and political religion imply the sacralization of the secular,

and the viewing of social duties and obligations as divine commands. All of this, contrary to the classical secularization thesis, reveals that religion is effective in all layers of social life in various new forms and planes. The relationship between religion and politics constitutes one of the most concrete examples of this situation.

This study, conducted through the historical, theoretical, and social dimensions of the religion and politics relationship, reveals that this relationship is not merely a historical legacy or an ideological conflict zone, but a continuous and determining element in the political organization forms of modern societies and in the formation processes of individual political identity. Throughout history, religion has not only shaped the spiritual world of the individual; it has also gained continuity as a determining element in the construction of political authority, the preservation of social order, and the establishment of legitimacy. Modernization and secularization processes have transformed the form of this relationship, but the role of religion in social order and political legitimacy production has continued to exist in different forms. Therefore, the interaction between religion and politics maintains its importance as a dynamic relational area that has shaped both individual socialization processes and the formation of collective political structures from the past to the present.

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CHAPTER 7

AL-ANDALUS: HISTORIOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

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Abstract

This study examines how the history of al-Andalus has been constructed within both Islamic and modern Western historiographical traditions. By analysing medieval Arabic chronicles alongside 19th – 21st century European scholarship, the chapter investigates the epistemological tensions and ideological frameworks that have shaped competing narratives of identity, civilisation, and memory. The research adopts a qualitative design grounded in comparative historiography and discourse analysis, treating historical narratives not as neutral representations but as products of knowledge making. The findings demonstrate that both Islamic and Western traditions place al Andalus at the centre of their respective civilisational claims, albeit through contrasting lenses. Islamic historiography frames al Andalus within paradigms of civilisational expansion and moral reflection, while modern Spanish nationalism constructs a teleological narrative through the ideological category of the "Reconquista." Orientalist and romantic scholarship further aestheticize al Andalus as a "lost paradise," whereas contemporary memory politics simultaneously idealise and marginalise this past. The study argues that the historiography of al-Andalus constitutes a site of epistemic contestation, revealing how modernity negotiates its identity

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through the inclusion, exclusion, or reconfiguration of Islam. Ultimately, the chapter raises the fundamental question: “Whose knowledge is history?”

Keywords: Islamic history, al-Andalus, historiography, identity construction, collective memory

1. Introduction

History is not merely a record of the past, but also a discourse concerning who represented the past, for what purpose, and with what linguistic and conceptual tools. Therefore, historiography can be read as a mirror reflecting the relationship between power, identity, and knowledge production in every period. The question ‘What is the temporal and spatial coordinates of al-Andalus in History?’ encompasses not only the memory of eight centuries of Islamic presence, but also an epistemological framework that questions how this past has been interpreted in the modern era, who has appropriated it, and who has been excluded from it. The history of al-Andalus is closely linked, on the one hand, to the internal dynamics of Islamic historiography and, on the other, to the process of constructing modern European identity.

In Islamic thought, history is seen as a field explained by the continuity of human actions rather than divine determinism. The stories in the Qur’an advise interpreting humanity’s historical experiences from the perspective of reason and reflection. This approach led to the synthesis of biographical, geographical, and political narratives in early Islamic historiography (Donner, 2010). Andalusian historiography emerged as a reflection of this tradition in the Western Mediterranean while recording developments in the fields of conquest, administration, culture, and science, it also interpreted Islam’s universal civilisational ideal through a local lens. Historians such as Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 955), Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977), and Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1075) were not merely chroniclers of events but actors who constructed the extensions of Islamic memory in the West (Adıgüzel, 2020, pp. 306–323).

With the modern era, the meaning of al-Andalus has changed radically. From the 19th century, Spanish national historiography, centred on the *Reconquista*, redefined Spain’s ‘Catholic essence’ and pushed its Islamic past outside the national identity (García Sanjuán, 2020, pp. 134–159). In this context, al-Andalus was coded as ‘Spain’s foreign past,’ and Muslim presence was interpreted as a historical aberration (Wolf, 2019, pp. 378–380). However, this same period saw the institutionalisation of a Eurocentric positivist understanding of history and the redefinition of history as a scientific discipline. Thus, every text written about al-Andalus became not only a historical narrative but also the product of an epistemological

positioning. Nowadays, historical writing produces alternative voices against these singular and nationalistic narratives. Multicultural readings shaped around the myth of *Convivencia* (coexistence) redefine al-Andalus as a place of mutual interaction between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. In contrast, critical approaches argue that this romantic view creates a new mythology, replacing historical reality with political correctness. Therefore, al-Andalus remains an ideological battleground for both Islamic and Western historiography (Christys, 2002, pp. 130–134).

This study aims to examine the points of intersection and divergence between Islamic and modern Western historiography through the example of al-Andalus. While seeking to answer the question, 'Whose history is it?', it aims to demonstrate that historiography is not only a practice of producing knowledge about the past, but also one that constructs forms of identity, power, and belonging. With this purpose, the chapter has been divided into 3 main parts. The general chronology of al-Andalus and the components of the social structure on the society of al-Andalus is given in the first part. The second part is devoted to selected medieval chronicles and historians of al-Andalus. In the final part, before conclusion, modern histography of al-Andalus and contemporary historians has been discussed. Also, the last part of the chapter is based on how modern histography is affected by the conceptualising the Reconquista.

2. The Classification history of al-Andalus

Andalusia's eight-century history has been shaped around dual themes such as conquest and defeat, rise and fall, synthesis and exclusion. This history is not only that of Muslim Spain but also a shared history of the Mediterranean world (Kennedy, 2014, pp. xiv–xvi). In al-Andalus, Islamic civilisation transported the accumulated knowledge from centres in the East (Baghdad, Cairo, Kairouan) to the West, merging with local cultures in Iberia, it produced a new synthesis (Fierro, 2020). This synthesis constitutes a paradigmatic field for both Muslim and Christian historiography while Muslim historians view Al-Andalus as a centre of conquest, civilisation, and learning, modern Western historiography has long evaluated it as a 'foreign' parenthesis (Wolf, 2019, pp. 7–22).

Andalusian history spans approximately eight centuries, from the Muslim conquests that began in 711 to the fall of Granada in 1492. This long period reflects not only a change in political power but also the cultural, scientific and intellectual transformation of the Mediterranean world. The history of Al-Andalus is one of the most enduring traces of Islam in the West, as well as

an area of contact and conflict where the Eastern Islamic world and European history intertwined (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 15–17). First, *the Conquest and the Period of the Governors* is recognised between 711 and 756. The crossing of the Islamic armies from Gibraltar to the Iberian Peninsula in 711, led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, was both a military operation and a process of civilisation transfer (Phillips & Phillips, 2013, p. 47). The weakening structure of the Visigoth Kingdom, internal conflicts among the local aristocracy, and socio-economic inequalities facilitated the rapid success of the Muslim conquests. The treaty policies implemented during this period determined the status of the local Christian and Jewish populations and broadened the social base of Islamic rule. This policy laid the foundations for the 'multicultural' structure that would become characteristic of Al-Andalus in later centuries (Barton, 2008, pp. 52–55). However, during this early period, Al-Andalus was a province directly subordinate to the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus. Governors changed frequently, internal strife, Arab-Berber rivalry and the lack of central authority led to instability. This situation deepened further with the Abbasids' overthrow of the Umayyads in 750. The arrival in Al-Andalus in 755 of the Umayyad prince Abdurrahman ibn Mu'awiya, fleeing Abbasid revenge, changed the region's destiny (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 17–20).

The second era is the Umayyad Emirate and Caliphate Period between 756 and 1031. Abd al-Rahman I established the independent Umayyad Emirate in Córdoba in 756, separating Al-Andalus from Abbasid authority (Collins, 1983, p. 170). This event signified not only political independence but also the birth of a distinct branch of Islamic civilisation in the West. The Umayyad administration sought to balance Arab and Berbers elements and establish an administrative structure compatible with the local population (W. M. Watt & Cachia, 1965). During this period, the policy of conquest was supported by administrative reforms, agricultural reforms and urbanisation activities, Cordoba quickly became a metropolis. During the reign of Abd al-Rahman II (822–852), the Umayyads gained stability, and economic prosperity and scientific activity increased. This period saw the strengthening of Andalusia's cultural ties with the Islamic world, but also its gradual independence from Eastern influence (Viguera-Molins, 2000, pp. 21–47). Abd al-Rahman III (912–961) proclaimed himself caliph in 929, defining al-Andalus as a caliphate on par with the Abbasids and Fatimids. This political move was not merely a show of force, but also a reinterpretation of Islamic legitimacy in the Western Mediterranean. Throughout the 10th century, the Caliphate of Córdoba became one of the most developed and cosmopolitan centres in the Mediterranean (Fierro, 2005, pp. 134–136).

The third age is the Taifa Kingdoms Period between 1031 and 1090. With the collapse of the Caliphate in 1031, al-Andalus fragmented politically into many small kingdoms, known as the Taifa states (Bruce, 2009, pp. 1–34). During this period, the central authority of Córdoba collapsed, but cultural and artistic production continued persistent. Diplomatic competition between palaces, literary councils and cities deepened the fragmentation on the one hand, but on the other hand sustained the intellectual vitality of al-Andalus. Centres such as Tuleytulah (Toledo), Ishbīliya (Seville), Balansiya (Valencia) and Garnāta (Granada) each formed their own cultural milieu. However, the growing strength of the Christian northern kingdoms (Castile, Leon, Aragon) weakened these independent territories, facilitating the advance of the *Reconquista* (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 130–149).

The fourth and fifth periods are Almoravid and Almohad Period between 1090 and 1269. From the late 11th century onwards, two major Berbers' dynasties based in North Africa became involved in al-Andalus, the Almoravids and, later, the Almohads. The Almoravids briefly secured control of al-Andalus after defeating King Alfonso VI of Castile at the Battle of Sagrajas (Zallaqah) in 1086 (Felipe, 2014, pp. 55–70). However, their strict application of Maliki law and political oppression expanded the gap between them and the people (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 140–145). Their successors, the Almohads, established a more centralised and intellectually vibrant order from 1147 onwards, initiating a new wave in philosophy, mathematics and architecture (Fierro, 2012, pp. 62–70). Thinkers such as Ibn Rushd and Ibn Tufail flourished in the intellectual atmosphere of this period. However, with the defeat at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, Almohad rule collapsed and the course of the Reconquista turned decisively against the Muslims (Fromherz, 2013).

The final period of Muslim authority in al-Andalus is Nasrid's Period and the Emirate of Granada between 1238 and 1492. From the 13th century, Granada, which continued to exist as a state subordinate to Castile, managed to prolong its political life through diplomacy, trade and tax agreements (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 273–280). While sustaining its economic prosperity through crafts, silk production and trade, the Emirate brought the elegance of Islamic art to its peak with monumental structures such as the Alhambra Palace. However, this magnificent architectural production was also a harbinger of decline. Granada's surrender to the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I in 1492 symbolised the end of Muslim political presence in Andalusia. The subsequent Morisco period (1500–1614) resulted in forced Christianisation, the banning of Arabic, and ultimately mass expulsions (M.

W. Watt & Cachia, 2017). This process signified not only a demographic transformation but also the erasure of Spain's Islamic memory.

Nowadays, academic interest in the history of Al-Andalus is concerned not only with understanding the past, but also with deciphering the ideological nature of historiography. Al-Andalus is like a mirror standing at the intersection of Islamic and European history. This mirror reflects both the universal claims of Islamic civilisation and the search for identity in European modernity. Therefore, the history of al-Andalus is not merely a narrative of a period, but also an intellectual problem area that questions what history means, who writes it, and in whose memory it lives.

3. The components of Andalusian Society

Throughout its eight centuries of history, al-Andalus society constituted one of the most complex yet dynamic examples of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the Islamic world. From the Muslim conquests onwards, the Iberian Peninsula had a multi-layered social structure where Arabs, Berbers, indigenous Hispano-Roman elements, Jews, Mozarabs, and later groups such as the Mudéjars and Moriscos coexisted (Barton, 2008, pp. 1–25). This diversity was not merely a demographic reality but also a form of cultural production that defined the nature of Andalusian civilisation (Coope, 2017, pp. 8–30). This multiplicity in al-Andalus became one of the historical foundations of the idea of the 'ummah' in Islamic historiography and the myth of 'Convivencia' in Western historiography.

The Arabs who settled in al-Andalus after 711 constituted most of the conquering armies and the first rulers. Although they were initially few, most of the political and administrative authority was in the hands of the Arabs. Competition between Syrian and Yemeni tribes was the source of early internal conflicts in the society. The Arab aristocracy settled in the most fertile regions of the conquered lands and established large estates (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 18–30). This led to economic superiority and political authority being concentrated in the hands of the Arab elites. In cities such as Córdoba, Toledo and Seville, Arabic language became not only the language of administration but also a symbol of high culture. This process also led to the language becoming an instrument of social differentiation, knowing Arabic was considered equivalent to being "civilised" (Coope, 2017).

The Berbers were the second largest Muslim group in Andalusian society. These communities, who came from North Africa, formed the core force of the conquests but were soon marginalised. Inequalities in land distribution, privileges granted to Arab tribes, and socio-economic inequalities led

to Berbers uprisings. Nevertheless, the Berbers played important roles, particularly in rural areas, mountainous regions, and border garrisons, and over time became permanently integrated into the demographic fabric of al-Andalus. From the 11th century, Berber dynasties such as the Almoravids and Almohads became actors that determined the fate of al-Andalus. Thus, the Berber identity, which historically began in a subordinate position, transformed into political supremacy in the later stages of the period (Rouighi, 2019, pp. 15–45).

Those who converted to Islam among the indigenous Christian population of Spain under Islamic rule were known as the *Muwalladun*. This group was ethnically of Hispano-Roman origin but had converted to Islam. In the early period, the Muwalladun formed an intermediate level, caught between both Arab and Berber elements in terms of identity (Smith et al., 1993, pp. 14–30). The narratives in favour of this group in the works of Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (a historian of Gothic origin) ensured that they were seen as a unique component of Andalusian identity. From the mid-9th century, Muwalladun occasionally rebelled against Arab rule, but over time they integrated into Islamic culture and formed the basis of the urban middle class (Kennedy, 2014, p. ibid). This integration has been interpreted in Islamic historiography as 'the local fruit of the conquest,' while modern Spanish historiography has assessed it more negatively as 'the Arabisation of Spanish identity.'

Christians who remained under Muslim rule were called 'Mozarabs' (Arabised). The Mozarabs lived while preserving their religious autonomy, they had their own churches, legal systems and religious leaders (Hitchcock, 2008, pp. 25–45). However, they experienced a profound Arabisation process at the cultural level. They spoke Arabic language, adopted Arabic clothing and architectural styles, and even imitated Arabic poetic forms. This situation led to the Mozarab culture acquiring a unique hybrid character. Modern research shows that Mozarabic culture is one of the most concrete examples of cultural exchange in al-Andalus. The Jewish community in al-Andalus enjoyed a relatively secure existence under Islamic rule for a long period (Baer, 1966). This situation contrasts sharply with the persecution and exclusion faced by Jews in medieval Europe. Jews played important roles in trade, medicine, diplomacy and science. Jewish viziers such held positions in the state administration, particularly during the reign of Caliph Abd al-Rahman III. Jewish schools in Cordoba and Granada initiated the Golden Age of Hebrew thought (Fierro, 2005, p. 68).

In the period following the Reconquista, the Muslim population remaining under Christian rule was called 'Mudejars' (mudéjar). The

Mudejars were artisans and peasants who paid taxes to Christian authorities while maintaining their religious identity. Their architectural and artistic contributions, particularly the Mudéjar style (*Arte Mudéjar*), left a lasting mark on Spanish culture. In the 16th century, Muslims who were forcibly converted to Christianity were called 'Moriscos', this group lived among conflicts of identity and belief (Smith et al., 1993). The expulsion of the Moriscos between 1609 and 1614 symbolises the final dissolution of Andalusia's multicultural structure, which had been shaped over centuries.

However, Andalusian society was class-conscious not only according to religious and ethnic differences, but also according to economic and social status. At the top were the Arab aristocracy and the high-ranking civil servants, while Berber tribal chiefs and the Muwalladun elite occupied the second tier. Urban merchants, artisans, and scholars formed the middle class (Barton, 2004, pp. 154–189). Slaves, especially those of Slavic origin, held important positions in the palace or the army. This hierarchical order was based on a social balance that blended Islamic law and local traditions. The interaction between ethnic and religious groups in al-Andalus gave rise to a phenomenon that could be described as 'cultural hybridity'. While Arabic became a common superordinate language, Latin, Hebrew and Romance languages continued to exist in local usage. Cities functioned as 'civilisation laboratories' with their multilingual, multi-religious and multi-class structures. This hybrid culture in Al-Andalus has been evaluated in different ways in modern historiography, romantic historians glorify it as 'Convivencia,' or tolerant coexistence, while critical historians argue that this picture is an exaggerated idealisation (Lapidus, 1988, pp. 298–314).

4. The Islamic Historiography on in al-Andalus

This multi-layered structure of society is directly reflected in Andalusian historiography. Writers such as Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, Ibn Ḥayyān and Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) brought their own social positions and ideological tendencies into their works. Some emphasised Arab supremacy, while others highlighted local elements. This diversity turned historical writing itself into a 'social practice'. Andalusian historians not only recorded the past but also reproduced their own identities. Modern historiography similarly attempted to compress this multi-layered society into national or religious categories. Yet, the Andalusian experience offers the most concrete example of history's plural and permeable nature. Andalusian historiography was encouraged by the classical traditions of Islamic historiography on the one hand, while on the other hand it took on a unique form within the social, cultural and political

conditions specific to the western Mediterranean (Adıgüzel, 2020). These historical narratives were based not only on the recording of events, but also on the interpretation of the past and the effort to legitimise the existence of civilisation in the West. Therefore, Andalusian historiography should be read both as an identity construction and as an intellectual defence.

Early Islamic historiography is directly related to the Qur'an's understanding of history, the past is a field of experience from which lessons (*ʿibra)* are to be learned. Classical historians, for example al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), do not merely chronicle events, they also seek the divine wisdom behind them (Fayda, "TABERÎ, Muhammed b. Cerîr", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi). In this understanding, history is like a worldly repetition of a 'sacred time.' Andalusian historiography inherited this legacy but reinterpreted it within the different socio-political realities of the Western Islamic world. The earliest chronicles of al-Andalus, written in the 8th and 9th centuries, focused particularly on narratives of conquest (*fatḥ*) (Collins, 1995). In these texts, the conquest of Al-Andalus is presented not merely as a military achievement, but as part of Islam's geographical and spiritual expansion. Narratives of conquest form the basis of the legitimacy of Muslim identity. Therefore, for historians, the past serves as a 'founding narrative of power.' Conquest epics are also intertwined with Arab tribal identities, and the historical narrative has become the ground for ethnic rivalry.

Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 955), recognised as the founding figure of Andalusian historiography, established the fundamental framework of regional history with his work *Aḥbār Mulūk al-Andalus* (Reports on the Kings of al-Andalus) (Özdemir, "RÂZÎ, Ahmed b. Muhammed", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi). Al-Rāzī displays a synthesising approach, combining historical data with both the Arab tradition of conquest and local Latin and Visigoth sources (Lévi-Provençal, "ar-Rāzī, Abū Bakr", EI²). In his texts, history is presented as the evolution of an Islamic civilisation centred on Córdoba. Conquest signifies not merely a beginning, but the birth of civilisation. al-Rāzī's son, 'Isa al-Rāzī, continued this tradition, expanding the chronology and reinforcing the idea of 'state continuity' in Andalusian historiography. Their works show that in 10th century Andalusia, historical writing was no longer merely a record of events but had become a tool for constructing political memory. In this respect, the al-Rāzī family were among the earliest writers in the Islamic world to approach the idea of 'national history' (Kennedy, 2014).

Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977), a Muslim historian represents the pluralistic structure of Andalusian identity. His work Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus (*History of the Conquest of al-Andalus*) is one of the earliest and most original

sources on the conquest process. Ibn al-Qūṭiyya interprets the narratives of the conquest in the context of the participation of local Christian elements in Islam, thus adding a dimension of local belonging to Andalusian history (Lévi-Provençal, "ar-Rāzī, Abū Bakr", EI²). In his historical narrative, 'Islamisation' is conceived not merely as an external conquest but as an internal process of transformation. This approach reflects a socio-cultural perspective of internalisation rarely seen in Islamic historiography (J. Bosch-Vilá, "Ibn al-Ḳūṭiyya", *EI²*). Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's text can be considered an early expression of the idea of an 'Andalusian community' beyond Arab and Berber identities. Thus, the writing of history here becomes a narrative of coexistence rather than ethnic rivalry. In this respect, Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's narrative offers an alternative interpretation to the 'centralised' emphasis of the al-Rāzī tradition in terms of both history and identity construction.

Ibn Ḥayyān al-Qurṭubī (d. 1076), who lived in the 11th century, is the most comprehensive and methodologically advanced representative of Andalusian historiography (Özdemir, "İBN HAYYÂN", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi). His work, *al-Muqtabis fi Tarikh al-Andalus*, is unique in terms of both archival material and critical observation. While providing a chronology of events, Ibn Ḥayyān also draws moral lessons, linking historical collapses to the tyranny of rulers and moral decay in society (Huici Miranda, "Ibn Ḥayyān", *EI²*). This perspective is the Andalusian version of the 'parable paradigm' prevalent in Islamic historiography. In Ibn Ḥayyān's texts, history is interpreted as 'the earthly manifestation of divine justice.' According to him, the political instability of Andalusia is the result of violating God's Sunna. However, Ibn Ḥayyān also analyses historical events in a critical manner, thereby taking historical writing beyond moralism. Modern historians have found early examples of an empirical approach to history in the Islamic world in his works.

In al-Andalus, historical narrative was not limited to chronicles and official records. Literary texts, particularly "qasida", served as carriers of historical consciousness. Poems written about the fall of Andalusian cities reveal the emotional and social dimensions of historical writing. In these texts, history is no longer merely 'what has happened' but 'what has been lost'. The memory gives way to longing and mourning. These literary historical narratives combine with the rational tradition of Islamic historiography to form a layer of emotional history. Thus, Andalusian historiography records not only events but also the aesthetics of loss (Toprak, 1988, pp. 157–175). However, Andalusian historians saw themselves not only as mere 'transmitters' of information, but also as authorities on knowledge. The writing of history was closely intertwined with religious sciences, particularly hadith, fiqh, and

literature. For a historian, the social meaning of an event was as important as the chain of transmission. Therefore, in Andalusian historical narratives, both narration and observation, sacred time and everyday reality are intertwined. Most historians belonged to the ulema class, scholars and wrote their works as an intellectual responsibility rather than to present them to the ruling circles. This situation gave Andalusian historiography a relatively autonomous character (Fierro, 2020). However, it should not be forgotten that historical narratives also reproduced the 'language of legitimacy' of society.

Andalusian historiography has been rooted in a specific ideological context in every period. The chronicles of the Umayyad period emphasised legitimacy, the texts of the Taifa period nostalgia, and the texts of the Almoravid and Almohad periods moral reform. History thus became a mirror of the social concerns of each era. In this context, the historical narrative is not merely a record of the past but also serves as a 'warning for the future.' With this feature, Andalusian historiography contains the precursors of the historical theory that Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) would later systematise (Görgün, "İBN HALDÛN", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi). History is an attempt to understand the laws of the rise and fall of a civilisation. Al-Andalus historians intuitively identified these laws and conceptualised historical cyclicality (ʿibra and ʿādātullah).

5. How Was the History of Al-Andalus Written in the Modern Era?

In modern historiography, al-Andalus has become not only a medieval civilisation but also a mirror of modernity. Al-Andalus's place in the construction of cultural boundaries, identities, and ideological narratives between Europe and the Islamic world has been shaped more as a narrative strategy than as a historical event. For this reason, the history of al-Andalus has been at the centre of debates on nationalism, Orientalism, and modernity since the 19th century. When we speak of 'modern Andalusian historiography,' we are actually referring to two major discourses that often contradict each other but share the same past: Spanish national historiography and Islamic-Orientalist studies. Both have reimagined Al-Andalus in the mirror of their own identity-building processes (Manuela Marín, 2009, pp. 67–81).

From the mid-19th century, as the idea of a 'shared history' came to the fore as the ideological basis for nation-state building in Europe, Spain also found itself in a position where it had to redefine its own past. However, during this process, al-Andalus was positioned as a past that could not be included

in modern Spanish identity and even had to be excluded (McSweeney & Hopkins, 2017, pp. 2–6). This exclusion led to the production of a 'national myth' centred on the concept of the Reconquista. The term 'Reconquista' (reconquest) was used in a limited and technical manner in sources prior to the 19th century, but in the modern era it became the founding narrative of Spanish national identity (O'Callaghan, 2011, pp. 5–22). According to this narrative, the Iberian Peninsula, 'invaded' by Muslims in 711, was reclaimed by its 'rightful owners,' the Christians, after eight centuries of struggle. Thus, the Reconquista was glorified as the re-establishment of Spain's 'natural' Catholic identity. This reading of history turned Al-Andalus into a foreign body in the national memory.

Historians such as Menéndez Pelayo linked the 'soul' of Spain to Catholicism, characterising Islam as a temporary and external phenomenon (García Sanjuán, 2020). Nineteenth-century romantic historiography constructed Al-Andalus as a 'lost exoticism' and the Reconquista as a 'national liberation epic.' Despite the secularisation process in modern Spanish historiography, this narrative continued to carry a religious subtext, national identity = Catholic civilisation. As a result of this ideological construction, Andalusian Islam was presented as the '*foreign past*' of Spanish history. Islam was represented not as a factor in Spain's cultural advancement, but as a disruption to its 'natural course of development.' This discourse, combined with the clichés of 'Arab barbarism' in 19th century European Orientalism, constructed Islam as an irrational, despotic and aesthetically sterile culture. Thus, al-Andalus was stripped of its status as a historical subject and transformed into a mirror of the 'other' in which Western modernity defined itself (Ramón Solans, 2021, pp. 293–300).

Spain's modernisation process suppressed the legacy of al-Andalus through a deliberate 'policy of forgetting.' At the beginning of the 20th century, Franco-era historiography made this mythology the official ideology, the Reconquista was interpreted as 'the historical mission bestowed upon Spain by God (García Sanjuán, 2020, pp. 133–140).' This ideological framework excluded not only Islam but also Jews and 'Arabised' cultural elements from the national memory. In this sense, al-Andalus remained in modern Spanish historiography as both an erased and a symbolised past which is a negative founding element of national identity. Parallel to this exclusionary historiography in Spain, 19th century European Orientalism also imposed its own aesthetic and ideological projections onto ql-Andalus. As Edward Said pointed out, Orientalism is not merely a way of depicting the East, but also a way of constructing it (Said, 2014). In this construction process, al-Andalus was represented as a 'Westernised East', both exotic and accessible,

both Islamic and European. European travellers and historians described al-Andalus with romantic melancholy. Portrayed as history's lost paradise, al-Andalus was conceived as an 'intermediate civilisation' embodying both the elegance of the East and the rationality of the West. This romantic discourse maintained an aesthetic admiration while preserving a political distance (Pearce, pp. 29–36). Muslim Spain was glorified but positioned as a 'past pushed outside Europe.' In these Orientalist depictions, the Alhambra Palace became a symbol of exoticism. Andalusia became a fossilised aesthetic memory. However, this admiration was based on an approach that historicised Islam. Muslim Andalusia was admired, but at the same time removed from history.

In the second half of the 19th century, philological Orientalism began to examine al-Andalus in a 'scientific' manner through Arabic sources. However, these studies (e.g., Dozy, Lévi-Provençal, Simonet) were epistemologically grounded in a Eurocentric perspective. Islamic history was treated not as a precursor to European civilisation, but as a background element. The study of Arabic texts was conducted on the assumption that 'the East had no historical consciousness of its own.' In this understanding, Al-Andalus was regarded as an intermediate station in the maturation process of Western civilisation. Thus, Islam's contribution was limited to a 'carrier' or "transmitter" role. Particularly in the history of science studies (e.g., George Sarton, H. P. J. Renaud), Al-Andalus was depicted as a bridge transmitting the Greek heritage to Europe, however, this transmission was interpreted as a 'conduit' devoid of creativity (Şeyban, 2010).

From the mid-20th century onwards, the writing of Andalusian history underwent a significant paradigm shift. In the intellectual atmosphere following the Second World War, themes of cultural pluralism, coexistence and intercultural interaction began to come to the fore. In this context, Al-Andalus was rediscovered as a model and source of hope for Europe's multicultural past. American and Spanish researchers, particularly Américo Castro and María Rosa Menocal, interpreted al-Andalus as a 'laboratory of cultural coexistence(Menocal, 2003).' Castro's 1948 work, España en su historia, argued that Spanish identity was shaped by the interaction of Arab, Jewish and Christian elements (Castro, 1996, pp. 20–35). This thesis caused a major upheaval in Spanish historiography, as it reversed the myth of the Reconquista, presenting the Islamic past not as a 'foreign' element but as a 'founding' one. Menocal, in her 2002 work The Ornament of the World, depicted Al-Andalus as a '*pre-Enlightenment Renaissance*' where the intellectual roots of modern Europe originated. This discourse of 'Convivencia' transformed al-Andalus into a symbol of tolerance,

reconnecting it with modern liberal values. However, this approach has been criticised since the 1980s. Historians such as David Nirenberg, Brian Catlos and Richard Hitchcock argued that the concept of Convivencia idealised historical reality (Yildiz, 2023). According to them, coexistence in al-Andalus was not peaceful equality, but a complex process of negotiation, domination and compromise (Catlos, 2018, pp. 71–80). The concept of Convivencia was a way for modern Western society to rewrite history in order to glorify its own liberal identity.

This debate deepened the epistemological transformation of Andalusian historiography, the question was no longer 'was there tolerance?', but rather 'how is history represented?' At the beginning of the 21st century, postcolonial readings of Andalusian history began to question how historical writing was intertwined with postcolonial discourses. Figures such, for instance, Maribel Fierro and Jessica Coope, argued that Andalusian history represented an experience that transcended the epistemic boundaries of European modernity. This new historiography positions al-Andalus not merely within Islamic or European history, but as a Mediterranean intellectual circulation space (Coope, 2017, p. 35). History is now read not through national or religious categories, but through the concept of 'geographies of knowledge.' Thus, al-Andalus becomes both a pre-colonial contact zone for Europe and a historical image that provides a basis for the critique of modernity.

Over the past twenty years, Andalusia has been not only an academic but also a political arena for debate. The resurgence of the Morisco heritage in Spain, the UNESCO status of the Alhambra, and phenomena such as 'Islamic heritage tourism' have intertwined the writing of history with memory politics. These new memory policies often market the past as a 'showcase of tolerance,' yet they do not involve a profound reckoning. Al-Andalus remains a representation in modern Europe that hesitates between a 'lost paradise' and a 'threatening other.' Therefore, the historiography of al-Andalus is not only a mirror of the past but also of the present, Europe's way of defining itself in relation to Islam, either against it or alongside it, continues to unfold through this history. Therefore, modern Andalusian historiography is not merely the history of a historical event, but the history of the production of knowledge. This history, rewritten within the triangle of Orientalism, nationalism and modernity, still raises the fundamental question today: "Is the history of Andalusia being written, or is modernity constructing its own history through Andalusia?"

6. A Historical Reading Through the Concept of the "Reconquista"

The concept of the "Reconquista" (the reconquest) represents in contemporary historiography not only a military process but also the manner in which European identity and modern historical consciousness were constructed (Esteve-Del-Valle & Costa López, 2023, pp. 494–500). This concept reduces an eight-century historical process to a single teleological framework, framing the Islamic presence as a 'temporary occupation' and the return of Christianity as a 'natural restoration (Wolf, 2019, pp. 37–40).' Thus, the Reconquista is not a definition of a historical event but an ideological template for a historical narrative (García Sanjuán, 2020, pp. 146–150).

The process known today as the 'Reconquista' covers the period from the Muslim conquests that began in 711 to the fall of Granada in 1492. However, it is noteworthy that this term was not used systematically in medieval Christian sources. The verb 'reconquistare' rarely appears in chronicles written between the 8th and 13th centuries, and when it does, it is used in a technical sense to mean the recapture of a specific region. The fact that Christian kingdoms viewed their actions during their own era not as the 'reconquest of Spain' but as 'jihad in accordance with God's will' or 'the establishment of justice' points to the modernity of the concept. In early sources, Christian resistance is generally narrated in the context of local dynasties' struggles for legitimacy (O'Callaghan, 2011, pp. 20–25). The language of 'conquest' or "reconquest" emphasises divine providence rather than a 'national consciousness'. The kingdoms of León and Navarre in northern Spain described their struggle against Muslim rule from the 9th century, as 'the expansion of the kingdom' or 'God's will.' Therefore, the term "Reconquista" did not carry the meaning of a 'national liberation epic' for the Christian world of that period (Şeyban, 2010).

In this context, the concept itself is a retrospective invention of 19th century nationalism. By applying the 'Reconquista' to the entire history of medieval Spain with a retrospective teleology, historians have transformed the dynamics of different periods and localities into a single linear 'movement of recovery' (García-Sanjuán, 2018, pp. 127–135). Thus, a complex historical reality, such as war, alliance, trade, cultural exchange, and the permeability of religious boundaries, has been reduced to a narrative of 'the awakening of a nation.' From the perspective of Islamic historians, the loss of al-Andalus has been interpreted through the lens of the 8th century 'conquest' paradigm (García-Sanjuán, 2024, pp. 85–92). In Islamic sources, there is no concept equivalent to 'reconquista' for the fall of al-Andalus. Terms such as zavâl

(disintegration), fitna (internal strife) or inqirâz (destruction) are used. Each of these concepts links political collapse to moral decay. Thus, in Islamic historiography, the 'lost land' is conceptualised not as a trauma but as the result of 'submission to divine will (Jakubowski, 2017, pp. 9–22).' In contrast, modern Western historiography has interpreted this loss as proof of its own historical superiority. Thus, 'conquest' and 'reconquista' become two opposing yet complementary ideological mirrors. One based on the rhetoric of spreading God's word, the other on restoring God's order.

The term 'Reconquista' first appeared in its modern sense in the late 18th century, during the Spanish Enlightenment. During this period, history had become a tool for constructing national identity rather than a religious memory (Gümüş, 2023). With 19th century romantic historiography, the Reconquista became an allegory of Spain's historical spirit. Islam ceased to be 'the other' and became 'the symbol of the dark ages (Şeyban, 2010).' This rewriting parallels the rise of nationalism and colonial expansion across Europe. The 'reconquest' is not only a medieval concept but also a modern one, Spain lost al-Andalus but compensated by 'reconquering' America. Thus, the rhetoric of the Reconquista produced the historical legitimacy of Spanish colonialism. The 'conquest of the New World' was seen as 'continuing the spirit of the conquests in the Old World.' Thus, the Reconquista became a link in an ideological chain stretching from the Middle Ages to the modern colonial era, the struggle against Islam was transformed into a rhetoric of civilising 'barbarian' peoples (García Sanjuán, 2020, pp. 147–150).

The concept of the 'Reconquista' is not merely a historical narrative, but a temporal construct. This concept renders Spanish history as an unbroken eight-century line, a 'line of destiny' whose meaning is national rather than divine. This teleological understanding of history is a typical product of modern historical consciousness, the past is read as a preface to the future.

This approach places the idea of 'historical continuity' at the foundation of the nation-state. Periods of Muslim rule are excluded from this continuity. Historical time is considered to have been 'interrupted' by the presence of Islam. Therefore, the Reconquista is not merely a narrative of military success, but a myth of historical continuity. Here, history is bound not to God's will, but to the will of the nation. In this sense, the Reconquista is a form of post-Enlightenment secular historiography reshaping the religious heritage: "sacred history becomes national history" (García-Sanjuán, 2018, p. ibid).

In the second half of the 20th century, particularly with the development of historical philosophy and historiographical criticism, the concept of

the ‘Reconquista’ began to be increasingly questioned. Researchers, for example, Joseph F. O’Callaghan, and more recently Brian Catlos drew attention to the anachronistic nature of this term (Catlos, 2014, pp. 313–320). What these historians have in common is that they view the ‘Reconquista’ as an ideological scheme rather than a historical fact. The narrative of the Reconquista has suppressed the pluralistic structure of the Middle Ages by defining Spanish history along the axis of ‘Christian progress.’ The real historical process, however, is characterised by constant alliances, cultural exchanges, and permeable borders. Christian and Muslim powers frequently formed alliances with each other and even cooperated against common enemies in certain periods. Therefore, the idea of an ‘endless war between two civilisations’ does not correspond to historical reality. Catlos’ work Kingdoms of Faith evaluates the Reconquista as a ‘chain of myths.’ According to Catlos, the concept’s power stems not from historical accuracy but from the symbolic order of the modern mind, Western identity still constructs its origins through a ‘history cleansed of Islam.’ Therefore, the Reconquista is not merely a historical myth but an epistemological mechanism, the West’s way of defining itself by excluding the ‘other’ (Catlos, 2018).

Among modern Islamic historians, the concept of the Reconquista is seen as an instrument of the epistemic alienation of Islamic history (Şeyban, 2010). The loss of al-Andalus created a ‘void’ in Muslim historiography because, in the modern era, the science of history has been redefined within the boundaries of Western epistemology. Consequently, Muslim historiography is often constrained by the conceptual language of the West when narrating Al-Andalus. Consequently, the critique of the Reconquista also signifies the reconstruction of Islamic historical consciousness, redefining the subject of history means transforming not only the past but also the mode of knowledge production.

Today, Reconquista is a concept that has been revived not only among historians but also in political discourse (García-Sanjuán, 2018, pp. 10–18). Rising far-right movements in Europe use this term to refer to “the West’s revival against Islam”, in Spain, some populist rhetoric associates the “spirit of Reconquista” with contemporary anti-immigrant sentiment (Esteve-Del-Valle & Costa López, 2023, pp. 10–22). This situation shows that the concept carries symbolic rather than historical power. The Reconquista still lives on as an ideological code defining Europe’s “relationship with the other.” Although academic historiography distances itself from this political discourse, the concept’s influence continues in popular culture, media, and tourism discourse. Cities such as Alhambra, Toledo, and Córdoba are commercialised as the “legacy of tolerance and loss,” while simultaneously

serving as venues for silent celebrations of the Reconquista. Therefore, the concept is not merely a historical process but also part of today's regimes of memory.

Conclusion

History is not merely a record of the past, but a way for humans to make sense of their own existence. Therefore, history is not only a field of knowledge but also a matter of faith. It is humanity's attempt to position itself within temporality, to make sense of its beginning and end. In Islamic thought, history reveals humanity's responsibility within God's absolute plan, in Western thought, history is identified with the human mind's quest for progress. Although these two approaches are often seen as opposites, they intersect in the example of al-Andalus, because al-Andalus is both the voice of Islam in the West and the stage on which the West defines itself against Islam. Throughout this work, my discussion around the question "Whose history is Al-Andalus?" has actually turned to the question "Whose knowledge is history?" The history of Al-Andalus is not merely a political narrative spanning from 711 to 1492, this history is a laboratory for how knowledge production, identity construction, and memory are established. In this laboratory, both Muslim historians and modern European academics have produced their own epistemological languages to make sense of the past. What ultimately emerges is not a single history, but a struggle between histories that is, a competition over whose words is used to narrate the past.

The most distinctive feature of modern historiography is its tendency to reduce the past to a national, religious, or civilization-based unity. This is precisely what Spanish nationalism did in constructing the Reconquista myth, transforming fragments of the past into a "national destiny narrative." In contrast, modern Orientalist historiography has continued the same process in a different way, by depicting al-Andalus as an exotic but "ahistorical" East, it has reproduced Europe's own superiority. In both cases, history ceases to be a field of knowledge and becomes the language of power. in this context, Al-Andalus is the starkest example of the ideological uses of history: on the one hand, a "Christianized past"; on the other, a "romantic myth of tolerance." The relationship between "Islam and history" is an expression of the relationship a civilization has established over time. Therefore, writing the history of Al-Andalus is not about claiming it as our own. It is about hearing the questions it leaves us with anew. And perhaps most importantly, history is never entirely "ours." Because history is that long, complex, and shared story in which we all touch each other. Al-Andalus is the brightest and quietest witness to this shared history.

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CHAPTER 8

THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL CONCEPTS IN THE LANGUAGE OF RELIGION

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Abstract

This research arises from the need to reexamine the nature of religious language and to determine the position of moral concepts within it. The modern individual's renewed contemplation of their relationship with religion and the deepening of their search for meaning have revealed that a religious language focused solely on juridical rulings may, in certain cases, fall short of fully conveying meaning. Therefore, reexamining the moral dimension of religious language has become one of the primary motivations behind this study. The study employs methods such as semantic analysis, contextual reading, and text-based interpretation; it is conducted within a qualitative, theoretical, and interpretive framework. The central question of the study can be formulated as follows: *"How can moral concepts within religious language respond to the needs of contemporary individuals by moving beyond classical interpretations?"* The limitation of the study lies in its

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primarily theoretical framework. Consequently, the findings require further reinforcement through additional field research, empirical studies, or relevant projects in order to be substantiated by contemporary social practices and lived experiences. The original contribution of this study lies in its approach to religious language not merely as the language of juridical rulings, but as a morally directive discourse grounded in metaphysical foundations. It further highlights the semantic transformation of moral concepts within a modern context. The key findings indicate that moral concepts have historically remained in the background within religious language; however, when their context, historical depth, and directive nature are taken into account, they actually hold a crucial role in elucidating religious meaning. An examination of the relationship between moral terms and concepts such as intention, ontology, and social responsibility reveals the necessity of reestablishing the unity between worship and ethics. The findings are significant in that they demonstrate how strengthening the moral emphasis within religious language enables more holistic and meaningful responses to the questions posed by the modern individual. This approach not only contributes to a deeper understanding of religion but may also positively influence the development of both individual and collective religiosity.

Keywords: Philosophy of religion, religious language, moral concepts, semantic analysis, worship–ethics relationship

1. Introduction

Religion continues to shape individual and communal life in contemporary society, though this influence takes increasingly diverse forms. For some, religion remains an essential phenomenon shaping their entire worldview. Others adopt a critical, distant approach, effectively disregarding it. Some people seek to integrate religion rationally into their lives while rejecting traditionally transmitted doctrines. These varied stances directly influence religious discourse itself: an individual's approach to faith shapes their engagement with religious language.

In Islamic thought, however, this engagement has remained problematically narrow. The focus has predominantly centered on juristic propositions (fıkhî önermeler), narratives (kıssalar), expressions of faith (iman), and theological affirmations (kelâmî tasdikler). This jurisprudential emphasis has marginalized the philosophical and ethical dimensions of Islam's intellectual heritage. Consequently, moral principles (ahlaki hükümler) remain under-interpreted, their contemporary meanings restricted, and their transformative potential unrealized.

This interpretive deficit becomes particularly evident in the way ritual worship is treated. The most prominent manifestation is the reduction of ritual worship (ibadet) to mere formalism — external compliance divorced from internal moral transformation. Religious obligations (dini vecibeler) are portrayed as rote (ezberlenmiş) duties, creating a vacuum of meaning for contemporary individuals. This vacuum is being filled: the proliferation (çoğalma) of spiritual movements and New Age therapeutic modalities in Turkey over the past fifteen years suggests that prevailing religious discourse fails to provide satisfactory answers in the quest for meaning.

This study argues that moral concepts must occupy a central — not peripheral — position within the language of religion. We demonstrate that integrating ethics prominently within interpretive processes is both philosophically necessary and practically urgent. By examining the semantic structure of moral terminology in the Qur'an and Hadith, analyzing contextual factors that shape moral meaning, and exploring the integration of morality with theology, we show how a morally-grounded religious discourse can address the spiritual needs of contemporary Muslims while remaining faithful to Islam's textual sources.

Before proceeding, a crucial distinction must be clarified. "Language of religion" (din dili) refers to discourse expressing metaphysical and divine truths — propositions about God and the sacred. "Religious language" (dini dil), conversely, refers to human interpretation and appropriation of these truths as tools for moral motivation (Yıldırım, 2015: 9). This distinction clarifies whether an expression represents metaphysical truth or interpreted meaning. The former pertains to philosophy; the latter to practice. Our concern is how moral concepts function within both dimensions.

The philosophy of religion has engaged with these questions throughout intellectual history. While modern philosophy of religion has intensely debated religious language over the last century, Islamic philosophy addressed these issues much earlier. Peripatetic philosophers (Meşşâî) articulated sophisticated theories under the conceptual framework of Elfaz-ı Şer debates (Çaylı, 2024: 13), demonstrating that Islamic engagement with religious language long predates modernity. Our task is to recover and extend this tradition, showing how moral concepts can renew contemporary religious discourse.

1. The Semantic Structure of the Language of Religion

The study of the semantic structure of the language of religion is concerned with the systematic analysis of the meanings, interrelations, and diachronic (historical) semantic shifts of the words, terms, and expressions utilized within the religious domain. Any inquiry into the nature of the language of religion is intrinsically linked to the question of the nature of religion itself as a phenomenon. Consequently, addressing this topic necessitates an understanding of religious anthropology, a conceptualization of how religion is comprehended, and, invariably, an examination of its linguistic framework (Canatan, 2022: 39).

To begin, if we ask "what is religion?" it may be defined as a system of belief, worship, and morality that governs the human relationship with the sacred and the surrounding environment. This system of thought is formulated as individuals observe existence and apprehend transcendent truths that lie beyond material boundaries. One such transcendent truth is the institution of prophecy (nübüvvet müessesesi). It is only through the revelation-based messages promulgated by prophets that humanity can comprehend the essence of divine truth and learn that the requital for their actions will be experienced in the eschatological realm (uhrevi dünyada) (Abduh, 2012: 161). The individual subsequently performs a religious act and internalizes it by means of the language articulated by the prophet—that is, by utilizing the language of religion.

According to the traditional religious perspective, every word in language, regardless of its nature, corresponds to a specific entity, state, or phenomenon. Sentences are subsequently formed by the combination of these meaningful words. Words possess an intrinsic meaning that is robustly correlated with the word itself, as they function to elucidate the relationship with the external world (Kuvancı, 2012: 13). In this regard, the language of religion, while cognate with everyday language, serves as a vehicle for specialized functions, such as the exegesis of sacred texts, the transmission of religious concepts, and the sharing of spiritual experiences. On the semantic level, this language comprises the structures of meaning that facilitate both the individual's communication with God and broader social consensus (Cebeci, 2002: 45-47). As religion, per the aforementioned definition, constitutes an integrated whole, it must be addressed in all its dimensions during the process of comprehension and interpretation.

What, then, is the role of philosophy? We cannot ascertain the precise referents of words within the religious context through empirical data; it is at this juncture that philosophy intervenes. The metaphysical dimension of philosophy attempts to define a reality posited to exist beyond the empirical and scientific world (i.e., the transcendent)—such as God, the soul, or the idea of the absolute—and debates the meaning and epistemic boundaries associated with them. Philosophy's responsibility, at this point, is to logically explicate the objectives of language and the means by which these objectives can be achieved. In this context, linguistic meaning is the fundamental concern of philosophy. This philosophical approach posits that meaning resides not in the individual word, but in the proposition or judgment. If the word's use within the sentence is disregarded, the meaning remains incomplete; thus, the true locus of meaning is the proposition (Ferre, 1999: 4-5). Furthermore, these propositions are interconnected. Therefore, the juristic applications (şer'i uygulamaları) of religion, as much as its moral principles, must be incorporated into this semantic process.

Just as confining the language of religion solely to juristic applications renders comprehension incomplete, limiting the understanding of religion purely to morality also leads to a deficient interpretation. Braithwaite, for example, contends that religious discourse is an extension of moral language. In this view, religious statements articulate an individual's moral dispositions and function as a tool to actualize these orientations into praxis (Braithwaite, 1955: 24-25). However, by reducing religious language to ethics, Braithwaite aligns himself with logical positivism. This approach disregards the other dimensions inherent in religious language—particularly its transcendent and divine aspects—and relegates religious propositions to the status of expressions merely implying moral inclinations (Yıldırım, 2015: 123-128). This reductionist approach ignores the multifaceted nature of religion.

Therefore, the role of juristic applications in religious language must be addressed in conjunction with the moral dimension. From this standpoint, regarding the content of religion as nothing more than a moral doctrine, and developing its language accordingly, is an interpretation tantamount to abstracting religion from its rich, multidimensional structure and reducing it to a merely formal (şekilsel) construct.

What is gained by evaluating the language of religion simultaneously from semantic and moral perspectives? It helps us better grasp the multidimensional nature of religion without subsuming it under a single dimension. When religion communicates via a linguistic system, and this language is accepted as possessing a semantic structure, one must first

determine what is being asserted by any given proposition. Subsequently, the context in which this meaning emerged must be investigated. In the final stage, the functional meanings that the same expression has acquired in different cultures and eras must be ascertained. This methodology can be rendered more intelligible by practically applying it to propositions from the Qur'an and Hadith, particularly by way of moral propositions.

1.1 Semantic Aspects of Moral Terminology in the Qur'an

In studies concerning the linguistic diversity of the Qur'an, various modes of expression—such as the language of narratives (qisas), legal rulings (ahkâm), the unseen (ghayb), cosmology, critique, and miracles—are examined in detail. These discourses are often explicated through their pedagogical, normative, analogical, evidential, or mythic dimensions. It is striking, however, that the language of morality is seldom treated as a distinct category. Moral injunctions are generally relegated to a sub-category of the language of ahkâm, evaluated only indirectly based on their degree of legal bindingness. This indicates that the moral dimension of the Qur'an is perceived not as an independent linguistic form, but rather as a secondary element within the legal and normative structure. Consequently, when analyzing the language of religion in the Qur'anic context, morality is not treated as a direct linguistic genre; it remains overshadowed by prescriptive, juridical pronouncements (Canatan, 2022: 83-145).

And yet, once the meaning of a moral verse is determined and its original context understood, if that expression is then interpreted in a manner that is both functional and relevant to our contemporary era, a distinct moral language (ahlaki dil) spontaneously emerges from within the broader language of religion. This new discourse, by virtue of its functionality for the contemporary individual, can acquire a sanction as meaningful as that of modern ethical thought.

For example, many Qur'anic verses highlight not only the formalistic/external shape of worship and juristic applications (şer'i uygulamalar) but also their internal moral and spiritual dimensions. The Qur'an possesses such a systematic framework. The prayer ritual (namaz, salah) is the most important act of worship in Islam. The Qur'an's emphasis on meaning—specifically, moral virtue—in relation to this act is clearly articulated in Sūrat al-Māʿūn (Chapter 107):

1. Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense?

2. For that is the one who repulses the orphan,

3. And does not encourage the feeding of the poor.

4. So woe to those who pray,

5. [But] who are heedless of their prayer (distant from its essence) –

6. Those who make show [of their deeds],

7. And withhold [even] small assistance.

These verses reveal the importance of moral verses within the sphere of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), according to the structure of the language of religion. In short: Worship + Morality appear as an integrated whole. Therefore, the interpretive methodology must be systematic and consistent; legal rulings (şeriat) and moral principles should not be treated as discrete. Moral content, then, only acquires a holistic meaning when considered in conjunction with fiqh rulings.

In another example concerning prayer, the verse, "Indeed, prayer restrains from immorality and wrongdoing" (al-ʿAnkabūt, 29:45), emphasizes that prayer is not merely a ritual but a moral discipline that distances a person from evil. However, due to the traditional prioritization of the fiqh dimension, prayer may be viewed by the pious (dindar) as solely a religious obligation (dini vecibe), which causes the inner meaning of the worship to be sidelined. Yet, if morality were treated as a significant context within the language of religion, co-equal with other contexts, it would become far more probable that prayer would fulfill its function of restraining the individual from evil. Furthermore, the fiqh validity of a prayer that fails to prevent immorality ought to be a subject of debate.

Another example is the verse, "Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity (sadaqa) by which you purify them and cause them to increase" (al-Tawbah, 9:103). Here, zakat (almsgiving) is described not just as a jurisprudential obligation but as a means of purifying the individual's inner world (arınma). This purification, from the perspective of the language of religion, necessitates functional interpretations. Only through this process, and by being situated within the language of religion, can morality become more pervasive.

To provide a more common example, when one examines the verse, "Either retain them (women) in accordance with maʿrûf (kindness) or release them with ihsan (grace/excellence)" (al-Baqarah 2:229), the process of divorce in Islamic discourse is declared with the principle of ihsan. The practical application of this verse, however, is often not so "soft." This discrepancy

stems from the prioritization of ahkâm and fiqh over morality within the language of religion, or perhaps from a failure to accurately transmit the verse's intended purpose and mode of application. These examples clearly demonstrate how fiqh rulings and moral principles are intertwined in the Qur'an, indicating the necessity of interpreting moral concepts via a semantic methodology.

Semantic transformations illustrate how Qur'anic moral expressions are transferred from their historical meanings to contemporary ethical understandings. Through this process, these terms acquire a more functional and inclusive meaning in the modern world. For instance, the word "birr" (ربلا), which appears in the Qur'an, is generally associated with acts of worship, charity (infaq), and patience. This usage has led to its interpretation as a concept denoting the relationship between humanity and God. That is, "birr" has predominantly been understood within a vertical and divine dimension (Okumuş, 2002: 97-115). As the human-God relationship is an individual and personal affair, the moral understanding derived from the verse remained confined to the believer's private sphere. This was a consequence of the ethical order during the period of revelation, which was primarily based on transforming the individual's inner world. Morality, in effect, began in the heart.

As the period of revelation has concluded and human lifestyles have changed, moral concepts can no longer be limited to individualistic interpretations. In an age where societal moral values are weakening, these concepts can, through semantic interpretation, acquire a broader, social meaning. For example, "birr" today can connote active goodness and social responsibility. In this way, the individual bears moral responsibility not only vertically toward God, but also horizontally toward society.

Another example is the Qur'anic term "maʿrûf" (فورعم). In the traditional and classical periods, this word denoted conduct that was compliant with established customs and norms (ʿurf) (al-Jurjānī, 1283: 237). In the absence of a codified legal system, socially accepted customs served as a criterion and reference point for maintaining social order. Today, however, "maʿrûf" can be employed to mean conduct aligned not only with traditional custom but also with universal moral values. On issues such as violence against women or children's rights, "acting with maʿrûf" implies adherence to universal ethics, not merely a societal habit—because custom (ʿurf) is not infallible and it is essential to critique it to attain truth. This shows that the concept of "maʿrûf" can, over time, acquire a broader and more potent meaning.

Similarly, the word "taqwa" (تقوى) was classically understood as the individual's inner disposition of piety or awe toward God. The formation of this understanding was influenced by the emphasis on individual transformation during the Meccan period, the nascent state of the social order, and the strong influence of Sufism (tasawwuf). However, in contemporary understanding, where societal transformation has gained an importance equal to that of individual development, "taqwa" can also function as social responsibility. For instance, in the verse, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (atqākum) of you" (al-Hujurāt, 49:13). If "taqwa" here is interpreted in its classical sense, superiority is a matter of one's cardiac orientation (inner piety). But according to a semantic interpretation, "taqwa" can be understood not just as an internal quality but as social responsibility. Thus, it generates a moral principle against social discrimination.

Thus far, we have provided examples from the Holy Qur'an and certain social transactions (muʿāmalāt). We will now continue by explaining the importance of the language of morality within the language of religion through examples from the practices of the Prophet.

1.2. Understanding and Interpreting Morality in Hadith Literature

Parallel to the Qur'anic verses, the Hadith literature contains propositions that necessitate semantic interpretation. When the Prophet employed a moral concept, he presented it in a manner that was simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive. However, as some of these expressions were articulated in the idiom of that specific era, they may today be either incomprehensible or non-functional. A semantic shift has occurred over time. The semantic re-interpretation of this shift can render the moral Hadiths more intelligible and effective in the contemporary context.

As an example, in one of the most well-known Hadiths, "I was sent only to perfect noble ethics (makārim al-akhlāq)" (Ibn Hanbal, n.d.: 2/381), the term makārim (noble ethics) was, in classical interpretation, understood to mean internal virtues and lofty dispositions. However, given contemporary moral understanding and the significant emphasis placed on social morality, reducing this concept to a mere internal state renders it anachronistic and difficult to grasp in the modern age. Therefore, when the concept of makārim is expanded today to encompass broader domains such as social responsibility, empathy, and environmental ethics, its meaning is amplified,

and the Hadith's function acquires far greater relevance for our time (Kaco, 2016: 122).

Another example is the Hadith, "A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe" (Bukhari, n.d.: 4/10). This was historically understood primarily as refraining from inflicting physical harm and engaging in malicious speech, as physical power and harshness were prevalent and accepted modes of conduct in the Arab society of that period. Today, however, this statement can be applied to issues such as hate speech, calumny, and discrimination on social media. The "tongue" (lisan) is no longer confined to speech; it now encompasses written, visual, and digital communication (Koca, 2016: 125). Through this re-interpretation, the Hadith is transformed into a more potent admonition against contemporary moral problems.

Digitalization, one of the foundational drivers of the transformation in moral concepts within religious language, also manifests in the Hadith: "Modesty (Hayāʾ) is part of faith (Iman)" (Muslim, n.d.: 1/46). This was traditionally explicated in terms of an individual's sense of shame and respect for their private sphere. Yet, today the concept of hayāʾ can be reinterpreted in relation to modern concerns such as protecting personal boundaries, observing online privacy, and maintaining public decorum. This interpretation demonstrates the concept's transition from a purely individual virtue to a principle of social and digital ethical conduct (Koca, 2016: 128).

These examples illustrate that the re-signification of moral concepts found in the Hadith is both significant and beneficial. Expressions formerly understood as individual virtues can today carry broader implications related to social and digital life. It is therefore necessary to interpret moral Hadiths not only through their archaic linguistic structures but also with consideration for contemporary moral challenges. In doing so, the Hadiths become both more comprehensible and more capable of resonating with the modern individual.

2. Contextual Factors of Moral Concepts

When a moral proposition is encountered within the language of religion, the meaning of that proposition or its constituent words requires interpretation based not only on their literal significations (lafızlar) but also on their context. An examination of various theories of religious language reveals contextual factors and elements such as place (mekân), time (zaman), the addressee (hitap), and interpretation (yorum).

To exemplify these contexts, the statement "helping is good" is a moral proposition that, at first glance, may leave a positive impression. For instance, while helping a neighbor after a disaster generates a positive connotation, the same act, when used in the sense of helping an enemy during wartime, carries a negative and unethical meaning (Yıldırım, 2012: 545). Both actions constitute "helping," yet when the time and place are inappropriate, the act can transform into one that is entirely devoid of virtue. Moral propositions within the language of religion must likewise be conceptualized with this context in mind.

In addition to time and place, there is the element of the addressee. The fact that the style of address (hitap üslubu) in the Qur'an and Hadith varies according to the audience (muhatap) reveals the importance of this element. For example, the word "patience" (sabr) appears in various places in the Qur'an, but it can undergo a shift in meaning due to differences in the addressee. In the verse, "O you who have believed, persevere and excel in patience and remain steadfast and fear Allah, that you may be successful" (Āl ʿImrān, 3:200), the believers are addressed using a gentle and encouraging tone. This may indicate that "patience" in this verse does not signify a moral obligation (ahlaki bir yükümlülük) but is, in fact, presented as a virtue (fazilet) for believers (Razi, 2004: 9/155).

When time, place, and addressee are taken into account in a proposition, the issue ultimately rests on interpretation. Critically, "interpretation" here does not refer to the general comprehension or exegesis directed at the language of religion. Rather, it refers to taking into account the commentary the speaker himself provides on his own words. For example, the verse "...Allah is with the patient" (al-Baqarah, 2:153) is a moral principle derivable from the Qur'an. However, the Prophet may have offered various commentaries on "patience" in different contexts; therefore, when understanding a moral statement, these differing interpretations must also be considered. The expression of patience becomes a moral principle when applied in the face of hardship or trial (imtihan). However, the same disposition, when applied to situations of submitting to oppression (zulm) or injustice, can become the antithesis of morality, as it facilitates a violation of rights.

As in Wittgenstein's use-theory of meaning, language—especially the moral language of religion—acquires meaning through context. When language is encountered in a vacuum, it either fails to convey meaning or the meaning it does convey is not functional (Wittgenstein, 1953: 20). Thus, when a philosopher of religion engages with moral propositions, they must evaluate them not only in terms of their truth-value but also in terms of their

functionality and utility. The statement "Be just" carries different meanings depending on where it is uttered. When stated in a court of law, it is a legal rule; the judge is expected to render an impartial decision. But when the same statement is made within a family—for instance, by a parent to their children—it becomes an appeal to conscience. That is, the same moral proposition can transform into either a rule or an exhortation depending on the context.

This demonstrates the significance of the context of a moral proposition. It can evolve into a practice that is not static, but rather is shaped by the situation. For this reason, it is crucial that the moral proposition does not lose its value (Yıldırım, 2012: 548). In conclusion, even when moral concepts are embedded within religion, their meanings may not remain uniform in every instance. Factors such as where, when, to whom, and how they are communicated influence how these concepts are understood and actualized. In other words, moral utterances can acquire different meanings based on their context.

2.1. The Integration of Morality and Theology

Although a precise and common definition of the "language of religion" is difficult to establish, there are generally shared understandings of what religion entails. Consequently, defining religion as a phenomenon that addresses both individual and communal masses, contains propositions of belief, action, and virtue, is established around a conception of absolute truth, and asserts the veracity of its propositions, corresponds to this shared understanding (Peterson, 2013: 3-4). That is to say, in religion, truth is not confined merely to belief or jurisprudence (fıkıh). Religion encompasses belief, conduct, and moral disposition. The believer, therefore, must cultivate an awareness that addresses the diverse dimensions of religion without resorting to reductionism.

Like other dimensions of religion, moral concepts are grounded in a metaphysical foundation. This is not as simple as it may appear; on the contrary, it necessitates an intellectual framework. Morality is not confined to a mere behavioral state; rather, it is founded upon ontology (being) and epistemology (knowledge). Moral rules acquire meaning through humanity's place in the cosmos and its quest for truth. Thus, concepts such as "justice," "goodness," and "responsibility" are values inherent in the structure of being itself. These concepts, therefore, carry both social and existential significance (Akdemir, 2009: 5-7). A perception has arisen that the metaphysical aspect of belief (due to its link with iman) and jurisprudence (due to its entanglement with

promises of "punishment" and "paradise") is more intense. Consequently, morality is often relegated to considerations of individual asceticism (züht) and social order.

When morality is addressed on an ontological plane, it is intrinsically linked to humanity's purpose of creation. In theistic thought, God's justice is not a mere attribute but the foundational principle that establishes the cosmic order. Within this order, humanity also bears moral responsibilities. For example, the principle of "not lying" naturally preserves social trust, but it must not be limited to this function; it simultaneously signifies a respect for truth (hakikat). This principle is not just a social rule, but an act congruent with the order of being. Morality, in this respect, is the mode of conduct appropriate to the structure of existence (Akdemir, 2009: 8-10).

Epistemologically, moral knowledge is linked to intention (niyet) and internal disposition. For example, if an individual gives zakat (alms) but does so for ostentation (gösteriş), externally he appears to have fulfilled his duty. However, if the intention is corrupt, the act is morally questionable. Based on such examples, moral knowledge depends not only on the physical act but also on the rectitude of the intention. In this case, morality must be considered in a metaphysical light, as the human inner world possesses a more profound reality than external behavior (Aybakan, 2020: 58-60). This is underscored by the Prophet's Hadith, "Deeds are but by intentions" (Ameller niyetlere göredir).

Evidently, morality within the language of religion—at least in theory—is connected to metaphysics and constitutes a significant domain. The reduction of the language of religion to jurisprudence (fıkıh) leads to this metaphysical dimension being disregarded. Jurisprudence concerns itself with the externally observable actions of individuals; morality, conversely, prioritizes the individual's intention and inner world. Even if a person has committed moral transgressions, if they perform a jurisprudential act of worship, such as prayer (namaz), they are considered to have fulfilled their religious duty. This is a situation that arises from the reduction of the profound moral meaning of religion to mere rules (Yaman, 2016: 115-117).

Moral concepts derive their ontological and epistemological foundations from the metaphysical structure of the language of religion. The reduction of religious understanding to jurisprudence diminishes the profound meaning of religion and relegates morality to mere regulations. In other words, morality ceases to be an intrinsic value and transforms into an externally applied formalism. As a result, formalistic worship (şekilci ibadetler) proliferates.

2.2. The Directive Function of Moral Concepts

The most significant reason moral concepts are sometimes attributed less importance within the language of religion is their confinement to a purely descriptive (tanımlayıcı) role. In the religious tradition, the directive function of morality has received less emphasis; or, even when afforded theoretical importance, it has failed to become established in practice as it ought to be. However, the language of religion does not merely articulate moral values; it also aims to guide people toward rectitude. This guidance is generally expressed through imperatives (e.g., "do," "do not") and exhortative statements.

In other words, the language of religion seeks to modify human behavior, regulate society, and appeal to the human conscience. Consequently, moral concepts frequently address the question of what ought to be; they indicate not merely "what is," but "what ought to be" (Çetin, 2012: 20).

In the Qur'an, the principle of "enjoining good and forbidding evil" (al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-n-nahy ʿan-al-munkar) issues a direct summons to action. This expression is not confined to describing what is good or evil; it dictates what must be done. Similarly, the imperatives found in verses such as "Be just" (al-Māʾidah, 5:8) or "Be with the truthful" (al-Tawbah, 9:119) demonstrate that moral values are not merely to be contemplated, but to be actualized. Such statements provide direction, impose responsibility, and clearly articulate the required mode of conduct (Doğan, 2020: 390). Yet in practice this is often not reflected in many Muslim societies. (Abu Zayd, 2004: 45-25).

Expressions in the Hadith literature also explicitly state how individuals ought to behave. For instance, statements such as "Be good to your neighbor" (Bukhari, n.d.: 8/10) or "Be gentle" (Muslim, n.d.: 4/2005) do not merely describe goodness; they directly summon the individual to goodness. These types of statements do not simply define morality; they aim to put it in practice. Thus, the language of religion is not merely descriptive of morality, but is also constitutive and directive of it.

Theological propositions, in this regard, are also value-laden statements (değer taşıyan ifadeler) that seek to generate an inner moral awareness (Çetin, 2012: 35). When these imperatives and exhortations are correctly applied, they prevent morality from remaining at a purely theoretical level and transform it into the domain of praxis (eylem alanı).

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the 2000s, humanity has re-examined the role of religion in life. In our socio-cultural context, we observe that religion is still perceived by contemporary individuals as necessary and influential. Despite assertions to the contrary, religion remains significant in many lived experiences. If we consider the growing distance between individuals and religion, this detachment may not always be openly expressed due to traditional social pressures. However, another reality persists: individuals undergo internal processes of questioning faith. Research indicates that youth, in particular, are more exposed to this critical inquiry. At the same time, the interest among middle-aged and older demographics in modern spiritual movements and New Age therapeutic practices seems to confirm this distance.

In the early Islamic period, the practical application of religious principles, as exemplified by the Prophet's life, did not generate confusion among Muslims. The living presence of the first addressee — the Prophet himself — allowed immediate and clear resolution of such issues. After his death, however, these challenges increased and continued to the present day. This has given rise to numerous theological (itikadi) and jurisprudential (fıkhî) debates. While these debates contribute to intellectual richness, it is also necessary to provide meaningful answers for those who adhere to the faith.

At this point, the importance of religious language becomes evident. Moral concepts within this language are central to our analysis. Explaining religious principles not only as juristic (fıkhî) rulings but also through the lens of morality — adapted to contemporary life conditions and new problems — can offer meaningful answers to the modern person's search for meaning.

This study has suggested that morality is not only the practice of certain principles but also has deeper philosophical dimensions. Philosophy examines humanity's existential position, sources of knowledge (epistemology), and the nature of values; all of these are intrinsically linked to morality. In a metaphysical context, ethics investigates whether moral values (good/evil) possess an objective and universal reality independent of the human mind—that is, whether they have a transcendent existence. It engages ontology when examining what kind of being moral principles (such as virtue) possess, and whether the goodness of an action depends on the act itself or its consequences. Epistemology focuses on how (through reason, intuition, etc.) moral truths and judgments can be known, and to what extent this knowledge is certain or justifiable. These contexts show that morality is more than a set

of practical rules; it rests on deeper existential and cognitive foundations. If a more solid basis is established for expressing religious language through moral concepts, more satisfactory solutions can be produced for contemporary individuals. Otherwise, classical understandings may render this process incomplete.

When morality within religious language is correctly conceptualized, it is not confined to personal conscience but influences social life. Historically, religious language in the Islamic tradition has concentrated on jurisprudential (fıkhî) rulings, which has pushed moral values into the background. Yet morality — similar to acts of worship, legal rulings, and fiqh — must be reinterpreted to meet the needs of the modern era. If this direction is followed, moral concepts will no longer remain mere regulations but will become active values that offer new pathways for the modern individual. Developing such an approach can make life spiritually more intelligible and practicable, providing a meaningful foundation for societal well-being and helping us prepare for the future.

Meaning must be constructed by approaching all elements of religion holistically, and this is possible only by emphasizing the importance of internal values. Religion gains meaning through belief, worship, and morality. Otherwise, a person who performs ritual worship but does not treat others justly has not, according to this hermeneutic approach, fully aligned with the essence of religion. Piety (dindarlık) is not composed merely of formal practices and actions; it is nourished by moral concepts such as honesty, compassion, and patience. True piety is therefore possible only when the internal and external dimensions are realized together. This reflects the real essence of Islam.

For this reason, an increase in studies on morality within religious language, along with new methodological approaches, would be highly beneficial. For many years, discourses of faith (iman) and jurisprudence (fiqh) have held prominence in Islamic societies, while the emphasis on moral principles has been overlooked. This situation has contributed to a type of piety focused mainly on external rules while internal moral values are neglected. A model of piety in which virtue is not cultivated — where moral values remain in the background—can pose a risk to human dignity. Islam presents itself as a holistic approach embodied in the Prophet's exemplary life. Therefore, religious language must be addressed together with moral concepts and religious principles so that both individuals and society may attain genuine well-being (ferah).

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CHAPTER 9

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

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Abstract

The relationship between psychology and religion is analogous to that of two brothers (or sisters) who do not get along with each other and argue frequently. The last century has seen an increase in conversation and integration between psychology and religion, despite the fact that their historical trajectories frequently suggest friction and mutual suspicion between the two fields. This research study critically examines the historical evolution of the relationship between psychology and religion, characterised by mutual suspicion and epistemological divergence. Historically, psychology has maintained a sceptical stance towards religion, frequently reducing spiritual experiences to psychological constructs, a stance that is rooted in empirical inquiry and scientific methodology. In contrast, religion, which is based on revelation, faith, and transcendental meaning, has regarded psychology as inadequate for comprehending the complete extent of human experience. Religion has been one of the most influential topics of discussion throughout history. It has had a profound impact on the societies, nations, regions, economies, politics, and wars of the world. In short, religion has deeply shaped the world. This research conducts a thorough analysis of fundamental psychological theories and their viewpoints on religion,

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exploring the reciprocal impacts and conflicts between the two fields. The discourse encompasses Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, Faller's comprehensive critique, and contemporary frameworks acknowledging spirituality as essential for psychological well-being. Moreover, the study integrates Islamic psychology as a supplementary framework, emphasising notions such as nafs, qalb, and fitrah that advocate for spiritually rooted psychology. The study concludes that psychology and religion are not mutually exclusive but may be complementary fields. Recognising their distinctive epistemologies contributes to better comprehension of human nature, mental health, and the quest for meaning in modern society.

Keywords: Psychology, religion, Islamic psychology, spirituality, mental health

1. Introduction

Despite contemporary psychology primarily dismissing the relevance of religion in the examination of human behaviour, the connection between psychology and religion is as centuries old as the very beginning of psychology itself (Haque, 1998: 98). Jones (1994: 184) claims that the previously non-interactive position of psychology about religion was based on an archaic comprehension of science and an excessively limited professionalism. Modern philosophy of science dismantles the strict distinction between science and other modes of human understanding and activity, such as religion. Science and religion are distinct; nonetheless, they cannot be unequivocally separated or regarded as mutually exclusive. He proposed a development regarding the potential collaboration between religion and psychology as both a scientific field and a practical profession (Jones, 1994: 184).

Olson (2002: 38) argues that considering specific criteria and the influence of various beliefs and biases, it is understandable that psychology, as a science, has limited its engagement with religion to psychological inquiry only. Ultimately, psychology is characterised as the science of behaviour, not a metaphysical study of the soul. Psychotherapy is not synonymous with spiritual direction. An implicit norm apparent in these data is that psychology and religion should remain distinct. This separatist perspective is articulated in two forms: dualistic and reductionistic. In the initial form, psychology and religion are regarded as distinct yet equivalent in their realms; in the subsequent version, they are perceived as separate and unequal, hence diminishing the authority of one due to the pre-eminence of the other. The psychoanalytic, behavioural, humanistic, and cognitive revolutions in

psychology exhibit a shared inclination to diminish the spiritual aspect of experience to psychological derivatives, behaviours, emotions, or beliefs or to disregard it entirely as inconsequential, if not deemed "superstitious" or "irrational." The suggestions for separation in both versions are typically based on an excessive focus on the differences between psychology and religion. These represent genuine disparities in methodologies, content, sources, attitudes, and assumptions (Olson, 2002: 38).

This research endeavours to conduct an in-depth investigation on the relationship that exists between psychology and religion. Firstly, the inquiry will focus on the question, "What is psychology?" concentrating on its historical developments and contemporary discourse within the discipline. The second topic that will be covered is religion, and it will be examined in depth by providing examples of how well-known psychologists articulate religion. Following that, an in-depth discussion on the relationship and interaction between psychology and religion will be provided, which will include the thoughts and theories of several well-known academics. This research will conclude with a discussion of psychology from an Islamic point of view, which is anticipated to make a great contribution to the psychology of religion.

2. What is Psychology?

The term "psychology" originally emerged in English in 1693, but it did not gain widespread usage or comprehension until the mid-1800s. The term was created by combining the Greek phrases "psyche" and "logos". Psyche originally denoted breath, but it subsequently evolved to signify soul, as breathing was believed to signify that the soul had not yet departed from the body. In the seventeenth century, the Greek term psyche expanded in meaning to encompass "mind". Logos, the other Greek term from which psychology is derived, initially signified "word" and then evolved to denote discourse or reason. Psychology, derived from its Greek origins, literally signifies conversation or reasoning concerning the mind, or, in contemporary terms, the study of the mind, which is a definition present in certain dictionaries (Colman, 2016: 2). Oxford dictionary describes psychology "the scientific study of the mind and how it influences behaviour" (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, 2025). '*A Dictionary of Psychology'* by Oxford University Press defines psychology as "The study of the nature, functions, and phenomena of behaviour and mental experience. The etymology of the word implies that it is simply the study of the mind, but much of modern psychology focuses on behaviour rather than the mind, and

some aspects of psychology have little to do with the mind" (Colman, 2015: 2808).

Canguilhem (2016: 203) argues that despite the term "psychology" suggesting the science of the soul, it is significant that ancient philosophical systems, which regard the psyche or soul as a natural entity, do not possess an autonomous psychology in either concept or reality. The study of the soul is categorised into metaphysics, logic, and physics. The physics-orientated Aristotelian text on the soul is, in fact, an extensive treatise on biology. William James (1890) defines psychology as the awareness of mental life, asserting that consciousness is the basis of mental existence. He aimed to ascertain the importance of human consciousness and its major role in survival. Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) regarded psychology as a scientific examination of conscious experience, asserting that its objective was to discern the elements of consciousness and their integration in producing our conscious experience (Mandler, 2011). Freud's (2012: 21) psychological theory posits that "human behaviour is shaped by unconscious memories, thoughts, and urges. This theory posits that the psyche consists of three components: the id, ego, and superego. The id is wholly unconscious, whereas the ego functions within the conscious mind". Carl Gustav Jung (2014: 22) argues that "psychology deals with ideas and other mental contents".

In the late 19th century, the emergence and development of psychology as an academic field featured the formation of various foundational schools of thought. Among the most significant early paradigms were Structuralism, Functionalism, and Psychoanalysis, each of which influenced the development of contemporary psychological theory and practice. Wilhelm Wundt, who established the first psychology laboratory in Germany in 1879, frequently receives credit as the formal founder of psychology. Wundt concentrated on comprehending the structure of conscious experience by employing a technique known as introspection, which involved trained observers reporting their thoughts and sensations. His objective was to ascertain the fundamental components—feelings and sensations—that coalesce to generate mental experiences. Structuralism was the name given to this early approach; however, it was ultimately found to be too subjective for long-term scientific application. Functionalism, on the other hand, was created by the famous American psychologist William James and looked at the reason for behaviour rather than its structure. James suggested that mental processes should be studied in terms of how they help people adapt and survive. Functionalism focused on how ideas could be used in the real world and led to progress in areas like mood theory and educational psychology. Simultaneously, Sigmund Freud presented the psychoanalytic

approach. Freud developed the technique of free association while working with patients suffering from nervous disorders to uncover their unconscious thoughts. He asserted that unconscious desires and conflicts, especially those stemming from childhood experiences, primarily shape human behaviour. Freud's framework highlighted instincts like sexuality and aggression, and his notions of the id, ego, and superego continue to exert significant influence in psychotherapy (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2010: 6-9).

In the modern era, the majority of psychological information disseminated through the media emphasises practitioners, therapy, and assistance from others, leading individuals to perceive psychology primarily as a discipline concerned with emotions and methods for improvement. A significant proportion of psychologists (about 55%) provide counselling or treatment to clients; nonetheless, many of these practitioners possess a doctorate in psychology, necessitating the study of scientific methodology and the completion of extensive research (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2010: 4). The discipline of psychology has gained significant popularity in contemporary society, as television programs, films, series, and magazines frequently explore and highlight various aspects of the field's work. The importance of considering one's (or oneself's) psychological health conditions is frequently emphasised in public discussions or conversations, and individuals appear to exhibit a significant interest in the field of personal growth by purchasing books or viewing programmes (Katz et al., 2017). Contemporary popular psychology appears to have gained significant popularity, perhaps jeopardising the integrity of the discipline of psychology. A study by Furnham and Hughes (2014) investigated the frequency of psychological myths and misunderstandings among psychology students and the general population, focusing on popular psychology. A total of 829 individuals completed a 249-item questionnaire aimed at assessing a wide array of psychological misconceptions. The findings indicated that psychological myths and misconceptions are abundant and prevalent. A variety of prevalent, possibly detrimental, and socially polarising misconceptions were recognised. Psychology students identified a higher number of myths compared to the general populace. Nonetheless, effect sizes were minimal, suggesting that education has a very restricted efficacy in dispelling psychological myths and beliefs (Furnham & Hughes, 2014).

On the other hand, psychology has always been connected with religion. While psychology historically usually attacked and critiqued religion, recent discoveries in the field have exhibited a more favourable perspective towards religion. According to Argyle (2000), religion is a significant aspect of human existence and experience, offering valuable insights for

psychologists. Argyle (2000: 5) argues "the conflict between religion and the physical sciences and then suggests that the basic strategy to resolve the disagreement between religion and the physical sciences is to claim that science works with the physical world and religion with the inner world. But psychology deals with the inner world too. Psychology also tries to predict human behaviour and why people believe". Therefore, it would appear that the relationship between psychology and religion is powerful and intricate, with the capacity to generate a mutual interaction between the two fields. It seems that it would be more beneficial to initially address religion prior to exploring the complicated relationship between psychology and religion.

3. Religion

Since prehistoric times, religion has been integral to human experience and civilisation (Nelson, 2009: 3). Religion has been one of the most influential topics of discussion throughout history. It has had a profound impact on the societies, nations, regions, economies, politics, and wars of the world. In short, religion has deeply shaped the world. Haque (1998: 97) asserts that religion is a prevalent and influential phenomenon in the lives of numerous individuals and religious behaviour exists in nearly every society and culture worldwide. Oxford Dictionary defines religion as "the belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them, or in the teachings of a spiritual leader" (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, 2025). Jensen (2019) emphasises that religion in general as a human social and cultural fact.

Guthrie (1996: 419) defines religion as a cultural construct originating from a particular historical context. Implementing the concept across cultures may mean abandoning borders in favour of familial similarities. Utilising the metaphor of the family necessitates considering the implications of shared heritage, which illuminates the commonalities typically observed within families. He believes that people's fascination with humans, along with perceptual and cognitive confusion, is the origin of this phenomenon. Ambiguity and curiosity regarding people result in interpretations attributing anthropomorphic characteristics to many entities and circumstances. Religions transcend boundaries while asserting that the nonhuman universe parallels humankind. This assumption is essential and prevalent. Anthropomorphism exerts a greater influence on our thoughts and actions than religion does. It establishes familial resemblances among religions, which is crucial for the study of religion (Guthrie, 1996: 419).

Smith (2017: 261) asserts that it is impossible for any contemporary global citizen to remain ignorant regarding religion. Religion has not been eradicated by modernity, and it appears that it will not be in the near future. Religion continues to be of paramount importance worldwide, not only in spite of but also as a result of modernisation. Since the conclusion of the Cold War in the final decade of the twentieth century and the acceleration of globalisation in the twenty-first century, religion has arguably experienced a resurgence. Anyone who endeavours to understand the modern world without considering religion is attempting the impossible.

Freud (2022) posited that religion was an expression of latent psychological neurosis and distress—an endeavour to exert control over the external environment. He believes that religion serves as a safeguard against the overwhelmingly dominant force of nature and the desire to address the deficiencies of civilisation that are acutely perceived. He asserts that all religious beliefs are illusions and incapable of proof. Carl Gustav Jung (2014: 23) explains religion as follows:

"Religion, as the Latin word denotes, is a careful and scrupulous observation of what Rudolf Otto aptly termed the numinosum, that is, a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, it seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator. The numinosum—whatever its cause may be—is an experience of the subject independent of his will. At all events, religious teaching as well as the consensus gentium always and everywhere explain this experience as being due to a cause external to the individual. The numinosum is either a quality belonging to a visible object or the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness. This is, at any rate, the general rule" (Jung, 2014: 23).

Religion is a significant factor in the lives of individuals as well as in the dynamics of groups. Religion profoundly influences the human psyche, and conversely, psychology affects religion. Several fields of study, including social psychology, social psychology of religion, and psychology of religion, are responsible for conducting research on the relationship between psychology and religion.

4. The Relation and Interaction Between Psychology and Religion

Religion and science constitute the most paramount and impactful forces in the development of humanity. The influence of religion has clearly diminished

in contemporary times, while that of science has ascended. Regrettably, most people perceive religion and science as antagonistic to each other. The clash between religion and science has attained legendary status; the existence of any intrinsic discord between the two is vehemently and passionately contested. The existence of a genuine conflict and incompatibility, or the irrelevance of one to the other, depends on various circumstances. It appears likely that many of the concepts articulated concerning this clash arise primarily from prevalent misconceptions about the true essence of science and religion, as well as the fundamental objectives they seek to achieve Haque (1998: 97).

Haque (1998: 100) argues that why psychologists may have antipathy towards religion. He asserts that the discipline of psychology functions on the premise that behaviour is a consequence of causation (cause and effect). This concept is based on the discourse of determinism versus free will and whether individuals are entirely accountable for their acts. Consequently, the majority of psychologists assert that human behaviour is mostly influenced by inherent nature, suggesting that individuals possess limited free choice. Psychoanalysis, behaviourism, and more recently, neurological research endeavour to demonstrate the influence of determinism in creating human behaviour. This scientific elucidation of human behaviour, including religious aspects, undoubtedly presents a problem for those providing interpretations based on religious conceptions, particularly the notion of "free will" (Haque, 1998: 100).

The interaction between psychology and religion frequently seems tense because of their contrasting epistemological bases. Religion is founded on revelation, faith, and subjective experience, whereas psychology is orientated towards empirical observation, analysis, and rational explanation. In her thorough investigation, Singer (1969) illustrates that these fields are not only compatible but may also enhance one another through common explorations of the unconscious, symbolic experiences, and the fundamental frameworks of the human psyche. Singer (1969: 315-319) highlights that Jung's concept of the collective unconscious serves as a crucial integrative element between religion and psychology. The collective unconscious, unlike the personal unconscious rooted in individual experience, constitutes a transpersonal domain common to all humanity. It encompasses archetypes—universal, preconscious constructs that organise experience and generate recurring patterns throughout religions, myths, and cultural expressions. Religion, from this perspective, is not an external imposition but a natural psychological reaction to archetypal structures inherent in the psyche. Singer (1969: 327-331) elucidates that the most prominent archetype connecting psychology and

religion is the Self, which Jung envisioned as the primary organising factor of the mind. The Self unifies the conscious and unconscious, manifesting in religious symbols, ideas of completeness, and transcendent experiences. This paradigm is often externalised to deities, salvation, and sacred symbols in various religious traditions. The spiritual search represents a metaphorical journey towards integration and individuation, a psychological process of achieving wholeness. Singer (1969: 331) contends that both religion and psychology are experiencing changes. The symbols and doctrines of historical religious traditions may no longer resonate, yet the psychological needs they fulfilled endure. Consequently, psychology must re-establish its focus on religious experience, not as theology, but as an expression of the psyche's symbolic existence.

According to Faller (2001) the interaction between religion and psychology contained both reductionist critiques and phenomenological openness. For instance, cognitive psychologists have criticised religion for its dependence on supernatural explanations and illogical cognitive biases. Someone might contend that religious convictions frequently avoid refutation and may foster in-group prejudices or magical reasoning (Faller, 2001: 21-23) In this context, psychology may serve as a clarifying agent, aiming to elucidate what religion obscures. Nevertheless, as Faller (2001: 23) emphasises, this critique has evolved. Over time, numerous psychologists acknowledged that religious traditions may encompass psychologically significant concepts, including moral frameworks, communal connections, and rituals that promote mental well-being. According to Faller (2001: 25), religion has influenced psychology, particularly in the realms of existential, humanistic, and transpersonal traditions. He analysed Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and archetypes as well as Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, which underscores the significance of meaning. Faller (2001: 26) asserts that religion and psychology are more interwoven and transdisciplinary. Rather than elucidating religion, scholars in the psychology of religion today examine its functions, variations, and psychological correlates. Faller (2001: 27-31) posits that religion and psychology converge in four ways. (a) Therapists are increasingly acknowledging that clients' spiritual beliefs influence their identity and coping strategies (spirituality and mental health). Integrative therapies, such as spiritually integrated psychotherapy, acknowledge and incorporate clients' religious beliefs. (b) Religious narratives offer cognitive frameworks for understanding suffering, mortality, and uncertainty, topics also explored by psychology. (c) Kohlberg's phases of moral reasoning and Erikson's psychosocial stages generally align with the moral growth frameworks of religious systems. (d) Psychological studies indicate that

religious involvement fosters community, social support, and a sense of belonging (community and belonging).

Although psychology traditionally stems from a secular, empirical perspective and religion from a spiritual or metaphysical framework, the two fields are increasingly converging in significant and mutually beneficial manners. Hayes and Cowie (2005: 28) contend that although scepticism towards religion remains prevalent in mainstream psychology, a more constructive relationship has emerged—particularly within counselling psychology—via the conceptual link of spirituality. Modern counselling psychology underscores the significance of the client's subjective process of meaning-making, which often encompasses spiritual considerations. Transpersonal psychology and humanistic therapy explicitly recognise spiritual growth as an aspect of psychological rehabilitation. Hayes and Cowie (2005: 28-32) are of the opinion that psychology and religion must be used to help individuals' lives ethically and meaningfully. The emerging consensus posits that spirituality should be incorporated into psychological theory and practice as a supplement to scientific inquiry that encompasses the full spectrum of human experience. The transpersonal perspective, which encompasses the psyche, inner development, and peak experiences, offers alternatives for integrating spirituality into treatment without requiring religious commitment. This experiential and comprehensive approach acknowledges the personal, social, and existential aspects of spirituality. The interaction between psychology and religion should be expanded, not merged. Religion offers millennia of ultimate contemplation, while psychology offers observation, analysis, and practice. They emphasise the path towards transcendence, integrity, and restoration (Hayes & Cowie, 2005: 32-33).

5. Psychology from Islamic Perspective

From the Islamic perspective, all humans share a common origin, the nafs (self or living entity). The nafs is a cohesive entity including biological, psychological, and spiritual aspects of existence bestowed by the Creator. Its reference in the Quran pertains to "the shared origin of all humanity" (Ansari, 2012: 340). Islamic psychology, known as 'Ilm al-Nafs', is primarily the examination of the soul (nafs), intellect, and behaviour in alignment with Islamic doctrines and epistemology. It notably contrasts with secular psychology, which is fundamentally based on materialist and empiricist frameworks. Islamic psychology incorporates the divine wisdom from the Qur'an and Sunnah with the factual and rational perspectives of modern science, creating a comprehensive framework that includes the

spiritual, moral, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of humanity (Rassool, 2021: 11). Rassool (2021: 12) claims that traditional Islamic psychology was mainly about spiritual growth, focussing on 'tazkiyat al-nafs' (purification of the soul) and improving one's ethics. This approach perceives the human being as a dual entity—physical and spiritual—necessitating alignment with heavenly guidance for psychological well-being. Classical Muslim philosophers, like al-Ghazali, al-Razi, and Ibn al-Qayyim, examined the study of the self as a theological and psychological pursuit, emphasising the relationship between the lower self (nafs al-ammārah) and the spiritual heart (qalb). Modern Islamic psychology developed partly as a response to the dominance of Western psychology in Muslim-majority cultures, where local thinkers like Malik Badri (2018) criticised Western psychology for being "soulless" and too focused on secular ideas. The Islamization of knowledge movement aimed to restore psychology within an Islamic framework, highlighting Tawhid (the oneness of God) as its epistemological basis. Islamic psychology is not simply an adaptation of Western theories; it is a discipline that aims to comprehend human nature, behaviour, and emotional existence from the perspective of divine revelation, moral responsibility, and spiritual purpose—rooting mental health in submission to Allah and the purification of the soul (Rassool, 2021: 13-15).

Rothman and Coyle (2018) propose an Islamic epistemology and cosmology-based soul model for indigenous Islamic psychology. The authors propose a genuine Islamic conceptualisation of the human psyche, based on traditional Islamic sources and confirmed by qualitative investigation, acknowledging that previous attempts to integrate Islam and psychology have mostly adopted Western paradigms. Their resultant model comprises four fundamental components: the nature, structure, stages, and development of the soul. At the core of the approach is the notion of 'fitrah', the innate essence of humanity, which is intrinsically pure and directed towards God. However, worldly distractions and misalignment obscure this inherent propensity, necessitating a psychological and spiritual effort for realignment (Rothman & Coyle, 2018: 1741-1743).

Islamic psychology is a holistic, spiritually grounded framework for comprehending human nature, behaviour, and mental health, founded on Qur'anic epistemology and the principle of tawḥīd (divine unity). Haque (1998: 110) contends that contemporary Western psychology, characterised by empiricism and atheism, has systematically marginalised religion, limiting human beings to mechanistic frameworks and omitting the spiritual aspect from scientific exploration. This movement is exemplified in the works of Freud, Skinner, and others who regarded religious belief as abnormal or

superstitious. Conversely, Islam regards religious experience as fundamental to human growth and prosperity. Haque (1998: 110-111) promotes the Islamization of psychology, which involves realigning psychological theory and practice with Islamic metaphysics and ethical philosophy. This process entails reinterpreting fundamental psychological principles, examining classical Islamic texts, and incorporating religious values into therapeutic practices and research. The objective is not to dismiss science but to integrate empirical investigation with spiritual insight, thereby developing a psychology that is both scientifically sound and spiritually significant. Haque (1998: 110) underscores the necessity for institutional reforms, curriculum integration, and interdisciplinary collaboration to develop an Islamic psychological framework. This approach seeks not just treatment or correction but also the ultimate goal of human existence: the attainment of divine purpose and inner equilibrium (al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah) in both temporal and eternal contexts (Haque; 1998: 110-111).

Conclusion

The complex relationship between psychology and religion illustrates a dynamic interaction between empirical investigation and metaphysical reflection. Historically characterised by friction and mutual distrust, these two fields have progressively advanced towards nuanced interaction and partial integration, especially in areas where human meaning-making, moral development, and inner change intersect. The traditional distinction between religion as a spiritual metaphysical realm and psychology as an empirical behavioural discipline has been challenged by philosophical critiques and modern advancements in psychological theory and practice. Although positivist traditions in psychology have historically marginalised or diminished religious phenomena, contemporary frameworks—such as humanistic, existential, and transpersonal—have reintegrated spirituality and religion as essential elements of psychological well-being.

The research's essential argument is the epistemological divide between psychology, which relies on scientific methods, and religion, which is based on revelation, faith, and symbolic interpretation. Nonetheless, these epistemologies need not be mutually exclusive. Jung's notion of the collective unconscious provides a mediating framework in which religious symbols and archetypes are perceived as universal mental structures inherent to humanity. Likewise, researchers like Singer and Faller emphasise that religion and psychology both address significant issues about the essence of the self, the pursuit of meaning, and ethical development. The intersection

of religious narratives with psychological dimensions in domains such as moral reasoning, social belonging, and resilience demonstrates the potential for reciprocal enrichment when these fields interact with respect. Recent developments in psychology—especially in the counselling, psychotherapy, and mental health fields—have increasingly recognised the importance of clients' spiritual and religious perspectives. Integrative methodologies, which acknowledge spirituality as a facet of human experience, demonstrate that psychological theory and practice can no longer marginalise religion. Furthermore, empirical evidence now confirms the beneficial impact of religious involvement on psychological well-being, resilience, and communal cohesion. Conversely, psychology provides religion with analytical instruments for comprehending belief, ritual, and religious experience, thus enhancing theological reflection and pastoral care.

The incorporation of Islamic psychology expands the investigative scope, demonstrating how diverse epistemological and cosmological frameworks can transform the comprehension of the mind. The Islamic notions of nafs, qalb, and fitrah emphasise a spiritually rooted psychology that unifies body, intellect, and soul. Islamic psychology perceives the self as a moral and spiritual creature directed towards a divine purpose, in contrast to secular paradigms that reduce human consciousness to neurochemical processes or conditioned behaviours. Scholars like Haque, Rassool, and Rothman offer persuasive frameworks that challenge the secularisation of psychology and promote the reunification of ethical, spiritual, and metaphysical aspects rooted in Islamic revelation.

In conclusion, conversations and relationships between psychology and religion are not only feasible but also necessary. In light of the intricate crises of morality, identity, and meaning that humanity is currently facing, neither domain is sufficient in isolation. The potential to provide a more profound understanding of the human condition is present through the integration of scientific insight with spiritual wisdom. This interdisciplinary border must be further investigated in future research, with a shared commitment to human flourishing, critical reflection, and mutual respect.

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CHAPTER 10

FREDERIC WILHELM NIETZSCHE'S CRITIQUE OF CHRISTIANITY

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Abstract

Our study, titled "Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity," seeks to address the question of what exactly lies at the heart of Nietzsche's problem with Christianity—a thinker who occupies a significant place in the history of philosophy with his famous declaration that "God is dead." Building on this central question, the aim of the study is to demonstrate that the widespread assumption, common in some circles, that Nietzsche was hostile to religion and to the idea of God, is in fact inaccurate. Accordingly, the study attempts to show that although Nietzsche has often been accused in philosophical circles of being distant from, or even opposed to, religion, he was not genuinely an enemy of religion as such; rather, his critiques primarily targeted Christianity. In this regard, an effort has been made to employ a descriptive method. Since Nietzsche was not a systematic philosopher, his thought has been subject to diverse interpretations, which in turn creates certain limitations when attempting to determine precisely what his ideas correspond to. His writing style contributes to this difficulty: it is philosophical, yet at the same time poetic and literary. Both his non-systematic approach and his distinctive style pose significant challenges to fully understanding him. Nevertheless, a fundamental judgment that can be

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drawn from his works is that Nietzsche was not opposed to all religions, but that he engaged in a profound confrontation specifically with Christianity. Nietzsche criticizes Christianity because, in his view, it cuts the human being off from action, severs one's connection with this world, and encourages stagnation instead of struggle. I believe that identifying this central point adds an original contribution to the study. From this perspective, it should be emphasized that Nietzsche was not an enemy of religion per se; rather, his essential problem lay with Christianity, and the study seeks to explain this in detail. In sum, this work is an attempt to dispel the common misunderstandings surrounding Nietzsche by examining his critique of Christianity from various perspectives.

Keywords: Sociology of institutions, Christianity, God is dead, nihilism, decadence

1. Introduction

Religions can be described as belief systems that have been part of life since the beginning of humankind's journey on Earth. Religions reveal their importance in human life by providing answers regarding the organization of life, the acceptance of certain beliefs about the afterlife, and, in particular, by offering satisfying discourses on the existential nature of human beings. In this regard, religions become one of the important dynamics of human life.

Nietzsche, who not only influenced his own era but also influenced existentialism and postmodernism in the period that followed, expressed important ideas on religion. Anyone who knows anything about him has definitely heard the phrase "God is dead." This phrase, along with Nietzsche's opposition to religion, contains more than just a phrase he uttered in a moment. Accordingly, the phrase *God is dead* is an important clue that allows us to understand his views on religion within the framework of his philosophical approach. With the phrase "God is dead," Nietzsche essentially declares his reckoning with the Christian God; it is not a matter of Nietzsche having any quarrel with other gods or religions. Behind his declaration of the death of the Christian God lies the idea that this religion is based on suffering in the person of Jesus Christ. According to him, this religious understanding, based on suffering, detaches man from the world and therefore from movement, life, and the desires of the body, and this situation causes man to be defined as a bloody living being. When Nietzsche's concepts of Apollo and Dionysus are considered, it is seen that Christianity has no connection whatsoever with the Dionysian aspect of humanity, and this is an important reason for his stance against religion. For while the Apollonian aspect represents human

prudence, reason, and common sense, Dionysus, on the contrary, represents human sexuality, enthusiasm, art, instinct, and emotion, demonstrating that humans are directly alive and involved in life. Nietzsche's stance against religion is undoubtedly not limited to this; he will also point to Christianity as the fundamental source of nihilism, decadence, herd morality, and degradation.

2. The Death of God or the Upsetting of Values

When Nietzsche's name is mentioned, two important statements generally come to mind. The first is the phrase *God is Dead*, and the second is the statement on Nihilism, which we will discuss later. Here, in order to better reflect Nietzsche's philosophy and his critique of Christianity, it is necessary to first focus on the statement "God is dead." What does his statement "God is dead" mean? Or, since a dead god requires an agent, who killed him? The question of who is more important than the question of what. Because the question of what presents us with the situation; the question of who presents us with the perpetrator. Accordingly, rather than discussing and evaluating God's death, it is extremely important to discover the perpetrator responsible for this event.

When Nietzsche says God is dead, he does not mean a god with theological foundations, as understood in the history of religions. Rather, he means a god in whom people place their hopes, from whom they seek help, who gives meaning to their existence, and to whom, in the words of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), they take refuge. It is not another god who intends to kill God and his sanctity, but man himself. Accordingly, man has become the murderer of God. In Nietzsche's words: "God is dead! God is dead! And we have killed him! We, the most vicious of all murderers, how shall we con (Pearson, 2011, p. 24) sole ourselves?" (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 130). The most significant problem created by God's death here is the emergence of a void and the loss of meaning in human existence. In other words, the absence of the value judgments embodied in God, the absence of faith, which is the most fundamental thing that gives meaning to life, reveals a great deficiency for human existence. The meaning of human life... (Küçükalp, 2005, p. 36).

It is a known fact that from the moment humans embark on their earthly journey, they are in search of meaning along with their basic physiological needs. It is clear that the search for meaning constantly occupies the human mind, not only for life but also for death and beyond. So, if there is no God in this search for meaning, what situation might humans encounter? In other words, for a human who tries to give meaning to life through the existence

of God, how can meaning be constructed in the absence of God? Keith Ansell Pearson, who has done important work on Nietzsche, asks one of these questions we might face with the death of God in his book The Perfect Nihilist:

"If God is dead, and we have lost the traditional metaphysical-moral structure that gave meaning to existence and provided it with purpose, how can we now interpret the world and give meaning to our lives? How can we endure and overcome such an experience?" (Pearson, 2011, p. 24).

Pointing to Christianity as the cause of God's death, Nietzsche essentially addressed issues such as the emergence of a culture of suffering, detachment from life, the disappearance of values, apathy, herd morality, and the insincerity of preachers. As is well known, all religions and beliefs, even if they prioritize the otherworld, do not completely disregard this world. For human existence is worldly in the sense that it is flesh and blood and has physiological needs. Being worldly necessitates work, shelter, and the continuation of the species. That being the case, denying the world and its contents is not only irrational but also inhumane. Because any lifestyle that cannot be disciplined, overcome, or have its needs met will manifest itself in a more negative way. The novel The Name of the Rose by the important thinker Umberto Eco is a work worth remembering in this regard. In this work, monks who completely isolate themselves from life, despise and humiliate their bodies, and try to elevate their souls exploit young children who come to the monastery for education. This situation stems from the contempt for the human body and problematic human relationships. Here, we see Nietzsche diverging from the Platonic and Christian understanding of humanity, and it is clear that this is why he targets Christianity. However, it is known that disregarding emotions, impulses, and many other characteristics that inherently give existence and meaning to the body also means disregarding the human being. According to him, Christianity has dealt the greatest blow to human existence by despising the body and even disregarding it at times.

Based on Nietzsche's idea that God is dead, it can be seen that the disappearance of authentic religious belief has placed suffering at the center and, as a result, has also separated humans from life. According to him, the fundamental idea that causes humans to be separated from this world and always places belief in the afterlife is suffering (Nietzsche, 1964, p. 49). And the institution that preaches this suffering the most is Christianity. Of course, suffering is a necessary emotion that humans encounter in life and that sometimes enables them to mature. But according to Nietzsche, Christianity sanctifies suffering because of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

and the suffering he experienced at that moment; it negates life. Any life that is negated becomes a place to be avoided, ignored, and even unacceptable for human existence.

Nietzsche believes that Christianity's approach, based on suffering, also leads people to apathy. Christianity, which undermines the sanctity of God, sometimes recommends that people live away from society rather than directly within it. However, in this situation, humans cannot establish healthy communication with other humans and become isolated from them. To isolate oneself completely from society essentially means to isolate oneself directly. Especially after the death of God, death preachers who call humans to the afterlife rather than to life emerge as important figures here.

There is a group of people whom Nietzsche says became more visible with the death of God, and these are the death preachers. They are people who advise others to withdraw from life and invite them to the dizzying world of death and the afterlife (Nietzsche, 2010a, p. 61). Although they preach about death, they are people who try to exploit life in every way. According to Nietzsche, these preachers not only mislead individuals and society, but they can also control them and steer them in whatever direction they desire. Thus, they establish their own power and manipulate religious institutions.

According to Nietzsche, another negative consequence of Christianity is the emergence of the herd mentality. He defines herd people as those whose ties to life have been severed, particularly by Christian clergy, who preach to them about death and the afterlife. The herd person is someone who, potentially unaware of the power of their soul and lacking the courage to act upon it, plays the role assigned to them by the clergy but is not yet themselves. Nietzsche uses the following expressions for herd people:

"The herd animal is not sick in itself. It is even priceless, but it needs a shepherd because it lacks the ability to govern itself—and priests understand this. The state is not sincere enough, not secret enough. It escapes this situation by directing conscience. So, are herd animals made sick by priests in this way?" (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 203).

Here, Nietzsche expresses that herd people, whose existence is restricted by clergymen, need a power to rule them. According to him, power and its institutions establish domination over people by appealing to their emotions rather than their minds. As a result of this domination, instead of a human being who is free and a candidate for becoming a superhuman, a herd human emerges who has been made sick, whose hope has been consumed, and who

has been largely disconnected from life and infected with death and the beyond. According to Nietzsche, the situation that arose with Christianity's declaration of the death of God is the visibility of its own power. In other words, the religion that eliminated God has itself become a god and has gained infinite power over people.

Nietzsche pointed out that many institutions also suffered from the death of God. According to him, the removal or even elimination of a God who was above everything and possessed absolute power, who gave meaning to humanity and the world, also had a negative impact on the institutions under his rule and influence. So, what are these institutions? Nietzsche states that Christianity affected not only humans but also institutions that are important for society. According to him, religion, education, morality, tradition, justice, media, politics, and other instruments of the state are institutions. With Christianity killing God, religion became monopolized by preachers, priests, and other clergy, and as a result, it became politicized. On the other hand, educational institutions also suffered from the death of God. According to Nietzsche, since the current understanding of education is based on both general and technical education, it only produces people who understand technical work. General education, on the other hand, acts on the promise of providing education to everyone, thus creating a uniform type of person and posing an obstacle to the existence of the superhuman, which Nietzsche valued. According to him, since philosophy, literature, poetry, and classical languages have no place in the technical education curriculum, it produces a type of person who understands only technical matters but is distant from cultural codes. And here, the fundamental purpose of education becomes the standardization of people and material gains (Nietzsche, 2010c, p. 27). Therefore, in an environment where education is distant from a cultural perspective, philosophy, poetry, classical languages, debate, critical thinking, literature, and classical texts become insignificant.

3. Religion as a Source of Decadence

In his problem with religion, Nietzsche did not target all religions, but rather subjected to criticism those aspects of religion that had been stripped of their essence, emptied of meaning, deprived of movement, based on suffering, and grounded not in the real but in a metaphysical realm. His criticism can be seen as a direct result of his stance on Christianity. According to Nietzsche, Christianity, which acts differently from the true perception of religion and therefore causes the greatest harm to religion, is the culprit. This harm caused by Christianity did not occur suddenly but gradually.

Nietzsche, emphasizes decadence as one of the stages brought about by Christianity. The concept of decadence is derived from the French word Decadere and means collapse and decline. In a fundamental sense, Nietzsche's concept can be expressed as the impoverishment of life, the desire for the otherworld, and the collapse of morality accompanied by great fatigue (Nietzsche, 2010d, pp. 15–16). In this respect, the state of decadence pointed out by Nietzsche is imagined as a disease that has directly infiltrated life and is trying to take it over. According to him, this situation is something that must be experienced, like the biological course of human life, but from which lessons must be learned. Indeed, human existence is constantly confronted with collapses, joys, sorrows, and life experiences from birth to death. In this situation, it becomes important for humans to change both their own and their society's direction and to overcome this state of decadence.

This state of sickness that has permeated society manifests itself in many institutions related to society. The failure of these institutions, which shape the character of society, such as religion, education, culture, and morality, to develop an update over time leads to their devaluation, emptying, and even decay (Baykan, 2000, p. 16). This situation has also been emphasized by Ibn Khaldun, one of the important figures of Islamic thought. According to him, it is normal for societies to be born, grow, and eventually die, but societies that develop themselves and keep up with the times can have longer lifespans. Therefore, the social reality described by Ibn Khaldun is an important observation that Nietzsche did not overlook. He believed that humans and societies could escape the state of decadence they had fallen into through awareness and action (Baykan, 2000, p. 16). What Nietzsche means by movement here is the Will to Power transformed into action. For this reason, he always keeps movement on the agenda, sometimes pointing to its importance through the Will to Power and sometimes through vitality, emphasizing the necessity for human existence to be in constant motion, both individually and socially, overcoming obstacles and the difficulties of life (Nietzsche, 2015, p. 12). His positioning of the idea of movement in such an important place and his view that it is essential for overcoming decadence stems from his struggle with Christianity. Nietzsche states that the Christian religion belittles life, that it is not the place of truth, and moreover, that it is a valley of tears, cutting man off from movement and, as a result, giving rise to a state of decadence (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2017, p. 451).

It is clear from this that decadence is not a condition but a consequence. Accordingly, decadence is a cultural, religious, sociological, and psychological condition that emerges with the spread of problems in social institutions and individual life and permeates everything. According to Nietzsche, the source

of this decadence is Platonism and Christianity. Platonism's conceptualization of everything as fixed from an epistemological, ontological, and ethical perspective has almost eliminated the physical characteristics of human beings that Nietzsche valued highly, such as feelings, impulses, and passions. For every idealized epistemology, ontology, and ethical issue is not only a blow to the individual's subjective reality but also an attempt to eliminate the Dionysian side of human existence. Considering that both the Apollonian side, with its characteristics such as common sense and prudence, and the Dionysian side are fundamental dynamics that constitute the bipolar nature of human existence, the absence of one of them will constitute a deficiency in terms of human evolution and interrupt human existence's efforts to become superhuman.

Ultimately, what causes the emergence of decadence is Christianity, along with the Platonic tradition. According to Nietzsche, Christianity is one of the main actors of decadence. He states that religion, particularly in the person of Jesus Christ, produced a sociology of suffering and that this suffering caused people to develop a desire and expectation for the afterlife rather than the world. In such a situation, a human being who has lost hope in life, who cannot bear to live there, who has lost the ability to act, will emerge. Nietzsche uses the term herd man for this type of human being and directly points to religion as the source of herd mentality. Therefore, decadence, or decay, finds its place in a medium that Christianity has corrupted and degenerated.

4. Nihilism and Christianity

When addressing the relationship between religion and philosophy, Nietzsche presents us with another important concept. This concept is Nihilism. According to him, this concept is extremely important in the relationship between religion and philosophy, and understanding this relationship also shows what religion means and what it is capable of, specifically in Nietzsche's Christianity.

This concept, which is nihilismus in German, nihilisme in French, nihilism in English, and nihil in Latin, means to oppose systems and institutions that are considered valuable (Akarsu, 1998, p. 95). The origin of the word always implies opposition and destruction. However, according to Nietzsche, this destruction is not a common occurrence but rather a result of decadence, i.e., decay. In other words, if decadence is decay, then nihilism is the result of this decay. He believes that nihilism occurs in three stages, and Christianity is the primary cause of its emergence. This is because Christianity, which causes

decadence, or decay, is also responsible for the consequences that follow decay. Nietzsche states that nihilism occurs in three stages. In the first stage, he focuses on Buddhism and Christianity, stating that they are nihilistic religions. Buddhism's acceptance of Nirvana as the sole goal requires human beings to withdraw from/distance themselves from many worldly pleasures. According to this, the result of a life detached from reality is nihilism. At the same time, Christianity's attribution of high value to its conceptions of God and the afterlife and its assertion of them as truth, according to Nietzsche, expresses the disconnect between reality and fantasy. He believes that Christianity's tendency to push this world into the background and bring the afterlife to the forefront is a great delusion.

What Nietzsche sees as the second stage of nihilism is the loss of credibility of the Judeo-Christian way of life in its attempts to understand and interpret the world. The loss of faith has caused a moral-psychological void and crisis among people. According to him, in this situation where faith is lost, trust in all kinds of institutions considered valuable by society disappears, and a state of emptiness emerges. Therefore, the situation that arises as a result of the loss of faith is nihilism.

In the third stage of nihilism described by Nietzsche, there is a different meaning compared to the two negative stages explained earlier. According to him, this third stage has a more positive quality. In other words, in this stage, a positive aspect of nihilism can be discovered through awareness. At this stage, the opportunity to break free from traditional and religious understandings and the crises they cause may emerge (Baykan, 2000, pp. 73–74). In this respect, nihilism refers to a matter with philosophical and sociological foundations rather than the concept popularly used and conceptualized as nothingness. Some conceptual confusion in the field of philosophy or the acceptance of certain views as absolute truths form the philosophical manifestations of nihilism, while the rudeness, indifference, and insensitivity that are widespread in society can also be counted among the sociological manifestations of nihilism. Therefore, Nietzsche's emphasis on nihilism comes to the fore here and necessitates a new definition. According to him, nihilism is the degradation of supreme values by their own intrinsic values. In other words, it is fundamentally a project of devaluing what is sacred and destroying it (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 24). According to Nietzsche, Platonism, one of the philosophical systems, and Christianity, which later appeared on the historical stage, are not only directly responsible for decadence but also the cause of a great void and devaluation. This state of emptiness has manifested itself in both individuals and society. This nihilistic situation has manifested itself especially in the form of social sorrow, widespread despair,

and moral decay (Pearson, 2011, p. 58). Furthermore, Christianity has lost its original purpose, which should have been a constructive dynamic in society, and instead has appeared in a form that leads society to decay. According to Nietzsche, Christianity has existed not as something sacred or accepted as sacred discourse, perceived or presented to us by clergy, but as an institution that has been manipulated, causing decay and emptiness (Nietzsche, 2010a, p. 14).

Nietzsche highlighted the negative impact of Christianity on humanity by emphasizing that this decay, which affects both the individual and society, was dictated by preachers within the religious institution and by the masses in society. For Christianity not only weakens humanity but also drives it to submission, surrender, and resignation. At the same time, it prevents humans from seeing themselves as inferior and from acting freely (Copleston, 1996, p. 164). In this process, which began with humans killing God, the sacred has been devalued, and as a result, God and the religious institution, which were a refuge, a source of hope, and a harbor for humans, have evaporated. Where there is no God and no religious institution, great wounds and voids have formed in human existence. In such a situation, because humans have become devoid of purpose in their relationship with the world, they have not only begun to see the world as unliveable, but have also dared to disregard the world, thereby cutting off their own existence from movement (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 31). Here, the issue of movement constitutes an important crossroads in Nietzsche's philosophy. For Christianity, founded on suffering in the person of Jesus Christ, disparages the body and therefore the world, not only destroying man's search for meaning on earth but also severing him from his own purpose of existence. Another situation that a human existence deprived of meaning and purpose will encounter is moral collapse.

According to Nietzsche, morality, one of the important areas where nihilism manifests itself, is another institution that has suffered from Christianity's blow. The idea that Christianity confined morality to the dilemma of sin and virtue also brings with it a questioning of the origins of nihilism. For Christianity, which places humans within two fundamental religious frameworks, sin and virtue, has not only damaged their subjectivity; it has also negatively affected their emotional and impulsive sides, causing people to become individuals with herd morality. Because humans, forced to choose between pure good and sin, have harmed their own subjectivity and have been compelled to perform all their actions within the context of this dilemma. They have also planned their actions within this context. Christianity's understanding of clergy, contempt for the body, and focus solely on the afterlife is extremely harmful to the biological aspect of humans. This

is because the human body is related to nutrition, shelter, and procreation, as well as desire, the will to power, and instincts. Christianity, however, ignored these aspects and greatly damaged the relationship between the body and life, which Nietzsche considered important (Baykan, 2000, p. 75).

Considering that Christianity is the source of nihilism, which directly affects human and social life, it can be seen that human existence also causes nihilism. For what emerged in European societies along with decadence was hopelessness, the displacement of the sacred, excessive alcohol consumption, wars, social events, and aimlessness. It expresses a result rather than a cause, a reaction rather than an influence. This situation in European society, where they pushed themselves into aimlessness and emptiness with their own hands, affected all kinds of institutions they possessed, whether it be the church, the university, or other institutions of the state, and this led to the beginning of a process that was very difficult to reverse.

Nietzsche explains the nihilistic situation that has emerged, particularly in Europe, and which has spread like a disease, as follows: "Herein lies the fate of Europe: we are losing our love for humanity along with our fear of it; our deep respect for it, our hope, our desire for it. The appearance of humanity now fills us with weariness. What is Nothingness (Nihilism) today, if not this? We are weary of humanity..." (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 58).

According to Nietzsche, this nihilistic situation heralded by the death of God declares the death of human morality, instincts, purpose of existence, will to live, the weakening of the spirit, and the destruction of the sacred that one believed in and clung to. However, a person who is truly aware of this nihilism and sees its causes and consequences will also be capable of active philosophy. Because although nihilism appears before us as a result, from Nietzsche's perspective, it is not a matter of pessimistic acceptance, and nihilism brings with it an enlightenment and awareness within itself. Nietzsche expresses this point as follows:

"Why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have held until now are drawing their final conclusions; because nihilism represents the final logical confusion of our great values and ideals; because we must experience nihilism in order to understand how valuable these 'values' really are. Sometimes we want new values." (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 22).

Nietzsche states that the nihilistic situation, for which he claims Christianity is primarily responsible, brings about an awareness here. According to him, what stands before us here is the threshold where the power of the spirit is

now recognized, where new values are attempted to replace decayed ones, and where the power of the spirit is ultimately felt at a high level. What follows this threshold is active nihilism. According to him, in this situation where escape from nihilism is impossible, active nihilism, which makes its presence felt through individual awareness, advises people to destroy the values they believe in. Proceeding from this point, nihilism, which heralds the destruction of Christianity and Europe's corrupt institutions and value judgments, heralds a new dawn, a higher human species, like the Phoenix rising from its ashes (Copleston, 1996, p. 165).

According to Nietzsche, nihilism emerges not as a cause but rather as a process and consequence in a decadent society. Because every individual and social life engulfed by decay is doomed to lose in the battle against this pathological state, with few exceptions. He believes that in this situation, where values and institutions are decaying due to Christianity, despair, loss of faith in the sacred, increased alcohol consumption, individual and social grief, and corrupt morality will emerge, along with all kinds of philosophical and religious discourse imagined as truth. He considers this type of nihilism to be passive nihilism. Passive nihilism is a state in which the spirit is weakened and almost lost (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 37). Here, along with the loss of the spirit's power, there is disappointment, loneliness, depression, withdrawal, weariness, and unease created by the moral worldview (Baykan, 2000, p. 77). Therefore, the nihilism caused by Christianity will continue to produce herd mentality and slave morality as long as human consciousness does not emerge. However, despite all these negatives, people who are aware of the will to power, who value life, and who are conscious of their bodies as well as their souls will be exceptions. Therefore, making a choice here will also change one's destiny.

To escape the adverse conditions of nihilism caused by Christianity, the individual who makes a choice affirms life by becoming aware of their own existence. This type of person is aware of the suffering that Christianity advocates and places at the center of life, yet they have not severed their connection to life. Nietzsche emphasized that a person who is aware of decay and the nihilism it creates, thanks to a healthy body and Apollonian wisdom, must attack outdated values and institutions. As a result, he recommended replacing fragmented values and institutions with new ones. Although Nietzsche presents a pessimistic picture in the context of nihilism, he also offers a way of salvation. This situation, in which Nietzsche heralds salvation for humanity, is active nihilism. Accordingly, active nihilism brings with it an awareness of morality, belief in God, and submission (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 61). In this context, active nihilism, which Nietzsche presents as a hope

or a way out and which, if overcome by humans, makes it possible to move towards the superhuman, is the roadmap for humans who can build their own existence through their own efforts.

5. Christian Ethics and Nietzsche's Criticism

One of the most important aspects of Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity is undoubtedly the issue of ethics. According to him, Christianity has brought human ethics to the brink of great decay. Undoubtedly, this situation has both historical and philosophical foundations. Historically, the problem began with Platonism (428-348 BC), which based its epistemology, ontology, and ethics on immutable ideas. Plato's philosophy, which attempted to be constructed with concepts such as idea, ideal politics, and ideal morality, is the philosophical system that Nietzsche opposed and found wrong. Epistemologically, Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of knowledge formed by human subjective experiences rather than an absolute idea, claiming that the emotional and impulsive state of the human being also has an effect on events. Accordingly, in the construction of knowledge, the emotional states of human beings influence the emergence of reality. Therefore, a reality that is subjective and does not ignore human experiences is considered more acceptable than a purely scientific reality. In an ontological context, influenced by Heraclitus (535-475 BC), Nietzsche accepts that existence is not as solid as it is believed to be, but rather variable, and expresses that life is also in a great flow. According to him, ethics is different from the morality of happiness that Plato saw as the ultimate goal.

Because Plato's ethics are more abstract and detached from life. According to Nietzsche, Plato idealized everything and neglected the subjective experience of human existence, emotions, and impulses. However, humans, influenced by their circumstances and environment, can react differently to the same events and interpret them in different ways. Given this, Nietzsche not only refuses to accept the philosophy of Platonism and its specific understanding of ethics, but goes so far as to reject it outright. He presents the relationship between Platonism and ethics as follows:

"In Plato's ethics, there is something that does not actually belong to Plato but is only found in philosophy. Despite Plato, it can be said that: That is, Socratism, which is very noble to him, no one does evil to himself, so all evils are done unintentionally. Because a bad person can do evil to himself: If he knew that evil was evil, he would not do it. Therefore, the bad is bad only because it is wrong; if the wrong is removed, it can necessarily be made good. This kind of reasoning frightens the ordinary person, who sees only

unpleasant consequences in bad actions and judges that 'bad actions are foolish,' equating 'good' with what is useful and accepted, without thinking too much..." (Nietzsche & İnam, 2015, p. 104).

According to Nietzsche, the condition for being moral here is equated with being knowledgeable. This is an important point raised by Socrates in the history of philosophy. According to Socrates, a knowledgeable person cannot do evil (Akşit, 2018, pp. 23–40). Evil stems only from ignorance. Socrates' student Plato continued this view, stating that when something good or bad is idealized and one has knowledge about it, it is impossible for something bad to emerge. However, Nietzsche, unlike these views, states that what causes good and evil to emerge stems from the situation one finds oneself in, rather than from an epistemological understanding. Therefore, Nietzsche criticizes Platonism by stating that morality cannot be explained by being knowledgeable and idealized.

Another understanding of morality that Nietzsche criticizes in the historical process is Christianity. According to him, Christianity has prevented the emergence of moral action by immobilizing humans, consuming their hope, and turning them into purposeless beings. For morality to exist, both freedom and action are necessary. It is pointless to talk about morality in a place where there is no action or movement. Christianity has restricted human freedom and prevented action by imprisoning humans between sin and virtue. In this case, if there is no freedom and no subjective movement for humans, it becomes impossible to speak of morality. Nietzsche offers a new morality in opposition to the moral understanding offered by Christianity. This morality is the Master-Slave morality. According to him, one of the starting points of Christianity is to enslave humans. This project of enslavement takes place particularly in the form of love, mercy, suffering, helplessness, and absolute submission to the religious formation to which one is attached. Absolute submission and suffering drive humans toward slavery rather than freedom. Therefore, the fundamental point of divergence between Christianity and Nietzsche on morality will be the Will to Power. According to him, the Will to Power is: "In life—assuming that life itself is the will to power—nothing has value except the degree of power." (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 60). Nietzsche states that life is directly based on this will to power. According to him, the will to power does not mean possessing something, obtaining something, or bullying because one possesses it, but rather desiring life, being aware of the power of one's soul, and being able to turn the possibility of creating new values into action. This power is the power that directly drives human actions and separates them from the weak (Nietzsche, 2011, p. 56). At the same time, the power that potentially exists in humans gains

value depending on whether it is transformed into kinetic energy or not. If power does not manifest itself as an action in humans, it has no meaning, but if power manifests itself as an action, it has a noteworthy quality from Nietzsche's perspective. Therefore, whether power manifests itself or not determines Christianity and Nietzsche's understanding of morality. In situations where power remains potential (which is particularly associated with Christian morality), humans perform their actions because religion tells them to; here, it is submission rather than power that is at stake. However, in the Nietzschean sense, if power exists kinetically, humans become the direct cause of their own actions. Therefore, in situations where power is transformed into action, the Master Ethics, accepted as the cornerstone of Nietzsche's ethics, emerges. This will to power that emerges in people with Master Ethics can also be expressed as an inexhaustible, fertile will to life (Nietzsche, 2010a, p. 131).

According to Nietzsche, people with master morality move society toward change and transformation, taking it beyond the nihilistic phase caused by Christianity. Here, people emerge who transcend herd mentality, overturn all kinds of religious and traditional life teachings imposed on them, and produce new values in their place. Nietzsche explains the outcome of this will to power found in people with master morality as follows:

Well, do you know what "the world" means to me? Shall I show you in my mirror? This world is an energy monster, without beginning, without end; a power that is solid and iron, neither growing nor shrinking, not expanding itself, only transforming itself, a house as a whole, of unchangeable dimensions, with no expenditures or losses, but also with no increase or income; a house surrounded on all sides by "nothingness" like a border; not something blurred or spent, not something extended into infinity, but established as a specific power in a specific place, not in a space that could be empty here or there, but as power everywhere, as a game of powers and a wave of powers, simultaneously both one and many, increasing here and decreasing elsewhere; repeating over the years, a sea of forces that eternally changes, eternally flows back, flows into each other and races, with a tide in their own forms; striving to go from the simplest forms to the most complex, from the quietest, most solid, coldest forms to the hottest, most chaotic, most internally contradictory forms, and then emerging from this abundance, affirming itself in the same permanence of this era and these years, returning to simplicity as something that must return forever, insatiable, undisguised, inexhaustible, from the game of contradictions to the pleasure of harmony: this is my Dionysian world of eternal self-creation, self-annihilation; my mysterious world that gives double pleasure; my "beyond good and evil"

state, which has no goal until the pleasure of the circle itself becomes a goal... (Nietzsche, 2010b, p. 651).

Thanks to the Will to Power, which Nietzsche expresses here as the fundamental requirement of master morality, humans gain actionability along with the responsibility and self-confidence that comes with it. The moral style that this will to power brings forth is master morality, and the only condition that causes morality to emerge is the use of power. According to Nietzsche, master morality is a noble morality, different from the morality of Christianity, which seeks to equalize society. In master morality, the addressee is directly the individual. It is measured by the power possessed by the individual. This power is not merely physical power, but rather the highest power that the spirit can possess. Therefore, the essence of master morality is fundamentally the power of the spirit, the effort to exist on its own. Opposite master morality is slave morality, and Christianity has had a major influence on the formation of this morality. The power at the source of master morality has no place in slave morality. This is because slave morality emphasizes collective existence over individual existence. In people with slave morality, influenced by Christian discourse, weakness, meekness, and powerlessness become apparent along with this feeling, due to the prominence of suffering. Nietzsche describes the fundamental characteristics of people with slave morality as follows:

While every noble morality develops by saying yes in a victorious manner, slave morality says no to what is outside, different, and not itself from the outset. This no is its action. It is the reversal of the value-assigning gaze. This direction belongs to the feeling that is not backward, toward the self, but outward: For slave morality to exist, it generally needs an external stimulus to act, viewed from a physiological perspective, and its action is fundamentally based on reaction... (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 51).

According to Nietzsche, the weakness of people with slave morality grows in the face of the noble people's predatory attitude/behavior that tries to overcome everything. These people, who cannot possess the master morality that the nobles possess, eventually feel resentment towards them. And they create an affirmation of this weakness in their own way. This situation largely eliminates the desire for power (Nietzsche, 2010a, p. 225). The resentment caused by slave morality, which is deprived of power and steeped in hatred and jealousy, eventually results in the slave's reaction against the master. Those with a slave mentality who harbor resentment are physiologically unhappy, seek revenge, and do so against people with a master mentality (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 144).

Consequently, people with a slave morality primarily require a hostile external world to establish their place. In other words, they do not consider their own individual existence as the source of action and movement, but rather require external stimuli (Pearson, 2011, p. 167). Ultimately, the existence of emotions such as anger, resentment, and jealousy in slave morality stems from Christianity. According to Nietzsche, Christianity neglected the essence of humanity by prioritizing the importance of the group or community over individual existence. This prevented people from attaining a noble and masterful morality. Therefore, the morality that Christianity gave rise to was slave morality.

Conclusion

In the history of philosophy, Nietzsche is regarded as a philosopher distant from religion due to his famous phrase "God is Dead." Moreover, it is even claimed that he was not only distant from religion but also directly hostile toward it. However, contrary to what is commonly believed, Nietzsche was not an enemy of religion. In fact, he emphasized that religion can be valuable for both individuals and societies. Particularly with regard to the Muslims of Andalusia, the Islamic teaching of resisting injustice can be associated with the Dionysian side. At the same time, its mission to spread peace and harmony can be seen as carrying an Apollonian character.

Undoubtedly, what Nietzsche opposed was not Islam, but Christianity—a religion that, unlike Islam, ignores the will to power, longs for herd-like humanity, and is steeped in resentment, envy, and hatred. For Christianity, by declaring "God is Dead," killed not only God but also all sacred values that existed in His name. This is the central point Nietzsche emphasizes: the fate of the human being without God. What will a godless person do after this point, and where will they take refuge? For Nietzsche, this process, which he calls decadence, is decay. This decay, much like the effect of a grave illness on the human body, has spread everywhere and taken hold. Accordingly, this corruption, which has permeated every institution from the individual to society, has severed the bonds between people and institutions, alienating them from one another. Institutions vital for human life—such as religion, education, justice, media, and health—have all been affected by decadence, creating serious problems in both individual and social life. Among these problems are sorrow, despair, excessive alcohol consumption, and aimlessness.

According to Nietzsche, nihilism follows this decay brought about by Christianity. For him, nihilism is not simply a state of nothingness as is

often assumed, but rather a philosophical and sociological condition that arises as the outcome of a process. To interpret or conceptualize it merely as simple nothingness is a grave injustice to Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche describes nihilism as the result of decadence. In other words, nihilism is a concrete condition faced by human beings due to the negative effects of decadence on individuals and institutions. And the sole culprit behind this situation is Christianity.

Although the nihilism caused by Christianity appears negative, it also heralds within itself a possible way out for humanity. In Nietzsche's distinction between active and passive nihilism, those who choose the passive side are herd-like people with a slave morality. They are too weakened to step outside the truths preached by Christianity; they submit to religion and place the group's existence above their own. These people, unable to aspire to the will to power, become herd-like due to their detachment from life, their reactive stance against the noble, and most importantly, their inability to be "this-worldly." For Nietzsche, such people embody the morality of slaves.

On the other hand, the other side of nihilism is active nihilism. Unlike the passive form, active nihilism carries greater significance for human existence. It signifies an awareness that, through the will to power, becomes meaningful and harbors hope. In the nihilist state where many institutions and values are destroyed and meaning is lost, a person does not build life upon what is given but rather upon the values and propositions they themselves create. According to Nietzsche, the person who turns this awareness into action through the will to power becomes both free and endowed with a master morality. Such people, from the perspective of active nihilism, choose this life rather than the afterlife, joy rather than suffering, nobility rather than vengeance, and thus embody the morality of masters.

In conclusion, Nietzsche did not wish people to belong to the herd or possess a slave morality. Instead, he desired that they become noble and master-like, placing the will to power at the very center of their lives. Christianity, however, contrary to Nietzsche's views, seeks the emergence of individuals drained of the will to power, herd-like in mentality, and defined by slave morality. Ultimately, Nietzsche criticizes Christianity within the framework of decadence, nihilism, and the opposition between slave and master morality, aiming to reveal the negative consequences it has brought about in human and social life.

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