

THE RELIGION OF THE TURKS



BERSERKER

BOOKS



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INTRODUCTION

Religion, as in almost every society, is an important element of culture in Turkish society. It has played an active role in shaping the individual's personality. Shortly after the founding of the Ottoman Empire, Islam became established with state support. Islamic rules began to be implemented. Over a period of 600 years, Islam left its mark on all the people of Anatolia. It melted them into its pot at the cost of destroying their national consciousness. In 1908, with the constitutional monarchy, efforts to create a Turkish consciousness began. These efforts continued intensively during the Republican period. However, while this effort created a void in values among the republican intelligentsia, it also pushed the people of Anatolia to resist the new order. It is impossible to understand this struggle, which has persisted for over sixty years, without understanding the structure of Islam and its effects on Turkish society.

Although Islam is fundamentally a religion, its founder Muhammad tended to define it more as a "nation." Thus, Islam's ummah structure left a deep mark on Islamic peoples. The ummah structure is the element that binds all Muslims together and brings them into a community. Every Muslim possesses, even if faintly, a sense of community and awareness of high values; whether progressive or ignorant, there is a bond connecting one Muslim to another. Even among workers under Marxist influence, far removed from religious concerns, this sense of religious community (jamaat) can be sensed. The reason for this lies in the complex structure of the ummah in Islam. A person born into a society steeped in Islam cannot easily shake off this spirit of the ummah.

On the other hand, the ideological structure of Islam is based on the individual's complete submission to God. The path to a person's submission to God is through submission to Sharia law. At the head of the resulting society is not a ruler, but God Himself. When someone who accepted Islam said to Muhammad, "You are our ruler," he replied, "God is the ruler, not me."¹

Thus, in an Islamic society, governance is directly from God. It is the sovereignty of God watching over the people. God is the name of the supreme power working for the common good. The public treasury is God's treasury, the army is God's army, and public officials are God's officials.

This feature of Islam became most deeply entrenched during the Ottoman Empire. The sultan was both the ruler of the state and the ruler of religion. He was God's shadow on earth. He was the executor of God's commands. Therefore, anyone who opposed him was considered to be opposing God. No one living in the country had any security of life or property.

On the other hand, the Qur'an addresses daily needs. It attempts to regulate them. According to the faith, the Qur'an is the final, complete book. Muhammad is a flawless human being in all his actions. These two fundamental principles are valid for eternity. It is impossible to think about or discuss the falsity of these two principles. Therefore, a person must regulate their behaviour according to these two principles throughout their entire life.

Islam has a highly diverse and guiding function in terms of upbringing. Children will be brought up and guided within the framework of Islam. At this point, another characteristic of Islam comes into play: in Islamic communities, form and structure are dominant; the community order of Islam is distinctly different from that of Western societies. In Western societies, there are values; in Islam, individuals cannot decide what to do based on their conscience, but act according to societal patterns.

Religion determines what is good and what is evil. Personal choices are negligible. However, Turkish society has its own hierarchical principle. This is a characteristic of the Turkish people. It has developed as a feature throughout history. Over the centuries, the pastoral and military life they lived in elevated social command and discipline above all else in the Turkish people. Whether the authority representing this social conscience is a khan, a chief, a mosque preacher, or a council is irrelevant. It is sufficient that there is an office that can impose its will on society. Then, even if the laws and rules that come from there change the entire order of life, they flow easily into the spirit of the people like water.

For this reason, Turks can be resilient against external forces as long as they maintain their communal structure and hierarchical order. However, when their hierarchical order breaks down, they become scattered among other nations and are more easily disrupted. Turkish soldiers captured in Korea endured captivity more easily than other nations as long as they maintained their hierarchical order and remained united. However, once their hierarchical order was disrupted, they became more scattered than other nations and were easily subjected to brainwashing. The mosque fills this authority vacuum.

In Islamic societies, the process of forming an individual's personality is much longer than in the West. Children growing up in an unstable environment, such as in relatively unchanged Islamic societies, cannot resolve their growing pains in the same way as Western children. Islam prevents children from acquiring a national personality. As a result, children acquire a religious identity rather than a national identity.

The novelist Kemal Tahir explains this process of identity formation between Western and Eastern societies as follows:

"In the West, the family is like a womb! Just as animals care for their young until they can walk and live on their own, then send them away from the nest, Western men care for their children until a certain age. This certainly plays a part in the formation of their personality. But it also undoubtedly contributes to raising merciless people. The family in the East consists of individuals, but it has a different character, a separate integrity. What happens to one member concerns the whole family. What classes do in the West, the family seems to take on in the East." 3

Kemal Tahir mentions that the Ottoman family nucleus is strong. According to him, it has an effective education system. It is within a patriarchal family system. Authority is very binding.

Erikson defines human life as a series of crises that must be resolved. Resolving these crises in a positive manner enables the individual to participate in society in harmony with themselves and their environment. According to Erikson, there are eight major crises in human life. Some crises emerge at an early age. Others appear during adolescence or later. If they are not resolved at the appropriate age, they become more difficult to resolve in later stages of life. The crises identified by Erikson and the solutions offered by Islam are as follows:

The first issue is for the child to face life with confidence from birth. Affection, trust and order enable the child to view the world with confidence. Parents should not limit themselves to guiding the child solely through prohibitions and rewards. They should also make the child feel that they are engaged in meaningful work.

There is no significant difference between Western and Eastern societies in resolving this issue. The greater importance placed on boys in Eastern societies may be seen as a difference.

The second problem is overcoming feelings of shame and suspicion. When a child interacting with their environment perceives certain behaviours as shameful, they cut off their interaction with the outside world. They view the outside world as an environment to be suspicious of.

Islam is a society of "patterns or standards" (norms) in resolving this crisis. Patterns bring out shame in a very particular way in individuals. In Islamic societies, shame is not about being ashamed of one's own actions. It is the fear of incurring the wrath of society for doing something that society disapproves of.

Islam has the concept of taqiyya. Taqiyya means to fear God and to avoid actions prohibited by religion.

The development of a child's assertiveness is the third problem. Children who learn to use their bodies experiment with this. They break things, engage in sexual experimentation. If these experiments are stopped at this stage, the child's assertiveness is replaced by feelings of guilt.

Islam does not make a significant contribution to the development of initiative.

The fourth issue is the child's beginning to perceive the civilisation around them from a technical perspective and attempting to make it their own. In Islam, technology is pursued alongside religion. Technology presents itself to the child as a religious influence. However, Islam influences the individual most in matters of religion. The purpose of education in Islam is to confirm that Islam is the best religion. It is to raise the child to be a good Muslim. Education also has a didactic structure. Accordingly, education reinforces authority and strengthens the authoritarian aspect of Islam.

With the resolution of these issues, the individual reaches adolescence.

The fifth problem to be solved is the issue of identity and personality. Discovering one's personality is a very important event. The child who is about to join the world of adults will determine what kind of personality they will bring with them. They will choose a job, a profession, and find their place in society. This stage is the stage of solving how masculinity or femininity will be presented to society. In a word, the individual will decide what their personality is.

Solving this problem is more difficult than it seems. One danger is that a person caught between several personalities may become unable to decide which one is their true personality. In this stage, where solving the personality problem is difficult, young people generally prefer to dissolve themselves into collective actions. They cling to teachings and ideologies that do not require much thought.

Islam generally aims to resolve personality crises by renewing faith. He will be like those around him. He will be a devout Muslim, spending his time like them. In order to integrate into society, they will accept the Islamic beliefs previously taught to them. However, if the individual embarks on certain quests during this stage, a significant personality problem arises and they fall into crisis. They seek the way out of the crisis in Islam again. Some drift towards extremes. They try to find their personality in sects such as Nurculuk, Nakşibendilik, and Süleymancılık.

The sixth crisis is how the person will relate to their environment. This formation is the interaction of an ego with another person. If the person cannot successfully resolve this issue, loneliness begins. The person considers others to be enemies who disrupt their loneliness and endanger their security.

Islam's communal structure is an important element in establishing relationships with others. Principles such as hospitality in Turkish-Islamic traditions, getting along well with friends, forgiving others for their misdeeds during holidays, and trying not to establish harsh relationships form the ideological direction of Eastern societies.

The seventh problem is the individual's inability to produce and be creative within society. Islam is traditional in terms of creativity; Islamic societies have not truly transitioned to a capitalist structure in cities. Production has remained limited to demand. People have devoted their labour to depth rather than breadth in their professional lives. An individual's creativity has not increased the production of the institution they work for. Devoting twenty years of labour to a book cover has been a source of pride.

Another way of being creative in Islam is through jihad. Expanding the borders of the Islamic world and increasing wealth through plunder have served as creative endeavours. Following God's path has provided individuals with peace of mind, while also securing worldly possessions. "Jihad" has been perceived as a sacred stage.

The eighth crisis is when a person who has attained selfhood attains a spiritual order that regulates their interaction with the outside world.

In Islam, this problem is solved by rules. It is entirely clear what a believer who has entered the path of Allah and Muhammad should do. For someone who behaves as Muhammad commanded, " " there is no problem to consider in relation to the outside world. It is sufficient for them to follow Muhammad's sunnah in all their behaviour.

Among Turks, these groups sometimes clash and sometimes compete with each other. The first four groups, in particular, are constantly competing to win over each other's followers.

Today, when one speaks of religion, Islam immediately comes to mind. However, many of the beliefs known today as Islamic faith date back to ancient times. Without identifying these elements that shape our social structure, it is impossible to understand this structure.

1

KURTATA

In Turkish family life, Turks recognise the wolf as their ancestor. The practice of considering the wolf an ancestor is explained by certain legends among Turks. Beliefs in all societies are embellished with legends. The grey wolf legend is recorded in two forms in ancient Chinese sources.

The Göktürk epics begin with a massacre in which all Turks are wiped out by their enemies. The Turkish race is saved from this great massacre by a young man whose mother is a wolf

. Because his mother was a wolf, this young man could not be killed and survived alone. He marries the daughters of the Summer-Winter Gods. He names his first son "Turk". One of Turk's ten children is named "Asena", meaning Grey Wolf. This name was given to Asena to preserve the name of her ancient mothers. The Turks multiply as the children of these marriages.

*

In another legend, the mother wolf is described first as a saviour, then as a mother. This female wolf protects and feeds the surviving Turk. New generations of Turks are born from the marriage between the female wolf and the lone Turk child, whose hands and feet have been cut off. One of the children born from this marriage is Asena. Asena does not forget her ancestors. She wants everyone to know their ancestors. She has a pole erected in front of the tent. She places a golden wolf's head on top of it. This wolf's head becomes the first flag of the Turks. When the Turks emerge from Ergenekon, the name of their khan is Börte Çene, meaning Grey Wolf.

In the Uyghur Türeyiş epic, God descends to earth in the form of a male wolf. Chinese sources provide the following information about the origins of the Kaocho tribes, considered the ancestors of the Uyghurs:

"A khan has two extraordinary daughters. The khan cannot bear to marry his daughters to humans. He decides to offer them to the Sky (God). To this end, he builds a high hill in a desolate place in the north of his country. He places his daughters on top of the hill. He prays to God to accept them. Three years pass. Their mother said, 'Let's bring them back now.' The khan refused. Another year passed. An old wolf came. He waited on the hill, howling day and night. He made himself a den under the hill. He never left. The younger daughter said to her sisters:

—Our father left us here to marry Gök (God). Now the wolf has come. Perhaps it is a sacred animal sent by God. I will go down to him and become his mate.

The eldest daughter objects:

—This is a filthy beast. Our mother and father would never approve of this marriage.

The younger daughter does not listen to her sister. She goes down, marries the wolf.

Children are born. These children, born of the wolf, become the ancestors of the Turkish tribes known as the Kao-cho.

The essence of these epics is the same. According to this essence, a grey wolf, the mother wolf, ensures the revival and proliferation of the Göktürk lineage, which is facing extinction. Thus, in a sense, the Turks consider the wolf their ancestor and respect it. Such a belief suggests the existence of totemism among the ancient Turks.

A golden sculpture of a Hun prince has been found. According to legend, the lineage of Maotun, the Khan of the Asian Huns, traces back to a dragon. It is highly probable that the dragon was worshipped in very ancient times. Furthermore, in his work *Câmi'utTevarih*, written in the first quarter of the 14th century, Rashid al-Din lists 24 Oğuz tribes and assigns one ongon bird to every four tribes. Thus, the falcon, eagle, hare, sungur, three-bird, and kestrel are the totems of the Oğuz.

Many scholars consider totemism to be humanity's first religion. In totemism, a community is usually bound to a plant species or an object by mystical, kinship-like feelings. This bond has specific duties, prohibitions and rituals. The main characteristics of totemism are as follows:

"People belonging to the same totem believe they come from the same ancestor. Individuals bear the name and symbol of the totem. Marriage between people gathered around the same totem is forbidden. It is forbidden for people belonging to the totem to eat the totem animal or plant. It is believed that the totem helps the members of the believing community and protects them from various dangers.⁵ "

Animals were generally considered totems. Sometimes, instead of the animal itself, a part of it (tail, tongue, claw, feather, etc.) served as the totem. Animal totems were most commonly seen in primitive societies that subsisted on hunting.⁶ Certain beliefs and behaviours consistent with totemism are observed among the Turks.

In the late 19th century, among the Turks of Central Asia, there were idol fetishes reminiscent of the "şuringa" in totemism. Among the Altai and Yakut Turks, there are idols representing the father and mother. Abdülkadir İnan reports that among the shamanists of the Turkic race, there are idols bearing names such as rabbit, bear, eagle, and squirrel. There are also idols made for great shamans, heroes, and good and evil spirits. The totem of the Televüt Turks is Tilek. This totem is human-shaped. Tilek is invoked in shamanic prayers. The bear is one of the most revered idols among shamanists. The hunters of the Shor Turks consider the idol called Shangir to be sacred. This idol is also human-shaped. Pieces of animal skins are hung on it. It provides abundant game to hunters who please it. If angered, it burns down forests and makes hunters ill. Spirits depicted in bird form are found more among the Dolagans, neighbours of the Yakuts. The most revered bird among the Yakuts is the eagle. According to the Yakuts, spring and autumn depend on the spiritual power of the eagle. With one flap of its wings, the eagle melts the ice; with two flaps, spring arrives. It is understood

, this bird was a symbol of the sun and the Sky God in ancient Yakut times. The eagle tradition has also survived among the Bashkirs until recent times. There are connections between the eagle and tree worship. In ancient times, when Bashkirs encountered a stranger, they would ask what his bird and tree were.

Ibn Fazlan reports that the Bashkirs have twelve gods.⁷ There are separate gods for winter, summer, wind, trees, humans, animals, water, night, day, death, life, and earth. The god in the sky is the greatest of them all. However, he rules the others in harmony, and some of them worship snakes. There are also those who worship fish. Some worship the crane. Those who worship the crane are defeated one day in battle against their enemies. At that moment, the cranes begin to cry out behind the enemies. The enemies are frightened by this and flee. They are defeated when they were victorious. Upon this, the Bashkirs begin to worship the crane. Their worship of the crane as a god is based on such a legend.

The Bashkirs make an object out of wood. They hang it somewhere. When they set out on a journey or encounter an enemy, they kiss it and prostrate themselves before it.

A story in the Alevis' holy book, Buyruk, recalls the legend in the Uyghur Türeysiş epic:

One day, Imam Ja'far sat with his followers and turned to one of them:

"Tomorrow I will send someone to you. Give him your daughter," he commanded.

When this believer returned home, he told his wife what Imam Ja'far had said. He goes to bed at night. He wakes up in the morning and gets ready. At that moment, he hears a noise at the front door. He goes outside to look and sees a wolf standing at the door. "This must be the person Imam Cafer spoke of," he thinks to himself. Without a second thought, he brings his daughter and hands her over to the wolf. The wolf takes the girl and leaves. A few days pass. His wife says:

"You gave our daughter to the wolf, just as Imam Cafer said. The wolf took her away. We haven't heard from her for days. Go and search the woods opposite. If the wolf has eaten her, gather her bones and bring them back so we can bury her. Let's give up hope."

Upon this, the man gets up and sets off towards the forest to search for his daughter. He goes and goes and goes. He arrives at a place where a flock of birds is flying. He sees a beautiful girl and a handsome young man sitting there. He recognises his own daughter. He sits with his daughter and son-in-law. He tells them of his fears and doubts. Then he turns and comes home. He tells his wife what he saw. The husband and wife are happy and rejoice.

Thus, the elements of marrying the wolf and the wolf becoming human are also explored in Buyruk. The bridge connecting ancient beliefs to Anatolia culminates in Alevism.

However, none of this proves that the ancient Turks were totemic. In totemism, it is not enough to simply regard an animal as an ancestor and make images of it. In a totemic family, a social order based on the mother is dominant. Kinship is based on the totem bond. There is shared ownership. There is a kind of "parasitic" economy based on gathering and hunting. Every stick has a totem.

In contrast, Turkish social life is patriarchal. Blood kinship exists. Individual property is important. An economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry prevails. Only the "wolf" is considered an ancestor. There are no other totemic ancestors. The legend of the wolf is widespread throughout society. This is based on a mixture of fear and respect for the wolf. This is because the wolf is the feared animal of the steppes. It poses a great danger, especially to herds of animals. The wolf's real name is not even spoken. In Turkish, the wolf's real name is "böcü". Etymologically, kurt is the name for wolf cubs. Ultimately, although the wolf is considered sacred and worthy of respect, it is not worshipped. Respect for an animal in a community does not necessarily mean that the community is totemic. Indeed, in the Zoroastrian religion, cows and dogs are sacred. In some Indian religions, killing animals is forbidden. In ancient Egyptian religion, the Apis bull is sacred. Crocodiles and eagles are worshipped.

Among the Bashkirs and Oghuz, there are traces of totemism in beliefs related to birds of prey. However, this is most likely due to the influence of neighbouring peoples. For example, the influence of the Ural peoples can be considered for the Bashkirs. There is also Finnish and Hungarian influence. These beliefs among the Oghuz are based on Mongol influence. Traces of totemism can be found among the Mongols. The Mongol family structure is matriarchal. There is a parasitic economy. 8

HOLY ANCESTOR

One of the ancient Turkish beliefs that has been absorbed into shamanism is ancestor worship. Ancestor worship is an event and is a universal belief. Ancestor worship, stems from the fact that humans are the only creatures who know the inevitability of death

. However, knowing this truth is not enough. People resist thinking about it at all times. The ancestor believes he will live on as long as there is a lineage to worship him. That is why childlessness is a terrible disaster in tribal societies.

In Greek mythology, Mother Earth, Gaia, devours her own children. The Titans devour Dionysus, son of Zeus. Zeus then eats his heart and creates a new Dionysus. These are considered traces of human sacrifice.⁹ According to what we learn from the Torah, the situation is the same among the Israelites. The Torah contains explicit commandments requiring men to marry the widows of their brothers who died without children. Thus, the sons born to them would form the lineage of the deceased brother, ensuring his continuity.¹⁰ Human sacrifice tradition among Arabs . . .

Kenan provinces (Northern Arabia), human sacrifices are made to the gods who govern the order of nature. During the pre-Islamic period, the Arabs sacrificed their most precious male child to appease the wrath of God, and traces of the tradition of human sacrifice can be found in the heavenly religions. Jesus takes it upon himself to sacrifice himself to save humanity. At the Last Supper, Jesus dips the bread into his own body and the wine into his blood. T h a t blood will be shed for the salvation of humanity. The tradition of the Feast of Sacrifice in Islam has the same meaning. It is inspired by Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son Ishmael.

The belief in ancestor worship begins with the sanctification of certain powerful individuals who have died. The ancestor gradually attains semi-divine status. This is the case with the Heraeans in ancient Greece. Among Indo-European peoples, the deceased's belongings are placed in their grave. The relatives of great and honourable deceased individuals are killed and buried alongside them. This tradition of human sacrifice is particularly horrific among the Celts. Among the peoples of Northern Europe, sacrifices for Freyr are equally terrifying. Among these peoples, Freyr, who is a male boar, is the god of abundance. Human sacrifices are made to him in ceremonies.

The tradition of human sacrifice is also found among the peoples of the Far East. In fact, this belief, which parallels humanity's past, also exists among the Turks. In ancestor worship, the father/ancestor protects family members through their spirits after death. Therefore, they must be respected. The Huns offer sacrifices to their ancestors every year in mid-May. The Tabgach sacrifice to their ancestors. Among the Turks, memories of ancestors are considered sacred. Severe penalties are imposed for disrespect towards graves. Weapons, valuable items, and jewellery are placed in the graves of ancestors. Sometimes the deceased chieftain's horse, adorned with gold and silver, is buried together with his wife. There is a belief in a second life in the afterlife. In this belief, spirits are immortal. In Old Turkic, " " means "soul" (tin) and the word " " means "spirit" (). The word " " has the same

"breath". Death is thought of as the cessation of breath, the soul leaving the body and flying away. Thus, it is believed that their life in the other world is ensured.

Among the ancient Turks, the greatest sacrifice was the horse. Many horse skeletons have been found in the kurgans of Central Asia and the Altai. Among other animals, the sacrifice of male animals was considered superior. Traces of the tradition of human sacrifice can be discerned in Turkish beliefs. For example, there are accounts of close relatives being buried together among the Huns. The deer legend among the Göktürks is a similar example. The legend goes as follows: One of the Göktürk elders, who was related to the Sea Goddess, killed a deer while hunting. Because of this, from that day on, the Göktürk tribe was forced to send humans as sacrifices.

Sacrificial ceremonies were also performed by the Chao Turks, who lived in China 1000 years before the Sui Dynasty. The Chao Khan hunts deer with a bow during the sacrificial hunting feast. He sacrifices them at his ancestors' temple.

There is a mythical single-horned animal called "Kilen-Kiyik" from the deer and mountain goat species. Another name for it is ku-tu. This name comes from the Turkish word kutlu (blessed). According to legend, Kutu is found in the Kyrgyz provinces. The Turks believe that animals such as deer, mountain goats and kilen kiyik live on a sacred mountain together with other sacred animals. They believe that the Khan's palace and the temples of earth and sky are located on that mountain. Kutu and the deer become immortal by eating the herb of immortality that grows on that sacred mountain.¹¹

The ritual of sacrificing to the Earth God at the foot of a tree in China is also seen in various forms among Turkish tribes. The Kagnılı tribe is one of these. During autumn, a race is held around a tree, branch or grove. Or a sacrifice is made at a place where one wishes to be cleansed of evil spirits. A forest of trees is planted there. A sheep is buried as a sacrifice. It is covered with willow and flowering reed branches. Kımız is poured over it. The Tabgaçs plant a tree or forest with a ceremony. This greenery symbolises the Hakan lineage.

Ancient	Turks	the Chou	(1050-249 BC)	1050-249)
sacrificial	ceremony	and	the distribution of ongun continue among	

the Göktürks in the form of hunting feasts. Among the Chou, the animal killed by each warrior becomes his ongun. In autumn, the Chou khan hunts deer with a bow and arrow and sends parts of them as sacrifices to the temple of the ancestors. In the ceremonies that follow, the remaining meat of the sacrifice is eaten by members of the Khan's family. Thus, a connection with the spirits of the ancestors is established. At this feast, people's places are determined according to their status. An oath is sworn with a cup.¹² Among the Göktürks, the year begins with winter. The turning points of the year and the ceremonies begin on the day called "yangı kün" (new day). Among the Huns and Göktürks, in the summer months

Sacrifices are made to the sky and water god and the earth god. The rite for the ancestors is performed in the cave of the ancestors. The rite of the sky and its symbol, the dragon (Köklü), takes place on the banks of the Temir River. The Eastern Huns worship the sky and the dragon in volcanic mountains with lakes and waters. They give these mountains names meaning 'sky mountain'. The Göktürks celebrate the Earth God ceremony on the bare mountains west of Ötüken.

The Göktürks also held hunting feasts before weddings. Animals such as mountain goats and wild horses were hunted with tools such as bows and spears. Oğuz hunts and hunting ceremonies are depicted in vivid paintings. Certain parts of the hunted animal, called "Sünük" (bone), were distributed to the Oğuz chiefs according to tradition. The hunt is divided according to certain rules. During the ceremony, the chieftains' shares are distributed, and an oath is sworn.

In Turkish, rams, sheep, horses, deer and mountain goats are offered in sacrificial ceremonies called "tapıg" or "yağışlıg tapıg". It is reported that ancient nomads, including the Scythians and Huns, practised human sacrifice. This tradition is not seen in China or among the Göktürks in the 6th-7th centuries. The only observation of human sacrifice among the Göktürks comes from the Byzantine envoy Valentin. Valentin describes the funeral rites (yog) of İstemi Khan as follows:

"On one of the days of mourning, they brought four bound Huns. They placed them together with (the Khan's) father's horses. They ordered them to come (to the other world) and enter (the Khan's) father's circle."

Other sources regarding human sacrifice are even more ambiguous. In those sources, the ceremony does not result in death. For example, a Chinese woman is asked to sacrifice herself to a deceased Uyghur khan. The Chinese woman does not comply. In another source, a Turkish warrior wants to sacrifice himself to a deceased Chinese khan. However, he is stopped by others.

The tradition of animal sacrifice is magnificent among the Göktürks. White-coated sacrifices are offered to the sky, the stars, and the celestial ancestors. On a mountain peak, animals are hunted with bows and spears and then burned. It is believed that animals such as the sigun (mountain goat) and kiyik (deer) are associated with the sky god. According to belief, these animals live in the khan's forest. These animals also feature in legends told about the khan's lineage. Only the khan can hunt them. For this reason, the name Kutlug is given to İlerish Khan and the leaders descended from the Göktürks. It is also thought that deer sacrifices were made among the Göktürks. Most likely, the belief that deer lived in the khan's forest continued among the Göktürks. It was believed that the sacrifices would serve the other world. The raw meat and blood of the sacrifices offered to the earth and the spirits of the earth

the raw meat and blood of the sacrifices are buried in the ground. White-coated horses were sacrificed to the sky. Sheep and rams were buried. This may have been a sacrifice to the earth. The sacrificial pit at the Göktürk ancestral temple () is filled with horse, sheep and bird bones. Sacrificial stones in Siberia, which may predate the Göktürks, feature drawings of horses and deer and channels for blood to flow.

However, the situation is different among the Ak Hun. There is a law of unity among the belted warriors. According to this law, when one of the warriors dies, the others sacrifice themselves. This tradition is forgotten early on among the Chinese and Turks. Among the Mongols, the human tradition continues until the 13th century.

Western sources report that upon Attila's death, many people were killed and buried together.

Despite all this evidence, Eberhard emphasises that the Turks did not have such a tradition. According to Eberhard, the tradition of human sacrifice is not a product of steppe culture. It exists in agricultural cultures. The Turks prohibited human sacrifice.¹⁴

3

GÖKTANRI

The inscription of Bilge Khan begins, "I, the divine Bilge Khan of the Turks, born in the sky, have ascended my throne." This statement reflects a belief. These are the first sentences of a belief, filtered through the ages and put into writing by the community itself. It will be interpreted in many ways.

The true religion of the steppe Turkic community is considered to be the belief in Göktanrı. In this belief, Göktanrı is the sole creator. Tengri (sky) is the highest being. It is the pillar of the belief system. It is the creator, the holder of absolute power. Sacrifices are offered to it. He is often referred to as Göktanrı. According to Eliade, it is a unique belief system specific to the communities of Central and Northern Asia. For Giraud, it is directly "the main worship of all Turks".

The Sky God generally intervenes directly in people's lives. He punishes those who do not obey his commands. One cannot go against the will of the Sky. Oaths are sworn and thanks are given to the Sky God.

In a letter sent to the Chinese emperor in 176 BC, Maotun, the Khan of the Asian Huns, states that he won his victories with the help of Göktanrı.

, Liu Yuan, who founded the Hun state, praises the bravery of his young nephew, saying, "The Sky God brought this person into the world with the Huns in mind."

Traces of the Sky God belief can be seen among the peoples who appeared on the historical stage in Asia. The Huns, Tabgach, Göktürks, and Uyghurs offered sacrifices to the Sky God.

In ancient Turkish inscriptions, God is sometimes described as a national deity, referred to as "Turk Tengri." The Göktürks separated from China at his behest and established a national state (680-682). He granted the Turks their khan. However, because the community abandoned the khan, "God" led them to destruction. God is a "supreme being" concerned with the independence of the Turkish people. He bestowed upon Tonyukuk the knowledge necessary for success. He placed Bumin and Istemi, the founders of the Göktürk khanate, on the throne to uphold Turkish customs. He exalted Khan İlderiş and his wife, Queen İl-Bilge, saying, "May the Turkish nation not perish... may it be free and independent." Victories in battle are achieved at his behest. He grants destiny and fortune. He takes them away from those who are unworthy. He brings dawn and revives plants. Death is also subject to his will.

People kneel before Göktenrı and pray. They ask God for blessings. If this request is granted, horses multiply and people live long lives. Even the raven's prayer reaches God. God knows who is righteous and who is deceitful.

The Orkhon inscriptions state, "When the blue sky above and the black earth below were created, the son of man was created between them." Here, the concept of God is not merely the physical sky; it is a supreme being. God is eternal, God is sovereign over all things, God is everywhere.

This is the essence of the Sky God belief, considered the first national Turkish belief. But Shamanism leaves its mark on the ancient Turkish belief. More accurately, it gives it its name. Among the Turks, belief resembles a snowball rolling down a mountain. By the time this snowball reaches the valley, it has become a huge avalanche. In fact, this is the case for all world religions. However, in Shamanism, the combination of the old and the new is more pronounced. The new belief does not seek to eliminate the old. It adds to the old. Therefore, Shamanism does not touch the Sky God concept. Eliade says that Shamanism smiles when the Great God is mentioned. There are some interesting commonalities between Islam and the Sky God religion. The Sky God corresponds to Allah.

SHAMANISM

Shamanism is the belief that gives the Turkish faith its multifaceted name. In reality, it is a settled belief that the religious beliefs of the steppe peoples are linked to shamanism.

According to Eliade, the great researcher of shamanism, shamanism is, in short, a technique of trance and trance-like states. However, not every trance is shamanism. The shaman enters a trance using his own special methods. In this trance state, he raises his spirit to the heavens and descends into the underworld. He wanders around there. He senses the spirit separating from the body. He takes control of spirits. He connects with the dead, demons, jinn and fairies. He heals the sick. He fulfils the wishes of the dead and goes to the gods in heaven and on earth to convey people's troubles and wishes. He acts as an intermediary for them. With these characteristics, shamans inspire fear and respect in primitive communities. He is an expert on the human soul. He looks after the supernatural and spiritual fulfilment of the masses. However, his function is not as comprehensive as that of priests in other religious and magical beliefs. Unless there is a problem, the shaman has no work to do.

Shamanism is, at its root, more of a steppe Turkic belief system in the form of magic than a religion; it is a way of life against the harsh conditions of nature. A form of shamanism existed among the ancient Turks. It has no connection with the beliefs in God and "yersu" seen in ancient Turkic society. However, there has been a surprising harmony between Turkic beliefs and shamanism. In particular, the cult of ancestors, the belief in eagles, ironworking and horse sacrifice among the Turks have acquired shamanic characteristics. The most significant feature of shamanism at its core is its ability to adapt to the spiritual makeup of the people in the region where it spreads.

Turkish thought eventually arrives at Shamanism after a long journey. It assimilates many of the beliefs that came before it. For this reason, shamanism does not exhibit a particular unity. The world's various places and different appearance . It is a multi-coloured belief system that adapts to

time and environment. The "Esirime" in shamanism has merged with Turkish beliefs.

Thus, the shamanic spirit wanders. It connects with the gods. The secret powers that the ancient Turkish society attributed to nature gain new meanings. Gradually developing, it adds new elements to it. Thus, it succeeds in encompassing its entire spiritual realm within a specific framework and gains the solidity of a religion. Nevertheless, external influence is not unique to the Turkish religion. According to religious historians, such influences, amalgamations, and renewals exist in every religion.

Shamanism was widespread and accepted among the common people of the Göktürks, rather than among the khan and his entourage. Inscriptions make no mention of this belief. Byzantine travellers Menander (6th century) and Theophylakt (7th century) ensured that shamanism is recognised in its present form today. The term "shamanism" is used relatively for the ancient Turkish religion. This is a religious understanding far above that of the Altai and Yakut shamanism. It is the religion of the great nomadic khanates.

Nowadays, when we talk about the ancient Turkish religion, shamanism immediately comes to mind. It is constantly mentioned, but few people can define what it is. However, the ancient Turks adopted shamanism after a series of beliefs. Shamanism is so diverse that very few people can define it. It assimilated many previous beliefs and developed differently in different regions. The most distinctive feature of this nature religion, as is true of all religions, is that it takes shape according to the times. It takes on different forms in different periods.

The essence of shamanism is the worship of the Sky God, the Sun, the Moon, the earth, water, ancestors, and fire (the hearth). Religious ceremonies are conducted within a specific ritual.

According to Chinese sources, the fundamentals of Central Asian Shamanism are the worship of the Sky God, the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, water, ancestors, and fire (hearth).

a. Nature is always right

Belief in the forces of nature is found in all folk religions. For example, the ancient Greek gods and goddesses originated from the forces of nature. Zeus is the god of the sky. He brings rain, causes lightning to strike, and sends clouds. Apollo is the god of the sun and youth. Aphrodite is the goddess of spring and love, etc. However, like the ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians, the ancient Greeks thought of their gods as human beings. According to this belief, every city has a guardian god.

In ancient Egypt, the Nile was the god of abundance. In ancient Iran, fire was the manifestation of Zoroaster's god Ahura Mazda. According to the Romans, every place had a guardian. Every person had a guardian fairy. Examples could be multiplied. Ultimately, all peoples create concrete representations of their gods. The Greeks depicted their gods through statues, while the Indians and Arabs did so through idols.¹⁵

Among the Turks, belief in the existence of certain hidden powers in nature began in the earliest periods. This belief is described in the Orhun monuments with the term "yersu". The Orhun monuments feature the phrase, "When the blue sky above and the dark earth below were created, the son of man was created between them." In the Kyrgyz epic *Manas*, the lines "Yer yer zaman, su su zaman" Her iki

expressions also connect humanity to the creation of the world. When the sky and the earth were created, woman and man came into being.

According to the Altai Turks, there was "water" before the earth was created. One version of the Altai legend begins, "First there was water. There was no earth, sky, moon or sun." In another version of the legend, "First there was the sea. There was no earth or sky. The god Ülgen flew above the sea. He wanted to land. For him to land, the world had to be created. Suddenly, Ak Ana emerged from the water. She gives Ülgen a command. Upon this command, the earth is created. According to the legend, there are 99 worlds besides ours. The underworlds (heaven/hell) of these worlds exist. The Uyghurs also maintain this belief in "yersu".

In ancient Turkic cultures, mountains, hills, rocks, valleys, rivers, water sources, trees, forests, the sea, iron, and swords possessed mysterious powers. Additionally, the sun, moon, lightning, stars, thunder, and spirits were considered deities. Spirits are divided into good and evil spirits. Alongside male gods, there is a goddess named Umay. The Asian Huns sacrifice to their ancestors and nature gods in spring and autumn. Han Tanhu worships the sun during the day and the full moon at night. The Huns, Göktürks, and Uyghurs control their endeavours with the movements of the moon and stars. The Tabgach offer sacrifices to their ancestors in spring and autumn. The sacrifices are made inside a stone temple, and birch trees are planted around it. These form sacred forests.

The Huns only undertake attacks or wars on days when the moon is waxing or waning. The Great Khan is like the highest priest. Every morning, he emerges from the tent of the gods and, with a reverent attitude, greets the rising sun. When he sees the auspicious new moon, he greets it with the same respect.

b. Earth-Water

The ancient Turks believed in the existence of "Tengri spirits" in the sky. They worshipped nature. Worship of nature is expressed by the term "yersu". Worship of Yer-Su developed during the great empires and rose to the level of worship of the homeland.

The Göktürks used the concept of "ıduk yersub" (sacred place water). This refers to protective spirits and homeland. The inscription "eçümüz apamız tutmuş yer sub" (place water ruled by our ancestors) appears in the inscriptions. The Yer-Su cult represents the mountains and forests of Ötüken and Budun province. These sacred yer-su spirits govern the destiny of the Göktürks. The role of the yer-su spirits in protecting the homeland is emphasised in the Tonyukuk inscription (): " " (they are very numerous) and " " (they are very numerous). " " (they are very numerous) The Göktürks () were attacked in their homeland ()

were ambushed and defeated with the help of the deity Umay and the spirits of earth and water.

Yersu spirits are also considered sacred among the Uyghurs. Two yersu names are mentioned in the inscriptions: "ıduk Ötüken" and "tamıg ıduk baş". "Iduk Ötüken" is the centre of the khaganate. The sacred Tamıg is the source of the Tamir River. In Uyghur culture, the spirit of the sacred mountain in the legend of Kutlu Dağ gives strength and happiness to the rocky nation. Similarly, the Yada stone, used as a rain stone by the ancient Turks, exists. All these are elements of nature worship.

The worship of mountains, water (rivers, lakes, springs), trees, and rocks seen in today's shamanic Turkic tribes is grouped under the name "yersu" in ancient Turkic inscriptions.

c. Mountain

The sanctification of mountains is a universal belief. The ancient Jews sanctified Mount Sinai, the Greeks Mount Olympus, the Arabs Mount Arafat, and the Hindus the Himalayas.¹⁶

Mountains are the most distinctive manifestation of the spirits of the earth and water. Among the shamanistic Turks, mountain worship is associated with the worship of the Sky God. The Huns sacrificed to the Sky God every year on Mount Hanyoan in their ancient homeland. Mount Gantsuanşan is one of the sacred mountains of the Huns. The Hun khans reinforced their treaties with China by sacrificing on the summit of Mount Hunda.

The worship of the Sky God and the worship of mountains are closely related. The Shors and Beltirs of the Altai Mountains offer sacrifices to the Sky God in ceremonies on high mountain peaks. They call this ceremony *tengere tayıg* (sacrifice to the Sky God). According to Gardizi, the ancient Turks believed that mountains were the seat of God. The Türgesh and Çiğil Turks considered a nearby mountain to be the seat of the Gods. High mountain peaks are close to the heavens.

Most of the mountains of Central Asia are named with sacred words in Turkish and Mongolian. Today, every shamanistic tribe and clan in Central Asia and the Altai Mountains has its own sacred mountain. But the Altai Mountains are the common sacred mountain of all. Large unions formed by tribes have common sacred mountains. Mountain and cave culture is also important among the Göktürks. In the 7th century, Mount Ötüken and its forest were sacred to all Turkic and foreign tribes that entered the Göktürk Empire. The khan's tent was set up in Ötüken. Every year, the tribes held ceremonies with their chiefs in the Budin İnli cave. They offered sacrifices to their ancestors. Even after the Turks converted to Islam, this worship continued. Mahmud of Kashgar, who wrote *Divan-i Bağdat*, mentions Ötüken.

In the Uyghur legend recorded by Cüveyni, there is the sacred Kuttag. It brings happiness and abundance to the Uyghurs. After the Chinese saw this mountain, the Uyghurs were devastated. The same legend is told about Erdene Ula (Mountain of Happiness) in present-day Mongolia. The Chinese took Erdene Ula, which the Mongols worshipped. A female shaman prayed to God at the site of the mountain. She brought back the mountain of happiness. This legend is a variation of the Uyghur Kuttag legend.

The legends reflect memories of the period when the fertile mountains of Central Asia were held by the Chinese. The nomads who lost the mountains of abundance never forgot the memories of these mountains over the years. After leaving the Tsilen Shan mountain in Gansu province, the Huns would sing dirges.

According to shamans, the whole world is filled with spirits. Mountains, rivers, lakes are all living things. The rivers and lakes they sanctify are not merely local objects. They are beings that speak, hear, marry, and have children. The mountain is directly spirit, the spirit is directly mountain. It is difficult to separate them. Shamans perpetuate a very ancient, primitive understanding of life in nature.

In shamanic ceremonies, the shaman calls out to the Altai mountains. He hopes for help from them.

Let us not grieve, for God exists. Let
us not worry, for the Altai exists. We
worship the Altai.

Spirits and great shamans draw inspiration from the Altai.

The concept of the sacred mountain also exists among the Mongols. In The Secret History of the Mongols, when Genghis Khan was young, he took refuge on Mount Burhan Haldun during a raid by the Merkit tribe. With the help of this mountain, he escaped his enemies. The legend goes like this:

"I climbed Burhan Haldun peak. With Burhan Haldun's help, I escaped like a swallow. I must worship Burhan Haldun every morning. Let my lineage and my lineage's lineage know this!"

With these words, Temüjin hung his belt around his neck and his cap on his arm. He turned towards the sun. He struck his chest with his hand. He knelt nine times towards the sun and repented. He expressed his remorse.

A similar story exists among the Altai Turks. The Altai people, pursued by the Mongols, take refuge in the Karagay mountain. They sacrifice animals on the mountain. Suddenly, the mountain is covered by a forest. The Mongols cannot find their way. The Altai people escape.

In the 11th century, Gardizi wrote that the Nine Oghuz tribes worshipped a very large mountain. The Oghuz tribes sacrificed animals on that mountain.

The ancient Turks' worship of Yersu lives on among the Shaman Turks of Siberia and Central Asia. The Altai, Yenisei and Yakut Turks continue to worship mountains, forests, trees and springs. They hold magnificent ceremonies for sacred mountains. The Bashkirs consider all the Ural Mountains sacred. Furthermore, each tribe has its own sacred mountain. The tribes in the central part of the Urals worship the Tura and Kırktı mountains. They tie cloth to a tree on Kırktı Mountain. 18

The ceremony dedicated to the Sky God is also held at the top of a high and sacred mountain. Hymns are sung in unison. The mountains, rivers and forests are addressed.

In Anatolia, certain mountains are also considered sacred. Almost every Alevi village or settlement has one or two mountains that are considered sacred. Anatolia is full of such sacred mountains. In some places, ceremonies are held for these mountains. Rain prayers are performed. Sacrifices are made, vows are taken. During their migration, the Yörük people offer sacrifices to the spirits of the Taurus Mountains. The Turkmen people of the Çanakkale region revere Mount Kazdağı. They venerate Sarıkız there. Among the Alevis living in the area, legends are told and sayings are recited about Sarıkız. For example, this saying recounts the mythology of Sarıkız:

Hey, be my sacrifice, Zülfikâr Ali
You created the heavens and the earth,
eternal The world has never seen such
beauty Hey, be my sacrifice, Zülfikâr
Ali

From the light of my fortune, falling
to the Kaaba, Filtered through the
breath of God, passing by, Filled from
the hand of Sarıkız, drinking Hey, I
am your sacrifice, Zülfikâr Ali

By the threshold, the Sultan lies beside
her. In Sarıkız's court, the lion roars.
Selman knows the secret, the mystery.
Oh, I am your sacrifice, Zülfikâr Ali

Have you taken my wealth and my
life as lawful? Have you taken my
honour and my blood as lawful? Have
you taken my Golden Sultan as
lawful? Hey, I am your sacrifice,
Zülfikâr Ali.

The saying contains many colourful motifs. All the elements of the long road stretching from Central Asia to Anatolia are scattered throughout. According to the saying, it is Ali who creates everything. Sarıkız's light filters through and comes from God Ali. Selman lies at Ali's door. This Selman Farisi, established in Sarıkız's divan, knows all of Ali's secrets. Then Sarıkız becomes Selman's wife, his lawful spouse.

The events described here are entirely reminiscent of elements found in ancient Turkish epics. There are parallels with the Epic of Oğuz Khan.

In the Epic of Oğuz Khan, one day Oğuz Khan prays to God in a certain place. Darkness falls. A light falls from the sky. This light is brighter than the sun or the moon. Oğuz Khan walks. He sees a girl in this light. She is a very beautiful girl. She has a fiery, bright mark on her head. She is like a golden stake, an iron stake. She is so beautiful that if she smiles, the Sky God smiles too. If she cries, the Sky God cries too. When Oğuz Khan sees her, he is captivated, he loves her and takes her.

The tale of Sarıkız, told in the Kazdağı region, goes like this:

One day, Mother Fatma is very sad and troubled. She weeps. At this time, Hz. Ali is trying to open and capture Kan Castle. Hz. Ali hears Mother Fatma's sorrow and distress. He is about to take the daughter of the lord of Kan Castle, when Mother Fatma's hand grabs Hz. Ali's collar. The lord's daughter dies before Hz. Ali. Hz. Ali attributes this incident to Mother Fatma's feminine jealousy. He takes Mother Fatma to the girl's room. There, he comforts her. He asks her why she came. She tells him her sorrow.

"We have two sons. If only we had a daughter! That is why I came, troubled by this thought," she says.

Hz. Ali responds:

"Go to the Kaaba and take your daughter!"

At that moment, Mother Fatima finds herself with a beautiful girl inside the Kaaba. She takes this little bundle to her ancestor, Prophet Muhammad.

"See what my master Ali has given me," she says.

"But my dear, I have no third eye to see this beautiful girl. My two eyes are Hasan and Hussein. Take her to Ali. Let him entrust her to God," Muhammad replies.

Mother Fatima:

"He gave it to me because I asked for it. Ali won't take it back," he says. Prophet Muhammad: "Then take it and leave it at the Kaaba. God knows best.

"Fatima, going to leave her daughter at the Kaaba, encounters Salman lying on his side at the door of the Kaaba. "O Salman, what are you doing here?" she asks. "My master Ali ordered me to take a sacred trust. I have come to take it," he says. He takes the light in Fatima's arms and disappears from sight.

Selman leaves her in a palace made of diamonds and rubies on Mount Kaf. The girl grows up. Selman is her guardian. Selman visits her from time to time to check on her. As the girl grows older, she falls in love with the beauty of the old Selman. One day, she prays to God. She begs and pleads. Ali learns of the situation. Ali says:

"Your situation is dire."

Ali, who created heaven and earth and shared all his secrets with Selman, takes pity on him. He transforms him into a young, handsome man. He goes and brings the girl from her palace on Mount Kaf. He builds her a palace on Sarıkız Hill. Sarıkız lives in the palace for twenty days. Now this life, this loneliness, begins to weigh heavily on him. One day he begs Selman:

"I want to see my father, my mother, my grandfather, my brothers. Show them to me."

Selman feels sorry for Sarıkız and pleads,

"Sarıkız is very beautiful. She wants to see you. Come and see her," he urges. Fatma Ana asks Ali for permission and comes. She sees Sarıkız. After this meeting, Sarıkız dies, and Selman grows old again.

Seven girls on the right, seven girls on the left, and seven more crawl along, moaning and groaning with longing, going to ask about Ali. Twenty days later, they go to Ali's door. They enter under the cover.

When Fatma Ana went to see Sarıkız, it was the first day of autumn. Today, Alevis from all around Kazdağı come to Kazdağı. They hold a large gathering and celebration.

A. Yılmaz collected this legend from a 110-year-old grandfather.

In the legend, the mountain is sacred. The sanctity of the mountain is part of earth worship.

A. Yılmaz states that the glorification of Mount Kaz is based directly on the Shamanic belief. The Aktav Turks from the Northern Turks came and settled in this area. They preserved their old beliefs

under the Turkish-Islamic umbrella. They named Ayda Torugan 'Sarıkız' and the main mountain 'Kaz Dağı'.

ç. Trees, Forests

An entire forest or certain trees are considered sacred. The tree most revered by Shamans is the beech. Altai Shamans believe that the beech tree is descended from God. For this reason, lightning does not strike the beech tree.¹⁹ Muslim Shamans of East Turkestan consider the has

They keep an ash tree while healing with magic spells. Until recent years, Altai shamans did not perform ceremonies without an ash tree. The ash tree is not merely an instrument used in ceremonies, but a sacred being worshipped in its own right. A shaman from the Kaç Turks offers a sacrifice to the ash tree, saying:

Golden-leaved sacred birch
Eight-shadowed sacred birch
Nine-rooted, golden-leaved noble birch O
sacred birch tree
I offer you a black-cheeked, white lamb as a sacrifice.

According to this explanation, the ash tree was brought down to earth by the main god Umay and Ülgen. The male ash tree is always mentioned in Altai prayers. The Beltirs and Sagays perform sky or mountain sacrifice ceremonies under the ash tree. The Yakuts revere the black pine tree. Yakut women who cannot have children come to the black pine tree. They spread white horsehide under the tree. They pray in front of the tree.

Forest worship is also one of the most important forms of worship among contemporary northern hunter-gatherer peoples. According to Yakut hunters, there are nine forest deities. These spirits protect the hunters. They grant them abundant game.

Until recently, the Şor Turks, who made their living from hunting, placed great importance on the spirit of the forest. These spirits demand that the hunter be clean and truthful. The hunter must not engage in sexual relations on the day he goes hunting. The hunter's family members must also take care to be clean. Until the hunters return, games, joking and entertainment are forbidden in the village. The spirits of the forest do not like such things. These spirits love to listen to stories and tales from the hunters. For this reason, hunters take a skilled storyteller with them.

d. Water, Spring, River, Lake, Rock

Water has been an important element for the Turks since ancient times. In the Orhun monuments, "yersu" is the protective spirit of the Turks.

El Biruni writes that the Oghuz worshipped and prostrated themselves before a rock next to a very fertile spring. According to Gardizi, the Kimek tribe worshipped the Irtysh River. Water was the god of the Kimeks. In the 10th century, Ibn al-Fakih wrote that the Barhsan Turks revered Lake Issyk. The Barhsan Turks worshipped Lake Issyk.

In our time, the Altai Turks call nature worship "yersu". They sing hymns to "yersu" with magnificent ceremonies. They call out, "Our yersu, creator of our bountiful herds".

According to Arab sources, the ancient Oghuz and Mongols avoided water. They never washed. In the 10th century, Ibn Fadlan said, "They never wash, especially in winter, they have nothing to do with water." In the 13th century, Genghis Khan legalised this tradition.

The Cücen people did not wash their clothes or hands. The same custom was observed among the shamanic Oghuz and Mongols. Gardizi reports that the Kimeks and Kipchaks worshipped the Irtysh River. According to him, "Water is the God of the Kimeks." For this reason, the Tubals looked down on them. They considered them vermin. This tradition stems from the belief of devout shamans in water worship.

e. Fire, Hearth

Fire worship was very important among the ancient Turks. The Altaic shamanistic Turks recount the following legend:

The first humans fed on fruit and herbs. They had no need for fire. God commanded them to eat meat. They needed fire. Ülgen brought two stones from the sky, one black and one white. He crushed dry grass in his palm and placed it on one stone. He struck it with another stone. The grass caught fire. Thus, Ülgen taught humans how to make fire for the first time. "This fire is fire that has fallen onto the stone from my father's power," he said.

For this reason, in the Altai and Yakut regions, fire obtained from flint is considered sacred. In the Northern Altai, the bride and groom light the first fire with flint on their wedding night. They stay by this fire for three nights and three days.

Yakut shamans obtain fire with flint for religious ceremonies. They call this fire sacred fire. Fire lit with matches is not used in religious ceremonies.

Gazing into the fire to predict the future is an ancient Turkish custom. The great khans of the Turks have a specific day. On that day, a large fire is lit for them. Sacrifices are made to this fire, and prayers are said. Large flames rise from the fire

If the flames are greenish, there will be abundant rain and a good harvest. If they are red, there will be war. If they are yellow, there will be epidemics and illness. If they are black, the khan may die or embark on a long journey.

In the 11th century, Gardizi said:

They cremate their dead like the Indians. They consider fire to be the purest object. They believe that everything that falls into the fire will be purified. They throw the dead into the fire to purify them of impurities and sins.

According to Shamanism, fire purifies everything. It drives away evil spirits. In the 6th century, Byzantine envoys who came to the Western Göktürk khan passed through fires. With this ceremony, any evil spirits that might have come with the envoys were driven away. Traces of this belief are also found among Muslim Turks.

The Bashkirs and Kazakhs light a piece of oily rag and wave it around the patient, chanting "alas, alas." The terms "alaslama" and "alazlama" are also used in Turkish. It means cleansing with fire.

The word alas is a term used in Yakut and Altai shamanism. Yakut shamans drive away evil spirits by chanting "alias, alias". The shaman performs alazlama with the sacred fire.

The hearth cult and the fire cult are inseparable. In shamanic prayers, it is referred to as the hearth lit by our ancestors.

In one of the rhymed prayers recited during shamanic ceremonies, the spirit of fire is blessed as follows:

Thirty-toothed fire mother
Forty-toothed ash mother
You work and toil for us
during the day

Belief in spirits also brings divination and fortune-telling. Fortune-telling is widespread among the Huns and Uighurs. The Irk Bitik inscription left by the Uighurs is related to divination.²²

However, divination and fortune-telling are not unique to the Turks. They were part of humanity's general quests in ancient and medieval times. Divination was famous in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Babylon. The Romans were captivated by this mystery.

According to Byzantine sources, the Turks also considered fire sacred. This belief, seen among the Göktürks, was influenced by Zoroastrianism.

Shamanists, who established great states, created statutes to perform their religious ceremonies. The Manchus did this. According to the Chinese, the Huns also had similar ceremonies. Religious ceremonies were performed in a specific order. A ceremony was held at the beginning of each year in the temple at the Khan's tent. The chiefs of the 24 Hun tribes participated in the ceremony. They gathered in the city of Lungçeng in the fifth month of the year. They offered sacrifices to their ancestors, the Sky God, and the spirits of the earth.

In summer, the horses are well fed. They gather near the forest. They roam the countryside. They determine the number of people and herds of animals. The Khan leaves his tent twice a day to worship. He worships the sun in the morning and the moon at night. In 121 BC, the Chinese defeated a Hun prince and seized his tent. Among the spoils of war was a golden idol. According to Chinese historians, the Hun prince offered sacrifices to Göktaŋrı before this idol. When the Huns were about to embark on a task, they would observe the position of the stars and the moon.

After the Huns, various Turkic tribes who established states in Central Asia also offered sacrifices to Göktaŋrı, the earth, the sun, and the moon. Their religious beliefs were similar to those of the Huns. The Tobal, following the Siyenpi tradition, sacrificed to Göktaŋrı in the first month of spring. They offered sacrifices to their ancestors in a temple located in the east. In the first month of autumn, they held sacrificial ceremonies to Göktaŋrı. Religious ceremonies and sacrificial ceremonies were performed according to a set of rules. They carved a stone in the temple of the ancestors. They migrate south from their northern homeland. In stone houses, they sacrifice to the sky, the earth, and the khan's lineage. After the sacrifice, they plant poplar trees. From these, divine sacred forests grow. In the 3rd century BC, Hun worship continues among the Tobalas. The Tobalas oppress the Cücen people under their rule.

In 519, a female shaman among the Juan Juan sends a prince on a journey to the heavens. She then calls this prince back from his journey. To do this, she sets up a tent in a meadow in the middle of autumn. She fasts for seven days inside the tent and prays all night long.

We are in 6th century Inner Asia. The Göktürk tribe has re-established the great Turkish state. The Göktürks are a tribe devoted to their ancient religious beliefs. This tribe will develop a national script and national language in state administration. The bud of national state consciousness will blossom. Despite all this, primitive shamanism will survive.

The Göktürks also believed in shamanism. Despite being an advanced nation in the 6th century, they retained many primitive elements found in the shamanism of today's Altai peoples.

They fashion the forms of the gods from felt. They keep them in leather bags. They grease this appearance with internal fat. They erect them on poles. They sacrifice to the gods four times a year.

They sacrifice to the gods. These images are the idols called Töztös by the Altai, Tanara by the Yakuts, Eren by the Soyons, and Ongon by the Mongols.

They place the heads of sacrificed horses and sheep on poles. The Khan's tent is on Mount Ötüken. Its door faces east. Every year, together with the tribal chiefs, he offers sacrifices at the cave of the ancestors. On the first ten days of the month, they sacrifice to God on the riverbank. There is a high mountain 500 li west of Mount Ötüken. There are no trees or grass on this mountain. They call this place "Budun ili". It means the spirit that protects the country. They worship spirits and believe in shamans.

After the Göktürks and Uighurs, the Kyrgyz became the masters of the Central Asian steppes. According to Chinese and Islamic sources, they also offer sacrifices to the gods and spirits through shamans. There is no specific time for the sacrifice ceremony. They sacrifice to the waters and trees. According to the 10th-century Islamic traveller Dūleḡ, they have three festivals each year. They recite rhyming verses during their religious ceremonies.

Ebu Dūleḡ provides the following information about the Karluk people who lived east of the Seven Rivers and the Syr Darya River:

The Karluk Turks have temples made of fireproof wood. Images of their ancient khans are documented on their walls.

If this claim is true, Karluk shamanism was quite advanced. It had developed into a temple-based religion.

Again, according to Gardizi, the Kyrgyz worship various creatures, such as cows, hedgehogs, magpies, falcons, and beautiful trees. Every year, on certain days, musicians arrive. When the musicians begin to play, the shaman faints and falls. Questions are asked about what will happen that year: famine, abundance, rain, drought, danger, security, and enemy attacks. The shaman answers all these questions, and what he says often comes true.

In the 10th century, the Oghuz lived between the Caspian and Aral Seas. According to Ibn Fadlan, despite their proximity to Islamic lands, the Oghuz resisted Islam and clung to shamanism. Ibn Fadlan first encountered the Oghuz chieftain Küçük İnal Bey, who had initially converted to Islam. However, his people protested, saying, "If you become a Muslim, you cannot be our leader," and İnal Bey reverted to shamanism.

The funeral rites witnessed by Fadlan are identical to those of the Göktürks. A kurgan is built over the grave. Balbals are erected. A yug (feast) is held. The skins, heads, feet, and tails of the slaughtered animals are hung on trees. Thus, sacrifices are offered to the dead.

f. Spirits

In shamanism, there are good and evil spirits. In Altai shamanism, Ülgen is considered the greatest spirit and God. In Kyrgyz and Kazakh Turkish, ülgén means great, supreme. In the Buryat language, it means "our mother, the dark earth." Accordingly, Ülgen is the name of the Earth God.

According to the legend identified by A. Anohin, Ülgen is a benevolent being. He lives beyond the moon and sun, above the stars. There are seven (or nine) obstacles on the path to his realm. This path is open to male shamans during religious ceremonies. However, even male shamans can only reach the fifth obstacle. From there, they turn back. Ülgen's palace has a golden throne. He is human in form. Ülgen is creative. He is the creator of all beings. They call him the creator of all the sunlit and moonlit realms. He is the creator of fire. He placed the tripods in the hearths. The mercy that falls from the sky is his saliva. He causes the moon and sun to move. He carries white clouds from country to country. Ülgen has seven sons and nine daughters. They reside in the heavens. Each of his sons has a special name. His daughters are collectively known as the Akkızlar.

There are other spirits in Ülgen's service. These are the spirits Yayık, Suyla, Karlık, and Utkuçu. Yayık acts as an intermediary between humans and Ülgen, protecting humans from evil spirits. He is a part of the moon and the sun.

Suyla dwells on earth and protects people. Its eyes can see from a distance of thirty days. They resemble horse eyes. Created from fragments of the moon and sun, it is tasked with observing changes in human life. It protects the shaman from evil spirits that may attack during his spiritual journey. Together with Yayık, it carries the soul of the sacrifice to the heavens. In religious ceremonies, raki is used as an offering in its honour.

Karlık is Suyla's closest friend. Utkuçu is found in the heavens. He does not descend to earth. He greets the shaman who ascends to the heavens to offer sacrifices to Ülgen. He presents the shaman's wishes to Ülgen. Ülgen's sons are also in the sky. Each Altay tribe considers one son their protector. Ülgen's nine daughters (white girls) are the inspiration for shamanic prayers.

In shamanism, there are other benevolent female spirits. Umay, Ana Maygıl, Aka Ene, and Ayasıt are among them.

Umay protects children and animal offspring. She is the most famous female deity of the Turks. She has been known since ancient times. Her name appears in the first Göktürk inscriptions. Bilge Khan says, "When my father, the khan, died, my younger brother Kültekin was seven years old. Thanks to my mother, who was like Umay, my younger brother Kültekin was given the name erkahraman." He compares his mother to Umay. The inscriptions also mention that "God, Umay, and the sacred yersu spirits will help the Turks."

Ayasit is the creative, abundant, prosperous female spirit. She protects some human and animal offspring. She gathers and unites scattered elements of life. Among the Yakuts, she has taken on the role of the ancient Umay. She breathes "kut" into the child in the womb. She gives life to the child. She is the protector of pregnant women. Yakut girls make idols in the name of Ayasit and hide them under their beds. Barren women make wishes to Ayasit for children.

In shamanism, there are also certain evil spirits. Erlik is foremost among them. Erlik means "powerful" according to the Altai people and does all kinds of evil to humans. He causes illness and demands sacrifices. If no sacrifice is made, he attacks that tribe or that hearth. He brings death and destruction. He takes the soul of the creature he kills to his dark world underground. He makes them his servants. He is described in shamanic prayers as follows:

"He rides a black stallion, his bed is black beaver skin. No belt reaches his waist, his eyelids are a span wide, he has a black moustache and black beard. His face is stained with blood, he is a bright-haired, handsome erlik. His power comes from his chest, his cup is a dried skull, his sword is green iron, his face is jet black. The horse he rides is a black stallion, its reins are black silk, its whip is a black snake, and it comes smiling right before me!"

The man has seven (or nine) sons. He also has nine daughters.

According to shamanic belief, the whole world is full of spirits. Mountains, lakes, rivers (yersu) are all living things. Mountains, rivers, lakes are not just local names for shamans. They are beings that speak, hear, marry, and have children. Shamans preserve the memories of the very ancient, primitive animism period in their beliefs.

g. Shaman

The shaman is a religious figure who can communicate with spirits through trance. He can establish connections with supernatural beings. He possesses their power. He uses this power on behalf of the community. He acts as an intermediary between the gods and humans. He is chosen by the gods. Spirits are subject to his commands. His power is divine. This power comes to him as a cloud above his head. It takes the form of a rainbow and fills his body.

The shaman grows up with these beliefs. He is a person with a broad imaginative universe. He knows the secrets of nature. He has been thoughtful since childhood. He sometimes falls into depression. He speaks spontaneously. When he loses himself in religious ecstasy, he believes that his spirit has ascended to the heavens or descended into the underworld, or that he has seen hell.

Usually, whether a person will become a shaman can be understood from certain spiritual signs in their childhood. Nioradze describes these as follows: "Seeing giant spirits, frequent dizziness, fainting spells, the ability to predict the future. (...) Those who will become shamans writhe in spiritual and physical pain until they take up the shamanic profession. They often stop eating and drinking and do not mix with people. They appear nervous in their outward appearance. They flee from their homes to the forests and fields. They sleep outside on the snow. In the places where they live alone, they talk to spirits and jinn.

According to Drenkova, shyness and fear of people, an introverted spiritual structure, distress and the predominance of thought are precursors to shamanism. Faced with this situation, the child's relatives resort to various measures to prevent the child, who has been chosen by the spirit of the ancestors, from taking on this heavy responsibility. However, if all these measures prove ineffective, the young Altai is sent to a shaman for training and education. (...) For example, among the Kyrgyz, a person becoming a shaman roughly corresponds to the above indications:

Shamanism is not acquired through learning. It is inherited. No one wants to become a shaman. The spirit of a past shaman envelops the shaman candidate. After this, the shaman candidate begins training under an experienced shaman. The elderly shaman teaches them all the necessary teachings.

Among the Yakuts, a shaman candidate enters the training tradition as follows:

The entire tribe gathers and climbs a mountain or hill. The elder shaman dresses the future shaman in ceremonial robes. He gives him a staff bound with horsehair. Nine young men stand to the right of the young candidate, and nine girls to his left. The elder shaman recites the oath of allegiance to the craft. It is a long prayer. The young candidate repeats the same words.

In the early days of the Tobas, there were female shamans. They presided over the state's religious ceremonies. For example, in 339, at a sacrificial ceremony, they appeared with tambourines in their hands, just like the Siberian shamans.

h. Clothing

The most important garments of shamans are the upper garment and the headdress. The upper garment is made of white sheepskin. Other pieces are sewn onto it.

The headdress is three spans long. It is made of red cloth. Three buttons are placed on the edge. Shamans wear these during religious ceremonies.

After clothing, the most important accessory is the drum. Religious ceremonies cannot be performed without musical instruments. Later, shamans who converted to Islam would use the kopuz instead of the drum or def.

The shaman decorates his upper garment and drum in a dreamlike manner. The spirit he serves has described the form of these decorations in detail. The form and characteristics of the accessories arise from this inspiration.

1. Drum

Pictures are drawn on shaman drums using white and red paint. The paints are made by grinding soft stones found on riverbanks into powder. For this reason, the paints are called "apagaç stone" and "red stone". Experienced male artists apply the powder to the drum with their fingers to create the drawings.

The owner's drawing divides the drum into two equal parts. The head is at the top and the feet are at the bottom. The images of the moon and sun, which are round inside, are located on either side of the head.

Shaman drums feature images of the sun, moon, stars, lightning, and birch trees. The two birch tree images on a shaman drum are explained as follows:

"When we first trembled from our ancestor Ülgen, these two birch trees descended to the ground with our mother Umay."

In Altai Shamanism, after the shaman dies, the drum is taken to the forest and broken into pieces. It is hung on a tree branch. The shaman's body is also buried next to this tree.²³

i. Religious Ceremony

Fire is an essential element in shamanic religious ceremonies. The sacrificial animal is first offered to the spirit of fire. The ceremonies of the Turkic peoples who practise shamanism are divided into two categories:

1. Ceremonies that must be performed at specific times: spring, summer and autumn. They have been performed since ancient times. According to Chinese sources, during the era of the ancient Turkic Empires, they were the official religious holidays of the state, and the spring and autumn holiday ceremonies have been known since the Huns period. During the Mongol period, these would be the religious holidays of the state. They would be celebrated with magnificent ceremonies.

These summer festivals are universal ceremonies celebrating the rebirth of nature. They are similar in content to Passover among the Semitic peoples and Easter among Christians. The Yakuts call their summer festival "Isiah". After seven months of harsh winter, the mares will be milked and kumis will be fermented. The entire clan will gather in a meadow. The ceremony will be conducted under the leadership of the clan shaman, and games will be played. They will sing this song:

"O children, lords, joyful days have come
The old year is over, the new year has come
The whole earth has turned green
Children are being born,
Cows and mares are giving birth

Then the shaman raises the kımız cup to his head. He says, "Algıs" (Good luck). He offers the first kımız collected as a sacrifice to the great gods, Ürümlü Ayı Toyon and Ürümlü Ar Toyon. He recites the following hymn:

Ay Toyon, we give thanks to you
You have given us this spring season
You have sent us calves, foals, and sweet milk
You have adorned our trees with beautiful leaves
You have decorated our pastures with green
grass
We offer you this kımız-filled cup (kadeh)

Then they pour kumis and oil onto the Fire God, the owner of the fire. Nine bee maidens and nine bee youths participate in the spring warmth ceremony alongside the shaman. They accompany the shaman on his journey to the heavens. Maidens and youths who are not bees cannot ascend to the heavens. They remain in the layers of the sky according to the measure of their sins. There are stops along the way to the realm of the gods. During the ceremony, special hymns are sung for each of these stops.

Among the Yakuts, this ceremony has recently been transformed into a kind of national holiday or feast under the influence of Christianity.

The most important religious ceremony of the Altai people is the horse sacrifice ceremony. The ceremony can be long or short. The longest ceremony consists of three parts.

a) After sunset, the preparation phase takes place. The shaman determines the location of the ceremony. A special large tent with its door facing east is erected. A trap made of horsehair is placed at the door.

A trap made of horsehair is placed at the door. A green birch tree is planted in the middle of the tent. The branches of the birch tree inside the tent are pruned. The branches remaining on top of the tent are left untouched. A flag is hung there. The birch tree is cut in nine places. These places are called steps.

b) Several white horses are brought. These are offered to God. The shaman recites a spell and throws the cup he is holding behind the horse. If the cup falls head down, God does not like this horse. If it is a mare for sacrifice, the shaman washes the cup with her milk. Then he recites the following prayer:

You have seen and accepted it
The cup is from me, to drop it low is from you
Grant us auspicious knowledge

The reins of the sacrifice are in the hands of the "leader". This man represents the spirit that will carry the sacrifice's soul to God. The shaman makes a bundle of birch branches. He waves it over the sacrifice. He puts on his clothes and headdress. He takes his drum and mallet in his hands. First, he calls upon Ülgen, his sons, and the spirits connected to them.

The shaman addresses several spirits. He recites incantations. He mounts the mummified horse. He embarks on his journey to the heavens. He will supposedly capture the invisible soul of the sacrificial animal. After considerable effort, he captures the animal's soul. He flies away on the horse he is riding. (He is assumed to have flown away).

The sacrificial horse is killed by strangulation and breaking its spine. As the horse is dying, two shamans come to the animal's side. They bring the bread they hold in their hands to the horse. They mix the box from the sacrifice into the bread. This bread will be eaten by the owner of the sacrifice and their relatives. It is not given to anyone else.

The skin, head, feet and tail of the sacrifice are hung together on a pole. The bones of the sacrifice are separated without being broken. Two experts called "kazancı" cook the sacrifice. During cooking, no one but the kazancı may approach the sacrifice. The shaman takes some of the meat broth. He performs the hair ritual by reciting spells and prayers. The Ozans recite prayers. At the end of each verse, they shout "çook," meaning "amen."

Those attending the ceremony are given a feast of sacrificial meat. The shaman continues to eat pieces of meat while praying. A little later, the shaman rests. At this time, the owner of the sacrifice brings nine garments. He hangs them by the door of the tent. These are gifts to Ülgen. They are called "tolu".

The bones are gathered in a pit. It is covered with brushwood and twigs. The shaman dries his drum by holding it over the fire. He burns fragrant herbs with his robe and incenses the drum. He sits on a stool. He begins to call the spirits by beating his drum. First, he calls Yayık Han, the water god. He continues to beat his drum and recite rhyming prayers

He calls all the spirits he knows by name. Among them is the eagle. He describes the eagle as "the bird of God, the magnificent bird with copper talons".

After this, each clan summons its great ancestor. Hymns are sung to these ancestors. The owner of the sacrifice and his wife are embraced and blessed with the drumstick. The members of the household are symbolically dressed in armour and headgear. Then, with powerful drumbeats, they circle around the fire. He embraces the prize placed for Ülgen with the drum and mallet. He continuously recites poetic hymns. He takes Ülgen's prize and ascends to the sky. He reaches the first layer of the sky. There he encounters lightning and thunder, ascends to the second layer. He makes a prediction about the future position of the sky. He describes what is found on each level of the sky. Reciting verses, he ascends to the fourth level of the sky. He reflects the thunder with his drum. He reaches the fifth level. The thunder has increased. On this level, there is a spirit called Yayı. The shaman beats his drum slowly on this spirit level. He recites his prayers slowly. This spirit is female. He calls her "mother".

The Creator (Yayı) asks:

Whose descendant are you? Whose grandchild are you? Tell me your name. The person's name becomes the deer's hide. Tell me your name, tell me your path. How did you come to this place, where birds do not fly and reptiles do not pass, like a foul-smelling insect?

The shaman is very afraid. He retreats, pleading and begging.

The shaman of Yayı makes predictions. "This will happen, that will happen." All those attending the ceremony throw their headdresses under the shaman's drum. This is to catch good omens. As the shaman ascends to the sixth layer of the sky, everyone takes their headdress. On the sixth layer, the shaman prostrates himself before the moon. Thus, he ascends to the twelfth layer of the sky. Here, he offers sacrifices to Ülgen. He recites prayers to him. Thus, the journey has come to an end.

The shaman descends to earth. He throws down his drum. He opens his eyes. He greets everyone as if he has come from a long journey.

This is a summary of the three-day ceremony. On the third day, a great feast is held in honour of the shaman. Everyone drinks the prepared beverages until they are drunk.

In religious ceremonies against evil spirits, shamans travel underground. They recount their experiences in rhyming verse: They have crossed the hair bridge in hell. They have crossed scorching yellow deserts where ravens do not fly. They have seen countless skeletons of sinful shamans. They have encountered snakes, dragons, and monsters.

The ancient Turks had a unique burial ritual. The burial ritual of the Göktürks is described in detail at , , and

They call it "the coffin beneath the domed tent." According to Turkish custom, the deceased is placed beneath the domed tent. Each relative slaughters an animal, such as a sheep, horse, or cow. The sacrifices are laid out outside the tent. All relatives mount their horses. They gallop around the tent. They circle the tent seven times, crying out in grief. When they reach the door, they cut their faces with knives. Their faces and ears are slashed. Blood mixes with tears. As a sign of mourning, their hair is cut. Incense is used. A "yuğ yıpar" (incense-burning mourning torch) is lit with juniper wood. An auspicious time is chosen to bury the deceased. Those who die in spring and summer are kept until the leaves fall, while those who die in autumn and winter are kept until the leaves turn green. The deceased is placed inside a wooden pavilion shaped like a domed tent. The khan is cremated on horseback, along with his personal belongings and valuable gifts such as gold, silver, and furs. The ashes are buried with the deceased's belongings. On the day of the burial, sacrifices are made again. A temple is built over the burial site. Horsemen surround the temple. A rock called a "bengü stone" is placed on top of the temple. The deceased person and their battles are depicted on the bengü stone. The ancestral temple monuments of the Göktürk period in the Orhun Valley are clear evidence of this tradition. These temples and sculptures are for people from the upper class. For individuals from lower social classes, large dolls called *tuh*, which are placed on Kyrgyz graves today, are placed on the gravestone. The tradition of cremation also existed among the ancient Kyrgyz. On the Kültegin monument, alongside the image of the deceased, there are also carvings of their relatives and entourage. The images other than the sculpture of the deceased may be symbols of people sacrificed in ancient times. A number of stones or sculptures (statues) equal to the number killed by the owner are erected on the tomb. These are called "Balbal". Again, in the tombs of the Göktürk period, sculptures of rams and images of horses and deer are found. These must be a reminder of sacrificial ceremonies. Among the Göktürks, the heads of the rams or horses sacrificed () were impaled on stakes and erected around the tomb. The ram and deer carvings may have been intended to symbolise these sacrifices. This tradition also existed among the ancient Chou Turks.²⁴

Toba Khan (572-581) adopted Buddhism at the urging of a Chinese Buddhist. He introduced Buddhism to the Göktürks. Toba Khan behaved like a devout Buddhist. He recites Buddhist prayers and observes fasting. However, we do not know how the people responded to Buddhism during this period. After Toba Khan's death, the Göktürk Khanate was plunged into ruin. The Turkish beys became Sinicised and degenerated. The Turkish black tribe cried out, "Where is my khan? Where is my law and custom?" There is no trace of Buddhism in the Orkhon inscriptions written 150 years after the Khan's death. According to the inscriptions, the Turkish God and Yer Su helped the Turks gain independence. However, the interesting thing is that the inscriptions make no mention of primitive beliefs, evil spirits, essences, or similar idols.

Bilge Khan's noble entourage had abandoned such traditions. The soft-hearted Bilge Khan had a penchant for the Buddhist religion. He was indifferent to the empty beliefs of the common people.

Indeed, Bilge Khan was captivated by the splendour of China. Central Asian Turkic culture should also be so ostentatious. His tent should be surrounded by fortresses. Temples to Buddha and Laozi should be erected. His nation should become accustomed to city life. Buddhist religious ceremonies should be performed. However, this view would be met with fierce resistance from the wise Tonyukuk.

But Buddhism had taken deep root among the Uighurs, leaving a deep mark on their lives, art and literature, and Hotan became the stronghold of Buddhism in Inner Asia.

The founder of Buddhism was Prince Siddhartha, who was of royal descent. Siddhartha was born in the Magadha region of India in the 6th century BC. When he reached the age of 29, he withdrew to the countryside and began to live the life of a dervish. He immersed himself in contemplating the meaning of life.

In truth, Siddhartha's situation is not such an unusual occurrence. Before him, or among his peers, it was common to encounter others in the same situation at that time. However, the outcome of his retreat is not the same as theirs. For years, he immerses himself in the realm of thought. Finally, one night, a miracle occurs. His mind is enlightened, and he becomes the Buddha. He discovers the truth, the truth of suffering.

According to Buddha, existence is suffering. Birth, greed, old age and death are interlinked, complementary rings, parts of existence. This suffering is endless. Suffering does not end with death. It takes shape in a new body.

On that unforgettable night, the truth that would end suffering also appeared before Buddha. One can only escape the vortex of suffering by killing desire, the desire to live. Only then, and only then, can one reach a state free from suffering

, nirvana, and for those freed from the endless chain of rebirth, there is no longer a body. Once Buddha's mind was enlightened, he began to spread the word of truth, the dharma. He established his sangha, his church. The new religion began to spread rapidly in the lands of Magdha. This rapid spread stemmed from Buddhism's inclusion of everyone under its umbrella, without distinction.

During Buddha's lifetime, the eastern Indian kingdoms of Magdha and Kosala had converted to the new religion. After Magdha conquered northwestern India, Buddhism ceased to be a local religion. It became a widespread religion.

After Buddha's death, differences of opinion arose among Buddhist clergy regarding certain principles. These debates gradually intensified. Eventually, Northern and Southern Buddhism split apart. Northern Buddhism formed the Mahayana sect. Looking at this sect, we see that the old atheistic Buddhism became crowded with gods, demigods, guardian spirits and jinn. It became a polytheistic religion. The clergy of this sect began to perceive Buddha as a god. They placed emphasis on worldly solutions. They argue that suffering will end when a strong personality devotes itself to Nirvana. The other school of Buddhism is Hinayana. Buddhist theology has created an abstract counterpart to Buddha's approach to thought in this school. In this school, the solution is achieved through meditation.

Buddhism has five main prohibitions:

Do not kill living beings, do not lie, do not drink alcohol, do not steal, do not commit adultery.

According to the faith, those who follow these precepts attain nirvana.

The Burkan religion spread to Central Asia in the 2nd century AD when it was adopted by the Kushan emperor. At this time, Buddhism was developing in two provinces of India. A Buddhist temple had been built in the capital of the Kengeres province. However, Buddhism would not take root in Western Turkistan. In this region, fire worship supported by the Sassanids and other Iranian religions would not allow Buddhism to enter. Indeed, the Shul Turks worshipped fire. They had converted to Islam from the religion of fire worship.²⁵ Despite its stagnation in Turkmenistan, Buddhism spread rapidly from East Turkistan to China. Throughout the ages, the Burkan religion would be the main cultural sphere in the settled areas of East Turkistan. Buddhist monasteries were established along the caravan routes leading to China. In Buddhist monasteries, Buddhist monks, called "toyn" in Turkish, spread Buddhist culture. In Central Asia, the Mahayana sect of Buddhism, called "Ulu kölüngü" (great ship or cart) in Turkish, developed. This sect differed from the original Buddhism, called "Kiçig kölüngü" (Hinayana), in that it

They were separated by lines. The Small Ship or cart was a personal philosophy of life. The Great Ship, however, was universal. But earlier Turkish beliefs were constantly settling into both of these sects. For example, the legend of the White Wolf found its place within Buddhism. Yet this legend belonged to the northern Turks and had no connection to Buddhism. The White Wolf was transformed into a Buddhist concept. A statue of the wolf was erected in a Buddhist temple. Similarly, the sky and ancestor religion's belief in the alp and semi-divine Khan entered the Great Ship sect. The sacred Khan tradition also found its place in Turkish Buddhism during the Göktürk period. There is a Bugut inscription describing the Göktürks' choice of Buddhism in the 6th century. In the inscription, Taspar Khan receives orders from the spirit of his ancestor, Bumin Khan. He bases the spiritual weight of this historical decision on the religion of the ancestors.²⁶

When Böğü Khan converted to Manichaeism in 762, he wished to become a "dıntar" (high-ranking priest). The Basmil and Uyghur khans who converted to Manichaeism entered the ranks of the sacred persons with the title "idik Kut". Furthermore, a Uyghur inscription documents the participation of the gods of heaven and earth in Manichaean ceremonies.

In Central Asia, the Mahayana school of Buddhism became the most widespread religion as a result of the efforts of the Kushans and the Huns. Just as with the Eastern Huns, the Göktürks under Mukan (552–72) and Taspar Khan (572–81) also chose Buddhism as their official religion for political reasons. Thus, the cultural influence of Confucianism and Taoism from China, Zoroastrianism from Iran, and Christianity from Byzantium would be overshadowed. Taspar Khan was very religious. He was given Buddhist titles such as Patra (Bowl of the Buddha) and Araslan. Taspar Khan had sutras translated into Turkish. He built a large Buddhist complex (Turkish: 'Ködüş') right in the middle of the vast lands of the Göktürk Khanate. He builds sacred document preservation houses called "Ediz ev" in Turkish. These houses store Burkan sculptures, Burkan religious writings, and relics of saints. These are 6th-century Central Asian Buddhist temples. Thus, Göktürk Buddhism generally develops in the direction of the Mahayana sect that developed in Central Asia.

Buddhist monks were also present in the Tabgaç palaces that ruled northern China between 550 and 580. Kinship and cultural ties between the Tabgaç and the Chinese provided an environment conducive to the establishment of this religion. Buddhist monks, who grew up in India and around Kabul, came to the Western Turkic Khan. The Western Turkic Khan Tong Yabgu, who died in 630, had become a Buddhist through an Indian monk. The Bukhara lineage of the Western Turkic Khan also chose Buddhism. The Burhana temple they built remained standing until around 645. Yel Tegin, ruler of the Baykent province, chose the Burkan faith before 588. During this period, Buddhist temples were established in Peshawar and Kashmir.

Buddhism also spread in the Karluk provinces. In 663, the Tardush tribe established the Karluk state north of the Kızılısu valley. We have religious names from the Turkish Buddhist lineage at the beginning of the 8th century. Furthermore, Belhli Şakik, one of the Islamic mystics of the period, confirms that the Kartuks were Buddhists. The mystic Şakik met a Buddhist monk with a shaved head and face, dressed in red robes, at a temple in the Karluk province. Belhli Şakik would be killed in 790 in Huttal, a Buddhist Turkic region. The Uyghur Khan Bögü and his lineage were most likely Buddhist before converting to Manichaeism. The spread of Buddhism among the Uyghurs must have begun in the 4th-5th centuries. The Uyghurs created a great body of Uyghur Buddhist literature and art in a new style in the Turkic language. Buddhism was, in reality, more of a philosophy that viewed life as a painful illusion and a magical dream than a religion. The Turkic Buddhist described this idea as follows: "Understand that the universe is like a spell, like a dream! It is nothingness and emptiness; there is no self, no ego. As the wheel of time turns, successive lives are considered a frightening dream, and one must escape from it. Salvation comes from recognising nothingness and shedding the self to reach nothingness. The Uyghur Buddhist explained this idea as follows: "To recognise nothingness, emptiness, is to reach the truth." This philosophy, which regarded life as a bad dream and called for liberation from it through nirvana, that is, extinguishing the self, was interpreted more concretely in the Great Ship sect. According to this interpretation, nirvana was not extinction, but reaching a state of existence beyond worldly understanding. When the fire of the self was extinguished, it merged with the fire of the universe's entire spirit. This led to a view close to Taoism, a belief in the spirit of the universe. All manifestations of the universe were reduced to a single principle, rather than two principles as in Taoism. Instead of the dualistic cosmology dominant in Taoism, the unity of the universe, understood as originating from a single source, was realised. While the universal spirit of the universe remained uncertain in Taoism, the Great Ship sect linked it to the spirit of the eternal Buddha. This philosophy, reported to have developed in the 10th-11th centuries, originated in the Uyghur region with the concepts of the Eternal Buddha and the Wheel of Time. From there, it spread to Tibet and other regions. A Uyghur poet defined the meaning of the Eternal Buddha as the human heart:

The heart is its own heart, The
heart is the heart,
What exists outside the heart?

This idea of the Tantric branch of the Great Ship sect is very similar to the Turkish mystical school's understanding of the Unity of Being. There are concepts and terms such as "heart" and "Eren" (a saint who can heroically overcome human weaknesses). Thus, Uyghur Buddhist texts precede Turkish mystical literature. The concept of the wheel of time transforms into the "Universe" (the celestial dragon that turns the wheel of time) in Karakhanid-period Turkish literature. Thus, Buddhism, which began as a non-religious philosophy of life, becomes a polytheistic religion within the Ulu Gemi sect. In a centralised world axis, many imaginary Buddhas, historical and fictional figures, and gods of ancient religions find their place in Buddhism. The Great Ship sect in the Uyghur tradition was a polytheistic religion before encountering Islam. True Buddhism underwent a major transformation in the Great Ship understanding. In this respect, Uyghur Buddhism saw no harm in using all the possibilities offered by the fine arts. In Uyghur Buddhism, dreams of paradise, religious ceremonies and literature are magnificent. The sculptures, paintings, ornate temples, and scents of flowers and musk are eye-catching, vivid, and delicate. The pavilions, inscriptions, gardens, and pools are watery and charming. The religious chants and games are exuberant.

The Mongol expansion led to new developments in Uyghur Buddhism. In 1212, the Khoko Uyghur Khanate joined the Mongol state. During this period, Buddhist Turkic culture led the Mongols for a time. Uyghur bakshis (religious teachers) converted the Mongols to Buddhism. They rose to the highest echelons of the Mongol state's cultural and artistic life. The Mongols learn Turkish as their cultural language. Mongolian begins to be written in Uyghur script. However, in 1269, Kublai Khan comes under the influence of Tibetan lamas (priests). Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism spreads in the Uyghur provinces. However, Uyghur Buddhist art continues its own style alongside Lamaist motifs. Meanwhile, translations from Tibetan are made in Uyghur Buddhist literature. Lamaist characteristics are clearly discernible in the texts translated from Tibetan. In these texts, Buddhist saints take on the appearance of Hindu deities. It is imagined that Lamaist Buddhist saints have spouses, like some Hindu deities. Images depict the saints embracing their wives. The embrace of this divine couple, called "öğkang" (mother-father) in Turkish, reflects the effect of life. The dreamlike image of Death, which is the end of life, is depicted with skulls and deadly weapons. These are found on the crowns and in the hands of the divine couple. Lamaist Buddhist saints, like Indian deities, are sometimes depicted with multiple heads, three eyes, and multiple arms. Alongside these similarities, there are certain differences between Lamaist Buddhist saints and Indian deities. For example, Buddhism the universe all appearances and

They regard gods as mere illusions. In a 14th-century Turkish Lamaist text, gods are also described as illusions:

They have no true essence,
They are like reflections in a mirror.

A 14th-century Turkish Lamaist painting is interesting. The painting depicts 64 deities, consisting of 32 pairs. The painting is vibrant and ornate. There is also a text describing the painting. The text in question reads:

It is sky-blue in colour.
It stands on a sun-circled lotus throne
And with his right foot extended, he strikes the crimson-coloured
Umay Hatun With his left foot, he strikes the black-coloured
Mahesvara
He is single-faced, two-armed, and three-
eyed. In his right hand he holds a bell, in his
left hand a vajra. And he embraces the
mother, who is the daughter of the Gods. His
crown has five skulls,
His necklace consists of fifty blood-stained human heads. The
mother Vajravara, who is in his embrace,
is red colour.
She has one face and two arms.
The sacrificial knife held in his right hand
terrifies the ten directions of the universe.
In her left hand, she holds a skull filled with five kinds of elixir
of immortality.
And embraces the
ancestor. Its crown is
made of five dry skulls,
The beads of her necklace are
made of Elil skulls.²⁷

Thus, Buddhism flourished among the Uyghurs for a long time, leaving a deep mark on their culture. When Islam began to spread in the Uyghur region in the 15th century, they encountered a form of Buddhism that had been influenced by relatively backward peoples such as the Tibetans and Mongols. However, Buddhism survives to this day, albeit to a limited extent, among the Turkic peoples. For example, the Yellow Uyghurs still believe in Buddhism today.

MANICHEISM

In the middle of the 7th century, the Göktürk State came under the rule of the Uyghur tribe. During this period, shamanism was dominant in northern Central Asia. The influence of the scriptural religions approaching from the west and south was negligible. The scriptural religions were influenced by shamanism, and the first Uyghur khans (Kül Bilge and Moyun Çur) were shamanists.

In 763, Bögü Khan introduced the Manichaean religion to the Uyghurs. Thus, the Uyghur Turks abandoned Shamanism and converted to Manichaeism. This marked the first time they had chosen a religion based on ethical principles. This event should be regarded as a symbol of broad-mindedness and intellectual maturity. The transition from Shamanism to Manichaeism is considered a milestone in the life of the community. This is because Manichaeism is more humane and has a more solid foundation. It places greater emphasis on ethical rules. For example, in Manichaeism, the act of killing, in whatever form, is considered evil and sinful.

At this time, the Uyghur khans' camp was located between the Orkhon River and Mount Ötüken. It is highly probable that not all of the Uyghur people converted to Manichaeism. The Karabalgasun inscription was erected 506 years after the Uyghurs' acceptance of Manichaeism. This religion would take root among the Uyghurs after 840. At this time, the Kyrgyz expelled the Uyghurs from Mongolia. The Kyrgyz state was established in the east of Central Asia. The Uyghurs who accepted Manichaeism came and settled in East Turkestan. After this, Manichaeism, Christianity, Buddhism and Shamanism coexisted in the Uyghur country.

In Buddhist Uyghur temples, priests will continue the shamanic essence or ongon cult. The Rubruk story will convey this information to us.

In the 3rd century AD, Mani of Babylon drew on the rules of a sect that had developed mainly in Babylon. He established a new religion by incorporating elements of Christianity and Iranian Zoroastrianism. The basis of this religion is dualism. The world is filled with two elements: good and evil, one light, the other darkness. In a time without beginning, the realm of light and the realm of darkness were separated. The realm of darkness stole a piece of light from the realm of light. As a result, matter and light mixed, and the soul came into being

This is the world as we know it today. The task of true knowledge is to recognise this mixture, to separate light from darkness and matter. To achieve this, God sent man 'reason', a spark of the spirit. Through the activity of reason, light will be freed from matter and return to its original home, the land of light. Thus, the first two fundamental principles, separation, mixture, and purification, which emerged over time, are incorporated. (Separation occurred in the past, mixture is the present state, and purification will occur in the future). Mani described this order in an epic style, using metaphors and poetic language.

In the land of light, an atmosphere of peace prevails. Here sits the "Father of Greatness". The "Great Spirit", thought of as female, roams over the land of light. The world we live in is the land of darkness. The land of darkness is filled with strife, noise, passion and foul odours. The war between the lands of light and darkness takes place in three stages:

1. To resist the attacks of the land of darkness, the ruler of the land of light sends the 'Great Spirit' as the mother of living beings. The mother of living beings also sends the first human, who is endowed with a five-part spirit. The first human feeds his five-part spirit to the devil and falls into a deep sleep. When he awakens, he prays seven times to the God of Light.

2. Upon prayer, the God of Light sends forth the 'Beloved of Lights', that is, the 'Great Architect' and the 'Living Spirit'. The Living Spirit has conveyed a call to humanity. This call awakens a 'response' within humanity. Together, the call and the response ascend to the highest world. The Living Spirit, with his sons, the five cosmological forces, and the 'Mother of Living Beings', takes the first human being to the motherland, while the spirit of the first human being, which has the ability to remember, remains in the land of darkness. Upon this, the living spirit creates the world with the help of his five sons. The five sons of the Living Spirit are breath, wind, light, water, and fire. Darkness kills several of the sons. Ten heavens are created from their skins, and eight lands from their flesh. From the remaining fragments of light, the sun and moon are made as the 'ship of light'. Thus, the world is created as a prison for darkness and the spirit. Now the event of salvation will begin.

3. The gods of the first two journeys implore the ruler of light. Upon this, the ruler of light sends a third messenger. The third messenger threatens and frightens the officials of the land of darkness. The officials return the fragments of light they had withheld. The third messenger creates a pillar of splendour. He sets the ships of light in motion. The spirits of light climb the pillar of splendour and reach the moon. From there, they pass to the sun and begin to flow into the land of light. Matter creates man to prevent this activity. It wants to trap the spirit in a tight circle. Male and female demons create man by swallowing the spirit (light) found in the land of demons. This man

It gives the power to walk. However, this effort is in vain. The ruler of the land of light sends the 'messiah'. This is Jesus in Christianity. The Messiah teaches man his true divine essence. The Messiah, in the form of 'reason', warns the prophets, the messengers of light. He gives them and all the 'chosen ones' the 'reason' that leads to salvation, that is, the 'virgin of light'.

Mani says, "For the light to be saved, every living being must work in this way." This is where the moral rules of Manichaeism originate:

- Abstinence from sexual relations
- Not killing living beings
- Prayer, preaching
- Reading the divine
- Confession
- Fasting

The framework of religion is defined by these and similar principles. At the end of the war that begins in this environment, fragments of light will be saved and reach the land of light. There, they will unite with all the light.

Mani has painstakingly and exhaustively detailed the creation of the universe, its eventual end, and the war that will continue until that time. This is the magnificent cosmogony, metaphysics, and moral science system of Manichaeism.

To spread his principles and customs, Mani established the Manichaean church during his lifetime, appointing his followers and priests. He created ranks among them. In Mani's belief system, the priests function as the manifestation of reason in the world. The 'chosen ones', the priests and nuns, participate in the task of liberating the fragments of light from matter through a life of seclusion. The people who are wholeheartedly devoted to the Manichaean religion are obliged to fulfil the requirements of the religion and to comply with the moral rules. Prophets before Mani, such as Zoroaster, Burkan and Jesus, showed humanity various ways to save the fragments of light. However, Mani is the greatest of these and the one who showed the most correct path. Mani says of Jesus, "His death on the cross, suffering pain, is a symbol of the light fragments suffering within matter and burning with longing for their homeland."

Mani successfully spreads his religion in Iran. He travels to various regions in India. He comes into contact with Buddhism. He presents the book he wrote in Persian to the ruler of Iran at the time. However, he soon falls out of favour. Not only is his church banned and his followers persecuted, but he himself is tortured. He is eventually killed by having his body torn apart. Mani's life, spanning the years 216-277, thus comes to an end. Upon this, his assistants and priests set off for Central Asia

and sought a new place to live. Indeed, their fortunes in Inner Asia were not bad at all. They began to gain strength with the addition of new Buddhist elements.

Manichaeism began to spread rapidly in the West in the 6th century, particularly in Africa and Asia Minor. At one point, it even threatened Christianity. However, it did not have the stamina to continue its religious expansion. In the West, Christianity, and in the East, Islam, even destroyed its written texts. Thus, Mani remains shrouded in a thick cloud of mystery. Consequently, what we know about him today is based solely on the unreliable writings of Christian and Muslim clergy.

According to Chinese historians, in 719 a Manichaean priest and scholar, a "great magus," arrived in the capital at the behest of the king of Tokharistan. This Manichaean magus immediately began to spread his religion. His initiative was met with great success, and seeing the alarming increase in the number of believers, the Chinese emperor issued an edict in 732 prohibiting anyone under his rule from converting to the religion of the apostates. Nevertheless, Manichaeism did not disappear from China. Despite persecution, it persisted here and there, even continuing to spread secretly.

The phrase "The state can only be ruled from the Ötüken steppe!" rolled off the tongue of the Göktürk khan. The Turkish nation now yearned for a settled life. In 681, Kutlug Khan entered the war of liberation, first seizing Ötüken. From here, he would be able to rule the steppes and the world of the age. The elderly Tonyukuk became the prime minister of the young Bilge Khan. Bilge Khan asked Tonyukuk to transition to a settled way of life. The people should build houses and establish cities. One of the religions of China should be chosen as the religion of the nation.

Tonyukuk's response clearly and explicitly expresses a nomadic and raiding policy: "The Chinese outnumber us a hundredfold. Nevertheless, if we are to confront them, we must follow the grass and water, live by hunting, and dwell in tents. When we are strong, we advance; otherwise, we retreat and hide. The Chinese are numerous, but they cannot fight everywhere. Because they live in walled cities, they cannot move quickly and cannot resist any attack, becoming prisoners. Furthermore, the religions of Burkan and Lao Tse make people soft and weak."

This view is essential for a state based on nomadism and raiding. However, Bilge Khan strives hard for his nation to settle down. He gives advice in inscriptions: "O Turkish nation, you have gone there and died in great numbers! If you go there, you will die. But if you settle in Ötüken and tend your caravans, you will have no troubles . If you settle in Ötüken , you will hold the state until the end in your hands

However, despite all these warnings, there is no clear evidence of settlement in cities. While nomadism persists, settlement in a specific area is desired.

After 745, the Uyghurs definitively replaced the Göktürks in Ötüken. The Uyghurs are referred to as Tokuz Oğuz in the inscriptions. The Uyghurs are more civilised than other Turkic tribes. They are a constructive Turkic tribe, more advanced in terms of culture. Like the Göktürks, they do not shy away from city life. They did not abandon the steppe and nomadic life, but they were not afraid of urban life softening them. When the noble Uyghurs began to marry Chinese princesses, urban life came naturally. The nobles built houses instead of tents. The people aspired to this way of life. Trade began. Trade necessitated the storage of goods. Gradually, new houses were built. Faced with these challenges, Soğut and Chinese craftsmen established a city of the wealthy called Baybalık on the Selenga River. Meanwhile, the borders of the state expanded. Urban civilisation took root and flourished.

Manichaeism suddenly and very quickly regains all the rights it had lost. The Uyghurs of the Orkhon region are at the height of their power at this time. With their formidable cavalry, they enter the Chinese capital of Loyang, which is grappling with internal problems. A Chinese bandit has rebelled. The Chinese ruler abandoned the capital, which had fallen into the hands of the rebels, and fled to southwestern China. The Chinese emperor requested help from the Uyghurs to rectify the situation. In the autumn of 762, Böğü Khan and his armies rescued one of the Chinese capitals from the rebels. According to nomadic tradition, the city must be plundered in return for the help. The commander of the Chinese army said, "If the people of Loyang, which is still in the hands of the rebels, hear that this city has been plundered, they will join forces with the rebels. It will become more difficult to take the city. Therefore, you must march on Loyang before the plunder." Böğü Khan abandoned the plunder and marched on Loyang. The Uyghurs cleared Loyang of rebels, then plundered the city. This was the result of the military assistance. The Chinese throne was saved from the rebels. But the Uyghur army did not return to Ötüken. They settled outside the city. City life captivated the Uyghurs. This forced hospitality benefited the Uyghurs, who had long traded with the Chinese. But soon conflicts arose between the Uyghurs and the Chinese. The Chinese persuaded the Uyghurs to return to Ötüken. They gave Böğü Khan a Chinese princess. They also promised to give him 20,000 bolts of silk every year.

The Loyang invasion had significant cultural consequences for the Turks. The Uyghur khan, known briefly as Böğü Khan, learned about Manichaeism in the Chinese capital and accepted it. Upon returning to his army near the Orkhon River, he took four Manichaean priests with him in order to have his chosen religion accepted as the state religion. With the help of Böğü Khan, Manichaeism subsequently became the official religion of the Uyghur state.

religion to his subjects, he brought four Manichaean priests with him. With Böğü Khan's assistance, Manichaeism subsequently became the official religion of the Uyghur state.

The nomads around Orhun, obeying their khans, convert to this foreign religion without resistance. The impact of this significant event on Chinese Manichaeism is considerable. The Uyghurs, having established their power in the region, send their envoys and troops to the capital one after another. A veritable Uyghur city emerges near Loyang. As protectors of Manichaeism, the Uyghurs first demand that the Uyghurs who had settled in China be allowed to freely build temples and monasteries for themselves. Thus, under Uyghur patronage, the Manichaean church in Loyang was established in 768, and within a few years (771), Manichaean centres were established in almost all of the major cities along the Yangtze River in southern China. The Chinese reluctantly accepted this western religion only under pressure from the Uyghurs. Indeed, when the Orkhon Uyghur State collapsed in 840 following an attack by the Kyrgyz, the emperor issued an order forcing all Manichaeans to wear Chinese clothing. A few years later, an even harsher step was taken: all churches were destroyed, images were burned, and their possessions were confiscated. Massacres were carried out against the Manichaeans. In the capital alone, seventy Manichaean nuns were slaughtered. According to Chinese estimates, at least half of those who followed the Manichaean religion were wiped out during these years. After the collapse of the Uyghur State, a large portion of the Uyghurs who gathered in the Tarim region continued to adhere to the Manichaean religion.

Manichaean hymns constitute one of the most noteworthy sections of the Uyghur language; the majority of the hymns have been preserved in full text or with very few omissions. The fifteen-part penitential prayer known as Huastuanit is one such example. The text lists all the prohibitions considered sins by the Manichaeans. Even religious conditions considered sins by the Manichaeans are inserted into the text.

Tan God has come
Arise, all lords and brothers, let us
praise Tan God
O Sun God, protect us
O Moon God, save us!
Tan God

Fragrant, sweet-smelling Shining,
radiant
Tan God...

The sounds, words, and verses will be repeated. A magnificent harmony will arise. The words of Tan God will be spoken one after another, creating a drum symphony. This hymn will be sung collectively in the dim light of a temple.

Manichaeism's mixed religious principles and customs resonated widely among the Uyghurs. According to witnesses of that period, there were more Manichaeans than Buddhists among the Uyghurs at that time. This was due not only to its adoption as the state religion but also to the structure of Manichaeism itself. Manichaeism has its own art. Its founder, Mani, was also a renowned painter. Even his enemies, the Muslims, acknowledged his power as a painter. Mani's artistic sensibility and talent as a painter also left its mark on his religion; texts found in Inner Asia are recognisable from afar. Manuscripts with religious content are decorated with artistic miniatures. They are written on white paper with the finest paints and the most careful, beautiful calligraphy.

Manichaeism was one of the first moral religions to spread among the Turks. According to Manichaean teachings, it is forbidden not only to kill humans but also to kill animals and eat their flesh. However, in the earlier beliefs of the Turks, death brought sanctity to humans in the next life . Indeed, ancient Turkish elders'

erect balbal stones in the form of documents they erect balbal stones in the form of documents of the slain enemy. Old Uyghur writings clearly describe the contrasts between the old and new religions. For example, it is said: "The people who used to feed on meat now feed on rice. In the country where killing used to be common, goodness now reigns."

In Manichaeism, in addition to religious requirements such as prayer, fasting, and confession, there are also conditions such as abstaining from sexual relations and not drinking alcohol. There are two classes in society. The first is the "elite class" who strictly adhere to prohibitions such as marriage and drinking wine. They maintain their livelihood with the zakat given by believers. The second is the "listeners" class, who assist them and are obliged to follow religious rules. Manichaeism also has two sets of commandments, ten and seven, and three prohibitions called seals. The three seals are the seals of the hand, tongue, and heart. Although Manichaeism is similar to Buddhism in some of its rules, it prohibits idol worship.

The extent to which Manichaeism spread among the Ötüken Uyghurs is not known for certain. Uyghur inscriptions mention that thousands, tens of thousands of people applauded Böğü Khan's acceptance of the faith. Although this number may be somewhat exaggerated, there is a grain of truth in it

. The entire upper echelons must have converted to Manichaeism. However, during the same period, there were also Christians among the Uyghurs. This religious divide caused conflict among the upper classes. A man named Tarkan opposed the acceptance of Manichaeism. In 780, Böğü Khan was assassinated. The assassination was carried out by Tarkan, a Christian. All events indicate that Böğü Khan was a Christian before Manichaeism.

Böğü Khan's choice of a religion that was persecuted from all sides, such as Manichaeism, is of great importance in terms of Turkish politics. At that time, Manichaeism had earned great hatred in China alongside Buddhism and Taoism. It was persecuted by both the people and the court circles. The Chinese would not want a religion they disliked to be protected by a powerful enemy. In this respect, it cannot be thought that this religion was accepted due to Chinese encouragement. The choice of Manichaeism must also have been motivated by the Uyghurs' desire to preserve their national identity. Just as in the case of Judaism, the Turks did not choose the religion of their powerful opponents. They preferred a religion that had been pushed into a corner.

The acceptance of the Manichaean religion and the adoption of this belief by a large majority caused significant structural changes for the Turks. Tonyukuk did not approve of the desire to build cities and choose one of the religions in China for a number of valid reasons. History proves Tonyukuk right. The Turkish nation loses its power of warfare and raiding. As a result, the Uyghurs cannot resist the attacks of the Kyrgyz from the north. They abandon Ötüken and migrate to the Tarim region. The Uyghurs, who settled in Hami, Hoço, and Beşbalık on the Northern Silk Road, established a small principality in this region until the Mongol expansion. The former barbarians of the steppes had now become urbanised. Taxes collected from the caravan routes provided the people with a prosperous life. Various works from the Burkan, Manichaean, and Christian religions were translated into Turkish.

The Manichaean religion, which was accepted in the steppes at the behest of the state, fell into disfavour with the collapse of the Ötüken Uyghur empire. In Hoço, it became a secondary religion after Buddhism. The most significant impact of the Manichaean religion on our culture is that it brought urbanisation to the Turkish people. In 762, urbanisation began in Turkish life with libraries, printing houses, and sewage systems. Above all, an atmosphere of tolerance was created among followers of various religions and sects.

It is assumed that the Iranian prophet Zoroaster founded Zoroastrianism, one of the world's major religions. The religion's holy book, the Avesta, contains Zoroaster's aphorisms. However, both Zoroaster's life and the position of the Zoroastrian religion are highly controversial. This is because Zoroastrianism is also referred to more broadly as Mazdeism. Mazdeism existed in Iran even before Zoroaster. In this case, the evolutionary process of religion also applies to Zoroastrianism. Zoroaster is considered the reformer of Mazdeism. What is said about Zoroaster's life is inconsistent. His life is embellished with a series of legends that defy logic. He most likely lived in Iran in the 7th century BC. Judging by his aphorisms, he was a very intelligent person who had assimilated the knowledge of his time.

The Zoroastrian religion is so close to Judaism that one might wonder whether they influenced each other. Zoroaster is the prophet of a single God, Ahuramazda, the creator of all things, who does good to humans. In the Zoroastrian religion, the gods of India and Iran are combined into a single God, with a surprising transformation and transfer. Perhaps this is a transfer of the great God Varuna in India.

According to Zoroaster, good and evil do not originate from the same source. Therefore, good is created by Ahuramazda (Hurmuz), and evil by Ehrimen. There is a constant battle between them. This battle will undoubtedly end with the victory of good. However, virtuous people will earn happiness to the extent that they participate in this battle for good. This clash is a clash between good and evil, light and darkness, heaven and earth. People who want to be human must be on the side of good, light, and heaven. In this way, social order will be established and production will increase. Ahura Mazda's gaze is always upon the hard-working farmer. True piety lies not in fasting and worship, but in agricultural labour.

It is said that Zoroaster, who wished to realise these ideas, was killed by a Turanian soldier. The religious order that Zoroaster had established so wisely and rationally was significantly altered after his death and filled with superstitions. Thus, this monotheism could not maintain its original structure for long and acquired a structure specific to Iran. Some of the old gods were reinstated in the New Avesta. However, Zoroastrianism is a culture that left a deep mark on Iran. Even the destruction of the Sasanian state by the Arabs during the reign of Omar and the spread of Islam in Iran could not erase the traces of this culture. In fact, the resistance of this culture lies in the origins of Shiism in Iran Ali

and takes various forms in different countries, is nothing more than a struggle to preserve the identity of other nations against Arab nationalism. Indeed, there is a deep-rooted national sentiment in contemporary Iran. This sentiment is the residue of a millennia-old civilisation, an Asian civilisation, that has seeped into their subconscious and accumulated there.

The Turks encountered Zoroastrianism in Lower Turkestan. Alongside religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Manichaeism, which competed with each other in the vast area stretching towards Central Asia before Islam, Zoroastrianism held an important place. Numerous Zoroastrian temples were found in major settlement centres of the region such as Baykent, Bukhara, and Samarkand. Zoroastrianism spread significantly among the Turks, who were very devoted to religious pursuits. In fact, Zoroastrianism was the state religion in this region known as Lower Turkistan.²⁹ Zoroastrianism went even further, penetrating various Turkic tribes across a vast area stretching as far as the Great Wall of China.³⁰

Zoroastrianism constituted one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of Islam in the region, and even after Islam entered the region, the Zoroastrians secretly continued to practise their faith.

Not only the Turks of Lower Turkistan, but also the Turks who conquered the shores of the Caspian Sea were captivated by the appeal of Zoroastrianism and converted to this religion. The Nine Oghuz tribes living in this region in the 8th century (during the travels of the Arab historian Ibn Bahr) believed in both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. Two separate religions coexisted peacefully within the borders of the same country. In the cities and the capital, the majority of the population adhered to Manichaeism. In the villages and the remaining regions, the Zoroastrian religion was dominant.

In fact, there are certain parallels between Zoroastrian beliefs and ancient Turkish beliefs. Foremost among these is the belief in the sanctity of fire. The Mug (Turkish: Moğuç) fire ceremony, which developed among the Iranians, also spread among the Turks from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Uyghur region. However, the ancient Turkish worship of fire was not adopted from the Iranians. Perhaps both beliefs converge at a very ancient root. There is also a fire worship event unique to the Turks. For example, among the nomadic Turks living in the Syr Darya region, there is a ceremony of burning the dead inside a pavilion. This is not found in Iranian beliefs.³¹ Among some Turkic tribes who chose Zoroastrianism, this ceremony continued to exist within the Zoroastrian faith.

NESTROYAN

It appears that the Turks' interest in Christianity began during the Göktürk period. Archaeological data corroborates the disputed Syriac sources. The following information appears reliable today regarding the early presence of Christianity among the Turks: One of the Khagan of Kashgar was in contact with the Byzantine emperor. In 718, the Patriarch of Merv Nasturi wrote that a great Turkic khagan and his people, residing in a pagan city, had chosen Christianity. The Turkic khagan established a great Turkic metropolitan in the city of Taraz. He built various churches. When the Shamanoğulları took Taraz from the Karluk, they saw that the largest temple was a church. Christian artefacts from the 7th-8th centuries remain in Central Asia and the Urals from the Karluk. It is believed that the Kyrgyz were also Christian in the 7th-8th centuries. Nestorian Christianity was also quite widespread among the Naymans. The word Nayman means 'eight' in Mongolian. However, the Naymans are a Turkic tribe. The Muslim-hostile Nayman chief Küçlüg was a Christian. It is said that the Khan of the Kereit Turks converted to Christianity around 1009 through a miracle of Saint Serkis.

In later periods, one of the main centres of Christian Turks was the country of the Onggud tribes. There were various walled cities within the borders of the Onggud principality. In the 13th century, a large library of Christian works was established in the Öngüt palace. The Öngüt princes were influential figures in the Mongol court. During the Ilkhanate period, the Öngüt princes established a Nestorian monastery in Azerbaijan.

Nestorianism spread among the Uyghur Turks. Its founder, Nestorius, was born in the town of Germanica in Syria. He was a Christian priest who grew up in the monastery of Antioch. He was knowledgeable but uncontrollably ambitious and incredibly conceited. After falling out with the Roman Church, he became the founder of a religion based on his own views.

Nestorius became Patriarch of Constantinople in 428. During this period, he asserted that Jesus concealed two spiritual natures, claiming he possessed two persons: divinity and humanity. He began to spread his views. As a result, he was excommunicated by the Christian church in Ephesus in 431 and exiled to Egypt. There he died alone and destitute. After his death, a new sect based on his principles developed in Iran and Iraq. This religion began to spread like wildfire to neighbouring countries.

This is Nestorianism, which found the opportunity to spread from Iran to Inner Asia. However, it is difficult to determine how much of the principles of this spread religion belong to its founder. At the beginning of the 5th century, bishoprics were established in Herat and Merv. The spread of Nestorianism continued in Inner Asia. The spread of Nestorianism in Inner Asia occurred entirely through practical means, entering the hearts of the simple people there. In reality, Nestorian clergy were not people so attached to religious knowledge and doctrine. They understood trade very well. They knew how to treat illnesses. They travel as itinerant merchants to distant countries. They establish relationships with many masses of people. They do not beg for money from anyone. This situation grants them economic independence and respectability.

Despite all this, Nestorianism cannot find opportunities to spread in Chinese territory. In China, it is mostly Turks who choose this faith. However, not all who choose this faith engage in trade; among the peoples of Inner Asia, the Kereit Mongols are renowned for Nestorian Christianity. Furthermore, the Onguts (Onguts) from the Castle Turks are also Nestorians. The Ongut palace houses a large library of Christian works. A Nestorian book is written in 1298 for the sister of the Ongut khan. This book is found in Anatolia a few years earlier. The Onguts join the Roman Church in the 12th century. The Öngüt beys were influential and respected figures in the Mongol courts. They wrote beautiful letters, practised calligraphy, and played the lute. Among the Öngüt Turks, Koşanlı Markus founded a large monastery in Azerbaijan during the Ilkhanate period. Markus was elected Nestorian patriarch in 1280.

In the 11th century, Nestorian priests organised the masses in Asia Minor. Major religious centres were established in Herat, Merv and Samarkand. This organisation would continue until the 14th century. With the collapse of Mongol rule, Nestorianism also lost its importance. It was driven out of China in the east and wiped out by the sword of Islam in the west. By the 16th century, it had disappeared entirely. Today, it survives only as the faith of a small ethnic group living near Mardin.

It is difficult to understand why the Turks chose an outcast, marginalised Christian sect. But looking at the Turks' general tendency in choosing a religion, it is easy to guess the reason: the Turks avoided choosing the religion of a powerful empire, not wanting to disappear in the process. However, they also see that their old religions cannot respond to the demands of the age. Thus, this search drives the Turks to try new religions each time. But this religion will not be an imperial religion, and it will not impose itself on the Turks!

YECÜC MECÜCLER

In the 7th century, we see a powerful empire stretching from the Caucasus to the Volga. This state is the Khazar Empire. The Khazars are a Turkic-origin nation. Their country was established at a strategic, pivotal point, serving as an important passage between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Khazar armies prevented the Arabs from advancing towards Europe, particularly during the most exhausting period of these invasions, the early stages.

The Hazar country lay on the Arabs' natural route of advance. A few years after Muhammad's death (632), the Caliphate armies were advancing northwards, sweeping everything before them. They had reached the Caucasus Mountains, a natural barrier. Once this barrier was overcome, the way to the lands of Eastern Europe would be open. The Arabs were met in the Caucasus by the disciplined, powerful armies of the Hazar Turks. The Arabs, who had destroyed the Sasanian Empire, were coming face to face with the Turks in Khorasan and the Caucasus during the same years. The Arab-Turkish war in the Caucasus would last for over a century.

Had the Turks and Arabs not encountered each other before? To what extent were Muhammad's words about the Turks based on truth? These are topics that are still debated today. According to two incidents mentioned by Kaşgarlı Mahmut, Muhammad had spoken very positively about the Turks. However, according to Arab sources and commentators, Muhammad's view of the Turks was not positive at all. Why did Muhammad speak hostile words against a community he did not know or understand?

Central Asia resembles a fertile mother. Since the dark ages of the past, peoples have migrated from east to west. They spread across Europe via the natural routes north or south of the Caspian Sea. This continuous influx of peoples, which has persisted since the most uncertain periods of history, creates nightmares for the settled peoples of Europe. For the settled peoples, the nomads of the East are savages who burn and destroy. The interesting thing is that the Eastern nomads also encounter the European natives after a while. They begin to settle down. They wait with fearful eyes for the nomads coming from the East.

In the 7th century, there was an attack from the West towards the East. However, this attack was not the first attack from the West towards the East within the cruel formation of the ycryuvarlağı

. There had been raids of this kind before. But the purpose and nature of this attack was unlike the others. It was believed to be carried out for a holy purpose. God Himself had directly approved these attacks. These military actions are sacred calls to convert to Islam. In reality, a new wave of nationalism blossoming in the deserts of Arabia has taken on a religious structure and launched a war of expansion in all directions. The opponents they encountered in the East and North were peoples with whom they were quite familiar. When all the legends and data are brought together, a concrete conclusion emerges. The Turks' acquaintance with European peoples and Arabs goes back to ancient times. The history of the Turkic people, known by their own name in Central Asia in the years after Christ, dates back much further.

Now, as the Arabs advance from West to East, they encounter the Turks once again. However, the Arabs do not hold particularly favourable views of this familiar encounter. Since ancient times, Eastern nomads have been referred to by the Arabs as Yecüc-Mecüc. The people (or peoples) known as Yecüc-Mecüc are also mentioned in the sacred books of the Semitic peoples. The Torah mentions a people called Gog-Magog. Magog is another pronunciation of the name Mecüc. According to some rumours, Magog or Mecüc is the first ancestor of the Turks. The name Togarma also appears in the Torah. This name is thought to be a distorted form of the word Turk.

Yecüc Mecüc appear in Genesis as two separate personal names. In the Qur'an, these two names are referred to as the names of peoples. This passage runs from verse 83 to verse 101 of the Surah al-Kahf. It consists of a total of 19 verses. In the Qur'an, Zulqarnain first sets out on a campaign to the west, then to the east, and then to the north. Zulqarnain encounters a people sitting between two mountains in this unknown direction. This people complains to him about the invasions of Yajuj and Majuj. They ask him to build a "barrier" to prevent these invasions. Upon this, a large barrier made of iron and copper is built between these two mountains. Yajuj and Majuj remain behind this barrier. This is the content of the section in the Qur'an.

Islamic scholars focus particularly on three questions in this regard. Where was this barrier made of iron and copper erected? Who are Yajuj and Majuj? Who is Zulqarnain? These questions can be answered with certain probabilities. A barrier of iron and copper was erected over the natural pass connecting the Caucasus to the south. Today, this place is known as the Derbent Strait. It is one of the key points in history and the ancient world, located between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. This is the gateway to the Caucasus Mountains in fairy tales; the Iranians built a stone wall here. The Arabs call this pass "Babül ebvâb," meaning "gate of gates." Throughout history,

, this was a place of passage for waves of expansion. Many peoples have attacked the south from here since ancient times and then retreated.

Yecüc Mecüc is the name given by the Arabs to the peoples living beyond this gate.

When all these rumours and data are combined, a concrete conclusion emerges. The Turks' acquaintance with European peoples and Semites dates back to ancient times. Although the Turkish past, based on solid evidence, is clear in the centuries after Christ, in earlier periods of history the Turks, in various tribes, pushed at the gates of the West. Now, Arabs advancing from the West to the East encountered the Turks once again. However, this familiar face was mixed with negative memories for the Arabs. The people of Mecüc, which began in the Torah, becomes clearer in the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, this name is mentioned together with the name "Yecüc". Even if Muhammad did not see or know the Turks, he learned about them during his caravan journeys to distant countries. It is natural for Muhammad, who based his teachings on earlier holy books, to make certain statements about them. Some sources even say that he wrote a letter to the Turks inviting them to convert to Islam.³² It is known that during Muhammad's time, the Göktürks were one of the most powerful states in the world. Based on this, the possibility of Muhammad writing a letter is considered. However, there are a couple of important points that are overlooked: Firstly, during Muhammad's time, Islam had not yet spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula; secondly, how could Muhammad send a letter to a people he did not know or recognise, who had not even converted to a book-based religion?

However, even if they did not meet face to face, it is impossible for Muhammad to have spoken so positively about the Turks. During his caravan journeys to distant lands, his ears were filled with rumours of Yajuj and Majuj. Furthermore, it is impossible for Muhammad to have praised a people who were portrayed negatively in the earlier books he considered sacred. Indeed, Arab historians generally do not view the Turks favourably. For example, the famous Arab writer Hazin (Imam Alaüddin Ali ibn Muhammad) compiled the views of commentators on this subject since the early days of Islam in his book *Lubâbut-Te'vil fi Maânit-Tenzil*, written in 1324. Arab scholars use the absurdities of the Israelites to attribute all ridiculous rumours to the Turks. The passage in the Qur'an reads as follows:

"O Zulqarnain, Yajuj and Majuj are causing corruption in this land. Shall we give you a tribute so that you may build a barrier between us and them?" (Kef, 94)

"When Yajuj and Majuj break through the barrier, they will come out from every hill into the world." (Enbiya, 96)

According to the Qur'an, their language is incomprehensible. Imam Hazin, relying on Ibn Abbas, one of those present at the Prophet Muhammad's discourse, states that this people are Turks. He emphasises that they know no language other than their own, and no one can understand their language. This is the first mention of the Turks in Islamic history. According to Hazin, Zulqarnain used interpreters to communicate with this Turkish people.

Indeed, many Arab writers who came after Muhammad constantly emphasised that this people, mentioned in a negative light in the holy books and the Qur'an, were Turks. The Syriac monk Yakubi, who lived in Antioch in the 12th century, was one of them. In his book titled *Vakayiname*, he addresses the issue of Yecüc Mecüc in detail. He provides the following information about the Turkish race: "The Turkaye or Türkâye nation is descended from the tribe of Yasef. Because their lineage comes from Magog= Mecuc." According to Yakubi's interpretation, the first spread of the Turkish race was in BC.

It occurred in 510, and the second expansion was the Seljuk expansion during his lifetime (12th century).

Ultimately, the Yajuj and Majuj are Turks. Zulqarnain built the wall to protect himself from the Turkish race. The name "Turk" also comes from the Arabic word "Terk". Imam Hazin, referring to these absurdities in the hadiths, documents them in the name of science. He defines the Yajuj and Majuj, who are definitively Turks, as follows:

The Yecüceler are one tribe, the Mecuc are another tribe. Each tribe consists of four thousand people. None of these men will die until they see a son from their own lineage who can wield a weapon. These are the sons of Adam who strive to burn and destroy the earth. Huzeyf said: They are divided into three groups. One group is like the cedar trees that grow in Syria, which are one hundred and twenty cubits tall. Another group is one hundred and twenty cubits tall, with heads and bodies like those of humans. Neither mountains nor iron can withstand them. There is yet another group among them: a man can lie down with one ear on the ground and cover himself with the other ear as a blanket. When they see elephants, wild beasts, and pigs, they do not pass by without eating them. They even eat their own dead. Their front legs are in Syria, and their wings are in Khorasan. They drink from the rivers of the East and Lake Tabariyye. Some are only a foot tall, while others are very tall. These are rare among the sons of men. For one day, the youth of Adam decreased (fell).

and the semen had mixed with the soil. God created Yecüc from that very water. Therefore, they are united with us not through the maternal line, but through the paternal line.

Hâzin reiterates in his book the view that the Yecüc Mecüc are Turks and comments, "Zülkarneyn built a wall against them. This people remained outside the wall, abandoned." He interprets that because they were abandoned, "they took the name Turk." He continues his argument as follows: "Their business is to burn and destroy the world. Some of them are like pine trees. Some are 120 cubits wide and 120 cubits tall. Some have one ear as a pillow and one ear as a blanket. And then it is said that another group is only a span tall."

Imam Hazin's embarrassing description continues in this vein. This depiction would later be repeated by many Arab writers. Tabari, for example, is one of them.³³

Traces of Turkish hostility run deep in Arab nationalism. For Arabs, Turks are creatures with "red faces, flat noses, small eyes, and faces as thick as shields covered with skin." Arabs, who refer to the Turks they describe in this way as Yajuj and Majuj, see them as the greatest source of destruction for humanity. Since the Umayyads, the Turks have been the target of Arab nationalism. Arab hatred and animosity have been focused on the Turks. The Yajuj and Majuj referred to by the Arabs are the Yuanchi Turks. Until they are crushed, there will be no rule. Indeed, Ibn al-Muqaffa, known as one of the greatest Islamic scholars of the Umayyad period and famous for his work *Durrat al-Yatima*, portrays the Turks as predatory animals.³⁴

However, Islam's view of the Turks is not limited to verses in the Qur'an that cannot be definitively proven to refer to the Turks. There are no positive references to the Turks in the authentic hadiths either. These hadiths were compiled by Muhammad. For Muhammad, the war between the Turks and the Arabs was so important that it would be a sign of the apocalypse:

"Shortly before the Day of Judgement, you will fight a nation wearing felt boots. Their faces are like shields covered with hammered leather. Their complexions are red, and their eyes are slanted."³⁵

Another source contains the following hadith:

As long as the Turks do not touch you, do not touch them. For these Turks, descended from the sons of Kantura, will be the first to take away the homeland and sovereignty that Allah gave to His ummah.

The authentic hadiths about the Turks compiled by Zekeriya Kitapçı are as described above. The words collected from those closest to Muhammad are not easy for the Turks to swallow. These words have been published by various researchers before.

All these accusations and insults stem from the impact of the blows the Arabs suffered at the hands of the Turks in the past.

The Arab-Turkish relationship, rooted in such a history, flared up again in the Caucasus in the mid-7th century. Between 642 and 652, the Arabs repeatedly crossed through Derbent and entered the lands of the Hazar. Each time, they were repelled. In 652, a major battle took place between the opposing sides. Both sides used catapults. Four thousand Arabs were killed, including Arab army commanders. After this, the Arabs did not dare to enter the Khazar lands for forty years. They directed their attacks towards Byzantium. Meanwhile, the Khazars brought the Bulgars and Magyars under their rule. They reach Ukraine and Crimea in the west. By the beginning of the eighth century, the Khazar state has grown powerful enough to challenge the Arabs.

These wars, known as the "Second Arab Wars" (722-732), resemble repetitive, monotonous, localised wars. The events are the same in all of them: the Khazars enter Arab territory through the Derbent Pass. After a while, the Arab counterattack begins. The Khazars retreat along the same routes towards the Volga.

A distinctive feature of these wars was a fanaticism that defied death. For example, a Khazar city would burn itself to the ground rather than surrender. In another incident, an Arab commander poisoned the water at the Babel Ebvab pass. An Arab army that had been defeated and was fleeing was intercepted by another Arab army. Men are forced to fight until there is not a single man left. "Let us go to paradise, O Muslims, not to hell," they cry. Every Muslim who dies in battle convinces himself that he will go to paradise.

During fifteen years of war, the Khazars swept through Georgia and Armenia. In 730, they inflicted a major and decisive defeat on the Arab armies. They captured Mosul and Diyarbakir and advanced towards Damascus, the centre of the Caliphate.

The final Arab attack was led by the commander who would later become Caliph Mervan II. Mervan first sent peace envoys, then launched surprise attacks through both passes. The Khazar army was unable to recover from the shock

and retreats as far as the Volga. The Khan is forced to seek peace. Mervan, following the method used in the other conquered countries, demands that the Khan convert to the true faith. The Khan agrees (737). But this conversion to Islam remains only in words. Apparently, it leaves no mark on the people. After this defeat, the Khazars reorganise themselves and increase their strength.

By this time, the Muslims had lost their old spirit of jihad. The Caliphate was in turmoil. Therefore, it was not possible for the Arabs to establish a strong base in the north. Indeed, Mervan soon became Caliph in Damascus, but then the Caliphate passed into the hands of the Abbasid dynasty and Mervan was killed.

Both sides exerted greater efforts to make the Khazars accept their faith. However, the Khazar kingdom, relying on its own military power, was determined to become the third power.

There is an interesting legend in the book "Kingdoms and Roads" by the Arab historian Al-Bakri about the Khazar Khan's choice of Judaism. The legend goes as follows:

The Khazar Khan, who was previously a pagan, first chose Christianity. However, he realised the error of this religion, became very upset about the situation, and confided in one of his high-ranking officials. That high-ranking man said to the king: "O Khan, the holy scriptures are in the hands of three separate communities. Summon one person from each of them and order them to explain their beliefs. Then you can choose the right one and follow its path."

Upon this, the khan sent word to the Christians, requesting a bishop. There was also a Jew present at the king's side who was highly skilled in debate and often conversed with him. When the bishop arrived, this Jew asked him:

"What is your opinion about Moses, son of Amaran, and the Torah that was revealed to him?" The bishop replied, "Moses is a prophet, and what is written in the Torah is true." Then the Jew turned to the king and said,

"Look, he has already accepted the truth of my faith. Now ask him what he believes in."

When the king asks this question, the bishop replies:

"According to my faith, the Saviour Jesus is the son of Mary, his word is the true word, and he reflects God's voice to us." Then the Jew turns to the king again and says:

"What he says are things I do not know. Yet he accepts what I have said."

When the bishop failed to prove his claims, he lost the case.

Upon this, the king summoned a Muslim to his presence. The Muslims sent him a well-read, intelligent man who was skilled in debate. However, the Jew who was close to the king bribed someone to poison the Muslim during his journey. Thus, the Jew succeeded in persuading the king, and the king accepted the Jewish religion.

Thus, in 740 AD, the Khazar Khan, his court, and his military commanders adopted the Jewish religion. And this religion became the official religion of the Khazars.

The fact that the Khazars chose the Jewish religion during their most powerful period surprises historians. The most logical explanation is as follows: At the beginning of the eighth century, the world was polarised between two great powers. On one side was Christianity, on the other Islam. The ideological doctrines of both groups operated according to the principles of power politics, working to spread their faiths through classical propaganda methods, persuasion and conquest. The Khazar Empire was the third power at that time, having previously demonstrated that it could compete with both major powers. However, the only way it could maintain its independence was to remain outside both Christianity and Islam. This was because, if it chose one of these faiths, it would lose the cultural leadership that complemented its political power. It would fall under the influence of either the Eastern Roman Empire or the Islamic caliph in Baghdad. The ancestral faith of Shamanism, however, lagged behind the living conditions of a magnificent settled state. For example, there was a tradition of human sacrifice. At the end of the royal period, there was a tradition of ceremonially killing their kings. On the other hand, the Khazars were not entirely unfamiliar with Judaism. Indeed, even after choosing Judaism, religious tolerance continued among the Khazars. Of the seven judges in the Khazar capital, two were Muslim, two were Jewish, two were Christian, and one was responsible for hearing the cases of the Russians and pagans. They were people of that faith. At the beginning of the tenth century, the Khazar Khanate was a fairy-tale country with its fair and broad-minded form of government.

Judaism is one of the ancient religions of the Near East. The name 'Jew' refers to a nation known as the Israelites or Hebrews. The name 'Jew' is the name of a region in Palestine, the name 'Hebrew' comes from their forefather Abraham the Hebrew, and the name 'Israel' is the name of Abraham's grandson Jacob.

Ibrahim was of Semitic descent. He was a Kildani. In the 2nd millennium BC, he migrated from the banks of the Euphrates to the land of Canaan or Palestine. Ibrahim had two sons. One was Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs of Hijaz. His mother was Hagar, an Egyptian slave girl. The other was Isaac, considered the forefather of the Jews.

Moses was born around 1300 BC. Many events had befallen the Israelites before Moses. Moses succeeded in uniting the tribes of Israel around a national religion.

Jehovah is the god of Israel, and Israel is the nation of Jehovah. It is believed that the Torah and the Ten Commandments were given by Moses. Later, kings came to power. David and Solomon were the most important of these. In addition to prophets, there were also seers.

The book of Judaism is the Old Testament. It is a compilation consisting of various sections and stories. It consists of five sections: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. The Talmud is an explanation of the Torah. In the Qur'an, these are referred to only as Moses' Torah and David's Psalms. According to Jewish belief, Jehovah is the one God. Everything belonging to other nations is an idol or a demon. Jehovah is the creator God. He created the universe in six days. He rested on the seventh day. He is the all-knowing, living and almighty one. The Israelites avoid mentioning his name out of fear and respect.

Revelation Jehovah protects his people and helps them against their enemies. He guides them to righteousness through his commanders and prophets. Jehovah usually speaks to his people directly or through the mouths of his prophets in order to guide them towards goodness and keep them from evil.

The Ten Commandments are the precepts that Jehovah gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. These precepts are as follows:

I am Jehovah! I am the God who brought you out of the place where you were enslaved, out of the land of Egypt. Let no other god remain in your sight. You shall not make for yourself an idol or anything to worship, whether from the sky above, the earth beneath, or the waters below. You shall worship no other god but me, for I am Jehovah, your God, your protector.

Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honour your father and mother, so that your days may be long. You shall not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house, wife, servant, maid, ox, donkey... (Torah, Exodus, 20:2-17)

The Psalms are sayings believed to have been left by David. They consist of 150 sayings. It is known that not all of the Psalms were left by David, but it is not known which of these sayings were left by him and which were not. Of these

Some are sayings that glorify God. Some are prayers that give thanks to God and ask for His mercy. Others are information and news, sayings full of faith and supplication.

The history of Hebrew monotheism is shrouded in prehistoric darkness; Abraham is known in history as the father of believers. However, this belief emerged in the polytheistic environments of Sumer and Babylon in the second millennium BC. Throughout the ages, Moses and other prophets ensured the preservation and refinement of this belief. At its root, Jehovah retains the personality that the primitive peoples associated with celestial images, elevating him to a superior being. It is closely related to the strong belief that gods resemble humans in appearance. Gradually, it is freed from its cosmic nature. It acquires a moral and spiritual understanding. However, it does not take on an abstract form. It is terrifyingly alive. The mystery of the "Holy Israel" and the "Burning Fire" cannot be learned through research. Faced with this mystery, one can do nothing but bow down, like Job.

Ultimately, the Khazars' choice of Judaism brought with it a number of cultural developments that were completely unexpected and unforeseen. The Khazars dared to choose Judaism because they were economically and militarily powerful. It became one of the longest-lasting Turkic states. It survived until around 1250, remaining in existence for approximately 600 years.

The last Jewish Turks were the Karaites, who lived in several cities in Poland until before the Second World War. They dwindled and disappeared during and after the war years.

NO PROPHET CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN HIS OWN LAND

Although seemingly insignificant at first glance, few events have had as great an impact on history as the conversion of the Turks to Islam. This choice was of great importance not only for the Turks but also for Islam. It was through the Turks that Islam was able to dominate the most extensive territories in the past. At the same time, the Turks lost some elements of their ethnic identity.

The Islamic religion emerged from a people whose social life was based on nomadism and whose political situation was based on banditry. Although the Arabs came from the same roots

but were scattered in their settlements. They were divided into various tribes. Each tribe had its own unique understanding and way of life. There were constant wars between the tribes. Not a day passed without plunder or raids, and the primitive desert way of life continued unabated. As a necessity of this environment, kinship had grown stronger. A sense of social unity had not developed. No distinct religious system had spread among them.³⁷ Many religious exploiters who presented themselves as prophets but could not find followers frequently appeared before the people.³⁸

Muhammad began to spread his religion in this environment. Although, when he announced his prophethood, he had already accumulated considerable wealth and knowledge. When he was only 12 years old, he travelled to Basra with his uncle Abu Talib's caravan, where he met Bahira, a Christian (of the Nestorian sect).³⁹ He had also established a relationship with a baptised Jewish scholar, a relative on his mother's side, in his own homeland. Thus, he acquired knowledge of both Christian and Jewish religions. At the age of twenty-five, he entered the service of Khadija, the widow of a wealthy merchant. He quickly won Khadija's favour and, despite the considerable age difference between them, married her. This behaviour was motivated more by financial reasons than love.

At a fairly advanced age, Muhammad began to devote himself to religious visions. He set out to spread his religious system, which was a blend of Christian and Jewish beliefs and traditions with Arab pagan views. Those who opposed him most were his own tribe, the Quraysh. The reason for their opposition was the same as that of the scribe Judas against Jesus: "No prophet can be effective in his own country." The Quraysh, who were responsible for protecting the Kaaba, could not possibly allow a new religion to emerge because of the authority that brought them fame and great financial benefits.

At first, Muhammad was able to convince only a limited number of his close associates. However, the disagreement between him and the Quraysh turned into conflict. Muhammad persevered in his belief at the cost of his life. God had sent a prophet to every nation, but had never sent one to the Arabs. He himself was that prophet.

"You are a mercy from your Lord to a people who were not guided before you, so that they may reflect and take heed" (Qasas 46).

Ultimately, Muhammad was sent for the Arab people. Perhaps his prophethood did not encompass all Arab peoples. It only covered Mecca and its surroundings and the Arabs associated with it. If they did not believe in the oneness of Allah, they would go to the Day of Judgement as polytheists. They would burn in Hell. They needed to be frightened.

"This is a Book We have sent down to you to warn the mother of all cities. It is sacred and blessed, confirming what came before it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it and maintain their prayers. (En'am 92)

This was followed by descriptions of Hell:

"We shall soon cast those who deny Our verses into the Fire, and We shall give them new skins so that they may taste the punishment. Surely Allah is ever Exalted in Might, Wise." (Nisa 56)

"Then they will be made to drink from a pus-filled water. They will try to swallow it, but it will not pass their throats. Death will come upon them from every side, yet they will not die. Then there will be a terrible torment." (Ibrahim 16, 17)

But how can a person be resurrected after death? How can a lifeless body that has decayed in the grave be resurrected?

Let it be any creature that grows in your heart. They will say, "Then who will recreate us?" Say, "The One who created you the first time." Upon this, they will shake their heads at you mockingly and say, "When will that be?" Say, "It may be very soon!" (Isaiah 51)

"On that day, the earth will be transformed into another earth, and the heavens into other heavens. All people will appear before the One and Only God. And on that day, you will see them brought close to one another (and their hands and feet chained together). Their garments will be of tar. Their faces will be covered in fire." (Ibrahim 48-50)

All his efforts were in vain. He had struggled, toiled, and spoken for thirteen years, yet he had only managed to convince a couple of hundred people. It was impossible for Mecca and the Quraysh to accept the new religion. Mecca was a city of merchants. The Quraysh were the masters of Mecca. In Mecca, there was the Kaaba, there were idols, there were crosses, there were fairs. On certain days of the year, all the surrounding tribes would come there. The Quraysh

gained their wealth primarily through this. If the new religion succeeded, Mecca would collapse. It was impossible, utterly impossible.

The Quraysh launched a decisive attack. This new religion had to be crushed at birth. Mecca became hell for a handful of Muslims. Some of the three hundred Muslims went to Abyssinia, others to Medina. After saving all his followers, Muhammad chose to wait alone in Mecca for a while longer. Only Abu Bakr and Ali remained as his supporters. The Quraysh chose a young man from each tribe. These assassins would raid the Prophet's house that night and kill him. But Muhammad was also alert. He had sensed the situation well. That night, Ali, who was still a child, entered Muhammad's bed. Muhammad and his loyal friend Abu Bakr slipped away from Mecca in the dead of night, as silent as ghosts. The Meccans, who thought they were doing Islam the greatest harm, had unwittingly done Islam the greatest good; Islam became Islam by escaping Mecca.

Muhammad first hid in a cave near Mecca. He then migrated to Medina. In this environment, he needed to find a broader base for expansion.

On the other hand, while Mecca was a merchant city, Medina was a warrior city. Two rival tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj, were constantly at each other's throats. The city was like a vanguard, waiting for a leader. The people of Medina had found the leader they wanted. Medina had found the environment that would save it from chaos. This was the beginning of Islam's march. Muhammad entered Medina on his camel, greeting his enthusiastic supporters.

Those who knew him described the Prophet in favourable terms. According to these descriptions, when the Prophet entered Medina, he was well-built and vigorous. He was of medium height, broad-chested, and strong-headed. His skin was bronze-coloured. His cheeks were bright, and his hair, which was a shade of brown, was neither curly nor straight. His hair fell in waves to below his ears. His moustache was trimmed, his lower lip protruded slightly forward, and his thick, bushy beard accentuated his round face. He has a broad forehead. With thick eyebrows separated by purple veins and large, bright eyes that illuminate the soul, set above a tightly arched nose, he is a leader born to command.

The Bedouin leader had released the camel's reins. The camel wandered aimlessly. Passing through streets and squares, it collapsed in the middle of the city, in a spacious place in front of the house of Khalid bin Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. On 16 July 622, it was not only a new religion that was emerging where the camel had collapsed. That day, a new state was being founded. In less than a century, the core of a state, an empire, would be established, covering half the world from the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Nile.

to China, from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Nile, a state, an empire that would cover half the world was being born.

Muhammad was welcomed warmly by the Hazrec tribe in Medina, who took him in. Muhammad named this tribe "Ansar," meaning "helpers," in gratitude for their assistance.⁴²

There was no state in Arabia before Muhammad. In fact, there was not even a word in the Arabic dictionary to convey this concept. The word "state" only came into use in Arabic after the 8th century. This word comes from the Arabic root *dwl*. It means "to turn, to revolve around something, to change, to turn by shifting places, or to be the successor or predecessor of someone."⁴³ The Arabs had adopted tribal characteristics and social duties, and were far from the concept of an independent state. They did not even have the concepts of crime and punishment. Stealing or killing someone were not considered crimes and there was no punishment for them. These were merely acts of harming others. The law of retaliation was applied. A social understanding based on the logic that if someone did you harm, you could harm them with your own tribe prevailed. Individual rights were not granted by the state, but by individuals. Punishment was also meted out by individuals. If you wanted to intimidate someone with revenge, you could attack any caravan you wanted! A way of life based on the principle of *44* prevailed. On the day the camel collapsed, Arabia was giving something it had never known before: the state. Now, beyond blood ties and clan allegiance, a sacred concept called the state was emerging. Until then, all eyes among the Arabs had been captive to the circle of clan relations. Each Arab clan was an independent unit. In the Arab's eyes, the entire universe was his own clan. That was the only friend. Outside the clan was always the enemy. They understood unity only through the clan. However, on the day the camel collapsed, Medina was filled with people from various tribes. These people were brothers; people saw that there were other unities outside the tribe. The narrow circle of tribal unity was torn apart. A wider, different world was emerging. A different, unifying universe was emerging that connected completely different people. This was Muhammad's greatest gift to the Arab people.

The migrants from Mecca settled one by one in the homes of their hosts in Medina. They had become brothers. This brotherhood was so profound that upon death, their inheritance passed not to blood brothers but to brothers in faith. The bond of religion was overcoming the bond of blood, which was the strongest bond among Arabs. It was only after the number of Muslims increased that inheritance passed to family members.

Muhammad arrived in Medina with around a hundred migrants. Medina was not a wealthy city. The Ansar accepted the brotherhood. However, Muhammad and

the migrants did not want to be too much of a burden on the Ansar. On the other hand, the Meccans knew nothing about agriculture or crafts. They only understood trade.

If they attempted to trade, they would have to scatter here and there. Then Muhammad would be left alone. On the other hand, the people of Medina were good warriors, and booty was a positive gain in Arabia. The Quraysh continued their hostility towards Islam, and the Battle of Badr two years later arose from this necessity.

Muhammad set about organising the religious, political and social structure of the state in Medina. He began to regulate religious worship according to certain rules. He understood well that worship, with mass participation, was a means of exerting pressure. Individuals participating in any mass gathering with a common purpose feel much stronger than they normally would. Their power seems to multiply several times over. Their confidence in themselves increases. A group reflects the light it receives from itself. Under this influence, individuals find the courage within themselves to perform actions they could never accomplish alone. Moreover, for Arabs, religious rules aimed at establishing self-control and order, as well as fostering common behaviour and unity, carry particular importance. This is because Arabs are dominated by a scattered, fragmented tribal lifestyle.⁴⁶

A wealthy Quraysh caravan under the command of Abu Sufyan was coming from Syria. The caravan was travelling to Mecca along the coast. Attacking the caravan would be a lucrative revenge. Muhammad arrived at Badr with three hundred men. However, instead of a well-loaded caravan, he encountered a formidable Quraysh army of a thousand men. Muhammad was in a difficult situation. Turning back would wipe out the newly born religion; for the Islamic warriors, it was a matter of fighting and winning or dying there. Muhammad gave a simple speech. Hearts and wrists were set ablaze. Muhammad established a good battle formation. With his three hundred soldiers, he formed a four-sided defence formation. They were defeating those who attacked with arrows. Thus, the Meccans suffered a heavy defeat.

Meanwhile, Muhammad wanted to spread his religion to the masses in Medina. He realised that the most suitable group was the Jews. The position of the Jews was more important for the newly born Islam than that of the Christians. Christianity was in distant countries such as Byzantium and Abyssinia. However, there were quite a number of Jews in Medina, and they were in the tent of Islam. They were superior to the Arabs in terms of prosperity. Wealth was in their hands. Their level was much higher than that of the Arabs. Their strict religious rituals had created a bond of blood and love among them. The Arabs of Medina were constantly forced to borrow money from the Jews at interest. Muhammad wanted to approach the Jews and Christians very carefully. The Magna Jews

And he sent letters to the Christians of Ayla. The letters ended with the word "salam," meaning "peace." The word "Islam" also derives from the same root as the word "salam." The word "selam" was sometimes used in a simpler sense to mean "safety" or security. Before entering Medina, he stayed for days in Kaba, near the city. Discussions were held for days. He wanted to reach an agreement with the Jews on two counts. One was for the daily order of life, the other was religious.

A seven-point agreement was drawn up between Muhammad and the important Jewish tribes for the daily order of life. The agreement was strong:

Both sides would live as one nation, and both religions would remain free. If Medina came under attack, both sides would defend it together. If Muslims or Jews went to war with a third party, the other would come to their aid. Peace would be made with the consent of both parties, and since Medina was a sacred settlement, neither side would shed blood. If a dispute arose, Muhammad would act as arbitrator.

Muhammad also wanted to approach the Jews religiously. To this end, he tried to continue important Jewish traditions within his own religious order. He chose Jerusalem as the Qibla. Like the Jews, Muslims also fasted. They performed ablutions, underwent circumcision, and paid tithes like them. In this environment, the only issue remaining was that Muhammad was the prophet of the Arabs. God had sent a prophet to every people, leaving the Arabs until last. Therefore, Muhammad was the last prophet. Indeed, in the Torah and the period prophet's future had been foretold, and he was that very one. It was sufficient for the Jews to accept this.

When a Book came to them from Allah to verify what was with them, they denied it, even though they had been asking for victory over those who had denied it before. Woe to those who disbelieve! (Al-Baqarah 89)

However, the Jews absolutely did not accept this. All Jewish scholars confirmed that the Torah announced the coming of the final prophet. God had revealed this. Yet they could not accept that Muhammad was that prophet. The Qur'an recounts previous discussions on this matter. They are accused of breaking their promise:

"We took a covenant from the Children of Israel: Worship none but God, be kind and compassionate to parents, relatives, orphans, and the needy, and speak kindly to people. Establish prayer and give alms. After all this, most of you turned away, and you continue to turn away." (Al-Baqarah 83)

Muhammad had struck granite. Despite all his efforts, he could not find support among the Jews.

"Those to whom We gave the Book recognise it as they recognise their own sons. Yet, a group among them conceal the truth, even though they know it." (Al-Baqarah 146)

While this disagreement with the Jews continued, Muhammad gained a considerable following among the idolaters in Medina through his clever ideas and pioneering behaviour. He completely lost hope in the Jews. Now, militant Islam could take the place of peaceful Islam. The commandment "There is no compulsion in religion" was replaced by

"Those who trade their transient life for the life of the Hereafter, let them strive in the way of Allah. To those who strive in the way of Allah and are killed or victorious, We shall soon grant a great reward." (Nisa 74)

The Hungarian scholar Ligeti describes this structure of Islam as follows:

"They say Islam is a sword. Indeed, this new religion has not contented itself with deceiving people to gain followers, promising them happiness in the next world, and calling them to the cool shade of the tree of life that awaits them when the time comes. Perhaps this religion consciously instilled in its adherents the idea that the greatest duty, the reward for which would be given in the next world, was to convert non-believers to Islam, not only by spreading the truths of the religion and enlightening their minds, but more by force of arms, by coercion. Muhammad's religion thus became the propagator of an unstoppable, fanatical policy of expansion.⁴⁸ "

Indeed, one of the fundamental conditions of Islam is jihad against the infidels. Jihad is necessary not only to defend against attack but also to spread the religion of Islam. Indeed, the Prophet of Islam waged 28 wars directly for this purpose.

They established order. The greatest caliphs who came after him also expanded the Islamic empire through constant warfare, in accordance with God's command.

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In reality, the Jews believed that a final prophet would come. But this prophet could not be Muhammad. The final prophet to come would be the Messiah. The Messiah would take charge of the Jews and make the Jewish nation dominant in the world. Therefore, the Messiah the Jews were waiting for had to come from among them. Muhammad, however, was an Arab. Since he was the final prophet, it would be the Arabs who would rule over other nations. This led to an irreconcilable conflict between the Jews and Muhammad. The Jews were a self-ruling people. They looked down on other nations. Furthermore, according to Jewish belief, even paradise was open only to Jews. No one but Jews could enter paradise. However, according to Muhammad, paradise was open to all followers of the religion of Abraham. All people who believed in one God, believed in the afterlife, and had lived a good life could go to paradise. Indeed, the Qur'an mocks the Jews' selfish understanding:

"Say: 'If it is only for you, and not for others, and if you are truthful, then wish for death!' They will never wish for death because of what their hands have put forward. Allah knows the wrongdoers very well." (Al-Baqarah 94, 95)

The Jews do not make even the slightest concession. They define the commandments that Muhammad presented as "the words of God" as information taken from the Torah and the Gospel. They accuse Muhammad of fraud.⁵⁰ After this incident, Muhammad's patience runs out, and he develops a great hatred for the Jews. He considers the Jews worse than the Christians. This time, Muhammad's accusations against them begin. Fundamentally, they have not recognised not only Muhammad, but also the true prophets of old. They accuse some of lying, and have killed others, as in the case of Jesus. This is their old habit. The Qur'an confronts them with this old habit:

"It is not as they imagine. Those who have earned evil and ugliness, who have surrounded themselves with their own sins, are companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever." (Al-Baqarah 81)

As Tabari also notes, when Muhammad arrived in Medina, he designated Jerusalem as the qibla. Muslims prayed towards Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months. This situation flattered the Jews. They began to say things like, "Muhammad and his companions did not know where their Qibla was; we showed them the way..." Muhammad raised his head. He awaited the designation of a qibla specific to Islam. Finally, the command came to turn from Jerusalem towards the Kaaba.⁵¹ After this, the concessions granted to the Jews began to be withdrawn one by one. The Jews were criticised in Surah Al-Baqarah, the longest surah in the Qur'an. The month of Ramadan was designated as the fasting period, distinguishing Islamic fasting from Jewish fasting. The Kaaba was accepted as the qibla instead of Jerusalem. Muhammad had killed two birds with one stone. On the one hand, he was excluding the Jews, who were unwilling to compromise, and on the other hand, he was winning over the idolaters. This was because the Kaaba was a source of income that the idolaters could not give up. It had been a place of pilgrimage even before Islam. It was visited by countless pilgrims and caravans. The profits from the Kaaba flowed to the Quraysh, Muhammad's tribe. The sacred Black Stone was located in the Kaaba. The wavy, oval stone, approximately 15 cm in diameter, was most likely a meteorite. It was later placed in a silver casing on the wall.⁵² In this way, Muhammad was also winking at his own tribe, the Quraysh. But the problem was not over for the Jews. The Jews thoroughly examined this difficult-to-correct event in Islam. They mocked the Muslims, and so the Jews and the unbelievers they incited began to murmur.⁵³ They asked, "Why did you change the Qibla?" This situation also caused ripples among the Muslims. Rumours spread throughout society: What about the previous prayers, if the Kaaba was the Qibla, why were prayers not performed in that direction until now? But the Almighty God does not delay in providing the necessary explanation in this regard. Upon this, the ripples in society cease. Verses 142-144 of Surah Al-Baqarah emphasise that the prayers previously performed towards Jerusalem were not in vain and explain why the qibla was changed.

"Among the people are some foolish ones who will say, 'What has turned them away from the direction they were facing?' Say, 'East is from Allah, and so is West. He guides whom He wills to the straight path.'" (Al-Baqarah 142)

"Thus it is! We have made you a community of the middle way, that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger a witness over you. We have made the Kaaba, which you used to face, a qibla, that We might distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn their heels back . This is Allah's guidance to those other than

it will indeed be difficult. But Allah will not render your faith ineffective. It is also a fact that Allah is first and foremost most compassionate, most merciful towards people." (Al-Baqarah 143)

"We certainly see that you turn your face towards the sky. We will surely turn you towards a qiblah that will please you. So turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. Wherever you are, turn your faces towards the Sacred Mosque. Those who have been given the Book know very well that it is the truth from their Lord. Allah is not unaware of what they do." (Al-Baqarah 144)

The conflict between the Jews and Islam intensified considerably after the Battle of Badr. The Jewish-Islamic rivalry was not confined to the religious sphere; it spilled over into daily life. The defeat of the Quraysh, three hundred men against a thousand, at Badr frightened the Jews. They felt the need to form an alliance against the Quraysh and the Muslims.

The Meccans were not about to let the Battle of Badr go unavenged. A year later, a ten-thousand-strong Meccan army arrived at Medina. Muhammad, having demonstrated his military leadership at Badr, would wage a new defensive battle. He positioned his army of seven or eight hundred men behind the Uhud hill to the north of the city. He placed his archers at the necessary points. In this way, he would put up a good resistance against the heavy forces. Indeed, he succeeds in carrying out his plan. However, the Meccans deal Muhammad a heavy blow, and the Muslims experience great panic at times. Muhammad is wounded and barely escapes with his life, retreating to Mount Uhud. The Meccans, deeming the battle at Uhud unnecessary, withdraw, and the Muslims suffer heavy losses. There are hundreds of dead.

The Prophet returns from Uhud covered in wounds, bruises and bandages. The Jews laugh quietly at the Prophet's pitiful state. But Muhammad employs a new tactic. He orders the retreating Meccans to be pursued. This decision revives the weary warriors. The Jews' joy is short-lived. Even the wounded join the pursuit. They catch up with the Quraysh six or seven miles south of Medina. The Quraysh do not expect such an ambush. They are already retreating. But this retreat takes on the air of defeat. The defence of Uhud turns into a repulsion. Muhammad has taken another step forward. Now it is the turn of the Jews in Medina. Several wealthy Jewish leaders were killed by Muslim commandos on Muhammad's orders. The suppression of the Jews in Medina began. Jewish neighbourhoods were emptied. The spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula was followed by the expulsion of the Jews.⁵⁴

For the new religion to spread and the empire's borders to expand, neighbouring Arabs and Jews had to embrace Islam. On the other hand, raids were carried out on large caravans, and rich spoils were seized. The Hijra's

In his seventh year, Muhammad launched a raid on Hayber. Hayber was a fertile, wealthy Jewish city renowned for its date palms. There were around 1,600 Muslims. The Jews outnumbered them three to one. However, the Jews were cowed by centuries of oppression and were cowards. Hayber consisted of clusters of houses, and the Islamic army did not have the strength to besiege the entire city. In this situation, houses were besieged and captured section by section. Hayber was thus captured. But Hayber's real importance came from its date palms. Muhammad's wife Aisha said, "It was only after the date palms of Hayber that we became rich."

Hayber holds multifaceted importance in the spread of Islam. The distribution of spoils of conquest began with this battle. The principles of spoils distribution established here would be applied in Islamic wars for centuries.

One-fifth of the spoils went to Muhammad. This share later became the right of the caliphs. The remaining four-fifths were distributed among the tribes.⁵⁶

The strengthening of Islam coincided with the expulsion of the Jews. The Jews in the Medina region had all their lands taken from them. However, taking Hayber from the Jews was not very useful to the Muslims. Hayber was far from Medina. Moreover, the Arabs were not dependent on agriculture. In this situation, Muhammad again made a wise decision. He left the Jews in Hayber in their places "on condition that they give half of their annual produce".

These were among the good deeds of the new prophet for the Bedouins. As Muhammad's fame and great influence spread, the number of believers who joined him began to increase. He added the wealthy country of Yemen to his empire, in addition to Central and Southern Arabia. It was now time to deal with his hometown of Mecca, which still harboured hostile feelings towards him.

In the eighth year of the Hijra, he marched on Mecca. Muhammad defeated the Meccans and took the city's leaders captive. In 630, the city surrendered. But he treated them very gently. He bestowed gifts upon many of them. He did not force anyone to become a Muslim. With this wise behaviour, he increased the number of his supporters among the poor classes in Mecca. He did not collect any spoils from the city. Thus, the Medinans' expectations of spoils were dashed. The people of the city began to think that it would be beneficial to reconcile with the new prophet. Moreover, Muhammad was not only not destroying the Kaaba temple, but was developing it further. He was preserving it within his own religious order. When the situation became clear, this cult supporter Kaaba idols worshippers friendship

. Thus, the last resistances were broken.⁵⁷ Thus, he became the final prophet of the monotheistic faith rooted in the Prophet Abraham. According to legend,

The Kaaba was built by Abraham, the forefather of the Abrahamic religions. The Jews also traced their lineage back to the prophet Abraham. In addition, the Kaaba contained a black stone called Hajar al-Aswad, which was the subject of various legends. According to one of these legends, this stone was an angel who had fallen from heaven and been turned into stone by God for some sin. Another legend said that the prophet Abraham had brought it with him from heaven. While in heaven, this stone was pure white, but it had darkened as it gathered the sins of believers.⁵⁸ Muhammad allowed non-Muslims to visit the Kaaba. This continued for a year. When Islam became sufficiently strong in Mecca, he sent Ali. The Kaaba was forbidden to polytheists. The flexibility of the Arabs was fully evident in the personality of the Arab prophet. The mystery of Muhammad's political success lay here; he was a master of good timing. He made plenty of promises for the future to save the moment. Then he took them back one by one. He never stuck to a particular idea. He did not engage in apolitical behaviour in the name of religious necessity. He was cool-headed, calm, and made decisions according to the requirements of the situation. Muhammad fought his wars with the sword, but in the rapid growth of Islam, this policy proved more effective than the sword.

Even after Mecca fell into Muhammad's hands, the Quraysh did not become Muslims. The Quraysh only embraced Islam after the spoils of Hunayn. The spoils of Hunayn were truly a windfall. The Muslims had never seen such a haul before. Muhammad gave the lion's share of the spoils to the leading polytheists of the Quraysh. Faced with the magnitude of this gift, they felt ashamed on the one hand, and on the other hand, they considered what benefits Islam could bring them and converted to Islam. Muhammad once again demonstrated successful politics, binding the Quraysh to Islam. But this drew the reaction of the Medinans. Because the Medinans had waged the war for Islam, while the Quraysh had sought to stifle Islam. Yet now the prophet had forgotten the Medinans and rewarded his own tribe.

He was constantly favouring the Quraysh. Upon this, the Prophet gathered all his supporters. He delivered an impassioned speech. He spoke clearly and emphatically. He explained his service to the people of Medina and the service of the people of Medina to Islam. He listed the work, sacrifices, and results achieved over eight years one by one. And he concluded his words as follows: "They return with a few sheep, but you return with the Messenger of Allah. Do you find this insignificant?" 60

Muhammad once again captivates the crowd with his striking words. The Medinans had not received their share of the spoils, but God's Messenger was with them. That was enough for them. The Ansar wept profusely, moved by the Prophet's words. Those who had just been heavily criticising Muhammad laid the first seeds of Arab nationalism alongside the Islamic religion established by Muhammad. Arab customs directly became constitutional rules of religion. Society was becoming tightly organised. The feuds between tribes were ending. Consequently, social development had also begun. The ghazawat followed one another, the state treasury was filling up, and the level of prosperity was increasing. As German scholar Rudi Paret said, the raids carried out before Islam became jihad after the acceptance of Islam. Jihad was considered a mandatory and honourable occupation for Bedouins. These were raids based on looting property and possessions from settled communities and other Bedouins. Jihad is directly encouraged in the Qur'an:

"Fight in the way of Allah and know that Allah hears all things and knows all things." (Al-Baqarah 244)

"Those who trade the fleeting life for the Hereafter should fight in the way of Allah. We will soon give a great reward to those who fight in the way of Allah and are killed or victorious." (An-Nisa 74)

O Prophet! Encourage the believers to fight. If there are twenty of you who are patient, they will overcome two hundred of those who disbelieve; if there are a hundred of you, they will overcome a thousand of them. For they are a people who do not understand. (Al-Anfal 65)

Religious warriors are rewarded. Verse 41 of Surah Anfal addresses this matter. According to this, four-fifths of the spoils (slaves, concubines, property, land, etc.) captured in the conquered lands belong to the warriors. One-fifth belongs to the state:

"On the day of separation between right and wrong, the day the two groups meet, if you believe in what We have revealed to Our servant, know that one-fifth of what you have obtained as spoils belongs to Allah, the Messenger, the Messenger's relatives, orphans, the poor, and those in need. Allah is capable of all things." (Enfal 41)

In Surah At-Tawbah, the attitudes to be taken towards those who do not believe in Islam are clearly stated. Severe insults are hurled:

"O believers! The polytheists are impure. Let them not approach the Sacred Mosque after this. If you fear poverty, know that Allah will enrich you from His bounty if He wills. Allah knows all things and is the possessor of all wisdom." (Tawbah 28)

Jews and Christians are identified as polytheists.

"The Jews say, 'Uzair is the son of Allah,' and the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah.' That is their saying with their mouths, imitating the saying of those who disbelieved before them. May Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!" (Tawbah 30)

As can be seen, curses are poured out upon the Jews and Christians from the mouth of Allah. In the same surah, it is explained what should be done to them, and a definitive judgement is given:

"Fight those who have been given the Book but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not embrace the religion of truth, until they pay the jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued." (Tawbah 29)

Thus, the future course of Islam's expansion is directly determined during Muhammad's lifetime. A tax called jizya will be collected from non-Muslims. Polytheists will be killed:

"If, after their covenant, they break their oaths and attack your religion, then kill the leaders of disbelief. For they have no oaths. If you do so, their conduct may be stopped." (Tawbah 12)

When Muhammad died (632), the Islamic state he had established only covered the regions of Mecca, Medina, Neşad, Taif, Okaş, Bedr, and Ceber. During the reign of Abu Bakr (634), it had reached the borders of Iran. The period of confrontation with non-Arab nations had begun.

After Muhammad took Mecca, he preferred to stay in Medina. Medina had become an example of Islam. He saw Medina as a state centre consisting of married clergy. In reality, Islam entered a period of longing to forget its early days in Mecca. Indeed, when Umar determined the Islamic calendar, he took the migration to Medina

the beginning of the migration to Medina rather than the beginning of prophethood. This was because Mecca represented the shame of Islam, while Medina represented its power. Meccan Islam was passive, while Medinan Islam was active.

Sacred Words

In terms of content, the Qur'an can be examined under five headings. The difference between Mecca and Medina is very clearly seen in the verses.

1. Some of the suras contain the principles and rules of Islam. They encompass religious commandments. In these verses, the prophet seems to be talking to himself. They are poetic. They are dark, profound, and resonant verses, like the rhyming proclamations of soothsayers. In all of them, thanks are given to God. They are verses of praise to God. This period covers 344 verses in 32 surahs. The lyrical period speaks most to the heart.
2. Some surahs call to religion. These surahs give abundant advice. They recommend thanksgiving and prayer to God. They contain judgments that indicate God's greatness. They enlighten and warn his people. It strives to guide people to the right path. In this phase, the call, or rather God's mission, has begun. However, this mission is very timid. Prophethood is mentioned only twice. This phase covers 849 verses in 26 surahs. It is a period of cautious transition from prophethood to messengership, with an emphasis on advice.
3. These are surahs containing pressure, intimidation and fear, with commands that frighten people with the torment of hell. Advice gives way to words about the Day of Judgement and the torment of hell, appealing to the fears and doubts in the depths of the human soul. Doubts are fuelled by terrifying descriptions of hell. 21 suras and 1902 verses belong to this period.
4. These are suras containing stories and parables. They appeal to the heart with a lyrical voice. If this fails, they appeal to the mind. If that fails, the fears of doubt and threats begin. The experiences of the old prophets are recounted.
5. The Medinan suras contain verses relating to Muhammad's private life and rumours about him. These concern only Muhammad's personal life. During the Medina period, 2,095 verses were revealed in 21 surahs. More than two-thirds of the Qur'an was revealed in Mecca. It comprises 4,850 verses in a total of 90 surahs. Only 200-300 people became Muslims during this period.

The verses of the surah in question are interesting in this regard. However, let us give another example:

O Prophet, We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have given their dowries, and those whom your right hand possesses from what Allah has given you as spoils of war, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncles and aunts who migrated with you. And also the believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to take her, not to the other believers, but only to you. We have made known to the believers what is required of them concerning their wives and those whom their right hands possess. (We have explained what they must do in this matter) so that there may be no difficulty for you (so that you may not fall into hardship or a difficult situation). Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Azhab 50).

O believers, do not enter the Prophet's houses without permission. If you are invited to eat, do not wait for the food to be cooked. Enter when you are invited, and when you have eaten, disperse; do not linger to converse. For this (behaviour) hurts the Prophet, but he is shy to tell you so. But Allah is not shy to tell the truth. When you ask them (i.e. the Prophet's wives) for something, ask them from behind a screen. This is purer for your hearts and theirs. It is not for you to hurt Allah's Messenger or to marry his wives after him. That is a great sin in the sight of Allah. (Azhab 52)

Surah Azhab was revealed in Medina between the 57th years of the Hijrah. The surah clearly shows the important paths Islam has taken. Ibn Abbas says the following about the above verse:

Some people were occasionally given food at Muhammad's house. They would sometimes come before the meal and wait until it was cooked. After the meal, they would not leave. Muhammad became annoyed by this. Upon this, the verse in question was revealed.

The Prophet could not bring himself to say what needed to be said, so God said it.

The verses permitting Muhammad's marriage to Zaynab, the wife of Zayd, are also among the verses concerning his private life. As is well known, Zayd was stolen from his mother in childhood and sold into slavery. The Prophet's wife Khadija, who was 20 years older than him, bought him. Muhammad freed this child, who was a gift from Khadija, and adopted him. Muhammad loved Zayd very much.

After adopting him, he marries him to his aunt's daughter, Zeynep. Thus, in a sense, Zeynep is considered Muhammad's daughter. One day, Muhammad sees Zeynep at home in a state of semi-nudity. He cries out, "O God, who turns hearts upside down!" Zeynep tells Zeyd about the situation. Zeyd divorces his wife, and Zeynep marries Muhammad. This incident also causes a great deal of gossip. God immediately comes to Muhammad's aid and resolves the issue:

"You said to the one whom Allah has blessed and whom you have blessed and set free, 'Keep your wife and fear Allah,' but you concealed within yourself what Allah was to reveal, and you feared people, whereas it was Allah whom you should have feared. When Zayd had no further need of her, We married her to you, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in marrying the wives of their adopted sons when they have no further need of them. Allah's command is always fulfilled. (Azhab 37)

However, Muhammad's followers reject the above arguments. According to them, this marriage was not based on love as claimed. Zaynab could not get along with Zayd. Coming from a noble family, she could not bring herself to marry a freed slave. She married for the sake of Allah's messenger. She could never warm to Zayd. She boasted of her nobility to Zayd. Zayd endured this for a while. Finally, he went to Muhammad and said he wanted to separate from Zaynab. Muhammad thought this was appropriate, but hesitated to tell Zayd. He advised him to "keep your wife". The Prophet wants to resolve this unease he harbours within himself. He will take Zaynab, who is to be divorced, into his own family, thus restoring her wounded honour.

But this has no bearing on reality. Because Zeynep is Muhammad's aunt's daughter. He had seen her long before. If beauty were the issue, he would have had the opportunity to marry her earlier.

After the famous incident with Ayşe's necklace, God intervenes directly in the rumours. The essence of the incident is as follows: The Prophet returns from a raid, but Ayşe is left behind. She is delayed in finding the necklace she has dropped. When she arrives at the place of lodging, she sees that the army has gone to Medina. Since Muhammad's wives were in closed areas on camels, no one noticed that she had been left behind. She waited where she was, thinking they would come looking for her. A young man named Saffan saw Aisha waiting there. He took her on his camel and brought her to Medina. This incident caused a terrible rumour to spread throughout the community. Aisha went to her mother's house.

The estrangement lasts a month. Muhammad goes to visit Aisha. Aisha is very upset. She says that nothing like that happened. Muhammad says words to the effect of, "Allah sees the truth, if you are innocent, God knows it." At that very moment, the Surah Nur descends. This surah resolves the issue. God condemns those who spread these rumours in harsh terms. He exonerates Aisha and Saffan:

"Those who brought the false report are a group among you. Do not think it is evil for you. On the contrary, it is good for you. Each of them has earned what they have earned from that sin. And for those who led the major sin, there is a great punishment." (Nur 11)

This incident actually caused a rift between Ayşe and Ali. When the rumour spread, Ali was consulted. Ali said, "There are witnesses to the incident; let them be questioned and investigated." In this verse, those who do not speak out against rumours are also blamed:

"When you heard it, should not the believing men and women have thought well of one another and said, 'This is a clear slander'?" (Nur 12)

It does not end there. To prove whether the incident is true or not, God does not settle for one witness, but demands four witnesses. He also considers those who believe in this incident to be liars:

"Why did they not bring four witnesses? Since they could not bring witnesses, they are all liars in the sight of God." (Nur 12)

God has taken His Prophet completely under His protective wing. He emphasises that even the spread of such gossip should not be permitted.

However, this distinction in terms of subject matter is not absolute. Sometimes religious judgements are combined with stories. Religious commands are given while past stories are told. Advice is given. Social rules are emphasised. Whatever happened in the past in the Near East is displayed.

For example, the myth of the creation of the universe is as told in the Torah and by the Sumerians. According to Sumerian mythology, the first thing in the universe was a vast, boundless water called the goddess Nammu. The goddess brought forth a great mountain from that water. Her son, the air god Enlil, split it in two. The top became the sky. The Sky God took it. The land beneath the sky belonged to the Earth Goddess and the Air God. The God of Wisdom

and the God of Air adorned the earth with plants, trees, and waters. Animals were created, and gods were formed to rule over them all.

The creation of the universe is described in the Torah as follows: The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, separating the waters from the waters," and God made the dome. He separated the waters below from the waters above, and God called the dome "sky" and the dry land below "earth." After this came the filling of the earth with plants and animals.

As can be seen, the Sumerian and Torah narratives are very similar. The Qur'an describes creation as follows:

"Do they not know that We created the heavens and the earth while they were joined together, and that We created every living thing from water?" (Taha 30)

The creation myth is very superficial in the Qur'an. However, the main idea is the same in all three sources (Sumerian, Torah, Qur'an). According to this, the earth and the heavens were joined together at the beginning. They emerged from water.

According to Islam, humans were created from clay. The origins of this belief also date back to ancient times. In Sumer, when the gods, especially the female gods, began to multiply, they complained about their heavy workload and the difficulty of preparing their food. They begged Nammu, the sea goddess who created all the gods, to find a solution. She told the god of wisdom to show his wisdom and skill. The god of wisdom made shapes out of soft clay. Then he addressed the goddess, saying:

O mother! The creature you will name has come into being. Place the image of the gods upon it. Mix the mud of the bottomless waters. Form its arms and legs. O mother! Declare the fate of the newborn! Behold, it is a human being!

During this act, all four gods are present: the mother of all gods, the Earth Goddess, the Goddess of Birth, and the God of Wisdom.

In the Torah (Genesis 2:7), this event is described as follows:

"The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."

The creation of man is described in two ways in the Torah. In Genesis Chapter 1:26, after describing God's creation of the earth, the heavens, the stars, the plants and the animals, it is said:

"God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him rule over the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Thus, creation was completed in six days. According to the Talmud, the first woman created alongside Adam was Lilith. Lilith sees herself as equal to Adam. She does not listen to Adam. She becomes a female demon. She begins to harass men. She does not let go of any man she catches. The seventh day of the month is especially dangerous for men. This Lilith is the name of a demon who built a nest in the tree of the Sumerian goddess of love, Inanna, and prevented her from cutting it down.

God then creates Adam from clay and his wife from his rib. Thus, while the Torah states that humans were created in six days as male and female, here the man is created from clay and the woman from his rib.

The creation of man is mentioned in various forms in different suras of the Qur'an.

I swear by Allah, we created man from an essence of clay. (Muminun 12)

Allah created man from dry clay, like baked mud. (Rahman 12) In the sight of Allah, the status of Jesus is like that of Adam. He created him from dust, then said, "Be," and he was. (Ali Imran 59)

He created every thing . And man's creation began with clay. (Sajdah 7)

Indeed, We created man from dry clay, from changing, sticky mud. We had previously created the jinn/Iblis from scorching fire. Remember when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being from dry clay, from changing, sticky mud. When I have finished him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down in prostration before him. All the angels prostrated themselves, except Iblis. He refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. Allah said, "O Iblis! What is the matter with you that you do not prostrate with those who prostrate?" He said, "I was not created to prostrate to a human being whom You created from dry clay, from changing, sticky mud." He said, "Then get out of here, for you are expelled." (Hicr 26-34)

As can be seen, in all three religions, man is created from clay. However, in Sumer, the reason for man's creation and how he was created is described in detail. 61 In Sumerian mythology, it is said, "Place the image of the gods upon him." From this it is understood, in Sumer the gods created in their image. This is evidence that they thought of the gods as human. The same statement is also found in the Torah:

And God created man in His own image, male and female He created them. (Genesis Chapter 1:27)

For God created Adam in His own image. (Genesis 9:6)

In the Qur'an, and therefore in Islamic thought, it is clearly emphasised that God created man in His own image. The Qur'an provides the following evidence:

The Jews said, "God's hand is tied. May their hands be tied!" They were cursed for what they said. Contrary to what they said, God's two hands are wide open, and He gives as He wills. (Maida 64)

In a hadith of Muhammad, God's form is described more clearly: When the Almighty God finished creating His creations, He lay down on His back. At that moment, He places one foot on top of the other. "No one is capable of doing anything like this," He says.⁶² This is clear evidence that Muhammad perceived God in human form.

The origins of these sacred texts, which showcase the history of the Near East, can be traced back to the Sumerian civilisation. There is a famous legend that remains from Sumer. There is a country called Dilmun, where pure, clean, bright gods live. It is a land of life where illness and death are unknown. However, there is no water there. The Water God tells the Sun God to draw water from the earth and fill the land with it. The Sun God does as he is told. Thus, Dilmun becomes a garden of the gods, with orchards, fields and meadows. In this paradise garden, the Earth Goddess grows eight plants. When these trees bear fruit, the God of Wisdom, Enki, tastes each one. This greatly angers the Earth Goddess. She curses the god with death and vanishes. The God of Wisdom falls gravely ill. The other gods find the Earth Goddess with great difficulty and beg her to heal the God of Wisdom. The Goddess cures the god's eight organs, which correspond to the eight plants.

creates a god for each. Five of the created gods are goddesses. One of the diseased organs is the rib. The name of the goddess who heals it is Ninti, meaning 'wife of the rib'. This name is a compound word formed from 'nin' (wife) and 'ti' (rib). One meaning of 'ti' is life. In its second meaning, the goddess's name means 'wife of life'.

In the Torah and the Qur'an, Adam is expelled from paradise after tasting the forbidden fruit. In the Torah, this story (Genesis 2:5-23) is told as follows:

And there was no shrub of the field yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, towards the east, and placed the man there. And the Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four branches (two of them being the Tigris and the Euphrates). And the Lord God placed the man there to tend and keep it. And the Lord God said to the man, "You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." And the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air out of the ground and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. But the man was alone. The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept, He took one of his ribs and made a woman from it. He brought her to the man, and the man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman'."

After this, it is recounted how the serpent deceived the woman into eating the forbidden fruit and their conversation with God in the garden. God curses the serpent. God makes coats for Adam and his wife to wear. He punishes the woman by making her bear many children in pain and Adam by making him toil with the soil. He expels them from the Garden of Eden. Up to this point, the woman's name is not given. At the beginning of Chapter 4, it is stated that the woman's name is Eve and that she gave birth to Abel and Cain.

Thus, although in the Torah (Chapter 1:27) God created man male and female on the sixth and last day of creation, He recreates man from the dust of the ground and his wife from his rib. Accordingly, what is recounted in Chapter 2:4-23 is taken from the Sumerian story.

The Qur'an also deals with this subject very superficially. The subject is touched upon in various suras:

And He taught Adam all the names. Then, when He presented them to the angels, He said, "Tell me the names of these, if you are truthful." (Al-Baqarah 31)

And We said to Adam: "O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat of the bounty thereof as ye will. But approach not this tree, lest ye become of the wrongdoers." Then Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from the state in which they had been. Then We said, "Go down, some of you being enemies to others. There will be for you on the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time. Then Adam learned from his Lord certain words and turned to Him, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, He is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Forgiving; He is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. (Al-Baqarah 35-37)

O Adam! You and your wife dwell in Paradise, eat from wherever you wish, but do not approach this tree. Otherwise, you will both become among the wrongdoers. Then Satan whispered to them both, seeking to expose their hidden shame. He said, "Your Lord only forbids you from this tree lest you become angels or join the immortal ones." And he swore to them, "I am one of those who give you good advice." Finally, he deceived them and brought them down. When they tasted the tree, their private parts became visible to them. They began to cover themselves with leaves from the garden. Their Lord called out to them, "Did I not forbid you from this tree? Did I not tell you that Satan is an open enemy to you?" They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.' He said: 'Go down, some of you being enemies to others. It is decreed that you shall dwell on the earth for a time and enjoy yourselves.' He said: 'There you shall live, there you shall die, and from there you shall be brought forth.' O Children of Adam! We have sent down to you clothing to cover your nakedness and as adornment. But the garment of righteousness is the best. This is one of the signs of Allah. Perhaps they will reflect. (A'raf 1926)

Indeed, We took a covenant from Adam before, but he forgot; We found in him no resolve. When We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," all prostrated except Iblis, who refused. We said, "O Adam, this is your enemy, so beware lest he lead you astray."

Do not leave Paradise; you will be miserable. You will neither hunger nor be naked here. You will neither thirst nor be scorched by the sun." Then Satan whispered to him, saying, "O Adam! Shall I show you the tree of eternity, an imperishable kingdom and dominion?" Finally, they both ate from it. Upon this, their private parts became visible to them; they began to cover themselves with leaves from the Garden. Adam had disobeyed his Lord and was bewildered. Then his Lord purified him, accepted his repentance, and guided him to goodness and righteousness. (Taha 115-122)

Ultimately, the creation myth in Sumer and the Torah are parallel. Both feature a divine garden, planted trees, water drawn from the garden, the eating of forbidden fruit, and elements of damnation. In Sumer, a goddess is created to mend the rib. The goddess is called "the lady of the rib." In the story in the Torah, the woman is created from the rib and her name becomes Eve, the Hebrew equivalent of the second meaning in Sumerian, Lady of Life (the life-giving lady).

In the Qur'an, the gardens of paradise are described in various verses in different suras. Only in one place is the forbidden tree described as the tree of eternity. It is not the serpent but Satan who expels Adam from paradise. Eve is not mentioned by name, nor is there any mention of her being created from a rib.

In Islamic mythology, the creation of Adam and his expulsion from paradise are somewhat different. Allah commands his angels, Gabriel, Michael, Azrael, and Israfil, to bring seven handfuls of soil from seven layers of the earth. However, the earth refuses to give up this soil. Azrael takes it by force. Allah rains on this soil for days. He softens it. The angels knead it. And Allah shapes it. Adam waits for 80 years as shapeless soil and 120 years as a soulless being. After gaining form and colour, the angels are commanded to prostrate themselves before Adam. Only Satan disobeys this command. Therefore, he is expelled from paradise. The measure of distinguishing good from evil in paradise is eating from the apple tree. This is forbidden to Adam. Angry at being expelled from paradise, Satan conspires with the serpent and causes Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, thus expelling them from paradise. Adam repents and begs for forgiveness. Through the intercession of Gabriel, he is forgiven and sent to Arafat in Mecca. There he meets Eve. Adam is commanded to build Mecca. Gabriel also teaches him the pilgrimage ritual. Thus, the human race is born.

There is another parallel between the Sumerian and Islamic creation myths: according to Islam, four angels assist Allah in the creation of man. In Sumerian mythology, however,

Four important gods assist. The apple tree in heaven is a tree frequently encountered in Sumerian myths, particularly in relation to the goddess of love. The Qur'an mentions once that this is the tree of eternity. In Sumer, the two-faced vizier Isimut gives the forbidden fruit to the god of wisdom, Enki. In the Torah, this task is accomplished by the serpent, in the Qur'an by the devil, and in Islamic mythology, Gabriel secures Adam's forgiveness. In Sumer, the main goddess, at the request of the gods, makes the god of wisdom good.

In Sumer, the god of wisdom, Enki, brings news from the other gods to humans; in Islam, Gabriel performs the same task. Gabriel's power and perfection are reminiscent of the Sumerian god of wisdom.

The myth of Abel and Cain also has ancient origins. The story of Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, is recounted in the Book of Genesis (Chapter 4:1) as follows:

And Adam knew his wife Eve. She conceived and bore Cain. She bore again, this time his brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd of sheep. But Cain became a farmer. After some time had passed, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground. Abel also brought an offering from the firstborn of his flock and their fat. The Lord looked upon Abel and his offering, but He did not look upon Cain and his offering. Cain became very angry. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain spoke to his brother Abel. It came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

The same event is recounted in the Qur'an in a very brief manner, without mentioning the names involved:

Recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam: When they offered a sacrifice, one was accepted and the other was not. He said, 'I will surely kill you.' The other replied, 'Only those who fear God will be accepted.' I swear, if you raise your hand to kill me, I will not raise my hand to kill you: I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds. I want you to bear both my sin and your own sin and be cast into the Fire: that is the punishment of the wrongdoers. Finally, his soul urged him to kill his brother, and he killed him. Thus, he became one of the losers. Then Allah showed him how to bury his brother's body by sending a crow to scratch the ground and say, " " "Woe is me! Like this crow I am unable

am I unable to bury my brother's body?" And he became one of those who were consumed by fire. (Maide 2731)

The same story appears in two forms among the Sumerians. The first is narrated as follows:

The shepherd god Dumuzi and the farmer god Enkimdu fall in love with the love goddess Inanna. Each praises his own produce to Inanna. Ultimately, the goddess favours the shepherd god Dumuzi's produce and marries him. Enkimdu accepts this choice amicably and becomes his friend.

The other story is based on the dispute between the Sumerian gods of summer and winter. In Sumer, emeš means summer and enten means winter.

Winter brings various animals, their young, butter and milk to Enlil, the god of the air. Summer brings trees, plants and precious stones. Both argue that what they bring is more valuable. Seeing this quarrel, the god finds winter's offerings superior. Summer accepts this and submits to winter.

God revealed these stories and parables, which occupy a significant place in the Qur'an, solely for people to learn lessons from them. Some of these stories had been revealed earlier. For example, the story of Moses and Pharaoh is found in the Torah. However, this event also originates from Sumerian myths. In Sumerian myths, gods who are angry with each other bring various disasters upon the whole country. In the line stretching from the ancient Near Eastern past to monotheistic religions, the common punishment of the gods is to turn water into blood:

In Sumer, the goddess of love, Inanna, falls asleep at the edge of a garden. Seeing this, the owner of the garden goes and rapes the goddess. Angered by this, the goddess inflicts various disasters on the country. All the wells in the country fill with blood. Slaves carrying wood drink nothing but blood.

The turning of water into blood is described in the Torah (Exodus 7:14-25) as follows:

The Lord said to Moses: Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he goes out to the river's edge and tell him, 'The God of the Hebrews has sent me to you. Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. I will strike the water in the river with the staff that is in my hand, and it will turn to blood. Moses

did as the Lord commanded. He struck the waters of the river with his staff. All the water turned to blood. The Egyptians could find no water to drink.

This event is described in the Qur'an as follows:

And they said, "No matter how many miracles you bring to enchant us, we will not believe in you." So We sent upon them, one after another, the flood, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood as separate miracles; but they remained arrogant and became a guilty people. (A'af 32-33)

The fact that the Torah and the Bible are filled with myths and stories from ancient times has been proven by archaeological data and historical research conducted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, the story of Moses being placed in a basket and set adrift on the water is one such story. According to this legend in the holy books, the wife of the Egyptian pharaoh finds the child in the basket and raises him in the palace. In reality, this legend is a story from the Babylonian period. It is one of the legends of the beliefs dating back to the Assyrian or Caledonian period. The Jews gave this legend a new form, dressing it up as the words of God.⁶³ However, the Qur'an cites the Torah as proof of the truth of what it says:

"O Muhammad, if you doubt the stories we have revealed to you, ask those who have read the Torah before you; these stories from your Lord are true." (Yunus 94)

According to Sigmund Freud, who himself came from a Jewish family, the stories about Moses in the Torah are entirely false and fabricated. Moses was not the first prophet to establish the idea of monotheism. First of all, it is not certain that anyone named Moses ever existed. Even if Moses did exist, the concept of monotheism was established long before him by the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten. Jewish scholars later attributed Akhenaten's views to Moses. Yahweh, known as "God" by the Jews, was a goddess considered the "representative of evil" in ancient times. In this important work, written at the age of eighty,

Freud presents the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten as an example of virtue and morality. He directs harsh criticism at Jewish religious leaders, whom he accuses of distorting history.⁶⁴

The story of Noah, the flood, the ark, and the ark's landing on Mount Judi is presented in the Qur'an as a completely new narrative:

"These are among the unseen matters which We reveal to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before this. So be patient. The outcome is for those who are mindful of God." (Hud 49)

It is emphasised that neither Muhammad nor the Arab people knew this story. This is because the Jews claimed that what Muhammad was telling them was taken from the Torah and did not believe him. God responded to the Jews' claims with a verse that silenced them:

"If you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then bring a surah like it, and call upon your supporters other than Allah as your witnesses. If you are truthful..." (Al-Baqarah 23)

The Almighty God has completely rejected the Jews, saying, "If you do not believe, then bring forth something better than this." Then, in the Qur'an, a story is told that is not found in previous books and is unknown to the people. Thus, the Jews' above claim is refuted.

However, the story of Noah is not actually unknown in the history of the Near East. This story is found in the Torah. The same story is found on a tablet in the library of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal, discovered in 1872. This story, which forms the last part of the Epic of Gilgamesh, is told to Gilgamesh, who seeks immortality, by Utnapishtim, who survived the flood and was granted immortality by the gods. The story is briefly as follows:

Humans multiply so much that God cannot sleep because of their noise and commotion. Upon this, the four great Gods decide to destroy these humans. The God of Wisdom, Enki, is very saddened by the elimination of the humans they created. He calls out from the walls of the house of Utnapishtim, who lives in the city of Shuruppak. He says that the gods have decided to create a flood. He suggests that he build a ship. He describes the shape of the ship. The man completes the ship in seven days, as instructed. While the ship is being built, various animals are slaughtered. White and red wines, unmixed with water, are drunk in abundance, like river water. Festivities reminiscent of New Year celebrations are held. Utnapishtim fills the ship with his family, relatives, artists, and domestic and wild animals from the countryside. He does not forget to take gold with him. As soon as the ship's door closes, a violent

storm and rain pour down. The waters do not just pour down from the sky; the Earth Gods also spout water from the ground. The flood becomes so violent that even the Gods who caused it are afraid. This apocalypse lasts six days and six nights. On the seventh day, the ship comes to rest on Mount Nisir. After waiting seven days, Utnapishtim releases a dove. The dove returns because it cannot find a place to land. Then he sends a swallow. It also returns. Finally, he sends a raven. When the raven does not return, the creatures on the ship come out. Utnapishtim offers sacrifices and drinks on the mountain top. Seven cauldrons are placed over fires burning wood from various trees. The sacrifices are cooked. The gods, smelling the sweet aroma of the sacrifices, gather. The god Enlil, who caused the flood, comes and sees the people and the ship and becomes very angry. "Who saved them?" he exclaims. The God of Wisdom stands up to him. "Punish the sinner, the one who broke the rules, but don't be so harsh and deadly!" he calms him down. Thus, Utnapishtim and his wife settle in the Garden of the Gods at the mouth of the river, granted immortal life.⁶⁵

The story is written in Akkadian, one of the Semitic languages. However, the names that appear in it are from another language. It is believed that the story originated with the Sumerians. Indeed, parts of the story have been found in later Sumerian inscriptions. The flood story is written in Sumerian in poetic form. Although at least half of the text has not been recovered, the surviving sections shed considerable light on the subject.

According to this, the gods, angry with humans, decide to bring about a flood. Ziusudra is informed of the impending flood by a god from behind a wall. The flood rages with full force for seven days and seven nights. Ziusudra sacrifices to the gods.

The same event is described at length in the Torah (Genesis 6-7).

According to the Torah, because humans were wicked and corrupt, the Lord decided to destroy them. Noah was a man who knew God and walked with Him. God informed him that He would bring a flood to destroy humanity. He told him to build an ark and explained what He would take into it. Noah did as he was told. The flood began. It lasted 40 days. Everything on Earth is destroyed. The waters recede only after 150 days. The ship came to rest on Mount Arafat on the 17th day of the 7th month. Noah waited another 40 days. To see if the waters had completely receded, he first sent out a raven. When it returned, he waited and sent out a dove. The dove did not return the third time he sent it. Upon this, they disembarked. Noah offered sacrifices.

He stops. When God smells the pleasant odours, He decides not to send another flood. He speaks to Noah. He promises not to send another flood upon the earth. Noah lives for 950 years and then dies. New life continues from the surviving creatures and Noah's sons.

In the Qur'an, this story is told quite superficially in various verses in the 29th surah. Most of the verses deal with Noah's faith issues with his community. The word "flood" appears only once.

"And indeed, We sent Noah to his people, and he said, 'O my people! Worship Allah and be devoutly obedient to Him. You have no other god but Him. I fear for you a terrible punishment from Him.'" (A'raf 59)

They denied him. So We saved him and those with him in the ship, and made them leaders. As for those who denied Our signs, We drowned them. Look and see what was the end of those who were warned beforehand. (Yunus 73)

It was revealed to Noah: "None of your people will believe except those who have already believed. So do not grieve over what they do." Build the ship before our eyes, in accordance with our revelation. And do not argue with me about the wrongdoers. They will surely be drowned. He was building the ship. Whenever any group from his people passed by, they would mock him. Noah said, "If you mock us, we will mock you, just as you mock us. You will soon know upon whom the humiliating punishment will fall, and upon whom the lasting punishment will descend. Finally, when Our command came and the oven boiled over, We called out: "Load into it two of every kind, and your family, except those against whom the decree has been passed, and those who have believed." But very few believed with Noah. Noah said, "Board it. Its sailing and anchoring are by Allah's name. My Lord is indeed Forgiving, Merciful." The ship carried them over waves like mountains. Noah called out to his son, who stood apart from them: "My son, come aboard with us; do not be with the disbelievers." His son replied: "I will take refuge on a mountain; it will protect me from the water." Noah said: "Today, no one can save anyone from Allah's decree except those whom Allah has mercy upon." And a wave came between them, and he was among those who drowned. And it was said: "O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold your rain."

"And the water receded, and the task was completed. The ship came to rest upon Mount Judi, and it was proclaimed: 'May that wicked people never return.' (Hud, 36-44)

We sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years minus fifty. Finally, the flood overtook them. For they were oppressors. We saved Noah and those aboard the ship, and We made the ship a sign for the worlds. (Ankebut 14-15)

And that We carried their descendants in those fully laden ships is a sign for them. We created for them other things to ride, similar to ships. If We willed, We could drown them, and then there would be no one to cry out for them, nor would they be saved. (Yasin 41-43)

As can be seen, the Qur'an does not describe how Noah's Ark was built, how long the flood lasted, how they left the ark, or why Noah lived for 950 years. In contrast, God's anger towards humans, the event being revealed to only one person, the building of the ship, the overflowing of water from the sky and the earth, the ship docking on a mountain, the salvation of some people, and Noah's long life are traces from the Sumerians.⁶⁶

The story of the Prophet Eyüp's patience also originates from the Sumerians. The story, found on two separate tablets left behind by the Sumerians, is in the form of a poem reaching 135 lines. The main idea of the story is that when people suffer misfortune, instead of cursing the God who caused it, they should exalt him and implore him to soften his heart, thus saving themselves from destruction. The God implored in Sumer is the God of man himself. He takes these prayers to the council of gods and obtains favourable results.

The Sumerians left behind poetry, which begins by advising the unnamed man to first praise and exalt his God, softening his heart with weeping and lamentation. It then recounts the mistreatment suffered by an unnamed man at the hands of his relatives and friends. The man speaks of the destruction that has befallen him. He wants his friends to share in his sorrow. He then says that these events may have come about because of his own sins. He begs his God for forgiveness. The poem ends with a section announcing that God has forgiven him.⁶⁷ In the Torah, this story is a 1040-line poem adorned with many words of wisdom. At the beginning of the story, God tells Satan that Job is a good servant. Satan replies, "If you put him in a bad situation, see how he will curse you."

how he will curse you." Satan fills Job's body with sores from head to toe. Job does not complain. His wife tells him, "Curse God who gave you this." Job replies, "We must accept God's goodness as we accept his evil."

After this, Job recounts in poetic form the calamities that befell him, stating that he should never have been born and that God had unjustly inflicted this upon him. His friends, however, defend God, saying that God would not do an unjust thing and that he deserved it. After this, God and Job engage in a debate. Both recount the good deeds they have done. Finally, Job repents for what he has said. God accepts his repentance and restores his health. He also doubles his wealth and property. Thus, Job regains his respect among his friends.

As can be seen, the Sumerian and Biblical texts are identical in subject matter. The poem in the Torah was written at least a thousand years after the Sumerian poem. It is deeper and more comprehensive, endowed with poetic language and words full of wisdom. The Sumerian poem is simpler. Both say that the disaster was a punishment for their sins. However, according to Sumerian belief, every child is born with sin.

This story is also told very superficially in the Qur'an. The subject is summarised in a few verses in four suras. In verse 163 of Sura Nisa and verse 84 of Sura Enam, it is written that it was revealed to Job, among all the prophets, starting with Abraham.

And Job... prayed to his Lord, saying, "Affliction has befallen me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." We responded to him immediately and removed his affliction. As a mercy from Us and a reminder for those who worship, We gave him his family and others like them. (Enbiya 83-84)

Remember our servant Job! He cried out to his Lord, "Satan has afflicted me with weariness and suffering." We said, "Strike the ground with your foot. There is a place to wash, and cold water to drink!" As a mercy from Us and a reminder to those of pure heart, We forgave him, his family, and those with them. We said, "Take a bundle of reeds and strike with it, and do not break your oath." We found him patient. What a fine servant he was! He was one who turned to Us in supplication. (Shad, 41-44)

Although the subject is written very briefly, the torment of the devil, patience, supplication to God, the acceptance of prayers, and reward are parallel to Sumerian and Babylonian sources.

The section "Song of Solomon" in the Torah is also based on Sumerian sources. The presence of this section, consisting of explicit poems, in the holy book has greatly puzzled theologians. Apparently, these poems have no connection to religion or history. In these poems, there is a lover and a beloved. Church priests interpreted this as Jesus being the lover and the church being the beloved. The Hebrews, on the other hand, showed Yahweh as the lover and Israel as the beloved. In the 19th century, it was suggested that these were related to ceremonies performed at Israeli weddings.

However, research conducted in light of new findings reveals that these poems were songs and hymns sung during the Sumerians' New Year festival, accompanied by musical instruments. As the Sumerian economy was based on agriculture, abundance and fertility were of great importance in their country. Therefore, the Sumerians believed that if they married the love goddess Inanna to the shepherd god Dumuzi (Dumuzi was originally a king, later deified), they would share their fertility and immortality, thereby ensuring abundance and prosperity in their country. In accordance with this belief, Sumerian poets and bards created a legend about the two gods. They wrote it down and passed it down to our time. Poems full of love and affection, written from the perspective of the king and the priestess or the god and goddess for each other, were composed to be read at these ceremonies and set to music in the form of songs. These ceremonies, which constituted fertility worship among the Sumerians, are today referred to as "sacred marriage ceremonies." It is understood that this fertility worship continued until the time of Jesus, and even later.

The goddess of love, Inanna, and Dumuzi marry after overcoming many difficulties. Once married, the goddess descends to the underworld. However, it is a place of no return. Despite being a goddess, she is not allowed to return to the surface. With the help of the god of wisdom, Enki, the goddess emerges from the underworld with its creatures, intending to send someone in her place. Wherever she goes, she sees the gods and goddesses mourning her absence, wearing sackcloth and crawling on the ground. She cannot bear to send any of them to the underworld. However, she goes to the city where her husband is. She finds him sitting on his throne, enjoying himself, unconcerned by her absence. In a fit of rage, she says, "Take this," and gives her husband to the demons. Later,

She regrets what she has done. But she does not want her husband to go unpunished. In this case, it is agreed that Dumuzi's sister, the dream goddess Gestinannan, will remain underground for half a year in his place. Thus, Dumuzi remains underground for half a year during the winter months, emerging when spring arrives to reunite with his wife. This union is celebrated by the king of the time and the high priestess. Grand ceremonies are held. The new year has now begun. Nature awakens. Trees turn green. Animals multiply.

The remnants of the poems recited at these ceremonies are Solomon's Song of Songs... Originally, they were songs composed by the Sumerian king and priestess, sung to each other in the mouths of the God and Goddess, filled with love and passion. These ceremonies, which formed the Sumerian fertility cult, are today referred to as "Sacred Marriage Ceremonies." This fertility worship continued until the time of Jesus, and even later. Therefore, although many topics unrelated to religion were removed from the Torah, these poems were left in the Torah.

The Sumerian goddess of love, Inanna, was revered and continued to exist under the names Ishtar in Akkad, Astarte in Israel, Aphrodite in Greece, and Venus in Rome.

Today, the attributes of Inanna are ascribed to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Like Inanna, she is the ruler of the heavens. She is the defender of social justice. She is considered the protector of the poor and the oppressed. Some perceive her as a goddess, worshipping her more than her son. Prayers are offered to her for the help of mothers, those at war, and grieving families.

Jesus' situation is similar to that of Dumuzi. There is a parallel between Dumuzi being beaten, tortured and taken underground, his return to earth, and what was done to Jesus and the belief that he returns to earth every year.

The name Dumuzi lives on as the name of the month of July in our calendar. In Hebrew, it is pronounced Tammuz. On 17 July, Israeli women fast and go to the temple gate to weep. This is a re-enactment of Dumuzi being taken underground.

The parallels between sacred words reflecting the history of the Near East and Sumerian inscriptions do not end there. The Qur'an explains why Jesus is the son of God as follows:

Imran's wife said, "My Lord, I have dedicated to You what is in my womb as a free servant. Accept my dedication; You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." When she gave birth, she said, "My Lord, I have given birth to a girl, and a girl is not like a boy. I have named her Maryam." I entrust her and her descendants to You from the evil of the accursed Satan." Her Lord accepted her in a beautiful

and nurtured her like a plant. Whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to see her, he would find her provided for. He would say, "O Maryam, where did this come from?" She would say, "It is from Allah." Indeed, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills without measure. (Al-i Imran 36-37)

According to these verses, there were temples at that time. The existence of temples is also evident in the Torah and the Gospel. Mary was a girl dedicated to the temple and raised there. She became pregnant in some way—according to some books, by Joseph. She feared that if she gave birth to God's child, she would be killed. Therefore, she chose to give birth to her child in a deserted place.

According to one hypothesis, Jesus was raised to believe he was the son of God. His declaration, "I am the son of God," though belated, ultimately led to his death.⁶⁸ This event bears certain parallels with Sumerian beliefs:

In some cases, even if Sumerian priestesses married, they were not allowed to have children. Children born by accident were killed. This was because these women were considered the wives of Allah, and the children born to them were considered the children of Allah. The Sumerians did not want a mortal to have a child of God.

The belief in a continuous succession of revelations preparing the prophets for the descent of sacred words also dates back to ancient times. An interesting feature of these revelations is that they overwhelmed the prophets with ecstasy, causing them to constantly experience trances and give birth to visions.

According to the Qur'an, Allah communicates with humans only through revelation from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to convey His will:

Allah does not speak to a human being face to face. He speaks through revelation (inspiring whatever thought He wills into His servant's heart), or from behind a veil, or sends a messenger to reveal whatever He wills with His permission. He is the Exalted, the Wise. (Shura 51)

In the Torah, God converses directly with individuals (other than prophets, such as Moses' brother, his servant, Abraham's wife, etc.), and angels in human form bring messages from God. God reveals what He wills in dreams.

In Sumer, the gods speak from behind walls. The god of knowledge, Enki, tells Ziusudra, Noah's counterpart, that a flood is coming from behind a wall. Or the gods inform humans of their tasks through dreams. In addition to this, humans learn the will of the gods through divination and prophecy.

In Sumer, dreams are interpreted as messages from the gods. Some of these dreams are also found in the Torah and the Qur'an. The most interesting of these is the dream of Jacob and his son Joseph. Joseph says, "We were binding sheaves in the middle of the field. My sheaf rose and stood upright. Your sheaves surrounded it and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers become suspicious, wondering, "Will this one be king over us?" When Joseph tells them about his second dream, in which he saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him, his brothers decide to kill him.

Sargon, who worked for the Sumerian king Urzababa, told the king about the dream he had seen, and the king, fearing that Sargon would become king in his place, wanted to kill him.

In the story of Joseph, God seems to boast about the beauty of the story He conveyed to Muhammad.

"We have revealed this Qur'an to you, narrating the most beautiful of stories. Yet you were, before this, among those who knew nothing of them." (Yusuf 3)

Sacred texts, while recounting the stories and tales of the Near East's past, also reshape the legal order and present it as religious rules. Sumerian laws form the basis of Hammurabi's laws. The laws of Moses and Islamic laws are influenced by these laws. The rules in the Mosaic law, such as respecting one's parents, not killing anyone, not committing adultery, not committing incest, not bearing false witness, and not coveting one's neighbour's wife or property, are the same as those in Sumerian law. Sumerian laws are more humane. For example, there is no eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth punishment.

The laws made by the Semites originate from these laws. For example, the incident between Prophet Abraham's wife and his concubine is clear evidence of this. According to Sumerian laws, if a barren woman's husband's concubine gives birth to a child, she cannot lord it over her mistress. If she tries to lord it over her, she will be punished. According to the Torah and the Qur'an, Prophet Abraham's barren wife Sarah gave her concubine Hagar to her husband to bear children. When the concubine bore children, she began to consider herself superior. Upon this, her husband took Hagar and her son Ishmael and cast them out into the desert.

According to the Torah, the eldest son receives a special share of the inheritance. If the child wishes, he can receive this share while his father is still alive. The same rule exists in Sumer.

The rule of stoning women who commit adultery, which is found in the Torah, does not exist in the Qur'an. There are some verses related to the punishment for adultery.

If any of your women commit adultery, bring four witnesses from among you; if they testify, confine those women to the house until death takes them or Allah provides a way out for them. If two of you commit adultery, punish them both; if they repent and mend their ways, then leave them alone. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Nisa 15-16) Adulterers and adulteresses, flog each of them with a hundred lashes. Let not pity for them withhold you from carrying out Allah's punishment, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. Let a group of believers witness their punishment. The man who commits adultery may not marry anyone other than the woman who committed adultery or the woman who committed adultery or the woman who committed adultery; the woman who commits adultery may not marry anyone other than the man who committed adultery or the man who committed adultery or the man who committed adultery. It is forbidden for believers to marry such people. (Muminun 2-3)

Stoning as a punishment existed in ancient Sumer. Around 2200 BC, it was reported that women who took two husbands and thieves would be stoned for their misdeeds. Later laws do not mention such a punishment. Laws concerning adultery are not available due to the fragments in the inscriptions. The act of adultery is found in the laws of Hammurabi:

129. If a man's wife is caught sleeping with another man, they shall be bound and thrown into the water. If the woman's husband spares her, the king shall also spare her.

130. If a man is caught forcing himself upon another man's wife, who is living in her father's house, that man shall be put to death, but the woman shall be set free.

Virginity was also considered important among the Sumerians. A man who forcibly deflowered a slave girl had to pay a certain amount of silver. A woman who married as a widow received half the dowry that a woman who married as a virgin would receive upon divorce.

The issue of virginity is more stringent in the Torah. If a girl is proven not to be a virgin when she marries, she is stoned to death. The Qur'an, however, does not mention the issue of virginity.

Sumerian inscriptions refer to forced rape:

"If the daughter of a free man is raped, and her mother and father did not know it, and the girl tells them, 'I was raped,' then her mother and father shall give her to the man by force as his wife."

Rape is also a theme in Sumerian myths. Although Enlil is the chief of the gods, he is banished to the underworld by the council of gods for deceiving his wife and raping her before marriage.

The same story is recounted in the Torah:

If a man lies with a young woman who is betrothed but not yet married, and they are found, the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father, and she shall be his wife. (Deuteronomy 22:28-29)

According to the Torah, if a man sleeps with an engaged girl in the city, both of them shall be stoned to death. The Qur'an does not mention this.

The roots of the concept of the afterlife in Islamic belief also date back to ancient times. In Sumer, the Goddess who maintained social equality judged people once a year for their good and bad deeds. She punished the wicked. This belief entered Islam as the Night of Salvation on the fifteenth day of the month of Sha'ban. In addition to their main names, the Sumerian gods had names according to their attributes. The Babylonians gave 50 of these names to their newly created god, Marduk. In this way, they took a step towards the idea of a single god. In Islam, the 99 names given to Allah are a continuation of the same tradition.

According to the Sumerians, the dead go to a dark, one-way underworld called Kur. This understanding continues in the Torah as Sheol, in Greece as Hades, in the Bible as hell, and in Islam as the afterlife. According to the Sumerians, there is no resurrection here. However, the underworld is a very lively place with gods, priests and the shadows of the dead. In some special cases, the shadows can emerge onto the surface. For example, at Gilgamesh's call, the shadow of his friend Enkidu emerges onto the surface, and the two friends converse. In the Torah, at King Saul's request, the shadow of Samuel emerges from the underworld.

According to the Sumerians, if food and sacrifices are not offered to the spirits of the dead underground, they will rise to the surface and disturb people. Weeping and wailing excessively after someone's death disturbs them. In Islam, prayers and sacrifices for the dead are a continuation of this belief. In Islam, there is also the saying, "Do not disturb the spirit of the dead by weeping too much." For the Jews, after the Babylonian captivity, under the influence of the Persians, the Zoroastrian religion introduced the resurrection of the dead, heaven, hell, and the bridge of Siraat.

In the Torah, Elohim, angered by humans behaving like gods, creates many languages so that they cannot understand each other. In Sumer, the god of wisdom, Anu

becomes angry and creates many languages so that people, while speaking one language, cannot understand each other.

The Sumerians wrote that they were a superior people chosen by the gods. Yahweh in the Torah and Allah in the Qur'an made the Israelites a superior nation.

The Sumerians liken women to fields. The same expression is found in the Torah and the Qur'an. The Qur'an states:

Your wives are your fields. Go to your fields as you wish. Prepare for the future for yourselves and know that you will surely meet Allah. Give glad tidings to the believers. (Bakara 223)

The creation of the universe in the Qur'an begins with the command "Be":

His command is simply to say "Be," and it is. (Yasin 82)

In Sumer, too, the gods say "Be," and everything comes into being by this command.

The Sumerians believed that all events in the world were written in the stars in the sky. This belief continues in the Qur'an. The Sumerians also believed that a person's destiny was written on a brick; according to Islam, a person's life will continue as written on their forehead.

The number 7 is very important to the Sumerians. Concepts such as 7 days to pass, 7 mountains to cross, 7 lights, 7 trees, and 7 doors are used. Similarly, the number 7 is used extensively in the Torah and the Qur'an; according to Islam, there are 7 gates to heaven. The Sumerian underworld also has 7 gates.

The Sumerians sacrificed animals to please their gods, to make requests of them, to be cured of illnesses, or in return for vows they had made. These sacrifices had to be healthy. Lame or sick animals were not sacrificed. Sacrifices were slaughtered by priests with special prayers. The right hip and internal organs of the sacrifice were offered to the gods. The rest was distributed to those around. In Islam, sacrifices are slaughtered under the same conditions. The right hip and internal organs of the sacrifice are left to the owner instead of the gods, and the rest is distributed to the people.

In Sumer, kings and queens were sometimes buried with their soldiers and relatives. However, there was no tradition of human sacrifice in Sumer. In contrast, there was a tradition of human sacrifice in Israel and Greece. It is understood that Arabs also believed in human sacrifice, but the Prophet Abraham abolished this tradition.

Prophet Abraham and his family, considered the ancestors of Jews, Christians and Muslims, migrated from Mesopotamia to Harran, according to the Torah. From Harran, they entered Palestine as a merchant colony, and Abraham, with his military and financial power, imposed his personal god on the people as their god. Meanwhile, he also instilled in the people the beliefs he had brought with him from Mesopotamia.

According to the Qur'an, God created the universe:

"He created everything on earth. Then He turned to the sky and arranged it into seven layers." (Al-Baqarah 29)

"He created the heavens and the earth in six days. This creation took six days." (Fussilet 11-12)

The Babylonians observed the movements of celestial bodies with great patience. The conclusions they reached through centuries of observation are close to measurements made today with sensitive instruments. In ancient Greece, this knowledge was further developed. Ptolemy, in particular, developed a comprehensive model of the universe that would influence Europe and other civilisations throughout the Middle Ages.

The model of the universe in the Qur'an is the model developed in Ancient Greece, the accuracy of which was undisputed at the time. This model took its final form with Ptolemy. Since the law of gravity had not yet been discovered, the Qur'an also contains the following verses:

"It is Allah who raised the heavens without pillars; you see them... Then He established Himself on the Throne. He has subjected the sun and the moon." (Rad 2) "We have set mountains on the earth so that it may not shake, and We have made wide paths on it so that they may travel." (Enbiya 31)

"He holds the sky up so that it does not fall on the earth without His permission." (Hacc, 65)

As can be seen, what the Qur'an writes about the structure of the universe is merely a brief repetition of the knowledge available at that time. Verses concerning topics such as the formation of the universe and the creation of man reflect the Ptolemaic model of the universe, which was the prevailing view at the time. However, they do not provide a complete explanation. Admittedly, believers argue that Muhammad was illiterate. They attribute such a great wealth of knowledge in an ordinary person to a sacred source. However, in his book *The Philosophy of the Prophet Muhammad*, Cemil Sena lists Muhammad's possible sources of knowledge as follows:

- a. During his journey to Syria with his uncle, Muhammad acquired some knowledge about Christianity and various sects from the monk Bahira at the monastery of the Nestorian monks.
- b. At the Ukaz Market, he met and debated with Jews, Christians, Iranians affiliated with Mazdeism, and idol worshippers, and listened to the sermons of Kuss ibn Sayda, the bishop of Najran.
- c. He learned some information about Christianity and Judaism from the Abyssinian slave Waraqa.
- d. During his travels to Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Iran, and Anatolian cities for trade, he engaged in religious, historical, and literary discussions and debates during various home visits.
- e. He grew up in an environment like Mecca, which was home to people from various nations. Here he got to know various people.
- f. In Medina, he acquired knowledge from Jews at the places where they taught.
- g. The Kaaba is one of the religious centres of the region. There are 360 statues of gods here. In Mecca, overseeing sacred matters is the hereditary duty of Muhammad's family. For this reason, Muhammad gains extensive knowledge and experience.⁷² In reality, it is impossible for such a person not to be literate. According to Cemil Sena's account from Ibn Sina's work, *The Healing*, Muhammad addressed his scribe Muawiya during the writing of the Treaty of Hudaibiya as follows:

"Put ink in your pen, cut your pen at an angle, lengthen the 'ba', make the 'sin' clear, do not blur the 'mim', write God beautifully, and adapt 'errahman' and conform 'errahim' to the rules of tajweed." ⁷³

This is definitive proof that Muhammad was literate.

The stories, advice and principles presented by Muhammad have travelled such a long way to reach him.

During the ten years in Medina, 1,467 verses were revealed in 24 suras. In fact, in the final years, no verses were revealed at all. Furthermore, religious rulings are secondary or tertiary in the verses revealed in Medina. Legal judgements, social, political and military principles take precedence. Muhammad's name is mentioned frequently. However, in Mecca, the names of other prophets are mentioned more than Muhammad's. For example, in Medina, the names of other prophets are mentioned

12 times. In contrast, his own name appears 47 times. Even in the fourth period in Mecca, his role as a messenger was left ambiguous and vague. In Medina, this not only became clear, but was constantly emphasised. He was not only called a messenger

is not sufficient. It is emphasised as "Resulullah" (Messenger of Allah). Muhammad has gained considerable self-confidence. The phrase "Resulullah" is repeated 68 times in the Medina suras.

The Meccan verses are three times as numerous as those in Medina. The surahs are four times as many. The Meccan verses are not only short, but also rhymed and metrical. The Medinan verses are long, but the rhymes are fewer. The Qur'an recited in Mecca is closer to poetry than prose in its original form. The surahs in Medina, on the other hand, are entirely prose. Ultimately, the Meccan verses are dominated by commands, stories and advice. The Medinan verses, however, concern the establishment of a state. In a sense, the Meccan period is theory, while the Medinan period is practice.

Mecca represents Muhammad's period as a tribal prophet, while Medina represents his period as a universal prophet. A prophet is a messenger who brings a new law. In this sense, he differs from a prophet who continues the old law. Only revelation comes to a prophet. A prophet is obliged to convey this and to call people to it. He tells people what he receives from Allah and does not interfere with anything else. The function of divine revelations is solely religious and otherworldly.

Messengers, however, are the bearers of sharia. They become the leaders of their communities. Therefore, messengers have social and political functions. These are not purely religious, but also worldly. For this reason, there are no hadiths from prophets. Only the verses are respected in them, while in the second type of prophets, hadiths are authoritative.

Muhammad's religion in Mecca is entirely otherworldly. In Medina, however, it is more worldly. In Medina, it is more government than religion. Muhammad is a preacher in Mecca. In Medina, he is a commander. In Mecca, he is weary and sorrowful; in Medina, he is confident and courageous. Islam pleads in Mecca and rules in Medina. Mecca is the birthplace of Islam, Medina is its founding place.

In Mecca, religion has always been tied to the afterlife. The Day of Judgement is near, and people must believe so as not to go to God as unbelievers. The understanding of religion in Mecca revolves solely around the Day of Judgement, the afterlife, and hell. In Medina, however, people are called to live. There is no mention of the Day of Judgement or hell. Had Islam remained in Mecca, it would have consisted solely of religious rules. In Medina, life prevailed. Christianity took about three and a half centuries to turn from the supernatural to daily life, but Islam achieved this during the Prophet's lifetime. It was not only his status as a prophet that enabled him to do this, but also his status as a ruler. Prophethood and leadership became separate powers. Those who did not believe in his prophethood were convinced by the sword of the ruler.

In reality, Muhammad did not design a universal religion. Although religion is based on the idea of spreading, Muhammad's childhood was spent in distant lands. Despite all this, Muhammad's religion is far from universal. It bears the traces of Arab

nationalism. Indeed, in Mecca, Muhammad was only the prophet of his tribe. In Medina, he turned from the tribe to the people. He thought only of the Arab people. He wanted to save only the Arabs from polytheism. The clearest proof of this is that the Qur'an is in Arabic. The Qur'an is in Arabic because the prophet was sent to the Arabs.

"If We had made it a Qur'an in a foreign language, they would surely have said, 'Should its verses not have been explained in detail? Whether in a foreign language or in Arabic!'" (Fussilat 44)

"We have revealed it to you as an Arabic Quran so that you may use your intellect." (Yusuf 2)

This reason is explained directly in the Qur'an. God has always sent prophets to people in their own language:

"We sent every messenger only in the language of his own people, so that they might make clear to them." (Ibrahim 4)

Gradually, Muhammad brought the Arab consciousness to the fore and put forward the following verse:

"Indeed, there has come to you a noble messenger from among yourselves. What troubles you troubles him. He is deeply concerned for you, and he is more compassionate and merciful towards the believers." (At-Tawbah 128)

In truth, Muhammad's prophetic domain was also limited. This domain included his own people, the mother of cities, Mecca, and its surroundings.

"We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an so that you may warn the mother of countries and civilisations and those around it." (Shura 7)

In truth, with the conquest of Mecca, the mother of cities, the religion has achieved its purpose and reaped the fruits of all its efforts.

"Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your religion." (Maida 3)

In this respect, Muhammad is also remembered with great respect by non-Muslim Arab nationalists. 74

Islam is not a new religion, but rather the rebirth of Abraham's religion specific to the Arabs. Abraham's religion accepts that Allah is one. It is based on one God, one true world, and good deeds. These three principles also exist in Judaism and Christianity, and Islam is also based on these three rules. All of these are one religion.

"Say: Allah has spoken the truth, and He is faithful to His promise. So follow the religion of Abraham, the Hanif. He was not one of the polytheists." (Ali Imran 95)

Originally, the name of Abraham's religion was also Muslim. It is the religion of those who surrender themselves to Allah.

Strive for Allah with the effort befitting Him. He has chosen you and has not imposed any hardship upon you in religion. Take the religion of your father Abraham as your foundation. Allah has named you Muslims in this Book, as He did before. (Hajj 78)

Not only Abraham, but also his sons Jacob and Joseph and his descendants are Muslims because they affirmed the oneness of God. Moses and Jesus are also Muslims. All are variations of the religion of Abraham. In this context, Muhammad gave himself the name Muslim first. For he was the first Muslim among the Arabs. There is no new religion; rather, it is a call to the Arabs to return to the Arab religion that has always existed.

The sanctity of the Kaaba also stems from this. The Kaaba was built by Abraham, the forefather of the revealed religions and the prophet of monotheism. The change of the qibla from Jerusalem to the Kaaba stems from Muhammad directly linking his religion to the religion of Abraham. The religion of Abraham is neither the Jewish, Christian, nor Muslim religion; it is solely the religion of Abraham, the servant who surrendered himself to Allah.

However, Islam differs from Judaism, Christianity and other religions in terms of sharia. The religion is one, but the conditions are different. Because conditions are specific to peoples. When peoples separate, conditions also separate.

"For every nation, We have appointed a form of worship and a place of worship; they follow it. So let them not dispute with you about this matter. Invite them to your Lord and pray. You are indeed a clear guide" (Hajj 67), "After Noah, We sent many messengers to their peoples." (Yunus 74),

"We sent every messenger only in the language of his own people, so that he might make things clear to them" (Ibrahim 4).

A prophet has been sent to every people in their own language so that they may understand. This is where the source of the differences in Sharia law lies. Religion is one, but Sharia laws differ due to the differences in prophets.

Even Allah does not desire a single Sharia. Sharias must be diverse so that people may be better tested. So that it may be understood which people are more wholeheartedly and firmly attached to the religion of Abraham. For this reason, Sharias must also be separate.

"We have appointed for each of you a way and a method. If Allah had willed, He would certainly have made you one community. But He has not done so in order to test you with what He has given you. So compete in good deeds. Your return is to Allah. He will inform you of the essence of the matters you have disputed." (Maida 48)

Thus, there is no effort to make all people Muslim. God does not desire a single law. The other laws remain valid as they are. A new law does not abolish the others. Indeed, the Jewish law did not cease to exist after Jesus, and other laws remain after Islam came. It could not be otherwise. God is One, and the prophets are delegates sent with the same mission. The prophets are equal. One is not considered superior to another. This is clearly emphasised in the Qur'an:

"Say: 'We believe in God, in what has been revealed to us, to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, to Moses and Jesus, and to the other prophets. We make no distinction between any of them. We are Muslims, submitting to God'" (Al-Baqarah 136).

Muhammad's goal is to save people from idol worship. By believing in the oneness of God, one becomes human. Muhammad wants to save his own idol-worshipping people from this. Judaism and Christianity have saved other peoples, and this one will also save them.

Muhammad sees other religions as true religions based on Abraham. Among monotheistic religions, he feels closest to Christianity. This is because there are monks among Christians who conduct deep research. Those monks do not deny what Muhammad says. Most importantly, Christians

have not succumbed to arrogance. The Jews, however, have succumbed to arrogance and mocked Muhammad:

"It is an indisputable fact that among those who harbour the most intense hostility towards believers, you will find the Jews and those who have fallen into polytheism. It is also an indisputable fact that among those who are closest in love to the believers are those who say, 'We are Christians.' This is so because among those Christians there are monks who devote themselves to Allah through deep study. And they do not fall into arrogance." (Maida 82)

Muhammad sends Muslims persecuted by the Quraysh in Mecca to Christian Abyssinia. He is reconciled with the Christians. War rages between Persia and Byzantium. Muhammad says the Romans will win, and a verse from God is revealed on this subject:

"The Romans have been defeated... in a place very close to the earth. But after their defeat, they will be victorious. Within a few years, the matter is ultimately in the hands of Allah. On the day of their victory, the believers will rejoice" (Rum 2-4)

Indeed, in 625, the Romans defeated the Persians. They captured Syria. This event was celebrated with festivities in Medina.

However, this truce could not last. Christianity, initially a small religion, did not take Islam seriously and protected itself. In fact, Muhammad had signed a treaty with the Christians in the fourth year after his migration to Medina. Ebubekir, Ali, Ömer, and Osman witnessed the event. The document was written by Muhammad's scribe, Muaviye. This treaty with the Christians was signed by both parties at the Fryars Monastery on Mount Carmel, in the presence of Christians and Muslims. In summary, this treaty contained the following conditions:

Muhammad confirms that he is the representative of his religion. Christians will also be completely free in their beliefs. All their movable and immovable property will be under his protection and that of all Muslims. No taxes will be levied on priests and monks, except for voluntary donations. Taxes shall be levied on wealthy merchants and fishermen's pearls, miners' precious stones, gold, silver, and other wealthy Christians . This tax shall not exceed 12 shillings per year.

Taxes shall not be demanded from individuals beyond their means and abilities. Christians shall not be forced to go to war against the enemy alongside Muslims. Muslims shall be obliged to protect and safeguard them. Christians and Muslims shall share in sorrow and joy. Christians shall not be obliged to marry their daughters to Muslims. If they are candidates for marriage, they shall not be rejected solely because they are Christians. The parties shall make their decisions entirely freely. If a Christian woman marries a Muslim, her husband is obliged to grant her freedom of worship as he wishes and knows. The Muslim husband cannot therefore threaten to divorce his Christian wife.

In return, Muhammad asks Christians not to assist enemies of Islam. Christians shall not open their homes and arms to them. Muhammad does not hesitate to grant the rights and duties granted to Muslims to Christians under Muslim control. In short, according to Muhammad, they too are Christians "... as required by the Sharia." 75

However, the order established by Muhammad and the understanding he brought soon deteriorated. As Islam spread and grew stronger, the conflict between them naturally came to the surface. Yet Muhammad's religion is monotheistic. Jesus is a true prophet. God impregnated the Virgin Mary. Gabriel breathed into Mary. In this respect, Jesus' words are also revelations. Jesus raises the dead. Despite all this, Jesus is not the son of God.

"They said, 'The Most Gracious has taken a son.' Indeed, you have uttered a terrible thing! Because of this statement, the heavens will almost burst, the earth will split asunder, and the mountains will crumble to pieces. Because they attributed a son to the Most Gracious. It is not befitting for the Most Gracious to take a son." (Maryam 88-92)

However, the Church of Christianity is based on the "Trinity" (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and the divinity of Jesus. After the above verses, it is said:

"Everyone in the heavens and on earth will come as servants to the Most Merciful." (Maryam 93)

Thus, it is emphasised that Jesus is not the son of God, but His servant and prophet, and there is a very strong reaction against the understanding that Jesus is the son of God. He is a prophet chosen by God Himself. But he is an ordinary, mortal human being. According to Muhammad, the doctrine of the Trinity is a remnant of polytheism. God is one.

It is based on the understanding that God is a trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Jesus is a prophet born of an ordinary mother, and Jesus' death was not for the salvation of all mankind from sin. This understanding is an injustice against God's justice. God cannot burden another person with the sins of others and make them pay for them.

Even within Christianity, there is no consensus on this issue. For example, the Bishop of Alexandria denies Jesus' divine nature. Muhammad was disgusted by this Christian disagreement. In verse 32 of Surah Rum, he says:

"They have divided their religion into sects, each sect rejoicing in what it has." (Rum 32)

Fundamentally, religions are never the religion of the prophets who revealed them; the church and sects have altered the religion of Jesus. Later Muslims would alter Muhammad's Islam. Thus began centuries of long, terrible struggles between the followers of the two religions, costing millions of lives.

Muhammad's Islam continues the humble journey that began as the Arab-specific development of Abraham's religion, gradually establishing itself as the one and only religion, the final religion. Other religions and principles are outdated, left behind by the times. God has sent the final book, suited to the conditions of the evolving world.

The Qur'an also offers an ambiguous interpretation regarding other religions. Judaism and Christianity are also true religions. However, their validity only extends until the advent of Islam. They have already corrupted their own religions. This corruption is clearly emphasised in the Qur'an. Islam emerged because those religions became corrupt. Therefore, both Jews and Christians are completely infidels, unbelievers. Churches are nothing more than temples of blasphemy. Therefore, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror is a holy sultan for converting Hagia Sophia into a mosque!

On the other hand, Islam surpasses Christianity in terms of the practice of faith. It brings new rights and freedoms to the individual. For example, no one can come between a Muslim and Allah. No one can decree that you shall be a Muslim or that you shall renounce Islam. In Christianity, however, a person can only become a Christian through the church. Once the church has excommunicated someone from Christianity, that is the end of it. Islam, however, is secular in both respects. There is no coercion in Islam. No one can hold a Muslim accountable for their actions. Only Allah has the right to hold someone accountable.

"So it is for you to convey the message, and it is for us to hold you accountable." (Ra'd 40) "Whoever disbelieves, his disbelief is against himself." (Rum 44) "Your religion is yours, and my religion is mine."

(Kafirun, 6)

"There is no compulsion in religion" (Baqara, 256)

Again, the optimistic arguments put forward are endless; Islam does not grant anyone the right to kill. Killing can only be considered in cases of retribution. Destroying a human being, who is created by Allah, is destroying the work of God, which is the greatest sin. However, its punishment is death. The Qur'an is clear on this subject:

"Do not kill a soul that Allah has made sacred, except for a just cause." (Isra 33)

Freedom of conscience and attacks on those of other faiths are also prohibited. For example, the following verses were revealed in Medina:

"Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and justly with those who have not fought you in religion and have not driven you out of your homes. Allah loves those who uphold justice. Allah only forbids you from befriending those who fight you in religion, expel you from your homes, and aid in your expulsion. Those who befriend such people are the very tyrants." (Al-Mumtahanah 8, 9)

Again, according to the same optimistic arguments, jihad in Muhammad's Islam is not aggressive. However, it is against those who harbour hostility towards Islam. The Qur'an is full of verses that reiterate this. For example:

"Fight those who fight you in the way of Allah, but do not aggress. Allah does not love aggressors." (Al-Baqarah 190)

They wanted you to fall into disbelief, just as you fell into disbelief, so that you might be equal to them. Therefore, do not take them as friends until they emigrate in the way of Allah. If they turn away, seize them and kill them wherever you find them." (Nisa 91)

"Seize them wherever you find them; drive them out from where they drove you out. Fitnah is oppression and corruption. Do not fight them until they fight you at the Sacred Mosque. If they

, then kill them. Such is the recompense for the disbelievers." (Al-Baqarah 191)

According to this and similar arguments, Muhammad's religion is not a religion of the sword. Jihad is only against those who violate rights and expel Muslims from their homelands. Muhammad also put this situation into a written agreement. But Muhammad himself directly fought 28 wars and pioneered expansion through warfare. Those who died in battle are considered martyrs and are directly promised paradise. Among Arabs, the warrior spirit, glory, prestige, and booty are among the primary motivating forces that require no other incentives. Worldly interests and spiritual interests are reconciled. Muhammad depicts the afterlife for warriors who die in battle for the sake of the holy religion in such an appealing way that life after death appears to the martyr as a continuation of the greatest pleasures and joys that can only be attained on earth through struggle. In reality, the Arab people are extremely modest in their desires. Their way of life is simple. But when it comes to love, they are extremely sensitive and appear as people whose emotions are difficult to satisfy. For them, a beautiful woman is more valuable than anything else. For such a woman, he is ready to sacrifice his life at any moment. According to Muhammad's teachings, beautiful women will not be lacking in paradise. Huri with skin like snow, dark eyes, and exquisite bodies await him in paradise to offer him the greatest happiness. In addition, all other pleasures and delights, dancing and music, magnificent palaces and gardens and equipment of paradise features

Originally, the Arabs, before Muhammad, before death after life after . It is certain that Muhammad adopted the idea of life after death from Christianity. However this life, the people's approval according to . Christians, too, have imagined the afterlife as a material world endowed with the greatest pleasures known on earth for centuries.⁷⁶ The era of Umar represents a significant phase in Islamic history in terms of Arab nationalism. The origins of Arab nationalism can be traced back to the era of Umar. Umar's justice is legendary in Islamic history. As is well known, Umar initially wanted to kill Muhammad and Abu Bakr for being Muslims. However, he realised the truth and regretted his actions. But this time, he killed his own father, who did not accept Islam. The spirit of Arabism during his caliphate transformed into fanatical Arab nationalism () () () () (Muhammad) () () ()

as a prophet sent to the Arabs. Umar, who knew this well, devoted all his energy to securing Arab unity.

Muhammad succeeded in establishing a religion and a state in that simple Arab environment. But now he is tired and worn out. He is ill in his final years. Over the years, his incessant ecstatic spells have increased. These constant ecstatic spells and visions, which overwhelmed the Prophet, have worn him down considerably. Added to this were the efforts and struggles he undertook to organise the new state structure. Furthermore, despite his advanced age, his life with his nine wives had severely strained the Prophet's health.⁷⁷ In the tenth year of the Hijra, seriously ill, he made his final visit to Mecca. He fulfilled the pilgrimage obligation, which has been preserved to this day. But his death came on an unexpected day. He left no will or advice for the future. No message came from God regarding his death. On 8 June 632, the man whose name spread throughout the world from that day on closed his eyes to life in the arms of his beloved wife, Aisha: "He was the greatest man Asia had produced until that day and one of the greatest men the world had ever seen."

The community is shocked by the Prophet's death. They don't know what to do. Omar grabs his sword and falls to the ground. He says that he is going to meet with God, like Moses, and that he will return. The panic is great. Everyone was talking at once. But then the real problem came to the fore: what would become of the Islamic state? Twenty-three years of work. Would ten years of organisation collapse in an instant? The founder of the state was dead, but the state had to survive. The scattered Arab tribes had begun a process of uniting into a nation. Omar believed that Abu Bakr was best suited to lead the state founded by Muhammad and proposed him as caliph. Those present at the meeting accepted this proposal one by one. The aim was to protect and strengthen Muhammad's legacy. While Muhammad was alive, the religion had spread superficially. The Prophet guided it as he wished, extending or shortening it. Abu Bakr compiled and collected the religion. No new commands were coming now. According to Muhammad's leadership, the religion began to globalise. He carried out the Syrian campaign that Muhammad had planned before his death. Success was certain. All of Syria had joined the Islamic empire.

Muhammad had combined the leadership of religion and state in his person. He was both Prophet and head of state. Now those two roles were passing to the caliphs. The papacy and kingship were united in one person. This was infinite power. Abu Bakr began his twelve-year reign with such power. His goal was to preserve the state established by Muhammad. But this was not so easy. The Bedouins were one by one breaking away from Islam. They had never truly been Muslim in the first place.

The Bedouins were nomads who roamed freely. They recognised neither religion nor order. As Ibn Khaldun said, these fierce people had adopted plunder and pillage as their way of life. They were the least disciplined of all the peoples of the world. Indeed, Muhammad realised how fragile the Bedouin Islam was . very well well. But in a in a the matter as it was. The vast majority of Bedouins did not know what prayer was. They were completely unaware of the afterlife and the Day of Resurrection.

During Abu Bakr's caliphate, the Bedouins had to be brought back into line. But while Islam was growing, changes were also taking place within its structure; Islam was taking on the characteristics of this fierce dynamic element. It was acquiring a warrior, expansionist, combative content. Ebubekir's era overcame such a difficult period. His successor, Omar, knew Muhammad's thinking well. Everything was for the strengthening of the Arab state. Omar succeeded in expanding the Islamic empire throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Syria and Iraq, from there to the Caspian Sea, and in the west to Egypt and North Africa.

The Prophet's actions and deeds were considered divine commands. They were Sunnah, and the actions of the first caliphs were accepted as equivalent to those of the Prophet. They were, after all, Muhammad's closest companions. Their devotion and sincerity to Islam were accepted by all Muslims. Thus, they became the successors of Muhammad, though they did not bear the title of Prophet. The decisions they made in response to new events and new needs carried religious authority.

Omar began to establish permanent settlements for Arab migrants in various provinces of the vast empire. This measure prevented the fragmentation of the dominant Arab population in the long term. It prevented the Arabs from assimilating among other peoples. Omar increasingly encouraged separatist tendencies. He prohibited land ownership in the territories conquered by the Arabs. His aim was to prevent the Arabs from settling down. He believed that if the Arabs settled down, they would lose their warrior structure. He also made the Arabic language the sole daily spoken language and language of commerce throughout the empire.⁷⁹

Ömer told the Arabs, "Do not be equal to non-Arabs in morality." Corci Zeydan, the Christian Arab author of *History of Islamic Civilisation*, proudly states: "Islam was nothing but the awakening of the Arabs, uniting them against non-Arabs." ⁸⁰

Omar abolished slavery among the Arabs. According to Omar, an Arab cannot be a slave. "It is very ugly for the Almighty God to grant the Arabs so many foreign lands and for the Arabs to enslave each other Omar,

There is no slavery in Islam. This is based on a hadith, but this hadith applies only to Arabs!

In this spirit, Omar expelled all non-Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula. No non-Arab could enter Medina.⁸¹ During the same period, Arab identity was prioritised over religious unity. Omar also showed great kindness and generosity to the Christian Arabs in Syria and Iraq. The Christian Arabs objected to the jizya being levied on them. Because they were Arabs themselves, Omar approved this too. On the condition that their children would not be Christian.

During the reign of Caliph Omar, the Arabs were pushing at the gates of Asia Minor. With the Arab expansion reaching distant lands, natural national divisions began to emerge within society. When the Arabian Peninsula was crossed, the first society encountered was that of the Iranians. Iran was the heir to an ancient civilisation. It was a country with thousands of years of civilisation. It had nurtured different religions within its bosom. The Zoroastrian and Manichaean religions were its products. It had established a great state tradition in history, like the Persian Empire. In such an environment, the Arabs' first conflicts were with the Iranians.

Omar was both religious and an Arab nationalist. Due to his religiousness, he was egalitarian to a certain extent. During his reign, Arab nationalism had not yet turned into hostility towards non-Arabs. During Omar's reign, the Islamic state had established its line. Osman, who was elected after his assassination, was from the Umayyad family. The Umayyad family had begun to take control of important points of the state during Osman's reign. Indeed, he appointed his nephew Muawiya as governor of Damascus. Osman was assassinated in his home by Muhammad, the son of Abu Bakr. Ali was elected Caliph, but Muawiya did not accept Ali's caliphate. After a long struggle, he gained control of the state. Thus began the Umayyad period of the Islamic state.

The war between Ali and Muawiya was also a clash between Medina and Mecca. Islam did not take root in Mecca. Muhammad was forced to seek refuge in Medina. Even after the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad did not remain in his own city, but returned to Medina. It was a war of interests between the pious Medina and the worldly Mecca. The Ansar of Medina were the backbone of Islam. The first jurists, the first hadith scholars, and the first theologians of Islam would emerge from among them. The people of Medina also became the first scholars of Islam they had established. Medina was the cradle, the spirit, the morality, and the conscience of Islam. It was the centre of the Islamic state.

The Quraysh ruled Mecca. Initially, the Quraysh were the most relentless enemies of Islam. They expelled Muhammad from Mecca. At Uhud, Muhammad saved his life from the hands of the Meccans

They came to crush Islam. Even after Mecca fell to Islam, they did not convert to Islam. However, after the Battle of Hunayn, Muhammad rewarded them generously with war booty, and they converted to Islam. This was two years before Muhammad's death. When the Prophet died, no one paid them any attention. Their resistance to Islam up until two years prior had not been forgotten. Moreover, they had no military power. They only understood trade and profit. Despite all this opportunism, it was the Quraysh who reaped the benefits of Umayyad and Abbasid rule. Because Muhammad came from this tribe!

The people of Medina believed that, in return for all their efforts, the state should remain in their hands after Muhammad. They are the rulers of the country. All material power is in Medina's hands. Behind the debates following Muhammad's death lie these struggles for supremacy. But Abu Bakr's cautious rhetoric, Umar's enthusiastic gestures, and the support of the Aus tribe prevent the people of Medina from seizing the state.

Muawiya is the founder of the Umayyad dynasty and the influence of the Quraysh tribe in the Arab state. He resorts to every means to establish the influence of the Quraysh family. He invents hadiths stating that caliphs must be from the Quraysh. He cites the Prophet and the first caliphs as proof that they were Quraysh. The Quraysh may not have been good soldiers, but they were intelligent, administrators, and organisers; they established the state organisation of the Islamic state.

However, the Quraysh never became good Muslims; they dragged the Islamic state into worldly pleasures and human passions. There was not a shred of sacred feeling in the Quraysh caliphs. The palaces of Damascus, the Umayyad capital, resounded with pleasure, entertainment and revelry. Muawiya's defeat of Ali is, in reality, the defeat of Islam. The caliphs who hold Islam in their hands do not allow religion to cross the threshold of their palaces.

The Umayyads differed from Umar in two respects. Umar was religious, while they were irreligious. Umar supported only the Arabs. They became hostile towards non-Arabs. For this reason, Umayyad Arab nationalism was aggressive. They took pleasure not only in pursuing their own interests, but also in harming non-Arabs. It was a chauvinistic nationalism. They did not hesitate to kill not only non-Arabs but even Arabs who did not think like them. For example, they killed Muhammad's grandson Hussein and his entire family at Karbala. In 63 AD, Yazid carried out a mass slaughter in Medina, eliminating the Ansar. Shortly thereafter, Haccac captured Mecca by destroying it with catapults. He personally beheaded Abdullah ibn Zubayr. Three days for In Karbala continuously man killed. From there

He went to Medina. He slaughtered the people of Medina. Houses with closed doors were immediately set on fire. Anyone who was captured was slaughtered. Qurans were torn to pieces and trampled underfoot, women's veils were ripped off. The Umayyad rule had brought Arab savagery to its peak. As the Islamic scholar Dozy said, "The Umayyad period was nothing but the restoration of the old idolatry." Arab chauvinism found its place in the Umayyad empire. They had invented a hadith saying, "Whoever hates the Arabs, Allah will hate him." The Prophet was Arab, the Qur'an was in Arabic. Thus, the authenticity of this hadith was indisputable. Arab supremacy over non-Arabs was established on this basis.⁸³ During the Umayyad period, all non-Arabs were called "Mawali". This word means freed slaves. It comes from the root mawla. There is a specific legal relationship between a freed slave and his former master. This legal relationship imposes obligations on both parties. In the early days of Islam, this relationship between freed slaves and their masters was of great importance. These individuals, known as Mawla, formed a distinct social class with important functions.⁸⁴ As is well known, Islam did not abolish slavery; in Islamic tradition, slaves did not bear names of the same quality as free people. The names of slaves were different and, upon first hearing, suggested Iranian and Turkish origins.⁸⁵ It was the Arabs who converted them from disbelief to faith. Therefore, these slaves must remain eternally grateful to the Arabs. The slave's duty is absolute obedience and respect to his master. All non-Arabs are masses of slaves bowing down to their Arab masters. Arabs cannot pray behind a non-Arab. Mevaliler cannot take a kunya, which serves the function of a surname today. Taking a kunya is the right of the Arab. When an Arab sits down to eat, the Mawali must stand. Non-Arabs cannot be qadis. The office of qadi is the exclusive right of Arabs. This is also linked to a hadith: The office of qadi can be given to those of honour and prestige, and therefore to Arabs. Arabs are masters, the others are slaves. Only Arabs engage in politics and govern. All other laborious tasks are for the Mawali.

The Mevaliler will build the roads, the Mevaliler will make the shoes.⁸⁶

The desert Arabs, who were recently at each other's throats, have gained considerable self-confidence. Arabs are not merely distinguished in terms of their physical structure. They possess unique characteristics in terms of their constitution. For example, an Arab woman can become pregnant fifty times. If this woman is from the Quraysh tribe, this number can rise to sixty. Those with Arab blood do not suffer from diseases such as paralysis. If someone has paralysis, there is definitely a disorder in their blood from their mother's side. The Umayyads used language as their most powerful weapon to strengthen Arab supremacy; Arabic was not the official language until the Umayyads. In Egypt, the Copts, in Syria

the Greeks, and in Iraq, non-Arabs were in the majority. The Arabs were merely invaders and rulers there. Each country used its native language. The Umayyads made Arabic the official language of the entire state. The second important difference between the Umayyads and the first four caliphs was their spending. The first caliphs sat on sheepskins instead of thrones. Muawiya had only one of his various thrones covered with 110,000 miskals of gold. Even during prayer, a distinction began between the people and the rulers. Muawiya had mahwils built in mosques. He isolated himself from the people.

The oppression and suppression of non-Arabs did not end there. One day, if non-Arabs increased in number, the lives of Arabs could be in danger. For this reason, Muawiya II embarked on the genocide of the Mawali. Non-Arab Muslims would be killed. But non-Arabs outnumbered Arabs several times over. In such a genocide, Arabs could be defeated. Fearing this, they backed down from the genocide.

Meanwhile, the Islamic empire was gradually expanding into distant lands. Different peoples were being forced to convert to Islam. The Shu'ubiyyah movement, which had emerged during the reign of Umar, began to flourish once more. The Shu'ubiyyah movement was essentially a resistance against the attempts of Muslim Arabs to establish legal and political supremacy over other peoples in the lands they conquered.

Thus, the divisions whose seeds were sown during the reign of Umar intensified during the reign of Ali. The supporters of Shu'ubiyyah defended the equality of all Muslims. A Muslim of Jewish origin named Abdullah ibn Saba defined the doctrine of this sect. He cloaked this political movement in religious garb. Political sects developed in the form of support for or opposition to Ali. The Kharijites represented those opposed to Ali, while the Shiites represented his supporters. Iranian Shiism began to flourish as a political sect. In reality, the emergence of the Twelve Imams and the most ardent defenders of the Prophet's lineage from Iran was not random. Iran had an ancient culture. It had undergone many stages by creating various religions. It had established a deep-rooted national consciousness. The Arabs who brought Islam to Iran were shocked by the Iranian palaces and the religious ceremonies of Jamshid. The learned and cultured clergy of the ancient Iranian temples spread the fundamental ideas of Islam by adapting them to their own behaviour. The ancient Iranians called the Arabs "tazi". This word described the physical characteristics of the Arabs, their speed and their resistance.

Iran now seemed to have forgotten "Turan," the homeland of the Turks, with whom it had fought for centuries. The Arab invasion had seized Turan's sacred flags, destroyed its sacred temples, extinguished its royal lineage, and devastated its entire existence. Amidst these ruins, they drew new inspiration from new ideas and renewed their faith.

Islam emerged from a people whose social life was based on nomadism and whose political position was founded on banditry. Before Islam, the Arabs were divided into two great tribes that fought each other. These tribes also had subdivisions. The tribes waged what they called "gazwa" or tribal wars among themselves. They oppressed each other and plundered each other's property; primitive desert life was the social order of the desert people. Blood ties had strengthened, but the highest social stage, the sense of national unity, had not yet awakened. Muhammad succeeded in transforming the tribal spirit of the Arabs into a national spirit with great enthusiasm. The Umayyads reawakened and strengthened the tribal spirit. They excluded other Muslims who were much more advanced than the Bedouins in culture and civilisation. As mentioned earlier, they regarded them as Mawali (freed slaves). They began to place great value on kinship among themselves. This attitude gave rise to a trend of communitarianism among non-Arab Muslims. It reignited the enmity and rivalry that existed before Islam between the family of Muhammad, the sons of Hashim, and the family of the third Caliph, Uthman, and Muawiya, the sons of the Umayyads.

The Hashimites had tied their political interests to love, respect and friendship for Muhammad's family. They defended religious unity and sought to bind Muslims to themselves through the bond of religion. The Umayyads, however, showed disrespect for religion and chose to weaken this bond. The Umayyads defended Arabism against non-Muslim Arabs. They pursued a policy of strengthening blood ties among Arabs who were not their supporters. They pursued such a policy of maintaining their reign. However, reactions against the Umayyads' plundering administration, which destroyed everything, gradually grew. The Hashimites also incited these reactions.

The Galiye sect within Shiism believed that Ali was divine. The Nusayris, who continue to this day, are based on the Galiye sect of Shiism.

FACE TO FACE

During the reign of Umar, the Arabs had reached the Amu Darya River. The Persian state had been destroyed, and the Islamic armies were approaching the Turkish borders. Although Umar had advised the governors he sent to Khorasan

not to cross the Jaxartes. However, the governors generally did not heed this advice and carried out raids whenever they had the opportunity.

The Arabs advanced to the borders of the Khazar Khanate in 652. They crossed the Derbent Pass, considered a legendary and terrifying place west of the Caspian Sea, with a single cry of "Allahu Akbar." The Iranian Muslims refused to go to Derbent, which they considered a dreadful place. The Turks, however, were amazed by the courage of the Islamic armies. They believed that angels were protecting them. According to Tabari, the Turks placed the body of an Islamic pioneer who died in the Derbent battles in a coffin and raised it with a prayer for rain. After these raids, some Khazars would choose Islam, taxes would be collected from Khazar cities, mosques would be built in Etil cities, and a qadi institution would be established. However, Islam did not take root in the Khazar province. The Khazar Khan had the Etil mosque and its minaret demolished in 922. The Khazar Turks who chose Islam could not hold on to their homeland and were forced to migrate. Among the Khazars who came to the centre of the Caliphate as migrants or prisoners of war, some rose to important positions.

The failure of Islam to take root in the Khazar provinces is attributed to Byzantine religious policy or Judaism.⁸⁹ Byzantium was attempting to spread Christianity during this period. The Khazars would choose Judaism after 740. However, in the 7th century, Islam achieved no success whatsoever in the Khazar provinces. According to some researchers, the Karaite branch of Judaism began under the influence of the Mu'tazila branch of Islam, thus spreading throughout the Khazar provinces.

As a result of the Turkic-Arab conflict, the Khazars blocked the route to the Turkic lands west of the Caspian Sea. Consequently, the Arabs turned to the east of the Caspian Sea. The first route opened between the Turks and Islam passed through Khorasan.

The Amu Darya River is considered the natural border separating Turan and Iran. Turkish-speaking peoples live east of the Amu Darya, while Persian-speaking peoples live west of it. Firdausi's famous *Shahnameh* depicts constant wars between these two peoples. However, in reality, economic and cultural relations between Turks and Iranians are mostly friendly. The nomads, whom Arab Persian sources refer to as Turks, arrived in these lands in the 5th century. Thus, when the Arab armies defeated the Sassanid Empire in the Battle of Nihavend and conquered Iran (642), they encountered the Turks in two separate regions: the Hazar Turks in the Caucasus and the small Turkic states in Maveräünnehr in the east.

a. The Unknown Turkestan

The Arabs named the opposite bank of the Ceyhun (Amuderya) River *Maveraünnehr*. This means "the other side of the river". Mahmud of Kashgar referred to these lands as *Çayırardı*. Thus, a part of Inner Asia has been known as "Turkistan" from ancient times to the present day. This name means "Turkish homeland, Turkish land". It is a combination of a Turkish root and a Persian suffix. Along with present-day Northern Afghanistan, the former Soviet Union also included the area east of the Caspian Sea. This vast area, whose exact borders are unclear, has been the settlement area of various Turkic tribes since ancient times. Along with the Turks, it served as the summer and winter pastures of nomadic Asians. Since ancient times, these areas, where the Turks rode their horses, have appeared in the pages of history under various names. Different tribes appear to be the owners of these lands. The Avesta, the sacred book of the Indians, mentions the Tura tribes in this region. Like other nomads, the Turas also consisted of different tribes.⁹⁰

Thus, when the Arabs reached the Amu Darya River, they established relations with the Turks in several directions. The southeast of the Caspian Sea was also under Turkish rule. The Shul Turks lived in this region. The name 'Shul' must be related to the Turkish words 'çöl' or 'çor'. The Shul Turks appeared in these lands in the 5th century. The Sassanids built a wall in the mountainous southern part of the Caspian Sea to prevent them from advancing. They named this pass the Shul Gate (*Bab-el Shul*). At the end of the 5th century, the Sassanid Shah Firuz built a city here bearing his name. During his southern campaign in 552, the Western Turkic Khan Istemi drove the Shul Turks into the Sasanian provinces as his vanguard. In response, the Sasanian Shah slaughtered the Shul tribe. He settled the remaining eighty people in the city of Firuz as border guards. However, the Shul tribe later succeeded in capturing the city of Jurjan on the shores of the Caspian Sea. They erected a tent-shaped ancestral temple in Jurjan. A Nestorian bishopric was established in Jurjan in 553. The Shul Turks thus came into contact with Nestorianism. During this period, the Turks encountered the Arabs. Tabari describes the Turks' encounter with the Arabs as follows:

In 639, the commander of the Muslim army arrived in the verdant land inhabited by the Shul Turks. At that time, Ruzban Bey ruled over Dihistan and Jurjan. Shul Bey initiated peace talks by bringing gifts. The Arab commander established an agreement with the Turkic chief under the following conditions: the Shul chief would protect the northern access route through the Turks and pay taxes. In return, if the Shul chief came under attack, the Muslims would come to his aid. Religions were free in the Shul country.

But this peace treaty did not last long. In 714, the Arabs launched a second raid on Jurjan. The Shul beys who resisted the Arab attack were of the Mecusi faith.

They had chosen. At this time, the Shul Turks had built castles on an island off the shores of the Caspian Sea. The Turks were defeated by the heavy Arab forces. Shul cities such as Jurjan and Dihistan fell into Arab hands. When the Shul lords were defeated, they fled to this island. Among the spoils of Jurjan was a crown. The Arab warriors considered the crown unlucky. According to the Arabs, it represented the cruel Turkish khan. No Islamic warrior wanted to take the crown as spoils. The crown was given to a beggar.

After this defeat, the Shul chieftain becomes inclined towards Islam. He decides to become a Muslim. He wants to declare his faith before the highest representative of Islam. The Arab chief sends the Shul chieftain to the caliph. The Shul chieftain learns that the prophet is higher than the caliph. He goes to Medina. In front of Muhammad's tomb, he swears an oath to choose Islam. After this, Şul Bey's lineage serves Islam. Many statesmen, poets, and bureaucrats emerge from the Şul lineage.

After removing the Shul Turks, the Arabs rebuilt the city of Jurjan. They built around forty mosques in the surrounding area. To protect the city from the non-Muslim Turks living in the north, they built a large wall. These non-Muslim Turks were the Oghuz Turks. Hudud al-'alam describes it as follows:

"There are two islands in the Caspian Sea. The Oghuz Turks living on Siyah Kuh plunder the land and sea. There is another island belonging to Dihistan. There, too, live a few people who hunt birds of prey and waterfowl and fish."

During the same period, the Nişabur region was also under the rule of Turkish beys.

When the Arabs reached the Near East, Merv, within the borders of present-day Turkmenistan, was a centre of mixed cultures. It was located on the border between the Turkish and Persian states. There had been continuous Turkish migrations since the 4th-5th centuries. In Merv, Iranian religions coexisted with Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity. The Nestorian metropolitan of Merv reported that Christianity was spreading among the Turks.

In 642, the last Sassanid leader fled from the advancing Islamic armies and sought refuge with a Turkic chieftain in Merv. In the name of the chieftains' pact of mutual aid, he requested assistance from the Khan. At this time, the region beyond the Jaxartes River was far from being a stable political entity. The area was divided into various principalities at war with each other. Destruction and raids had exhausted the people. During a journey in 630, Yuan-Chuang found the Turks and the country divided into 32 separate principalities. The country was also divided in terms of religion.

It has been divided. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Manichaeism are in competition with one another. Zoroastrianism, the official religion of the Sassanid dynasty and its people, has taken on the character of Iran's national religion.⁹¹ This religion, which has spread throughout Lower Turkistan, has its centre of gravity in Bukhara. It achieved significant success in Baykent and Samarkand. Buddhism, of Indian origin, was widespread in the region as the greatest opponent of Zoroastrianism. Manichaeism, known as a merchant religion, covered Lower Turkistan. However, none of these religions were state religions. This is because religious tolerance completely dominated all of Turkish history before Islam. There were no sectarian conflicts or bloodshed as seen in Byzantium or neighbouring Iranian states.⁹² The Turks are interested in religion, but they are not oppressive or coercive. For example, the Uighurs abandoned their national Shamanistic beliefs and chose one of the Buddhist, Christian or Manichaean faiths. But these were voluntary choices. Beliefs persecuted in other countries also found refuge in Turkish lands. For example, Manichaeism, which suffered severe persecution in Iran, took refuge in Lower Turkistan.⁹³ Although these countries were under the military rule of the "Turkish shad," the eldest son of the Western Turks' yabgu. The capital of this leader was the city of Kunduz. However, in reality, this sovereignty remained nominal outside of Toharistan. The Turkish beys moved about with a degree of freedom that could be considered complete. The Sogdians and Turks lived side by side. Wars between these two peoples were not uncommon. Therefore, the Arabs found it easy to advance in the region. Although there was no complete unity among the Arabs, they were in a position of great superiority relative to the local situation. The Sogdian princes lost their self-confidence in the face of Arab raids. They were forced to bow to the Arab storm. At first, the principalities of Asia Minor did not take the Arabs very seriously. They regarded them as ordinary marauders who had previously attacked these lands. They considered the Arabs to be temporary looters. They did not realise that they had completely lost their independence. However, these cities had never encountered opponents like the Arabs before. The Arabs were not like temporary raiders who came quickly, left quickly, and did not like long sieges. The Arabs' success is not based on definitive victories achieved through successful wars. Arab expansion follows this method: First, they send out scouting advance parties to nearby and distant lands.⁹⁴ They pit the ethnic groups in the region against each other and exploit the resulting conflicts. After gathering the necessary information, they arrive with their armies. At times, they promise to spread their religion through peace. But soon after, they renege on their promises and , breaking the treaties they had made, forgetting many . Plunder,

Destruction and slaughter follow one another. After this, Arab immigrants are settled in the region. This is where Arab cunning lies!

The Arabs, who conquered Iran during the reign of Omar, made intermittent raids into Turkistan. However, the Jaxartes River served as a security border between the Turks and the Arabs. The Arabs did not yet have the courage to directly annex Turkistan to their lands. Some of their attempts ended in failure. Indeed, the Arab raid on Fergana during the reign of Osman was a complete disaster for the Arabs. All Arab forces, along with their commander, were slaughtered by the Turks, leaving not a single survivor. The centre of the Caliphate was also in turmoil due to internal strife. The rise of the Umayyad dynasty, beginning with Osman, caused unrest among the Arabs. Attacks on Turkish lands ceased during the reigns of Osman and his successor Ali. Attacks intensified when Muawiya came to power in the Arab empire.

In 653, Balkh briefly falls into Arab hands.⁹⁵ The Arabs have long had their sights set on the city of Balkh. Balkh holds an important place in the history of Central Asia. It is a sacred city of Buddhism. It serves as the gateway to Nevbahar, the religious centre of the Kushan Empire. It is a major trading city of the period. The city is considered sacred due to all these factors. Balkh will remain of great importance throughout the Middle Ages. It was previously the capital of the Bahteris. Arab historians describe it as the mother of cities; it is the core city of the Silk Road. With the capture of Balkh, located in what is now northern Afghanistan, the Eastern Turkestan route will open up to the Arabs. Furthermore, this region, known as Southern Turkestan, enticed the Arabs with its rich natural resources. With its abundant iron, gold, and silver mines, leather, paper, perfume exports, and the Silk Road, Southern Turkestan was a prosperous country. It would be an important stepping stone in the Arab expansion. The political fragmentation of the region facilitated Arab expansion. Apart from the general insecurity, maintaining armies and palaces has become an unbearable burden. The expansions continued unabated. Despite all this, the Near East does not easily surrender to Arab expansion. The Karluk Turks in Tokharistan fight against the Arabs. Turks live densely around Balkh. However, the resistance of the Buddhists in the Balkh region against the Arabs is very intense. The Chinese also incite the people here against Islam. The Arabs are forced to make some concessions to break the resistance. They also consider Buddhists to be People of the Book. They cease to apply Sharia law to those who converted to Islam but later returned to their old religion. This brings new views and commands to Islamic law. Despite all this, a few years later, a widespread uprising involving large crowds of people breaks out in Balkh. The uprising is led by a man named Nezak Tarhan.

A lord rules. He is believed to have been a follower of Buddhism or Zoroastrianism. He played an important role in the overthrow of the last Iranian sultan (Yazgerd 632-651). Nezak Tarhan was a brave lord who resisted the Arab armies the most. He successfully organised the Turks of Toharistan and Khorasan. Nezak Tarhan and the Turkic chief of Toharistan were forced to come to terms with the Arab commander after Merv fell. The Arab commander launched raids on Balkh in 653. The Turkic chiefs were forced to obey the Arab commander. However, this peace treaty remained on paper until Balkh was captured. Nezak Tarhan was recaptured only eight years after the Arabs seized Balkh. He was pardoned after this uprising. However, the Arabs' capture of Balkh resembled a raid. Balkh fell into Arab hands in 663. The destruction of the famous Buddhist monastery of Nevbahar in the city also occurred during this raid.⁹⁶

The Arabs' significant encounters with the Turks in this region took place on the Sind border of Khorasan. Turkish horsemen from a walled city on the Sind-Khorasan border clashed with the Arabs in 664. The Arabs witnessed the Turks using horse tails as banners for the first time. They adopted this tradition. At that time, the area stretching from Kabul to Ghazni and the Sindh River was populated by Turks. These were the Göktürk, Halach and Oghuz tribes. In 644, one-third of the population of Ghazni was of Göktürk descent. By 726, the khan and his entourage in Ghazni and Kabul, along with the nobility, were entirely Turkish. In the 9th century, the Turkish Shah of Kabul paid the Arabs a yearly tribute of two thousand Oghuz. At the end of the 9th century, Islamic armies under Iranian Muslim rule defeated the Buddhist Turkish Shahs of Kabul and Ghazni. They introduced Islam to these provinces. The Turkish Shah withdrew to his capital on the banks of the Indus River. In the 10th century, the Turkish Shah state was overthrown by an Indian prime minister. This Indian established the Indian Shah state. After this, the Turkish tribes living between the Jaxartes and Sind rivers began to convert to Islam. The Islamic gravestones with the Old Turkic script found in the Mahaban mountains must date from this transition period. Until the 10th century, the Turkish settlement in the region was in this state.

The Arabs reached the left bank of the Amu Darya in 670.

b. Before Bukhara

Muawiya's governor of Khorasan, Ziyad, crossed the Jaxartes River in 673 with an army of 24,000 men. He laid siege to Bukhara. The Arabs had previously raided Bukhara and besieged the city. At this time, the Turk Kibaç (or Kabaç) Hatun was the ruler of Bukhara. Kibaç Hatun became famous in history for her charm and political acumen. The Bukhara principality was weakened by civil wars and foreign raids. Kibaç

Hatun sought help from other Turkish principalities. However, her calls for help went unanswered. Kibaç Hatun bravely defended the city against the vastly superior Arab forces. Although the Arabs did not fully capture the city, they succeeded in plundering it. They left Bukhara with rich spoils.

Meanwhile, after six years of struggle, the Arabs had managed to enter Samarkand. They carried out the same inhumane massacres in this region as they had done before. But the Turks gave no quarter to the Arabs in this region. Ultimately, the Umayyads decided that Turks who accepted Islam would be exempt from taxation in order to maintain control of Bukhara and Samarkand. Furthermore, the Turks and Arabs would have equal rights. In exchange for these concessions, some Turks chose to become Muslims. However, the Arabs reneged on their word once again. This was because cutting off the rich source of income from Samarkand did not suit their interests. Damascus was in turmoil. They ordered the jizya to be collected from the Turks once more.⁹⁷

However, the Arabs defeat Merv once again. The Turks are forced to evacuate Merv. Merv becomes the capital of the Khurasan emirs. In 691, Merv is the Islamic centre of Khurasan.

Meanwhile, internal turmoil within the Arab administration reaches its peak. Before the Battle of Siffin, a new movement emerges within Islam. The Kharijites put forward Muhammad's hadith, "Even an Abyssinian slave can be caliph." Based on this, they argue that all people are equal in Islam. The Umayyads want to establish a caliphate based on lineage. The Shiites want to bring Ali and his descendants to the caliphate.

During Muawiya's reign, Bukhara was constantly subjected to Arab raids. The governor of Khorasan, Sa'id, also turned his attention to Bukhara. The Sogdian chiefs sought help from Queen Kibach. Queen Kibach promised to protect the Sogdians. They gathered a large force from the Sogdians. They reinforced this army with soldiers gathered from Turkestan. Violent battles ensued. The Bidun Kafirs crushed the Muslim forces, which numbered 6,000. After a siege lasting a month or two, Bukhara was forced to come to terms with the Arabs.

At this time, the Arabs had established an unassailable reputation among the peoples of the Near East. With the surrender of Bukhara, this reputation was reinforced once again. Kibaç Hatun was humiliated. She was forced to make peace with the Arabs under harsh conditions. She was obliged to pay heavy war reparations. Furthermore, she would give hostages from among the sons of Turkish nobles as a guarantee to the Arabs. The story of these Turkish nobles, whose number is said to have been between fifty and eighty, is truly tragic. Captivity, neglect, and slavery in Medina took their toll on the young nobles.

They are driven to despair. They want revenge on the Arab commander at any cost. When the opportunity arises, they collectively attack the Arab commander and kill him with daggers. The news creates panic in Medina. Everyone goes after these Turkish youths. The Turkish youths retreat to a mountain and prepare to defend themselves. The people of Medina surround the foot of the mountain but are afraid to engage in battle. The Turkish youths die of hunger and thirst after being besieged on the mountain for a long time.⁹⁸ The Arabs will not fight against the raids that will be carried out by the Turks. The Arabs have again captured abundant booty. Each horseman gets 2400 dirhams. The Arabs in the city small small police force and to Mevr head continue their advance.⁹⁹

For 12 years, the Arabs plunder and destroy one wealthy and prosperous Turkish city after another. Wherever they go, they leave death, destruction and fire in their wake. Yet they cannot achieve a decisive victory. Despite all this slaughter, oppression and savagery, the Turks resist.

During this period, discord also arose among the Arabs in Khorasan. Despite the passage of half a century since Khorasan's incorporation into the Islamic state, the local population remained far removed from Islam.¹⁰⁰ Taking advantage of the quarrels among the Arabs, the local principalities declared their independence one by one. While Arab raids continued beyond the Syr Darya, the order of the Islamic army was severely shaken. In the battle fought in 680, the Arabs were defeated by the Turks. An Arab poet who participated in this battle lamented that he was left with nothing after the attack. The raiders were plundered and retreated.

At this time, Haccac, who would go down in history as the Tyrant due to his violent rule, was appointed governor of the provinces of Khorasan and Basra (694-714). Haccac began by re-establishing control through oppression in the areas under Arab control. During Muawiya's reign, Arab immigrants were settled in the region to facilitate Arab expansion. Fifty thousand families brought from Arabia settled in the major cities of Khorasan. Haccac wanted to strengthen Arab expansion with a new wave of immigrants. However, he disagreed with Caliph Yazid on this issue. He began by making Arabic the mandatory official language. He oppressed all segments of society against the Umayyad rule. He eliminated the Kharijites. His eyes were set on beyond the Syr Darya. But he did not have the power to do so. He could only carry out sporadic raids for a few years. These raids were not very successful either. Indeed, the war waged by Haccac's army against the Turkish Bey Rutbil was a complete disaster for the Arabs. Rutbil routed the Arabs. Haccac is forced to make a deal with Rutbil. According to this agreement, the Arabs will not collect tribute from the Turkish provinces for seven years. However, Haccac

Relying on the saying "war is deceit," he reneges on his word once again. In 699, he sends a powerful army against the Turks. Some cities fall into the hands of the Arab armies. In the face of this expansion, the unique Turkish resistance continues. The Arab writer Al-Jahiz describes the Turkish resistance as follows: " The Turk does not retreat like the Khorasanis. When he returns, he is a deadly poison and a death that finishes a man's business.¹⁰¹ The same inhuman practices occur in Khwarezm. The Arabs, one after another, magnificent Khorasan's Turkish cities . Arab rule is once again ruthless. Due to an uprising, all the Harezm intellectuals who supported the uprising are subjected to mass slaughter.¹⁰² They kill four thousand Turkish youths in Harezm. The Arabs return from Harezm with a large number of captives. That winter, a severe cold cold . The Arabs are accustomed to accustomed to to they cannot endure the cold. The prisoners' clothes and and put them on. Despite the despite the severe cold, the prisoners free. . These prisoners and to make a profit. By the time the caravan reached Merv, most of these naked captives had died.

This expansion under Haccac's leadership will not be permanent. During this period, the Arabs capture the large and small cities of the Turkish country, impose tribute on them, and plunder them. They cannot establish political sovereignty in the Turkish provinces. They cannot impose their superiority on the local population. They encounter fierce resistance everywhere, especially in Turkish settlements. Soon after, they are forced to return the cities they have captured to their owners.¹⁰³

The cruel Haccac appointed Qutayba as governor of Khorasan in 705. Qutayba is the defining name of Muslim Arab savagery against the Turks. The Arabs' lasting success began with him. In Wellhausen's words, Qutayba often owed his success to his ruthlessness.¹⁰⁴

Qutayba first turned his attention to the region of Balkh and Chaghanian. He brought this region under his control in 705. He made a new peace agreement with Nezak Tarhan. He secured unity among the Arabs and launched a raid beyond the Syr Darya. He turned his attention to Baykent, the major trading city beyond the Syr Darya.¹⁰⁵

Baykent was 6 km away from Bukhara and was an older city than Bukhara. It was the most secure and vibrant trading city in the region. Baykent resisted the Arab siege for two months. The absence of the Turkish beys made the Arabs' task easier. Upon hearing of the siege, Turkish warriors from various places rushed to Baykent's aid. Despite besieging Baykent for two months, Kuteybe could not take it. When the resistance forces also dwindled, Baykent was forced to make peace with Kuteybe. The Arab army was also tired and worn out. Kuteybe accepted peace in exchange for tribute. The Arabs entered Baykent through peace. But the city's

Upon seeing its wealth, they begin to plunder it. They destroy the city's magnificent buildings and walls. They plunder, burn and destroy this beautiful city for several days. They kill every Turk in the city who can wield a weapon. They take the women and children captive.¹⁰⁶ They leave Baykent, one of Asia's richest trading cities, with countless loot. Tabari reports that the city surrendered without a fight. However, other sources say that the city fell into Arab hands after heavy fighting. Indeed, Tabari himself reports elsewhere that the city was still in ruins four years later. It is clear that there was significant resistance in the city.

Baykent cannot save itself from plunder either. The city, with smoke and screams rising from every corner, is Islamised. First, Arab families brought from Merv are settled in Baykent. A significant protective force is established. All supervisory bodies, such as the governor, judge, and tax collector, are made up of Arabs. The symbols of the Buddhist and Zoroastrian faiths are piled up and burned amid the fearful glances of the local people who believe in them. Fifty thousand miskals of gold and jewellery are obtained from the melted symbols. A single carving, weighing two hundred and fifty thousand miskals, with pearl eyes, is seized.

The first Arab attack on Bukhara took place in 673. The principalities in Bukhara and Sogdiana were principalities under the rule of the Göktürk Khanate. These principalities were ruled by a Turkic prince or one of the local families. In 706, Qutayba crossed the Jaxartes River again. The Arab savagery in Asia Minor became the people's nightmare. The people united for Bukhara. Qutayba advanced towards Demir Kapı. This battle lasted for months. Here, the Arabs encountered the Great Göktürk army. It is said that the Great Turkic Khan commanded these battles. The battles of Sogut and Demir Kapı, mentioned in the inscriptions of Kültegin and Bilge Khan, tell the story of these clashes.¹⁰⁷ It is believed that Kültegin fought twice against the Arab commander Kuteybe, in Merv in 707 and in Samarkand in 711. Because of this fierce battle, Kuteyba's connection with Basra is severed. The cruel Haccac cannot receive any news from the Arab army for four months. He writhes in terrible curiosity and anxiety. He ordered prayers to be said in mosques for the victory of the Islamic army. The Arabs returned unsuccessfully from Demirkapı. Kuteybe withdrew to Merv. Haccac was very angry about this. But at that moment, the news that the city of Baykent had been captured cooled his heart.

In 707, Qutayba once again attacks beyond the Jaxartes. An army of twenty thousand, composed of Turks, Sogdians and Ferghana natives, confronts the Arabs. The army, led by the Turkish prince Kut Baga, attacks the Arab army commanded by Qutayba's brother. However, Qutayba rushes to his brother's aid and drives back the Turkish

army back. After a long and exhausting resistance, Bukhara surrenders to the Arabs. But surrender brings no benefit. Everyone said to have participated in the resistance is put to the sword. Then the Arabs plunder the city. That is not enough. The Arabs select fifty thousand people from the city's population to be sold as slaves. They appoint Tugshad as governor of Bukhara. This is nothing more than a ploy to quell the people's reaction. Tugshad, son of Harun, has converted to Islam and named his son Kuteybe. Indeed, throughout his entire reign, Tugshad is a traitorous collaborator.

Then Kuteyba exerts intense pressure on the people to convert to Islam. The Turks resist all pressure. A characteristic of the Turkish personality comes to the fore. Because it is contrary to the Turkish personality to adopt a belief by force. In the face of pressure, they appear to have chosen Islam, but in reality they continue their old beliefs and idol worship. They never turn away from the religion of their ancestors. So much so that when the Arab forces in the inner castle leave, the watchmen wake the people. The people appear to practise the Islamic faith. When the Muslim soldiers evacuate the city, the people return to their own religion.¹⁰⁸

Kuteybe learns of this secret resistance among the people of Bukhara. He seeks solutions to prevent the situation from escalating. He orders the local people to give half of their homes to the Muslim community. Thus, the Arabs would live in the same houses as the local people. They would teach them Islam and also monitor them. Kuteybe succeeds with this method and spreads Islam among the local people. He forces the people to comply with Sharia law. He builds many mosques. The traces of blasphemy (!) and signs of Zoroastrianism are erased. Kuteyba made great efforts to this end.¹⁰⁹ However, Kuteyba's oppressive practices led to resistance and backlash from the people. So much so that Muslims often could not even go to the mosque unarmed. As Gibb said, the Arabs used the same methods when colonising Merv.

After Kuteybe definitively captured Bukhara, he imposed heavy taxes on the local population. They would pay 200,000 dirhams to the Caliph and 10,000 dirhams to the governor of Khorasan annually. They would allocate half of their homes to the Muslim population. They would also give orchards to the Muslim population. They would find areas to provide fodder for Arab soldiers. They would show the Arab population areas where they could find wood and fuel. Thus, a large number of Muslim Arabs were settled in the great city. Orchards were given to them so that they could have a source of income. Land outside the city is donated free of charge. Due to these incentives, a large Arab migration to Bukhara begins after a while. The Arab migration continues for years. Arab families continue their lives without encountering much difficulty. Qutayba divides Bukhara into sections.

He distributed each group among specific Arab tribes. Arab migrations were among the primary factors driving Islamisation. According to Zekeriya Kitapçı, Qutayba carried out Arab settlement to break the influence of Zoroastrianism and create an environment conducive to the spread of the new religion. Some of the city's influential families are Zoroastrians. For example, the Kushans, who are most likely of Turkish descent, believe in Zoroastrianism. The Muslim conqueror (!) deals a heavy blow to the Kushans and seeks to crush Zoroastrianism. He takes half of the Kushans' homes and lands and gives them to the Arabs he has settled in Bukhara. The Kushani family, thinking to condemn the Arab governor, left all their property to the Arabs and left Bukhara. The Kushans established a new Zoroastrian neighbourhood outside the city. They wish to live peacefully, far from the Arabs. But the Ateşetapar section has been wiped out from the city centre. Muslim Arabs settle in their place. This is perhaps the greatest blow to Zoroastrianism in Bukhara. But the Kushans persist in their old beliefs. The Muslims eventually attack their newly built homes, burning and destroying them.¹¹⁰

Kutayba does not forget to make some concessions in his policy of spreading Islam by force. For example, he permits the Quran to be read in Persian. This is because the Arabs, especially the Umayyads, are racist Arab nationalists. They resisted by insisting on Arabic. But it was impossible for the local population to use this language. Kutaybe's initiative bore fruit, and Islam took deep root in Bukhara. Islam established itself in the city where Zoroastrianism and Buddhism had been eradicated.

In 708-709, Qutayba destroyed the principalities in Bukhara and Sogd one by one. Muslim armies began to take control of Western Turkistan. They fought constantly with the Turks. It is said that the Turkish khan and his son were wounded in these battles. The Islamic period began in the history of Turkistan. The region lacked political unity. The people were also complex. The Sogdians lived intermingled with the Turks. Qutayba succeeded in driving a wedge between the Turks and the Sogdian ruler Tarhun. He made a peace treaty with Tarhun. At this time, the rebellious Nezak captured the yabgu of Tokharistan and had him hanged.

In 710, Qutayba crossed the Demirkapı Pass and launched a new raid into the Turkish lands. It is believed that Kültegin's and Qutayba's armies clashed for the second time in this battle. The Arabs captured the city of Talkan. They razed this prosperous city to the ground. They massacred its people. They hanged the Turks on trees in rows. A four-farsakh stretch of the Talkan road was filled with Turkish corpses hanging in clusters. The Arab savagery was truly horrific. After this, Kutaybe captured the cities of Keş and Nefes. He renewed the peace treaty with Tarhun. Tarhun was the ruler of Samarkand at this time. However, a rebellion broke out against Tarhun

and Tarhun is killed. Gurek takes his place. The Sogdian people appeal to the Turkish ruler. They ask for help against the Arabs.

Kutayba returns to Bukhara. He converts the Buddha temple located in Bukhara's inner citadel into a mosque. Intense battles with the Turks continue. Turkish aid arrives against Arab pressure. The local population rebels against Islam. Despite all of Kutayba's pressure, Islam spreads very slowly beyond the Jaxartes River. It proves very difficult to fully convert the Sogdian country to Islam. Turkish resistance is not like that in Khorasan and Jurjan. There, the Arabs encountered small Turkish principalities. Beyond the Jaxartes, however, they faced large Turkish khanates.¹¹¹

In 711, Qutayba's armies reached Samarkand. Turks and Sogdians lived side by side in Samarkand. At that time, the city was under the rule of Gurek Bey (Oğuz Bek). Gurek, the ruler of Samarkand, sought help from other Turks. Help arrived from Tashkent and Fergana, but Qutayba's army ambushed and destroyed these forces. Samarkand was burned for days by catapult fire. The Turks defended the city fiercely, while Iranian slaves fought as mercenaries alongside the Arabs. It is reported that the Turks also participated in the capture of Samarkand.¹¹² However, the extent to which this claim is true is unknown. Gurek wants to make a deal with Qutayba and surrender the city. However, the Arabs do not abide by the agreement. After the city is surrendered, they impose a new agreement with very harsh conditions.¹¹³ It does not end there. Samarkand also suffered from the looting. Qutayba had all the idols destroyed. More than 50,000 miskals of gold were obtained from the remains of the idols. However, Turkish resistance began in the face of Arab savagery. In addition, the Arabs took thirty thousand young Turks captive and sold them in slave markets.

What was done in Bukhara is also done in Samarkand. The Mah-i Ruz, used as a temple by the Ari religion, is converted into a mosque. Buddhist and Zoroastrian monasteries are seized. All the precious stones from the Buddhist sculptures are stripped away. They are then piled up in one place. Tabari reports that the pile of sculptures resembled a large pavilion. Gurek finds these actions contrary to the agreement. He asks Kuteybe not to touch the sculptures. Kuteybe has no respect whatsoever for these beliefs. Kuteybe gives a loud takbir. He sets fire to the idols that had taken root in the hearts of thousands of people.¹¹⁴ Kuteybe's lust for booty and wealth is praised by Arab poets and becomes the subject of poems.

Kuteybe had actually entered the city temporarily. Then he settled there permanently. Next came the colonisation of Samarkand. A level of violence unseen anywhere else in Lower Turkestan was inflicted upon Samarkand. All the roads of Samarkand

were blocked. Massacres were carried out. Arab immigrants from Khorasan were brought to Samarkand and settled there.

Kuteybe rebelled against the caliph in 714. While raiding the Turks and Chinese, he was killed by his own soldiers in Fergana. A new commander and governor named Esraş was appointed in his place.

But the first phase of the Turk-Arab wars is about to begin. Thus, in the period leading up to 716, when the Turks would establish themselves and stop the Arabs, the cities beyond the Jaxartes River would be the scene of bloody Arab attacks. Arab immigrants are continuously settled in the cities. The Turkish defence is attempted to be broken.

c. Father of Hardships

When the Western Turkic state (580-658) collapsed, two main Turkic states remained in Turkestan. These were the Göktürk Khaganate (550-745), whose seat of government was in the Ötüken mountains, and the Tūrkeş state.

The exact dates of the establishment and decline of the Tūrkeş are unknown. They most likely broke away from the Göktürk Khanate in 658. By 716, they appeared as an independent principality in the Syr Darya region. The two Turkic states did not get along well with each other, but their solidarity against external threats persisted. They sought to preserve Turkic dominance in Central Asia against China, Tibet, and the Arabs.

The lands of eastern Afghanistan, including Kabul and Ghazni, were under the control of Buddhist Turks led by Tigin Shah and Ilteber (Rutbin), descendants of the Göktürks. They began fighting the Arabs in 661.

The second period of Arab-Turkish relations began with the establishment of the Tūrkeş. Now, even if small, the Arabs would find a Turkish state facing them. The Tūrkeş principality, which emerged in 716 as a small principality in the Seyhun region, was born as a small principality on the banks of the Seyhun.

The Tūrkeş were one of the five tribes that formed the Tulu branch of the Onok. Over time, they became the strongest tribe, their leader, and their spokesperson. They fought against the Göktürks but were unsuccessful. After the Göktürk defeat, the Tūrkeş chief Su-lu reorganised his tribe. Over time, he managed to bring all the Onoks under his wing. He organised raids to capture the Chinese-controlled cities of Kucha, Hotan, Kashgar and Karashar. The Chinese emperor realised he could not deal with Su-lu Khan. Rather than confronting the Tūrkeş, he found it expedient to bring them over to his side. In 719, China recognised Su-lu, the Turkic chieftain, as khan. With the recognition of the Chinese, the Turks established a new administration in the region under the leadership of Su-lu. Their capital was Balasagun. Su-lu Han ruled his principality from here according to the old state tradition.

He ruled. During the days when the Tūrkeş state was gathering itself, the Arab attacks from the West continued. Turkish troops and Arabs began to clash. In response to the Arab massacre and tax pressure, all Muslims and non-Muslims of Lower Turkistan gathered and sought help from Tūrkeş Bey Su-lu Han.¹¹⁵ The Arabs' era of brilliant success was now behind them in these wars.¹¹⁶ After this, the Arabs would be pinned down in Khorasan by twenty years of Turkish resistance.

Su-lu Khan is famous for his relentless resistance against the Arabs. The Arabs give this Turkish warrior, whom they dislike, an Arabic name meaning "Father of Troubles". Su-lu Khan, however, is constantly curious about Islam. He is not fanatical. But he cannot conceive of surrendering his independence to the Arabs in the name of religion. He questions the Arabs and engages in debates with them. He was friends with Haris, who rebelled against the Umayyad oppression. He allowed him to spread Islam in the Turkish provinces. He did not want to give up his independence for nothing in the name of religion and faith. Haris later entered Merv wearing the armour gifted by Su-lu Khan and was killed there.

The wars between the Turks and the Arabs were long and relentless. Using the uprisings as an excuse, the Arab governors slaughtered the townspeople and nobles after the Turks withdrew.¹¹⁷ Those who escaped the massacre sought refuge with the Turks.

In 724, the Arabs launched a raid on Fergana. They cut down and destroyed fruit trees. They burned and destroyed the country. And they besieged the capital. However, upon learning that the Tūrkeş were approaching, they hastily lifted the siege. They began to retreat. The Tūrkeş did not cease pursuing the Arabs. Small Turkish cavalry units constantly raided the Arabs. On the eighth day, the Arabs were forced to burn all their possessions, worth a million. The Turks kept pressing the Arabs. Although the Arabs resisted intermittently, they were unsuccessful. The Arab commander also dies in these clashes. The remnants of the Arab army flee to Huçent. A systematic retreat towards Samarkand begins. This day, known as the "Day of Thirst," marks an end to the Arab expansion.

Within a few months, Su-lu Khan, at the head of the Turks, drives the Arabs out of Lower Turkistan. The Arabs are even forced to leave Bukhara. Only two insignificant positions in Zerefshan and Samarkand remain in their hands. The Sogdians play both sides. They switch sides between the Turks and the Arabs. At this stage, the Turks besiege Samarkand. It is a small, harmless siege. But it is of great importance to the Arabs. The Turkish power has brought the Arabs to their senses. All forces in the regions under Arab rule abandon their rivalries. They unite temporarily. The united Arab army gathers in Amul.

However, they lack the courage to cross the river in the face of an army composed of locals and Turks. In fact, Turkish cavalry launch raids into Khorasan.

After this defeat, the Arabs would be forced to suspend their expansion in Asia Minor for 15 years. Arab influence and prestige had suffered a severe blow. The Arabs retreated into defence. They were completely driven from the other side of the Syr Darya. The pain of that day of thirst would never fade from the Arabs' memory. Arab sources report that the Turks were directly commanded by Su-lu Khan in this battle.

In early 731, the Turks and Sogdians gathered forces to besiege Samarkand. The Arab governor of Samarkand, Savra, dared not face the Turks in battle. He urgently requested help from the Arab governor of Khorasan. The governor of Khorasan, Cüneyt, hastily assembled his army. He crossed the river and advanced towards Samarkand. However, four farsangs away from Samarkand, they were ambushed by the Turkic Khan in the passes. The Turks scattered the Arab vanguard. They engaged in intense combat with the heavy Arab forces. The clash continued until both sides were exhausted. The Arabs were surrounded on all sides. They were forced to dig trenches to defend themselves. The Turks besieged the fugitives and stragglers before KISH. The next day, Tırkeş Khan attacked the Arab camp. He broke through the defences and entered the camp. Cüneyt, the Arab governor of Khorasan, found himself in a very difficult situation. He realised that the defeat of his forces would spell the end for the Arabs. He knew that if he was defeated here, Samarkand would also fall. The Arab governor in Samarkand sends a messenger to Savra. He orders him to leave a small guard unit in Samarkand and rush to his aid. The governor of Samarkand takes a shortcut through the mountains. Four farsangs before reaching the governor of Khorasan, the Turkish forces surround Savra, the governor of Samarkand. The battle rages until the sun is high in the sky. The Turks set fire to the meadow on the battlefield. They cut off the water supply. They want to leave the Arab forces of Samarkand thirsty. Driven mad by the fire and thirst, the Arabs launch a frenzied attack and manage to break through the Turkish lines. The forces become mixed up. A fierce battle ensues. In this frenzied battle, both the Turks and the Arabs are engulfed in flames, and both sides suffer heavy losses. The Arab army retreats. The Turkish horsemen continue to pursue the Arabs. Only 1,000 of the 120,000-strong Arab army survive. The Arab governor of Khorasan, Cüneyt, barely manages to reach Samarkand.

The Turks, meanwhile, retreat to Bukhara. Here, they control the natural route of communication between Samarkand and Khorasan. The morale of the Arabs has collapsed badly. They raise the soldiers' pay considerably, but it is difficult to find even 800 men to fight in Samarkand. The warriors equate fighting the Turks with death. However, at this very

at this stage, the Arabs' fate turns. They defeat a small Turkish unit in a minor skirmish. The next day, the Turkish chief attacks the Arabs to take revenge. The Arabs are prepared for such an attack. The Turkish attack is repelled. Arab morale rises. In autumn, the Turks are forced to withdraw from the Sogut region. The Arab army enters Bukhara. They then send reinforcements to Samarkand. The Arabs are very happy to have liberated Bukhara and Samarkand. They halt the Turkic attacks. In the period that follows, the Soguts are absorbed into the Arabs.

Ghurak besieges Samarkand. He succeeds in driving the Arabs from their capital. Only Bukhara remains in Arab hands. The region gains independence, even under Turkic control.

737 is the year of the Türgiř Khan's advance. Su-lu Khan moves his headquarters in the Chu valley from Suyab to Hatal within 27 days. Hearing of the Khan's advance, Esed prepares to cross south of the Jaxartes River. The Türgiř Khan inflicts heavy losses on the Arabs he captures while crossing the river. The Turks, following the retreating Arabs, also cross to the south of the Jaxartes. Su-lu attacks the rear of the Arab forces. The Arabs retreat to Balkh. Su-lu Khan does not return to his country. He spends the winter in Toharistan. Here, Haris, a warrior who has converted to true Islam, joins him. Haris advises Su-lu Khan to attack while the Arab forces are scattered. The Khan gathers soldiers and launches an attack. He advances to the vicinity of Balkh and continues his advance as far as Jurjan. He takes the capital. He waits there for a while. He sends horsemen in all directions. According to Gibb, the aim of the raid is not to take Merv, but to incite Western Toharistan against the Arabs. However, the ruler of Jurjan joins forces with the Arabs. Only a small force remains with Su-lu Khan. Eset catches up with Su-lu Khan in Haristan. Only four thousand men remain with the Khan. Su-lu Haris barely manages to escape. A snowstorm and rain prevent Eset from pursuing him. According to Gibb, this is a turning point in the Turkic advance:

"The battle is important. Because it would put an end to Arab rule in Transoxiana and perhaps Khorasan, at least in the near future. The rulers of Western Tokharistan were on Esed's side. However, Su-lu's victory would undoubtedly draw them to the side of Haris and the Turks. Belh, supported by Ceyhun, would become their base. The Arabs escaped this danger thanks to Esed's determination and his choice of Belh as his capital."

Defeat also spells the end for Su-lu Khan, whom the Arabs called the Bull because of his warrior spirit. Su-lu Khan initially does not take his share. He distributes all the spoils of war among the tribes. In recent years, he has forgotten this custom. This situation causes unrest

. He is defeated by China in 736 and by Esed in 737. The tribes revolt.

Following the Chinese and Arab defeats, the tribes revolt. Bağa Tarkan, a tribal chief, raids Su-lu's tent one night in 738 and kills him. The Khan's death increases the chaos. A fierce struggle begins between the Yellow Türgiș tribe and the Black Türgiș tribe. Conflicts among the TÜRKEŞ tribes intensify. Some Turkic tribes request Chinese rule, and their request is accepted. China regains control of Lake Issyk and the Ili Valley. Resistance against the Arabs in the Syr Darya-Amudarya region weakens. The Turkic chiefs are unable to fulfil their duty of stopping the Arab advance. As a result, Transoxiana falls back under Arab rule. The Arabs began infiltrating east of the Syr Darya. After the death of Sulu Khan in 738, they were able to enter Samarkand.

At this time, Arab nationalism is at its peak. But as with every rise, it prepares to fall when it reaches its zenith. The Umayyads, who practise Arab nationalism, look down on the Turks, even if they are Muslims, and consider themselves superior to them. They consider the Turks' property and lives to be lawful for themselves. They cover the excessive expenses of the Damascus palaces with resources from Turkish provinces. They wreak destruction on Turkish lands. They destroy works of art. After the Turks formed the Shu'ubiyya movement against the Umayyads, they embraced Islam en masse. Under the Umayyads, Arab political and legal oppression of fellow believers from foreign races and nations reached its peak. In the rapidly expanding Umayyad empire, Muslims other than Arabs were not considered equal to Arabs. They were seen as slaves to the Arabs. An Arab would not pray behind a Turk or an Iranian. An Arab would not travel or marry anyone other than an Arab. 119

In 745, the Turkish epic hero, Abu Muslim of Khorasan, became the governor of Merv. A softening began in Turkish-Islamic relations. Abu Muslim, the governor of Khorasan, was also dissatisfied with the Umayyad administration. He did not oppress the local populations. His eyes are on the Arab capital. He carefully monitors developments there. He waits, ready to act at any moment. This is why he integrates with the local people. This is why all the peoples of the Near East consider him one of their own.

For some reason, Arab historians refuse to accept this concrete situation. The Arab historian Tabari proudly recounts at length the story of the Arab expansion towards Khorasan. According to Arab historians, the Turks could only hold out against the Arabs for 20 years. Ultimately, they were decisively defeated and scattered in 738.

The oppression of the Umayyads, as in the Hijaz, aroused feelings of rebellion among the Islamic volunteers in Khorasan. The Umayyads prevented the people of Khorasan and Turkistan from converting to Islam in order to collect high taxes.¹²⁰ The Umayyads humiliated the local lords of Khorasan and Turkistan. The local chiefs did not remain idle. They called on the people not to convert to Islam. The people were caught between the local chiefs and the Umayyads. Unable to endure this situation, the Muslims of Merv rebelled against the Umayyads in 735. The Arab Haris raised the black flag of the Prophet. He called on all oppressed Muslims of every tribe to gather under this flag. There is a closeness between Haris and the Turks. At this time, there is a principality in what is now western Afghanistan under the rule of the Turkish Yabgu dynasty. The Turkish khan, Su-lu Khan, joins the war against the Umayyads alongside the Arab rebels. Although some sources say that Su-lu Khan spread Islam by building mosques, this is not certain.

However, during this time, the Umayyad influence in Khorasan also faded, replaced by the Abbasid influence. As is well known, the Umayyads practised intense Arab nationalism. The Abbasids were more concerned with spreading Islam. The people of Khorasan and Turkestan were opposed to Arab nationalism and to surrendering completely to the Arabs, rather than to Islam. For this reason, Abbasid propaganda found enthusiastic supporters in the region. In 747, an open rebellion against the Umayyads began in Khorasan. This rebellion gradually spread. In 750, it led to the collapse of Umayyad rule. This is why, despite the withdrawal of the Turks, the Arabs were able to advance east of the Syr Darya. A Turkish centre north of Kabul was Buddhist Tokharistan, descended from the Göktürk Khan dynasty. The capitals of the Turkish beys were Kunduz and Balkh. Among the secondary beys subordinate to these beys was Tarkan Tirek, a Turkic descendant and governor of Balkh. They too engaged in a relentless war against the Umayyads. The wars took place in Belh and in the Hindu Kush mountains, in the castles in the narrow passes leading to the Buddhist complex of Bamyān. The Turkish yabgu of Lower Toharistan was taken prisoner by the Umayyads in 709. In 724, he was brought to the caliphate centre of Damascus with his companions.

In the 10th century, the Halach Turks living in Ghazni and Gur converted to Islam. They would come under the rule of the Ghaznavid Turks and intermingle with the ancestors of today's Afghans. The Turks who descended into Sind and India established states in those regions and spread Islam. After the 11th century, they would be known by the name Turushka (Turk), which would come to be used as a synonym for Muslim.

Thus, the spread of Muslim Arabs had disastrous consequences for the unique ancient way of life in Inner Asia. This religion was first surreptitiously introduced from the southern borders, then gradually raised its voice, and finally, relying on its weapons, forced its way into the cities of the steppes when it felt sufficiently strong, penetrated the nomadic tents, and slowly but surely, a single, insistent voice rose in the conquered lands: There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his messenger.

The triumphant spread of Islam has created effects of uncertain duration in the history of Inner Asia. This intolerant religion destroyed even the seemingly harmless memories of the old world there. And then, a few centuries ago, when Westerners appeared in this dark corner, they would find nothing to remind them of the events and civilisations of past centuries.¹²¹

d. The Collapse of Arab Racism

As the borders of the Arab Empire expanded, reactions to the Arab chauvinism created by the Umayyads increased. The vast majority of Khorasan, which had entered Islamic borders, was Turkish. In Asia Minor, the Turks and Iranian peoples united. Abu Muslim of Khorasan and the Turkish beys argued that the Abbasid family should become caliphs. Abu Muslim's lineage is not fully known. He is said to be Turkish, Persian and Arab. But what matters is not his nationality, but his historical function. In 750, the Umayyad dynasty was slaughtered in a bloodbath. The entire Umayyad lineage was put to the sword. Historians record that six hundred thousand people were killed. The Umayyads drowned in the blood of ruthless Arab chauvinism. The Umayyad reign lasted 89 years (661-750). Their ruthless rule against innocent non-Arab peoples left a black mark on history and was wiped out. Islam emerges from Arab power. It comes under the control of non-Arab peoples. This is why the Umayyad collapse constitutes a revolution in Islamic history.

The Abbasids came to power by relying on non-Arabs. The caliphate office belongs to the descendants of Abbas, Muhammad's uncle. Although the new state was originally under the rule of the Quraysh, there is a world of difference between the two Quraysh states. In the Abbasid Quraysh state, all levels of government except the presidency are in the hands of non-Arabs. Non-Arabs predominated in the vizierate, the government, the army, and culture. Frankly, it was in the hands of the Turks and the Iranian peoples. The prime minister was from the Turkish Bermek family. The Bermeks were a Turkic family from Balkh. Once again, it was the Bermeks and their friends, the Turks of Tokharistan, Khorasan, and beyond the Jaxartes, who drew up the plans for Baghdad.

were Kahtabi and his companions, Turks from Tokharistan, Khorasan, and beyond the Jaxartes River. The Bermekids drew up the plan for Baghdad.

With the Abbasid rule, two phases occurred in Islamic history. Universality developed against Arab chauvinism, and intellectual action developed against Sunnism in religion.

Originally, the Abbasid caliphs, like the Umayyads, were descended from the Quraysh tribe. They also adopted an attitude of indifference towards religion. However, there was no intellectual action during the Umayyad period. The Umayyads were simply irreligious Arabs. Although the Abbasids were indifferent towards religion, there was an intellectual explosion in the state. Religion was not merely being disregarded; it was being directed towards reason and thought. Religious rules began to be measured by human intelligence. Islam ceased to be merely a belief. It embarked on a path of development as a form of thought.

The intellectual movement first erupted in Basra. Basra was a city founded during the reign of Umar. During the reign of Muawiya, the governor tasked with conquering the lands beyond the Jaxartes River selected and brought two thousand young intellectuals from the Turkish provinces and settled them there. This initiative sparked an intellectual outburst in Basra. The movement known as Mu'tazila is the result of this. The increasingly developed Mu'tazilite belief became the official religion of the state during the reign of the seventh caliph, al-Ma'mun. Al-Ma'mun himself was a Mu'tazilite and a theologian. The Qur'an was accepted as a human creation. The Qur'an was considered not the words of God, but the thoughts and teachings of the Prophet. Sunni Muslims called al-Ma'mun Emir-ul-Kafir (Commander of the Infidels). On the other hand, the Abbasid state also gradually distanced itself from its Arab identity. The capital of the state was also outside the Arab borders. The Arab border of Umar ended at Kufa on the banks of the Euphrates. Baghdad, on the other hand, was located on the banks of the Tigris.

Furthermore, the Arab influence in society and state order was fading. For example, Caliph Mansur (754-775) even abandoned Arab dress. Iranian clothing became the official dress of the state. Arabs were made to wear long skullcaps. During the Abbasid period, other nations continued to preserve their own traditions and customs within Islam. For example, the Barmakids were Dalai Lamas of Asia before 750. After becoming Abbasid prime ministers in Baghdad, they organised Islam according to the respected Chinese model. They established the very vague traditions of Islam's first century and the rules of Chinese Batinism.

During the Abbasid period, the Turkish presence in the state had begun to make itself felt. The Abbasid caliphs sent their sons to govern Turkish provinces so that they could learn good governance. Later, the caliphs were the sons of Turkish mothers. For example, the mother of Harun al-Rashid's three sons was Turkish. They became caliphs one after the other following Harun al-Rashid. Among them, al-Mu'tasim had tied his entire destiny to the Turks. His brother had been killed by Iranian soldiers. He formed his guard unit from Fergana Turks. Their number exceeded twenty thousand. The caliph built the Kaaba replica for the Turks

near Baghdad. To prevent the soldiers from leaving the region, he had a replica of the Kaaba built in Samra. He brought thousands of Turkish concubines to Samra. The soldiers married Turkish girls. The Arabism movement was completely crushed. The saying, "If the Arabs did not have a prophet at their head, they would not have achieved any victory," spread among the people. Whereas in the past, when caliphs ascended the throne, soldiers would swear allegiance to them, during the period of Turkish influence, caliphs began to swear allegiance to the soldiers during their accession.¹²³

The Abbasid Caliphate appears to have lasted for 500 years, from the 8th century to the mid-13th century. During this period, 37 caliphs ascended the throne. The actual existence of the Abbasid Caliphate was limited to 83 years. Seven caliphs should be considered Abbasid caliphs. For the remainder of its existence, only its name and shadow survived. The state fell into the hands of the Turks. The Arabs withdrew from the scene. Effective Arab nationalism, which began with Umar, lasted 200 years until the eighth caliph, and two centuries later, the Arabs returned to the desert from whence they came. Non-Arab peoples embraced religion and overthrew the irreligious Arabs. The Arabs, who created a new religion in the desert, return to their deserts, to their old way of life. Those who take the religion they themselves created from their hands will shake the whole world with that religion for centuries.

The Arab founder of the religion did not truly believe in the religion he established. The Turk who adopted another's religion, however, embraced it wholeheartedly.

As Islam spread, the old beliefs and customs of other peoples naturally became incorporated into Islam. Zoroastrian Iran and Christian Byzantium all came under Islamic rule. Not only the masses but also the clergy found their place within the new religion. This increased the quantity of Islam, but also led to significant changes in its quality. Islam was diluted with the beliefs of those religions. These new elements began to fabricate Hadiths as evidence for their own beliefs and teachings. They brought witnesses to their words and teachings with endless Hadiths beginning with "The Prophet said". During the Abbasid period, Hadiths exceeded 600,000. All Hadiths must have been said during the Medina period. All hadiths were said in ten years. That averages out to 200 hadiths per day. Muhammad would have had to talk non-stop. Bukhari took 7,275 reliable ones from 600,000 hadiths. Religion resembles living beings. No religion can survive without nourishing itself. As Islam spread and gained dominance over more nations, its rules multiplied. No religion has remained with the rules it was founded upon. If we apply this perspective to the enduring power of Islam, we can understand it better.

This change and renewal in Islam is also necessary. Muhammad's Islam spread beyond the Arabian deserts. This change necessitated the search for new principles, new perspectives, and other foundations. Religions are society,

Societies exist within life and history. Life and time flow. Religion is also part of this flow. This is neither complete development nor collapse. It is natural for religion to take on a new form after Muhammad. In this process of change, religion has sometimes gained and sometimes lost.

The religious worship system plays a major role in Islam's power and spread. Prayer and worship are mandatory. People follow an imam in mosques. This system also imposes strict order on Islamic armies. Expansion into large areas is carried out within this strict system of rules. However, Muhammad's Islam was not like this at all. Worship and ceremonies are free, flexible, and relaxed.

According to Islamic historians, the five daily prayers, which form the pillar of religious worship, were not established during the time of Muhammad. They did not exist during the Meccan period. This is only the product of the theologians and jurists of the 1st and 2nd centuries. During Muhammad's time, ablution and prayer were irregular and haphazard. Furthermore, the form and details of prayer are not described in the Qur'an. It is not a pillar of the religion. It is a second or third-level act of worship. The Meccan verses speak very vaguely about worship and prayer. Moreover, it is directed only at Muhammad, not at the masses. Prayer is commanded to believers in Medina. However, it is still unclear how many times it should be performed. The five daily prayers definitely do not exist in Muhammad's Islam. There is mention of morning, evening and night prayers. Even in the late Umayyad period, the principle of five daily prayers did not exist. Furthermore, prayer occupies a very insignificant place in the Qur'an. All 6,217 verses mention Allah. There is no verse in which the name of Allah does not appear. However, there are only twelve verses that mention worship. Worship is also not clear in the hadiths. There are 150 hadiths on the subject in Bukhari. But none of them clarify the form of prayer or that it should be performed five times.

Uncertainty also applies to ablution. Ablution is only mandatory for Friday prayers. For other prayers, Muhammad himself did not always perform ablution. Muhammad did not issue any warnings to believers who did not perform ablution or pray. Muhammad, knowing the Arab spirit, left worship flexible. Bedouin Arabs, in particular, did not adhere strictly. Worship must be performed in a way that does not restrict his freedom. Life is not frozen in religion; religion adapts to daily life.

On the other hand, worship is also necessary. To leave the Arab completely unrestrained would mean not binding him to religion. Umar and his relatives wanted Muhammad to ensure this aspect; it was necessary to establish a system of worship specific to Islam. Furthermore, this definition had to be unique, distinct from other religions, and begin with the call to prayer.

They first considered using a trumpet. However, this would be likened to the Jews, who also use a trumpet. Ringing a bell would be imitating Christianity. In this situation, Umar's suggestion of a verbal call (adhan) was well received and approved.¹²⁴

In the Qur'an

"Prayer protects you from evil and forbidden things. Indeed, the remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing" (Ankebut 45)

is defined. In another place,

"Prayer is an obligation prescribed for believers at specific times" (Nisa 103)

However, it does not specify that prayer should be performed five times a day. The most explicit verse regarding praying five times a day is:

"Praise your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting. And during the hours of the night and at the two ends of the day, praise Him, that Allah may be pleased with you" (Taha 130).

These statements, regarding the timing and number of prayers, are subject to interpretation. The detailed principles of ablution and prayer were established long after Muhammad. Muhammad, in keeping with the free-spirited Arab character, left worship practices flexible. Later, Islam formalised these practices to distinguish itself from other religions.

Muhammad did not forget to incorporate certain customs and traditions from older religions into the system of belief. The tradition of circumcision is one of these. Circumcision has long been a widespread tradition among the Negroes and Semitic peoples. It was considered a kind of sacrifice to their gods of fertility. Both Negroes and Semites circumcised their sons and daughters. They cut the tip of the clitoris in girls and the tip of the foreskin in boys.

Christianity, adopting baptism, which has its origins in Zoroastrianism, rejected this Semitic circumcision tradition. However, Islam, believing it was following in the footsteps of Abraham, continued the Semitic circumcision tradition.

This circumcision tradition, which included girls as well as boys, was practised throughout the Middle Ages in some Islamic countries. These were countries that had become thoroughly Semiticised, such as Syria, Egypt, Africa and Iraq. Other Persian countries, along with Iran, long

They resisted this tradition for a long time. Eventually, they only practised male circumcision. However, Jews circumcised their children seven days after birth. Muslims delayed their tradition to a later date in order to distinguish themselves from them.¹²⁵

e. Turning Point

The nomadic ruler Satuk Buğra Khan was the first to convert to Islam with his entire people. This important event took place in Kashgar around 926. However, it is not known which of the Turkic tribes living in Central Asia at that time this people belonged to. It is believed that these Turks, known as the Hakani Turks or Afrasiyaboğulları, descended from the Göktürks. In 893, they were forced to cede Western Turkistan to the Samanids. At the beginning of the 10th century, they established a state with Kashgar as its capital. At that time, Kashgar was the centre of Buddhist culture. The state is referred to as the Karakhanid country in ancient Islamic sources. Before converting to Islam, the Karakhanid Turks were Buddhists. The state had two important major cities. One of these is Kashgar, which is still well known today, and the other is Balasagun, which was much talked about in ancient times.

Satuk Buğra Khan's conversion to Islam is also shrouded in legend. Karşılı Cemal recounts the following event in the 13th century:

Satuk Buğra Khan was a descendant of Peşenk, son of Afrasiyab. This lineage (the Turanian lineage) traces back to Noah, son of Yasef. And he was among the first of the Turkish khans to embrace Islam. He was from the region between Kashgar and Fergana. Kashgar embraced Islam during the reign of Emir al-Reşit, Abdül Malik Nuhoğlu, Samanoğlu (954-961), when Al Muti Lillah, the commander of the faithful (946-974), was in power. (After Bilge Kül Kadir Khan) the rule of the Turks passed to Bazır Arslan's brother, Oğulcak Kadir Khan. He paid no heed to the letters calling for Islam. (From the Samanoğulları) Nasır oğlu Mansur fled from his brothers and arrived in Kashgar. Oğulcak welcomed him as a guest. "You have come to your homeland, you are a guest of your nation. Your brother mistreated you. We will show you loyalty," he said. He gave him the administration of the province of Artuç. And Nasir asked (Oğulcak Kadir Khan) for a piece of land the size of a cowhide to build a mosque and worship. (Oğulcak) said, "Go ahead, whatever you want is yours." Nasir sacrificed a cow. He cut its hide lengthwise (like a thin strip). With these, he marked the perimeter of the area that is now the Artunç mosque. Oğulcak was Satuk's uncle. When (Satuk) turned twelve, his high degree of beauty, bright appearance, natural intelligence, clear mind, broad understanding,

With his foresight and intellect, he was unique among the past Melikogullari. It was the day a caravan arrived from Bukhara. Satuk went to Artuç to see the goods they were carrying. And Samanoğlu Nasir hosted him. He treated him with hospitality. When noon came, the Muslims rose to perform their religious duties. Satuk, however, was unaware of this joyful duty. He looked at the (praying) crowd. When they finished, he asked Samanoğlu what they were doing. Samanoğlu said, "It is a fact that we are obliged to worship five times a day, night and day." (Satuk) asked, "Who made this obligatory for you?" Immediately, Samanoğlu began to describe to him the beautiful names and sublime attributes of the Creator. In the words of Muhammad, upon whom be the peace of Allah, he enumerated the conditions of Islam, the stories of the ummah, and their virtues.

After this, (Satuk) said: "He is God, and worship is not right for anyone other than Him. And there is no one more truthful than this Prophet, and no one more deserving of allegiance. And he accepted the religion. And he wanted the young men in his service and his entourage to also enter Islam and faith. They all became Muslims." 126

According to Cemal's account, the young Satuk Buğra hides his conversion to Islam. Oğulcak Kadir Khan learns that Islam is spreading in Artuç. As a countermeasure, he had an idol temple built in Artuç. Satuk Buğra Khan was forced to participate in the construction of the temple. While carrying bricks, he dedicated the temple to Allah in his heart. With the secret help of his aunt Hatun, he tried to escape his uncle's suspicions. When he reaches the age of twenty-five, he pretends to go hunting. He manages to escape from Kashgar with fifty Muslims. He captures the city of Tabgaç and stays there for three years. His uncle attacks him. Satuk gathers a force of a thousand men, including Muslims from Fergana. He withstands his uncle's army's attack. Finally, Satuk defeats his uncle. He takes Atbaş and Kashgar. He turns the Artuç temple into a mosque. The ruins of the Atbaş castle, which survived from this period, have reached our time. The memories of Atbaş castle change over time. It is included in excerpts from the Manas epic. The Kyrgyz people name Atbaş castle after Koşay, one of the heroes of the Manas epic. The monuments of Kashgar and Artuç, however, were rebuilt many times, and their original character did not survive to the present day. When Satuk Buğra Khan died in 955, he was buried in the Artuç mosque complex. This great monument became a symbol of Islam in East Turkistan. The Chinese and Kalmyks destroyed the tomb many times, and the Turks rebuilt it.

As a result of the Karakhanid Turks' adoption of Islam, the religious wars among the Western Turks came to an end. All of Western Turkistan and the western part of Eastern Turkistan united under the rule of the Karakhanid Turkic state. However, the Uyghurs did not adopt Islam. The Uyghurs and the Muslim Turks competed fiercely with each other, not only on the battlefield but also in the cultural sphere. The Uighurs would only adopt Islam around 1473.

The Karakhanid Turkic state rises as the stronghold of Islam in Turkistan. The Karakhanids now took on the policy of spreading Islam. This situation was not something that displeased the pure-blooded Turks. One after another, the old strongholds of Buddhist civilisation, such as Yarkent and Kotan, fell into the hands of Islam, which served as a wall against the cultural influence of China coming from the East to a certain extent.

The development of the Karakhanid state in the following period was as follows: In the years after choosing Islam, the Karakhanids recaptured Argu from the northern provinces of Western Turkistan. The Samanids were under the rule of a khan named Bugra Bey in 962. After the 980s, Bugra Khan took the provinces of Sayram and Samani. Thus, the Karakhanids gained dominance over Turkistan, extending westward from Hotan. This first major Muslim Turkic state lasted for three hundred years, from 926 to 1220.

The conversion of the ancient Bulgars from the Turkish tribes on the northern banks of the Volga River to Islam is shrouded in legend. In 922, the Bulgar leader Almuş, in a dream, reaches the truth in a legendary manner and thus chooses Islam. Almuş writes a letter to the caliph. He requests people who will teach him Islam and build a mosque and a fortress. The Abbasid envoys sent arrived at the gate of the Turkic Oghuz on the shores of the Caspian Sea on a cold March day in 922. Among the envoys were two young Turks in the service of the Abbasids, along with the famous traveller Ibn Fadlan. The envoys were dressed in thick clothes against the cold. They continue their journey on double-humped Turkish camels. Passing through the Oğuz, Pecheneg, and Bashkir regions, they reach Bulgar territory in 70 days. The Bulgars are nomads at that time. Ibn Fadlan writes that Islam has spread to the banks of the Volga and among the Oğuz. The envoys gathered in Almuş's tent. The Bulgarian tribal chiefs listened to the caliph's call to Islam while standing. They entered Islam with a takbir that shook the ground.¹²⁷

As in Turkistan, Islam began to take root among the nomads on the banks of the Volga, and Islamic life centred around the mosque. The transition to a settled society accelerated. Crafts developed. The Bulgars specialised in leather, metal and jewellery work. They became famous for their boot-making.

The Volga Bulgars become the northernmost outpost of Islam. Among the Bulgars, scholars such as emerge, Islam spreads among the Bashkirs such as the western Turkic tribes among

However, at the beginning of the 10th century, the vast majority of Turks had not yet adopted Islam.

In Eastern Turkistan, Islam would come face to face with Buddhism. The Turfan Uyghurs remained in the Buddhist faith until the 15th century. The Kara Khitai and Mongol expansions were invasions aimed at destroying Islam in the East. The Kara Khitai invasion seized the provinces of the Khaganate (Karahamid) Turkic state in Argu between 1128 and 1150. Within a short time, they spread between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, even reaching Khorasan and Kerman. However, outside Argu, the Kara Khitai contented themselves with leaving the Khaganate beys in place and collecting taxes. The Mongols, on the other hand, declared themselves to be of the Han lineage. During the Karakhanid period, the Nayman and Kereit chieftain Küçlüg Khan was a Turk. However, he was not a Muslim. He imposed heavy oppression on Muslims. He supported the Mongol massacres. He turned a blind eye to the burning and destruction of Islamic cities in Turkistan. But all this oppression did not shake Islamic civilisation in Turkistan. The Uyghurs taught the Mongols the Uyghur script and Buddhism.

The Karakhanid civilisation ended in Cend, considered part of the Oghuz tribe. By the 12th century, Islam had not yet reached beyond the sphere of Karakhanid influence. In this context, Turkic tribes such as the Kipchaks, Chuvash, Pechenegs, Western Oghuz, and Kipchak-Kuman living along the Volga and Oka rivers did not convert to Islam. Some of these tribes, which remained outside the sphere of influence of Islam at that time, would never choose Islam. Only the cities of the Volga Bulgars became the most influential centres of Islam in the north. The advance of Islam towards the west during this period would be recounted as a legendary memory in the Saltukname. The Saltukname narrates the process of Islamisation along the banks of the Ural River.

According to a widespread belief among Turks, Islam prevented the assimilation of the Turks. This belief, which was compatible with the Turkish spirit and way of life, ensured the permanence of Turkishness. However, some concrete evidence clearly reveals the inconsistency of this claim. According to Kaşgarlı Mahmut, Turks were the overwhelming majority among Muslims between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers. After Islam, the Turks assimilated among the Iranian peoples. During the Samanid period, the Turks were also in the majority between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers. According to Zeki Velidi Togan, the first Turkish translation of the Qur'an was made during the Samanid period. The translation of the Qur'an into Iranian languages also took place during the Samanid period.¹²⁸

Muslim and Christian religious teachings share commonalities in various respects through the concepts of ummah and lineage. The ummah is a community of people who share the same faith. Bloodline, on the other hand, is a commonality among people who share the same blood. In both religions, the stronger the concept of the ummah, the weaker the concept of bloodline. As the bloodline element grows stronger, the ummah bond weakens. Civilisations seek to emphasise the general characteristics of a religion

, while bloodline seeks to impose its own mark.

In Christian teaching, the common points of the ummah civilisation are extremely strong. The element of lineage has been reduced to a minimum. At that time, the European nations embraced by Christianity were not yet nations. Their languages had not even been formed. Roman civilisation had not yet been born. The new religion sought to erase all traces of the pagan era. Therefore, Christian civilisation stamped the nations it encompassed with the mark of the ummah, not the nation. There were no nations in the Crusades, only Christian warriors.

The situation is different in Islamic civilisation. Nations such as the Turks, Persians and Hindus possessed deep-rooted civilisations when they entered Islam. Upon entering Islam, they incorporated their own civilisations into its principles. In terms of lifestyle, Muhammad's Islam was too narrow for them. Therefore, Islam would later develop into a completely different form of Islam. Those who converted to Islam were people of high culture, who gave much more to the religion than they took from it.

Among Muslim Turks, it appears that two movements emerged from the earliest periods. The first of these is the acceptance of Islam as prescribed by Arab rulers. This movement has embraced everything Arab. From religion to language, from music to taste, from the entire world of thought and way of life to the past, and ultimately to filth, it has crowned everything as supreme. It has lost its entire identity through diminishment. It has become hostile to the Turk. It has lost its national values and entered a process of dissolution.

f. The Position of Arabic

In the past, Arabic was not a sacred language. It was the language of idolatry. It could not become a language of science like Latin. It is the language of the desert Arab. It is a rich language with many possibilities.

According to one researcher, Arabic is just like the Arabs themselves. It possesses characteristics that suit the Arab personality. Arabic conceals its intentions. It chooses flexibility and slippery expression over certainty. It is generally prone to lulling and deceiving the masses, herding them like sheep in a certain direction. In Arabic, it is possible to say the same thing in different tones by adjusting the pitch of the voice. Thus, minds are incensed, people are bewitched, and whatever is desired is instilled in the masses and even in the so-called enlightened. As a language of oratory, Arabic is ideal in this respect.¹²⁹

However, the situation changes when Arabic gains importance through the meaning of the Qur'an. To further enrich Arabic, words and terms are borrowed from Persian, Greek, and even Latin in areas related to political life. Sometimes Arabic words and terms are developed to form semantic equivalents of these words and terms. Some of these date back to the early days of Islam. For example, they are even encountered in the texts of the Qur'an.

Al-Sirat al-Mustakim, which Muslims are believed to follow, corresponds to the Romans' straight roads. Sirat comes from the Latin strata. It shares the same root as the English word "street".¹³⁰ However, as Islam spread from east to west, the view took hold that the words and sentences of the Qur'an were the direct words of God. The Arabic language of the Qur'an thus gained sacred status among Islamic peoples. According to the faith, God commanded in Arabic. It is necessary to learn it.

Thus, in non-Arabic-speaking nations, the teaching of Arabic ceased to be a means and became an end in itself. Science meant Arabic. According to Islamic belief, the Qur'an contained all universal knowledge. Only this knowledge was veiled. It was hidden beneath the words. The better one knows Arabic, the more one can understand this knowledge. Knowing Arabic is not only the greatest science, but also the greatest virtue.

In ancient times, the languages of science were Greek and Syriac. No one except Christians was interested in it. After the knowledge in Greek and Syriac was translated into Arabic, Islam began to develop. Distinguished individuals emerged from among them. Arabic took the path of becoming the language of science. Meanwhile, many words entered Arabic from Greek. However, Arabic equivalents would later be found for these terms.

Originally, Arabic was not sacred to the Arabs either. It was the language of idolaters. It was the language of the desert Arabs. It was never a language of science like Latin. It is a language rich in equivalents for concepts of great importance to Arabs, such as sword, camel, and woman. The words used by Arabs in this field, burning with the flame of the scorching desert, are astonishingly rich. The Arab people are highly sensitive to emotional activities. This characteristic is a result of the bright, vibrant nature in which they live. They are immersed in the vast sea of light from the sun, which shines almost continuously throughout the day. They enjoy the clean air that allows their gaze to reach the furthest corners. The monotony of the country's landscape begins to change in the evening. At night, the imagination of the Arab people is stirred by the influence of the sparkling starry sky, as if nourished by the heavens. The country's

Ultimately, its nature enables people to feel physically well, to be healthy, to enjoy life, and to be courageous and self-confident, as well as contributing to poetic (literary) sensitivity. In this respect, Arabs love poetry and narrative art. Now, the holy book has also been sent in this language. But God sent it in Arabic so that His people would understand the Qur'an.

"We have sent it down to you as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may use your intellect."
(Yusuf 2)

Even for those who were wholeheartedly devoted to Islam and faithful during the time of the Prophet, only the meaning of the Qur'an is sacred. The language itself is still a world language. How did the language of the desert Arabs become a language of science?

It was not the Arabs who developed Arabic and made it a language of science. The great thinkers of Islam emerged from among non-Arabs. The great commentator of the Arabic dictionary, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, was a Turk. He was a fellow countryman of al-Farabi. His dictionary is famous under the name *Lugat al-Jawhari*. When this Turkish author gave his dictionary to the Arabs after completing it, he said, "Learn your language from a foreigner."

Arabic quickly became the language of science in all Islamic madrasas. But this was not enough; it transcended its role as a tool and acquired a sacred status. It ascended to a level akin to science itself. After all, everything is contained within the Qur'an. It is merely concealed, hidden beneath the words. The better one knows Arabic, the better one understands. Arabic takes precedence over all sciences. It becomes the primary science. Learning Arabic is not only science, but also the greatest reward. With the efforts of madrasa scholars and people of various backgrounds, Arabic will become an advanced scientific language.

Since the Qur'an was revealed to the Arab people, it is in Arabic. There is no other reason for it to have been revealed in Arabic. This is emphasised in various verses of the Qur'an:

"We sent every messenger only in the language of his own people so that he might make things clear to them." (Ibrahim 4)

However, this rationale was later forgotten, and Arabic, which served as a tool, became an end in itself in the hands of Arab nationalists.

The Umayyads' acceptance of Arabic as the official language of Islam increased its importance. Arabic swept away the local languages of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Persia like a steamroller. It Arabised those peoples. Through language, Arabness melted non-Arab peoples.

Due to this superior position of Arabic, all Islamic intellectuals wrote their works in Arabic. This led to the entire Muslim civilisation being attributed to the Arabs in later periods. Today, Turkish scholars such as Farabi, Al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina are considered Arabs because they wrote their works in Arabic. The Arabs, not missing this opportunity, claim all thinkers and intellectuals as their own. Although medieval Western intellectuals wrote their works in Latin, no one attributes them to a particular nation.

The interesting thing is that it was non-Arabs who developed Arabic into a scientific language. The first Islamic thinkers and scientists came from among non-Arabs. They drew on Greek science and thought. The innovators in science and thought were again non-Arabs.

Even Arabic was being worked on and developed by non-Arabs. Because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, the language of God. Advancing it is not merely a service to science, but also a great act of devotion.

The most effective resistance to Arabic comes from Persian and Turkish. Like other indigenous languages, these languages do not surrender. However, the sanctity of Arabic causes a multitude of Arabic elements to enter these languages. A multitude of terms related to religion and Sharia constantly flow into these languages. In the 11th century, 1,015 Arabic words appear in Firdausi's *Shahnameh*. The situation is the same in Yusuf Has Hacib's *Kutadgu Bilig*, which dates from the same century. The use of so few Arabic words in such comprehensive works in both languages indicates the existence of national consciousness in the early periods. Indeed, the Karakhanids brought many innovations to Islamic civilisation. During their era, Karakhanid civilisation was at the centre of the Turkic world. However, Karakhanid civilisation developed around the Burkan and Manichaean religions. Thus, the Karakhanids' contributions to Islamic civilisation stemmed primarily from Buddhist culture. The concept of "Hakan" described by Yusuf Has Hacib in *Kutadgu Bilig* is based on the teachings of the Sky God and the Buddhist Ulug-Köningü sect. According to this teaching and Turkish tradition, the Hakan is a person who protects, feeds and clothes his people (*kara bodun*). Inspired by Bilge Khan, who defends national customs, uses his knowledge and intelligence, and, when necessary, gives his life for his people, he possesses superhuman qualities. He is responsible for educating the people in the most effective way. This understanding stems from Turkish Buddhism. In Turkish Buddhism, Burkan is a harsh khan, lord, or authority figure who holds a whip and a stick in his hand.

In Kutadgu Bilig, the Khan is the "ajun tözi". These two words originate from two separate cultures. Töz, in Old Turkic, means spirit or root. It is also used for the images of the spirits of ancestors and God. There is a belief in ancestor worship. The word ajun, in Buddhist Turkic documents, refers to various ways of life. The word is used in the Karahanid literature to mean the world. Thus, in Kutadgu Bilig, the khan is considered the spirit of the world. In Kutadgu Bilig, the khan type is presented in the personality of Küntogdı. Khan Küntogdı is the owner of "kut" in the ancient Turkish tradition. At a sacred moment when the celestial dragon (universe) set the wheel of fortune in motion, the khan became the owner of kut. Here, the ancient sky religion and the poem about the celestial dragon named Kök-luu represent a new interpretation of the beliefs of the period when the sky was symbolic. In Indian and Iranian religions, the concept of time is embodied in figures called Kala in India and Zurvân in Iran. These are imagined as dragons. In Kutadgu Bilig, there is another concept of time besides the universe. This is a type of Öd, the God of Time in ancient Turks. Ödleg is thought of as a horse advancing through night and day. Indeed, in some documents, the god of time, Kala, is a horse or a charioteer. The ancient Turkic god, Yol-Tengri, is conceived in the same way. Along with the dragon and horse motifs, the concept of celestial transformation is imagined in a manner similar to Buddhism's Kala cakra (the god of the wheel of time).

The numerous depictions of human-headed lions found in Central Asia are based on a widespread legend. The motif of the human-headed lion is also common in Buddhist tales. The same motif appears in Manichaean texts and the tales of Dede Korkut. In the latter sources, the human-headed lion is called Periken and Peri.

Yusuf Has Hacip, when listing the social classes among the Hakani (Karahanid) Turks, mentions a stratum called the "Ali lineage". Although the Hakani Turks were Sunni, they had a special affinity for the Ali lineage.

The interpretation of the order of the universe in Kutadgu Bilig is based on Chinese, Turkish and Buddhist thought. Yer-Su is a flat plane. Around this fixed space, the celestial dragon Evren turns the wheel carrying the sun, moon and zodiac signs. Around a fixed space, time is a turning wheel. Descriptions are made in accordance with this conception. The work begins on a spring morning, when the heroes are still young. The heroes are on the threshold of the event that will determine their destinies. However, the turning wheel is not in the meaningless transformation of Buddhist thought. Yusuf Has Hacib knows that the universe is harmonious and mature, and that human destiny has meaning. At this point, the poet is influenced by Islamic thought. For example, he says:

What is life, what is death? Where do
I come from, where am I headed?

He knows that creation has meaning. In the poet's heart, he ignites the fire of longing to
meet Him, the absolute moment.

He is one, pure, unadulterated, He makes
the non-existent exist, He makes the
existent non-existent

However, later on, the power of Arabic grew. Fuzuli's divan begins with an Arabic poem. This was not the Arabs' real gain. The fact that all Islamic scholars wrote their works in Arabic caused them great losses. It led Westerners to view Islamic civilisation as purely Arab civilisation. In reality, Western scientists also wrote their works in Latin. However, none of them ceased to be the property of their own nation. No one considered them Latin. However, all Islamic scholars who wrote in Arabic were considered Arab.

The Turks suffered the greatest loss in this regard. Farabi, Al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina, who were great creators in the fields of science and thought in Islamic civilisation, were considered Arabs because they wrote their works in Arabic.

The era that produced the renowned scholar Kaşgarlı Mahmut is this very age. Kaşgarlı consciously defends Turkish nationalism. And I say this with certainty, for I heard it from one of the trustworthy imams of Bukhara and from another imam. Both of them report with their testimonies that our Prophet mentioned the signs of the apocalypse, the end times, and the emergence of the Oghuz Turks, saying: "Learn the Turkish language, for they will have a long reign."¹³¹ The second hadith given by Kaşgarlı is as follows: "...The Almighty God said, 'I have an army, and I have named them Turks. I have settled them in the East. If I am angry with a nation, I will unleash the Turks upon them.' This is a superiority for the Turks over all other people. For God has taken it upon Himself to name them; He has settled them in the highest places on earth, in the countries with the cleanest air, and He has called them 'My own army.'" ¹³².

As can be seen, Kaşgarlı first links the learning of Turkish to a hadith of the Prophet, and from the second hadith he deduces that the Turks are a superior nation. Kaşgarlı is a Muslim who is extremely devoted to Islam. Therefore, his language becomes harsh when he speaks of others. He speaks harshly about the Buddhist Uyghurs. However, his attitude towards the Samanids is somewhat different.

Kashgari does not view Shamanism as a threat to Islam, or rather, as a religion that can compete with it. He regards it as a belief that deserves respect, passed down from ancestors and forefathers. This tolerant view applies more to the old beliefs among Muslim Turks.¹³³

g. The Dervish Does Not Fly, But His Disciples Do...

The most important figure in calling the Western Turks to Islam was Ahmet Yesevi. The founder of the mystical school bearing his name, Yesevi was born in the Sayram district of Western Turkistan in the second half of the 11th century, the son of a sheikh named Ibrahim. Upon his father's death, he came to the city of Yesi at the age of seven. Yesi holds an important place in Turkish history. In Turkish legends, it is mentioned as the capital of Oğuz Khan. Ahmet began his education here. He then became a student of the renowned mystic Sheikh Yusuf Hemedani in Bukhara. He was strongly influenced by him. He travelled to many places with him. In 1160, he succeeded his sheikh as the third caliph in Bukhara. However, he later returned to Yesi, following an old saying of his sheikh. He died in Yesi in 1167. It is said that his legendary life spanned 130 years. The connection of Ahmet Yesevi's lineage to Hz. Ali and, consequently, to Muhammad is also interesting. With this legendary genealogy, a connection is established not only intellectually but also through lineage. There are no supernatural elements in Muhammad's life, but those who follow him create many supernatural phenomena.

Muhammad's Islam is based on the absence of miracles. Yet the other prophets from Abraham's religion were endowed with miracles. One had a camel, another had a staff that performed wonders. Another raised the dead. Yet Muhammad was an ordinary man.

"Say to them: 'I do not claim to have the treasures of Allah with me, nor do I know the unseen. I do not claim to be an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.' Ask them: 'Can the blind be equal to the seeing? Do you not then reflect?'" (En'am 50)

The new believers demand that Muhammad show them miracles, prove himself, against the Jews and the unbelievers. Muhammad himself is troubled. He is God's prophet, so why does God not provide him with miracles? He advises his followers to wait patiently. He waits himself. He believes that one day God will

. But this never happens. Upon this, verses from God come:

"Nothing prevents us from showing miracles except that those before them denied them. We gave the people of Thamud the she-camel as a clear miracle, but they wronged themselves with her. We send miracles only to frighten and subdue." (Isra 59)

Thus, the danger of miracles is emphasised. If they disbelieve and deny after seeing the miracle, then they will perish. Because of this danger, it is unnecessary to show miracles! There is no single verse in the Qur'an that can be considered a sign of a miracle. The Prophet says he saw the Masjid al-Aqsa one night. Rumours begin about this ambiguous verse. The next day, a verse reveals the truth:

"The dream We showed you was nothing but a test for the believers" (Isra 65)

The issue is simply that Muhammad saw the Al-Aqsa Mosque in his dream. God tested His servants, gauging the reactions of the believers. The rumours immediately ceased. The only miracle of Islam is the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not a human creation. Even if all humans and jinn gathered together, they could not produce anything like it. The true miracle lies in the words of the Qur'an:

"Say, 'Even if all humanity and the jinn were to gather together to produce something like the Qur'an, they could not produce anything like it, neither individually nor collectively'" (Isra 88).

The dervish does not fly, his disciples make him fly. The lack of miracles during Muhammad's lifetime gave rise to a flood of miracles after Muhammad's death. Since the two worlds were created out of respect for Muhammad, Muhammad himself could not be without miracles. Moses had his staff that turned into a serpent, and Jesus had his breath that raised the dead. Muhammad had to surpass these.

Muhammad's dream of the Al-Aqsa Mosque became a miraculous ascension with many branches. Muhammad had mounted a winged horse named Burak. Guided by Gabriel, he ascended through the heavens, layer by layer. At each layer, he met with a prophet. Especially Moses, who had sent Muhammad to bargain with God three or four times to save his community from fifty prayers. The Ascension unfolded as a miracle of miracles, with Moses' staff,

had sent Muhammad to bargain with God three or four times to save his community from fifty prayers. The ascension developed into a miracle of miracles, leaving Moses' staff and Jesus' breath far behind.

In Islamic legends, miracles do not end with the Mi'raj. Süleyman Çelebi, in his literary work *Mevlüt*, begins to show miracles to Muhammad even before he was born. When his mother was about to give birth to Muhammad, angels spread beds of light, and white birds came bearing good tidings. Yet for other prophets, miracles only began after they became prophets!

Ultimately, religions do not remain in the commands and practices of prophets, nor in books. Religions develop more in the hearts of the people. The people nurture it in their hearts and let it soar. They attribute supernatural qualities not only to the prophet, but also to the person they love and respect.

Thus, it is emphasised that the teachings of Ahmet Yesevi are directly Islamic. According to the legendary family tree, there was a sheikh named Sheikh Ibrahim, a descendant of Hazreti Ali, in the city of Sayram in Turkistan. When the Sheikh died, his daughter Gevher Şehnaz and his seven-year-old son Ahmet remained. From a young age, Ahmet displayed extraordinary circumstances that did not match his age. Hızır guided him. After becoming an orphan at the age of seven, he was educated by a spiritual father. This was Sheikh Baba Arslan. He was one of the leading companions. With Muhammad's spiritual guidance, he came to Sayram and guided Ahmed. Again, according to legends, he lived for two or seven centuries.

His appointment to enlighten Ahmet Yesevi is based on a spiritual sign. During one of Muhammad's battles, his companions came to him hungry. They asked for some food. Upon Muhammad's prayer, Gabriel brought a plate of dates from heaven. However, one of the dates fell to the ground. Gabriel said, "This is the portion of a man named Ahmet Yesevi from your ummah." Muhammad wanted to assign one of his companions to deliver this date to Ahmet Yesevi. No one accepted this task. Muhammad threw the date into Arslan Baba's mouth. He explains how to find Ahmet Yesevi. He orders him to take care of his education. Upon this, Arslan Baba comes to Sayram (or Yesi). He fulfils the task he has taken upon himself and dies the following year. The houris cut a shroud from silk cloth. Seventy thousand angels send him off to heaven, weeping.

Yesevi's life thereafter is also filled with extraordinary events. The fame of this calm, quiet little boy spreads throughout Turkistan day by day. One day, the ruler, unable to hunt in the Karaçuk mountain in that region, wants to remove the mountain . . . All the saints of . . . mountain . . . from its place . . . to remove it.

He assigns them. However, the power of the saints is not enough to lift the mountain. They remember that they did not call little Ahmet. They call Ahmet. Ahmet comes to this gathering of saints with a loaf of bread. He divides the bread among those present in the gathering. There are 99,000 saints and the sultan's men. The bread is enough for all of them. Because of this miracle, they believe in Ahmet's greatness. And at Ahmet's prayer, rain pours down from the sky. Mount Karaçuk disappears. In its place, the district of Karaçuk is born.

The wisdom is interspersed with excerpts from Yesevi's life after the age of seven. Again, in these mysterious quatrains, the stages of education of Buddhist monks, beginning in childhood, are enumerated. These quatrains are like Buddhist hymns. Ahmet's life journey begins at the age of seven, when he enters Arslan Baba's education. Arslan Baba takes on the child's education with a mysterious command. This is perhaps Muhammad's legacy. It is a symbol of enlightenment. It is the mystery of the date palm reaching Ahmet Yesevi four hundred years later. Arslan Baba veils and hides this mystery. "He saw a secret and veiled it with a curtain." In the wisdom tales, Ahmet Yesevi lives strangely in the period that follows. He serves the poor. He escapes the passions of daily life. He undergoes training in difficult subjects, swallowing blood. At twelve, the veil of mystery is lifted. At fourteen, he becomes humble as the earth. At eighteen, he drinks the cup of love (the cup of passion) until it is empty, spreads his wings and flies. At twenty-two, he reaches God's realm. At twenty-three, twenty-five, he falls away from God. These years are the years of guilt in Yesevi's life. He feels remorse, he hates it. He wants his corpse to be stoned, dragged and thrown into a pit. The verses contain these lines of guilt:

I entered twenty-four, far from God, Throw

stones at my funeral!

Drag me by my feet, push me into the pit!

After Arslan Baba's death, the spiritual guide's soul wishes for Ahmet Yesevi to experience the pain of exile. This is reflected in the verse, "My father's soul sent me into this exile." Just as the Prophet sought refuge from the people of Medina on the Muna hill and migrated to his homeland, Ahmet Yesevi also crossed the mountains and became an exile. Ahmet Yesevi migrated to Bukhara. At that time, Bukhara was ruled by the western branch of the Khakani Turkic dynasty. It was one of the important cultural centres of Islam. Khakani literature and civilisation were experiencing their golden age. Great works of art and literature were created . Bukhara magnificent mosques, architecture examples and Eastern

is one of the places longed for in the past. It is also the centre of Sunni Islamic teaching. At that time, the Islamic scholar Yusuf Hemedani was living in Merv. Merv was the capital of the Seljuks. Yesevi, who did not know Turkish, joined Hemedani's school of teaching. Yusuf Hemedani defined the lives of the prophets as the only path to salvation. He lived in poverty, distributing even his daily food to the poor. He fled from the khans' entourage. He devoted himself entirely to religious sciences. He kept Salman-i Farisi's sword and turban. Although he missed his birthplace, Hemedan, greatly, he did not return. He continued his life by teaching Islam to the people of Central Asia. Ahmet Yesevi, as Yusuf Hemedani's third caliph, would take his place in Bukhara. This event must have taken place around 1140. Yesevi died in 1166. Thus, Yesevi must have spent a long part of his life in Bukhara. He longs for his homeland, his native land, and the white tomb of his spiritual guide, saying, "The place where I was born is that blessed Turkistan." With Arslan Baba's mysterious command, Ahmet Yesevi will finally return to Turkistan. This event is described in mysterious sayings as follows:

My desires, I am the brotherhood of
the Great Father's sacred white tomb

When he returned to Turkistan, Ahmet Yesevi had long since attained enlightenment, sacrificed his ego with a spiritual sword, transcended the realm of "fana-fillah," and was an elderly "saint."

By the command of God, I fell alone into the
bottomless sea, friends. My Lord commanded
that sea.

Praise be to Allah, I passed safely, friends

My age advanced, my life ended, I flew to the sky
My heart was shattered, my mind was bewildered, I
fell to the ground I fought fiercely against my
devilish desires
I have surpassed the stations of patience and acceptance, friends.

At nine, I was scattered like dust, yet I did not perish, At
ten, I did not turn to my right side,
At eleven, I subdued my own self. I surpassed
the realms of discernment and acceptance, my
friends.

At twelve, all souls spoke, The houris came
forth and greeted me,

The cupbearer of the secret elixir offered
it to me I took it and drank it with
propriety, friends

At thirteen, I became a diver and plunged into
the sea, seeking the essence of knowledge
from the secret.
Seeing the candle, I threw myself at it like a moth. I lost myself,
my mind went, I was astonished, friends.

At fourteen, I endured humiliation like the earth,
I spent my nights weeping, crying "Hu Hu," I
sold its thousand-gold worth for a single coin,
Then I spread my wings and flew, my friends.

At fifteen, I returned to the dervish lodge, I
brought every sinful deed I had done, I repented,
submitted to the Truth, I repented and fled from
sins, my friends.

Gabriel brought revelation to the true
prophet, the verse descended, saying,
"Remember," to the fragment and the
ashes. Hızır Baba sent me on this path.
After that, I overflowed like an ocean, my friends.

I wandered through the garden of the Sharia,
I roamed through the rose garden of the
Tariqa, I soared through the market of the
Tariqa, I unfolded the bed of knowledge, my
friends

He gave the wine of Elest to the file of Pir-i Mugan
I drank my fill, and he let me go
Kul Hacı Ahmet, my inner and outer self were
consumed I scattered pearls of wisdom to the
seekers, my friends

The act of cutting his flesh with a sword may be a reference to a phase mentioned in the legends of Yesevi. According to the legend, Yesevi named his son after the Prophet's deceased son, Ibrahim. Taking Muhammad's life as an example, he even wished to experience the pain of losing a child. The people of Savran, a city of the Oghuz Turks near Yesi

hear Yesevi's wish. They cut off his son's head with a sword and bring it before him. Yesevi responds to this cruelty with kindness. On the day of creation, people denied God's existence, calling it "misfortune". Yet the spirit of Ahmet Yesevi, as the reason for creation, accepts suffering and submits.

A legend is told among the Salars living in China. The Salars come from the Salurs, one of the 24 tribes of the Oghuz. According to the legend, the Salur tribe consists of two brother tribes called Akman and Karaman. The Karaman and Akman tribes killed the son of Ahmet Yesevi. Ahmet Yesevi cursed them. As a result, the Salurs could no longer live in Turkmenistan. They left their lands and migrated to China.

Thus, from his childhood, Ahmet Yesevi adhered to the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. When he reached the age of 63, the age at which the Prophet died, he wished to die to mourn Mustafa and entered the grave while still alive. In the darkness of the underworld, he met Mustafa's ummah. He spends his entire life in this house of suffering. Throughout his life, he performs many miracles and wonders. His miracles continue even after his death. Indeed, Timur Khan's decision to build the Yesevi tomb is based on a miracle performed by the sheikh after his death.

Timur stops in Turkistan on his way to Bukhara. Ahmet Yesevi appears in Timur's dream. Ahmet Yesevi says to Timur in his dream, "O brave one, hurry to Bukhara. The death of the khan there is in your hands. You must have gone through many things. All the people of Bukhara are waiting for you." The next day, when Timur awoke from his dream, he summoned the ruler of Turkistan. He ordered him to build a magnificent mausoleum over the tomb of Ahmet Yesevi.

Yesevi begins to spread his mystical views at an appropriate time and in a suitable environment. During that era, Sufi orders flourish throughout the Islamic circles of Asia. Eastern Turkistan and the Seven Rivers region have entered a strong process of Islamisation. Ahmet Yesevi gains great respect among the nomadic people of Turkistan in this favourable environment. Those who gathered around him were villagers or nomadic Turkmen who had recently converted to Islam. Therefore, he needed to address them in a language they could understand. Using verse forms taken from Turkish folk literature, he wrote mystical poems in syllabic meter and plain language. The people called these poems Hikmet to distinguish them from random poetry. Some of these poems have survived to this day. However, it is not known for certain whether the Hikmets are by Yesevi. They were written down after the establishment of the Naqshbandi order in Asia and even after its spread to the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. For this reason, they present Ahmet Yesevi in a manner entirely consistent with the Naqshbandi view. The Naqshbandis felt the need to establish certain links with Yesevilik in order to easily attract Turks to their fold

However, the legends of Babaö, Haydarö, and the Alevi regarding Ahmet Yesevi are more accurate and closer to historical reality.

Yesevi's spread was generally directed towards nomadic and rural steppe Turks. Argu, Khwarezm, and the Fergana region became areas where Yesevi principles spread. In this region, Turks and Iranian peoples lived during the 11th and 12th centuries. The Turks believed in religions such as Mazdeism, Mogoç, and Manichaeism. Yesevilik adapted its principles of propagation to the conditions of the environment in this area. For example, the term "Pir Muga" appears in the Hikmet poems. This term is clearly a remnant of the Mogoç belief in Western Turkistan. Yesevilik has a tradition of undergoing asceticism underground. This custom stems from a way of life based on mastery over the self. These similar influences were passed on to the Turks from Buddhism. During Yesevi's lifetime, the Buddhist Karakhanids ruled Balasagun. Buddhism was revived. Some terms in the Hikmets also appear in Buddhist Turkish texts. The term "eren" is one such example.

Yesevi dervishes have a tradition of shaving their heads. This is also based on the Buddhist monks' belief in shaving their heads. Again, the influence of Buddhist writing is clearly seen in some of the symbols, metaphors, and decorations in the Hikmets. The Hikmets, which list the stages of Yesevi's life, are reminiscent of Buddhist hymns. The Uyghur hymns contain the concept of "sakinçlıg yiti kılıç". This concept, which can be translated into modern Turkish as "the sharp sword of debate and thought", is described in the Hikmets as "Batın Tıgı".

All researchers agree that Yesevilik originated from Turkish customs. According to Fuat Köprülü, the "biçki" chant in Yesevilik is the echo of the drum in shamanic ceremonies.

In Yesevism, there is a belief in burying sacrificial blood. This is based on the sacrificial ceremonies of the Kagnılı Turks.

There are religious dances in Yesevism. These dances, which we can call the ancestors of the Semah in Alevism and the Sema in Mevleviism, date back to ancient times. However, dance is found in many ancient religions. Indeed, dance is also found among non-Turkish mystics. However, this dance, based on rapid turns, is clearly identified in the shamanic ceremonies of the Tabgaç and Göktürk periods. These dances were one of the most distinctive features of religious ceremonies between the 6th and 9th centuries. Thus, the earliest traces of semah are clearly evident. These religious dances, performed in circles during the Buddhist period, continued under the name "celestial dance" (tengirdem oyun).

Losing oneself and forgetting the world is depicted with the drawing of a cup. This belief persists as it does in mysticism. Among the Turks, it is particularly associated with the "oath-taking" ceremony

In 922, Almuş, the Khan of the Bulgar Turks who chose Islam, commemorated the Caliph. The Scythians, Huns, and Turks swear an oath over the "sucu" chieftain's wine cup. Ibn Fadlan objects to such an oath ceremony involving alcohol. Upon this, the Bulgars say that the honey wine is not yet ripe. Hızır, however, offers the cup to Ahmet Yesevi. Inside the cup is an elixir of immortality made from jade. In Turkish, this is called "tirilik suyu" or bengisu. This belief most likely stems from Taoism.

One of the figures in the Hikmet poems who offers to help people forget the world is Pir Mugan. Pir Mugan is sometimes the Prophet of Islam, sometimes Hızır, and sometimes Satuk Buğra Khan.

Yesevi, like Yusuf Has Hacib, is first and foremost Islamic. In this context, he is a saintly poet who facilitates the meeting between God and man. He is surrounded by his environment, the passionate, heroic semi-nomadic Turks who ride horses across the steppes, fight wars, and listen to epics. In this environment, the Hikmets will speak to the souls of these people. The "saint-poet" who recites these quatrains will emerge as a glorious spiritual warrior. Abstract thoughts and concepts will be expressed in simple Turkish. The voice of the Eren-Ozan, thus shrouded in mystery, will be read as a reflection of Central Asian culture, alongside the steppe Turks, in Islamic reverence, as a supplication to God and allegiance to the prophet. This Islamic understanding of the Turkish folk spirit heralds the Alevi sayings alongside Yunus Emre.

Yesevilik has blended with the old Turkish tribes, traditions and customs, as well as remnants of paganism, among the nomadic Turks. The coexistence of women and men is a necessity of nomadic Turkish life. Women and men sit together in Yesevi assemblies. The form of zikr in the Yesevi order is taken entirely from Turkish paganism. It quickly adapted to the way of life and thinking of the Turkmen tribes. The Yesevi dervishes, called baba, ata or dede, interpreted Islamic beliefs in a superficial and simplistic manner and presented them to their followers. Given all this, it is not possible to consider Yesevilik a Sunni order. In cities, Yesevism developed more in the direction of Sunnism and gave rise to Naqshbandism. Among peasants and nomads, however, it spread in the manner described above. Yesevism in the steppes was in no way compatible with the deep and complex ideas of Wahdat al-Wujud. It was adapted to nomadic Turkmen circles. It became a form of folk mysticism.

The first arrival of Yesevi dervishes in Anatolia was in the 13th century. They fled in large numbers from the armies of Genghis Khan and took refuge in Anatolia. They brought with them all the customs and oral traditions associated with Ahmet Yesevi. They taught his and his caliphs' mystical ideas with the same simplicity. These oral traditions

Through their agency, elements such as "entering the bird's plumage, setting stones and rocks in motion, and slaying dragons" spread, which would later appear in legends written in Anatolia. These wandering fathers in Anatolia,

ancestors, and forefathers bear a strong resemblance to the ancient Kamožans. They act as guardians of the old legends. They also function as sorcerers, poets, doctors, and religious figures. After the 13th century, they led to the emergence of Alevi orders in Anatolia.

Yesevîlik lost its importance in the 15th century with the advancement of Naqshbandî in Khorasan. In the 17th century, it completely dissolved within Naqshbandî.

The great Sheikh of Turkistan is revered by various orders. This is natural, given that there are major differences of opinion between these orders. Alevism and Naqshbandism are presented as two paths of belief originating from Yesevîsm. At first glance, it seems surprising that two orders with opposing ideas claim to come from the same source. Naqshbandî is a strict Sunni order. Alevism, on the other hand, is esoteric.

It is impossible to deduce this from Hoca Ahmet Yesevî's Divan. This is because the Divan was written much later. It is impossible to determine which of the wisdom contained in the Divan belongs to him. The same applies to his ideas. There are no documents that have survived directly from Ahmet Yesevî. The documents that have survived are highly controversial, so the most straightforward solution is to seek the commonalities and parallels between the two orders and thus arrive at a synthesis.

However, both the formation and development of the Naqshbandî and Alevi orders took quite some time. The Naqshbandî order took root in the Sunni regions of Transoxiana in the 14th century. These regions are cities. They are major cultural centres. Alevism, on the other hand, remains among the nomadic tribes. And we see that Naqshbandî Sufism, as a developed order, is climbing to the upper echelons. It is attracting important figures from the state apparatus into its structure. For example, we see a great statesman and writer such as Ali Shir Nava'i within Naqshbandî Sufism. It is governed by Sharia rules. It is nourished by extensive opportunities. Alongside all this development, it undergoes the natural process for religions: it becomes reactionary. Indeed, we see the same process later in the division of Alevism. In Bektashism, despite splitting off in the recent period, the Kızılbaş will embark on conflicting paths.

According to legend, he sent a group of saints to Anatolia. He commanded them to guide the Rum. According to legend, these saints, whom today's Anatolian Alevis regard as masters, were sent to Rum by Ahmet Yesevî, and some of them are very famous. Hacı Bektaş Veli is considered the master of masters. There are famous figures from that period whose names have been pushed into the background by the wheel of time

. In reality, they were in a higher position than Hacı Bektaş in their time. And according to some documents, Hacı Bektaş is considered their disciple. The person considered the highest-ranking Alevi dede of his time was Dede Kargın.

The name Kargın is linked to the Yıldız Han tribe, which formed the Bozoklu branch of Oğuz Khan's six sons. It is the name of one of the Afşar, Beydilli, Kınık, and Kargın tribes. The Oğuzs consisted of a total of twenty-four tribes. One of the twenty-four tribes. Each tribe has its own seal and bird of prey. For some reason, the name of the Kargın tribe is not mentioned in the Divan, and its seal is not given. Kargın's totem (bird of prey) is the Tavşancıl. The Tavşancıl is a type of eagle. It lives by hunting rabbits.

Dede Kargın was a Turkmen dervish who lived in the Elbistan region in the early 13th century. He came to Anatolia with his disciples and settled there. Over time, he gained great fame. He acquired many disciples. The sultan of the time recognised his talents and befriended him. He granted him 17 villages as an endowment. Dede Kargın spent years spreading his ideas here. He increased his number of disciples. He had four hundred caliphs, including Baba İlyas, who went to Rum. Dede Kargın selected four individuals from among his own caliphs: Hacı Mihman, Bağdın Hacı, Şeyh Osman, and Ayna Dola. He placed them under Baba İlyas's command. He assigned them the task of guiding Rum. Upon arriving in the land of Rum, Baba İlyas sent the four caliphs with him to various places. He ensured they settled there.

Hacı Bektaş stays in Elbistan before arriving in the province of Zülkadir in the Rum lands. Hacı Bektaş has a disciple named İbrahim Hacı. Hacı Bektaş gives him a cap made of deer skin. After his death, this cap causes a dispute between his sons and the disciples of Dede Kargın. They also use the same type of caps. As a result of the dispute, only the disciples of Dede Kargın are allowed to wear the cap. Because this cap is a symbol of their sect.¹³⁴ This event is described in the Velayetname as follows:

When Hacı Bektaş Veli first arrived in Rum, travelling from the Bozok region, he encountered a Turkmen shepherd tending his sheep along the road. The sheep, sensing the scent of Hazreti Hünkâr, gathered together one after another and followed him. The shepherd stepped in front of the sheep and turned them back. The sheep on the other side began to follow the Hünkâr. No matter how hard the shepherd tried, he could not turn the sheep around. Then it occurred to him that the signs shown by these sheep were not meaningless. Perhaps the person walking along the road was one of the saints, one of the enlightened ones. Do I not have as much sense as a sheep, that I should not fall at his feet?

. Perhaps he will look at me once and show me mercy," he said. He left the sheep and ran. He caught up with the Great Hünkar and kissed his hand. He pressed his face to his feet.

"O true saints," he cried out. "Bestow your grace upon me, cast your benevolent gaze upon me," he said. Upon this, the Sultan sat down in a place:

"What is your name?" he asked. The shepherd replied:

"My name is Ibrahim Haji," he replied.

The Great Sultan removed the item from his head. It is said that Ibrahim Haji wore a cap made of deer skin on his head. He placed it before the Sultan. His Highness uttered a single takbir and placed it on his head. He then wiped his eyes. He patted his back. The gaze of the saints is alchemy. If they gaze upon black earth, it turns to gold. At that moment, Ibrahim Haji received his share. All his shame was lifted. He stepped into the presence of the saints. And the Sultan commanded thus:

Go forth, for we have granted you Bozok and Üçok as your homeland. Let it be so, and may those little sheep be with you.

Then (Hacı İbrahim) arrived in that province. He displayed many interesting and unusual acts of sainthood and miracles. Among the Dulkadirli, he was called Hacı İbrahim. As the Hünkar had shown, Bozok and Üçok became his domain. Anyone whose foot touched a stone called out, "O Hacı İbrahim." And for a time, he was famous by this name.

Throughout his life, he never removed the deer skin that Hz. Hünkar had dressed him in. Before he died, he also dressed his disciples in deer skin headdresses. After he passed away, Dede Kargın's sons came. Hacı İbrahim said to his sons:

This deer skin crown belongs to Sultan Dede Kargın; where did you get it? They replied: Our ancestor Hacı was blessed by Hazreti Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli. Our path is from him. Dede Kargın's sons replied:

The crown of the Bektashis is the elif and the husayni. The deer skin crown belongs to our renowned ancestor Dede Kargın, they replied.

There was much debate in between. In the end, they were left helpless. They offered the deer skin they wore to the Dede Kargins. It has been definitively established that Hacı İbrahim's first spiritual guide was Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli.

The lives of Hacı Bektaş and his disciples are embellished with dreams. Old Turkish motifs form their patterns. For example, Hacı Bektaş Veli's relationship with Bozgeyikli is embellished with such a legend. The saint famous under the name Bozgeyikli is Emir Sultan.

While Hacı Bektaş Veli was praying on a grain of millet, a grain of millet grew from inside the millet. This grain became Emir Sultan. While Hacı Bektaş Veli was distributing the portions of the Urum saints, he lay down and prayed. Then, when he lay down, it occurred to him to ask Hacı Bektaş for a portion. He said to Hacı Bektaş Veli:

-Shall you throw this coin, or shall I?

Hacı Bektaş Veli Sultan says "destur" and throws the dice:

-Erciyes, hold...

The spearhead gets stuck in Mount Erciyes. Part of it breaks off. The rest falls in Syria, in a place called Beşir. The Mevali tribe lives there. When the tribe sees that a spearhead has fallen on their land, they want to remove it. However, they cannot. Some time later, Emir Sultan comes looking for the spearhead. He removes it. In doing so, he also proves that the spearhead belongs to him.

Emir Sultan is also the holder of the post. However, he later breaks away from the Hacı Bektaş lodge.

Within Alevism, ancient Turkish beliefs continue to exist under the guise of Muslim dress. For example, the institution of brotherhood, which originated in Central Asia, takes on an Islamic appearance under the name of Musahiplik. However, the institution of Musahiplik or brotherhood is not found in Arab countries. It is unique to Alevism. Some traces of brotherhood can be found in Central Asia. The word "biste" appears in Divan-ü Lugat-it Türk. The word is Sogutçadır. This word refers to the brotherhood of tradesmen. The Soğurs are among the oldest merchant peoples of Inner Asia. It is of Indo-European origin and is close to the Parsis. This institution, which promotes solidarity among craftsmen, spread among the Turks. It acquired a religious function within the Samanlik. It was brought to Anatolia by warrior veterans during the Turks' expansion into Anatolia. It continued to function as a brotherhood institution acquired later among warrior veterans. Later, in the Ahilik, it lived on in the form of solidarity among tradesmen and masters. In Alevism, it survives with its religious function. It is possible that it entered Alevism through the Ahilik. This is because the leader of the Ahis, Ahi Evran, and Sheikh Edibali were travelling companions. It may have entered Alevism through the Hacı Bektaş dervish lodge. However, Alevism may have directly continued this institution of the old religion.

As in all orders, the Ahis have infinite respect for Muhammad and his lineage. They are wholeheartedly devoted to Ali. In their secret religious ceremonies called Fütühatname, they accept Ali as their leader. Ibn Battuta speaks with great respect and excitement about the social and economic organisation of the Ahis.

The Ahis had long since recognised the need to rely on the necessary social and economic resources to Turkify Anatolia. They provided the first major example of cooperativism. They united in guilds organised around a system of labour and sweat equity, with ranks such as pir, nakip, yiğitbaş, usta, and zırak, across all branches of agriculture and industry. The realised objectives of today's trade unionism are resolved there. Even during the most glorious period of the Seljuks, the Ahis were active enough to take control of the administration of cities. Thus, they became spiritual sources for the emergence of Turkism and Bektashism. In Ahilik, chivalrous benevolence and the path of noble humanity are presented in Turkish. The rules that craftsmen and artisans' organisations must follow are compiled in a work called Fütüvvetname. The 16 rules of faith of the Ahi futuwwa saints become the fundamental principles of the Bektashi lodges. 135

After converting to Islam, the Karakhanids continued to practise their old beliefs among the Turks. Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Shamanism and Christianity found a place for themselves in the new religion. Traditions, beliefs and customs from the past found a place in some religious worship. For example, a cave that had been used as a Buddhist monastery in East Turkestan became a sacred place of pilgrimage known as the Ashab-ı kef cave. In Balkh, the Nevbahar monastery of the Buddhist Bermekoğulları is considered the tomb of Hz. Ali and is still a place of pilgrimage today. The Bermekids' acceptance of Islam was also quite painful. This monastery was destroyed during the reign of Muawiya. Even after converting to Islam, they continued to practise their old beliefs. The temple in question was later restored. Indeed, the Bermekids did not forget to link themselves to the Arab lineage.136

The Buddha statue in the mountainous regions of Turkestan is revered as Senk Hoca.137 Lighting candles at shrines is a remnant of Christianity. Wearing amulets and evil eye beads is from Buddhism, while considering certain trees and springs sacred and seeking help from them, and tying cloth to shrines, are remnants of pre-Islamic religions.138 In Tocharistan Sasanian prince Firuz's Shia legends connection to is intriguing. According to legend, Firuz's daughter Shahribanu married Hz. Hüseyin. Thus, those who came after Hz. Hüseyin were connected to both the Prophet's lineage and that of the Iranian emperor.

Thus, the remnants of ancient religions persisted across the vast area stretching from Inner Asia to Anatolia. Shamanistic traditions survived, and recent studies in Inner Asia reveal that shamanism continued to exist under the guise of Islam. East Turkestan guardians revered Fatima as a saint.

They recognise it. Supposedly, Gabriel taught this art to Mother Fatma. However, what they do is entirely based on shamanistic beliefs. Although they are Muslims, they have formed a guild. They have written a booklet as their constitution. They have named this booklet "Peri Hanlık Risalesi" (Treatise on Fairy Kingship). This name is an adaptation of the Buddhist name Burhan to the book. They have turned Burhan into "fairy reader". Supposedly, they have given it an Islamic appearance.

In Yakut games, ceremonies and rituals, shamans who are considered Muslims say "I begin in the name of Allah." Altai shamans mention prophets and Islamic saints instead of their gods. Adapting to the demands of time and circumstance, they have discarded their old gods. They content themselves with replacing them with prophets and saints. Thus, they preserve their art. Their splendid ceremonies and the wonders they perform when in a trance are more appealing to the ignorant masses than the charlatans. At its root, sorcery is also a remnant of shamanism. However, it has remained stunted because it has struggled to force itself into the guise of Islam. Sorcery cannot take hold in places where shamanism is truly represented. Remnants of ancient shamanism survive among the Muslims of Eastern and Western Turkistan.

Tying rags to graves and trees is one of the most primitive shamanic traditions. This tradition is widespread among all Muslim Turks. Shamanists generally make offerings to the spirits of mountains, forests, trees, and water, known as the "earth-water" deity. Earth-water spirits are benevolent and protective spirits. They do not demand bloody sacrifices unless offended. Muslim Turks use this to seek help from the spirit of a saint. The "Earth-Water" Gods have now settled in the graves of real or imaginary saints. Thus, they continue the practice of tying rags from the shamanic period. The bushes seen at some springheads serve the same function. Many people who believe in Islam are unaware that this is a shamanistic tradition.

One of the most common shamanistic traditions is to bring rain, hail, and storms. This important shamanistic tradition is performed with a rain stone called the "Yada" stone. When necessary, it is thrown into battle, and rain falls, storms break out, and visibility is reduced to nothing. Chinese sources write that this tradition existed among the Göktürks. The Göktürk khan, like the shamans who made it rain with the stone, created water and wind. A Buddhist Uyghur inscription describes a place of water worship. The Uyghur water worship site is a round, light-coloured place. Throughout the Middle Ages, it is constantly mentioned in all Islamic sources and by Islamic scholars. Many famous Islamic scholars say they have seen this stone. Some of them try to link the stone to Islam. Those who want to link it to Islam also invent a legend. They say that Noah the prophet,

He gave it to his son Yasef by reciting the Ismi Azam prayer. The Western Turks forgot the rain stone. But they did not forget the rain prayer. In years when drought increased as much as possible and despair set in, the people practised this belief as an Islamic belief.

Shamanic elements became more widespread as one travelled towards Central Asia. However, these elements did not become institutionalised there. In Anatolia, on the other hand, they entered a phase of institutionalisation. Among the Central Asian Turks, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz are one of the peoples who have preserved their Shamanic elements the most. They live within a strong Shamanic tradition. Centuries have passed since they converted to Islam. The entire population is devout Sunni Muslims. Nevertheless, traditions reminiscent of Anatolian Alevi beliefs continue to exist.

Even religious legends and stories are full of shamanic elements. Poetic stories and epics recounting Hazrat Ali's battle with the infidels and the murders of Hasan and Hussein are again laden with shamanistic elements. They believe these heroes were Kazakh or Kyrgyz. They have helper spirits. When they mourn, they mourn just like the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. For example, in a story recounting the events of Karbala, the mourning performed by the spirits for Hussein is described as follows:

From the third heaven above, tearing
his robe, Jesus came. Wailing, tearing
his robe, crying out, Abraham and
Ishmael also came.

At the funeral ceremony, the Prophet Jesus tears his collar. Because among the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, tearing the collar is required at funeral ceremonies.

At the beginning of the 19th century, legends about Hazreti Ali and the Kerbela incident spread among the Kazakhs. In these stories, Hz. Ali sleeps for seven days, just like the heroes of old Turkish fairy tales. He fights the enemy for seven days and seven nights. Sometimes women wrestle with the enemy. After defeating him, they marry him. Kazakh folk poets replace the old heroes and warriors with Islamic heroes such as Hamza, Ali, Hasan and Hussein. They dress up parts of the old national epics in Islamic garb. These epics live on dressed in Islamic clothing. They also help spread official Islam to the Altai interior. The themes of the stories are taken from Iranian folklore. They are adapted to appeal to Sunni Kazakhs.

The belief in wearing clothes backwards persisted among the Anatolian Turks until recently. Generally, a person who had been bewitched would wear their clothes backwards to avoid the spell's effect. Ibn Battuta describes the funeral ceremony he witnessed in Sinop as follows:

"It was the fourth day of our arrival in this city that Ibrahim Bey's mother passed away. I also attended her funeral. The Bey followed the funeral procession bareheaded and on foot. The other beys and door guards had uncovered their heads and wore their caftans backwards. The qadi, the preacher, and the teachers, on the other hand, had not uncovered their heads despite wearing their clothes inside out; instead of turbans, they had wrapped black woolen cloths around their heads. This mourning period lasted forty days among the people, and feasts were held every day, as was the case this time." 139

The belief in the evil spirit known as Al Karısı is also very widespread. Al Karısı, or albastı, is a belief common among all Muslim Turks. It is one of the living shamanistic remnants that Islam could not eradicate.

A Yakut woman without children prays by worshipping a pine tree. A similar belief also exists in Anatolia.

Lead casting is another such belief.

Hundreds of beliefs continue to exist under the guise of Islam. That is what belief is, after all.

According to the Alevi belief, the dedes (spiritual leaders) are descended from the Prophet. In this case, the dedes in question must be Arabs. It is conceivable that they assimilated into different nations over the course of time. However, this time we are faced with a significant problem. Based on fairly solid genealogical records, the Hashemite family, who are determined to be descended from the Prophet, must be Alevi. Admittedly, the chain of descent is quite complex and fragmented. Nevertheless, it is believed that the Hashemite family descends from Fatima, the Prophet's daughter who married Ali.¹⁴⁰ The Hashemite family, including King Hussein of Jordan, should be good Alevis. It is conceivable that the family lost their faith and assimilated while living among Sunnis for a long time. However, this time we encounter another problem. Anatolian Alevism is not seen in any Arab country outside Syria. Yet Syria is the centre of Muawiya's rule. Alevism survives in a country that should be the most devoutly Sunni. But Alevism is not found in the Iraqi lands where Hussein was directly killed. Neither the Shiite actions in Yemen nor the support for Ali in Morocco are Anatolian Alevism.

In Turkey, according to the widespread belief of Sharia adherents, Anatolian Alevism is a branch of Shiism. The founder of Shiism is a Jewish convert named Ibn Saba. Ibn

Sebe outwardly became a Muslim. He then introduced the heresy of Shiism to corrupt Islam.

However, a belief cannot be easily divided at someone's whim. At first glance, it may seem that religions have split due to differences in certain principles. In reality, the deep roots of division lie in national, cultural and economic reasons. The Shiism division in Islam is based entirely on the search for national identity. The most ardent defenders of the Prophet's lineage and the 12 imams come from Iran. The greatest resistance to the Umayyads' chauvinistic Arab nationalism comes from Iran. This stems entirely from Iran's deep-rooted culture. Indeed, many scholars confirm this fact. For example, according to Leon Cahen, Iran transferred its own beliefs to the new religion (Islam) as they were. Muhammad was the heir to Zoroaster.¹⁴¹ The English orientalist Arnold shares the same view.

The dynasty that had held sway over the structure of the national temple (the Sassanids) collapsed along with it. With no other centre to turn to, those of the Zoroastrian faith found an easy and straightforward path to transition from the old religion to the new. This is because the Iranians believed that many of the principles of the old religion could be found in the Qur'an. They see Ahuramazda as God and Ehrimen as Satan. The six stages of the universe's creation, angels and demons are not foreign concepts to their old religion. They also encounter heaven and hell in the new religion. The five daily prayers that came with Islam are like a reorganised form of the five daily worship sessions in the old holy book, the Avesta.

In the 640s, after 12 years of war, Iran suffered widespread Islamic expansion and lost its state and country in a dizzying manner. The national spirit adapted Zoroastrian principles to Islam in this way. It tried to preserve its identity through this method. This situation led to the Shi'ism of the defeated and collapsed Sasanian country through national sentiment. According to Gobineau, the sole reason Iran did not adopt Sunni Islam was national sentiment. Gaudefroy-Demombynes explains the origin of Iranian Shiism as follows:

The success of Shiite principles should be sought in their being the successor to the Babylonian faith. Because the Sassanid dynasty based its principles there on a sacred and divine sovereignty.

Iranian Shiites, starting from the sacred dynasty, defend that the right to caliphate belongs exclusively to the lineage of Ali. This belief, which the Sassanids inherited from ancient Babylon, finds life in Shiism through Islamic

. The marriage of Imam Hussein, the last ruler of the Sassanid dynasty, to Shahrbanu, daughter of Yazdgerd, kindled new hopes in the hearts of the Iranian people. The Iranians always viewed the lineage of Shahnaz and Hussein as the successor to their ancient sultans. Thus, the Iranian people's allegiance to the lineage of Ali became extremely strong.

When the Arabs brought Islam to Iran, they were startled by the splendour of the palaces of Medayin and the ceremonies of Giyan Jamshid. The Mubits, the scholars and priests of the ancient Iranian temples, adapted the fundamental ideas of Islam to their own behaviour and spread them. The ancient Iranians called the Arabs "tazi". This term describes the physical characteristics of the Arabs, their speed, and their fighting spirit.¹⁴³

Ultimately, the Iranian people, defeated by the Muslim Arab armies and losing their independence, adapted Islam into a national religion suited to their own circumstances. Initially, Shiism spread in Iran like a secret doctrine. In the 10th century, it emerged fully under the tolerant rule of the Samanids. In the 16th century, it became the official state religion with the Safavids.¹⁴⁴ Although Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, was a Qizilbash, he failed to impose Qizilbashism on Iran. Persian culture prevailed over Turkish culture. Just as in the field of language, in the field of religion, the religion of the conquered was absorbed by the religion of the conqueror. Iranian Shiism absorbed Turkish Kızılbaş.

In recent times, one of Tehran's enlightened ladies said to diplomat Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu:

"We have our own religion and customs dating back thousands of years. The invading Arab armies forced Islam upon us at swordpoint. Although the Iranians are now sincere Muslims, we have incorporated many beliefs from the Zoroastrian era into our new religion. You Sunnis call this Shiism. What place do the customs of Nowruz, which is directly a festival of a nature religion, and the custom of lighting fires and jumping over them a few days before it, have in Shiism, which must be regarded as a monotheistic sect despite everything?¹⁴⁵"

This is the truth. Shiism, in principle, does not differ greatly from Sunnism in terms of worship and belief. Shiism differs from Sunnism in that it considers rabbits unclean and does not eat them. The prohibition on rabbits originates from Judaism. On the other hand, Islam does not reject Judaism! It sees no harm in adopting a number of beliefs and practices from Judaism. The Jewish friendship evident in Muhammad's practices later turned into anti-Semitism.

This argument is completely inconsistent. If Sunni Islam developed over time based on Arab chauvinism, Shiism also sought to expand by relying on Iranian racism and Persian nationalism.¹⁴⁶ The blood ties between Shiism and Anatolian Alevism also stem from this. The common ground between the two at their root is their opposition to racist Arab nationalism. This will develop as Shiism in one and Alevism in the other.

Despite all this, the founders of Shiism were not Persians. Shiism originated among the Arabs. However, the Persians embraced this sect wholeheartedly, as it satisfied their national sentiments more than Sunni Islam. They sought to continue the sacred tradition of sovereignty they had acquired from the Sassanids in the lineage of Ali. They combined the legendary hero Rostam with Ali, and throughout Islamic history, they incorporated Iranian traditions, lifestyles and arts into this sect. For this reason, Iran falls within the circle of Persian culture within Islamic culture.

Shiism emerged with the claim of allegiance to Ali and the Prophet's family. The Umayyad dynasty, established by Muawiya, the son of Abu Sufyan, whose very Islam is questionable, waged a relentless war against the Prophet's family members. As a result of this conflict based on hatred, Islam split into seventy-three sects. After this division, Shiism managed to unite twenty of them under its umbrella. At this time, the so-called Abdullah ibn Saba succeeded in sowing discord among Islamic beliefs. He introduced an extreme movement known as Mu'tazilah into Shiism. This sect deifies Ali. Ali fought against this idea during his lifetime.¹⁴⁷ In reality, the belief in deifying humans also originates from ancient religions. It found supporters in regions where ancient beliefs were prevalent.

The concept of the Mahdi in Shiism also has very ancient origins. The concept of the Mahdi emerged with the hope of a "savior of tomorrow." It is a concept of hope that exists in all of humanity. This characteristic is very clearly emphasised in the epics of nations. The Torah foretells the coming of a prophet in the end times. This final prophet will be the Messiah. The Messiah will come, take charge of the Jews, and make the Jewish nation dominant in the world. The same belief continues in Christianity in a different form.

In Islam, the concept of the "Mahdi," awaited by ancient beliefs, also developed in Iran. Iranian scholars argued that Islam would one day split into seventy-three sects, from which a "firka-i naciye" (savior community) would emerge. Scholars cite a hadith of the Prophet as evidence for this argument. According to the same argument, those who recognise Ali's value will be at the head of the saved community. Ali is the gate of the city of knowledge. Those who do not shake his hand cannot enter divine knowledge. Ali is the lion of Allah. Ali is the mirror of the spiritual world. Ali is the martyr without a grave. Ali

is a person who has been removed from sight, carrying his own dead. He is the one who has earned the right to be awaited. Ali is not seen, but is found in the heart.

These sentiments have emerged from a region steeped in religion. Inspired by the beliefs of Zoroaster and Buddha, they have been channelled into a spiritual legacy. Nourished by ancient Iranian civilisations, these ideas are brought to life in the most vivid and exaggerated form in the spirit of the people.

The concept of the Mahdi is embellished with different motifs in Anatolia. In Anatolian Alevism, the Mehdi is a powerful being who carries the sword of justice and righteousness in his hand and will bring abundance and celebration wherever he goes. This supreme being is God, who will uphold his mystical rules and ensure that no one's rights are violated. This concept is embellished with the most beautiful words in Alevi sayings:

If my grandfather Mehdi were to
come, he would establish a
supreme court, he would break
the unjust.

This is the exalted being endowed with the qualities of the Anatolian gods of abundance. Should he come forth on a journey, Shah roses will bloom, abundant mercy will rain down, blessed days will dawn, and the wretched weeping in Urum will rejoice and smile. The Sultan will not drown the innocent, nor will he turn a deaf ear to the cries of the people. The Pasha will not silence the voice of truth. The rights of orphans and the poor will not be violated, and those who dispense justice will not open the doors to injustice. There will be no oppression, and God's justice will prevail. This Mehdi is Imam Hasan's son, Muhammad Mehdi. He died at the age of seven (or nine) in the 10th century. But he will return at the end of the world. When he comes, God's order will descend upon the earth, and the wolf will walk with the lamb. People will boast only of their own merits. No one will take anyone else's rights. No one will die of gluttony, and no one will die of starvation.

The problems and contradictions within Islam itself later reveal their impact. This is particularly evident in the injustice done to Ali and his family. Injustice done to a righteous person causes that person to acquire a legendary status in the Turkish spirit. Indeed, among the Turkish people, Ali takes on the identity of the ancient heroes. Sometimes he becomes a wise figure like Dede Korkut, sometimes a brave figure like Oğuz Khan. Against Arab chauvinism, the choice within Islam is always to side with Ali. Ali is woven into the Turkish memory with other motifs. Everything good, beautiful, and virtuous in the past is embodied in Ali's image. This Ali, adorned with the light of Turkish epics, has taken on a sparkling image detached from reality in the form . . . Kul Himmət, Ali's people eating giant

in a very skilful, lengthy verse. Some of the quatrains of this verse are as follows:

When there were no humans on earth and
no angels in the sky, A light descended
from Power and flowed down. All
creatures were like the light in a lamp,
The moon was Ali, and the letter 'mim'
was Muhammad.

Then the giant and the fairy were
created. Each ruled with a kaftan and
a turban. They had a sultan among
them, a mighty warrior, a true hero.

He could wield a three-hundred-and-fifty-
pound mace, A long spear, he could
destroy Kuh-u Kafi. All the giants feared
him, He was respected in all seven climes
and four corners.

There was a mountain on Mount Kaf, made
of dates. At that time, there were no
humans in the world. He saw a fresh young
man in the garden.

She was overjoyed and delighted,

saying, "Are you Nigar?" and

offered her hand.

She lost herself, her state faded away.
Özge could not fathom her condition.
She fell face down at once.

Many thousands of years passed,
many thousands of hours The earth
stood still, seven layers rose up Ali
and Muhammad appeared Before
them, a giant arose and knelt

The giant said, "A curiosity has taken
hold of me" I cannot come again, my
destination is far The boy I sought is
certainly here

My body turned to embers.

Selman saw Ali in his robe. The giant wrapped himself in Muhammad's cloak. When there was no human on earth or angel in heaven, I heard that many giant heads were cut off.

Both great and small heard this news. Who has attained Ali's secret? The giant became a Muslim and returned to his homeland. The congregation dispersed and disintegrated.

The elements in the saying are interpreted in different ways among the Alevi of Anatolia. The subject is generally as follows:

In the era when there were no humans on earth and no angels in the heavens, a light descended. All that was to be created was still but a light in the lamp. In that age, a giant and a fairy were created. Each ruled from Mount Kaf to Mount Kaf. But they also had a sultan. The sultan was three hundred and sixty cubits tall. His splendour was unlike that of any creature. His face is seventy-seven cubits long. When he looks, everything from east to west becomes flat. This brave man wields a mace weighing three hundred and fifty batmans. On Mount Kaf, there is a mountain called Hurma. Inside the garden, he sees a young boy. He rejoices and becomes happy. "Are you an apparition, my beloved?" he asks, reaching out his hand. He faints, losing consciousness. Seven days later, he regains consciousness. His hands are bound, his eyes filled with blood. To have his bonds loosened, he appeals to Sultan Suleiman. Suleiman asks the Giant who bound him. The Giant says it is not a matter of reason or logic. A child bound him. Suleiman declares he knows the mystery of this matter. He senses who did it. He tells the giant, "The Prophet Muhammad exists, he will come, he can solve your problem." Thousands of years, thousands of hours pass. The earth settles and becomes seven layers. Ali and Muhammad appear on earth. The giant revives and stands before Muhammad. The giant wants to see the boy who tied him up. When he sees the boy, he screams in astonishment.

There are different versions of this legend. According to an elder from the Erzincan region, the boy did not train just one giant, but all the giants beyond Mount Kaf. Every morning when the giants wake up, they want to cross Mount Kaf and come to Earth.

"Is Ali in the world?" they ask. They receive the answer "Yes" and abandon the idea of crossing the mountain.

The legend of Ali carrying his own body is also illuminated by the light of Turkish epics. The story goes as follows:

Shortly before Ali was martyred, he called his sons Hasan and Hussein to him. He informed them that he would soon depart from this world. "After I die, a veiled man on a camel will come. He will ask you for death. Give him death without resistance. Do not ask any questions," he advised. Indeed, on the morning of Ali's death, a veiled man arrives on a camel. He loads Ali's body onto the camel and carries it away. After the man leaves, Hasan and Hussein become suspicious. They feel remorse. They run after the dead body. They want to see the veiled man's face. The man understands their suspicion. He lifts the veil from his face. It is Ali who is carrying the dead body on the camel. The sons realise that the dead man, the veiled man, and in some accounts the camel, are their father.

Whether Turkish or Iranian, all peoples find their identity in Ali's allegiance. The most ardent defenders of the 12 imams and the prophet's lineage come from Iran. Iran overthrows the Umayyad rule. Iran revives the Abbasids.

Eba Müslüm of Horasan, who emerged from Merv, put an end to the Umayyad rule and handed power over to the Abbasids. During the Abbasid era, Muslim nations were granted a certain degree of freedom. Arab social and political pressure was broken to a certain extent. Non-Arab Muslim writers began to defend their own national traditions, historical honour, and languages against the Arabs. They wrote books for this purpose. In response, the Arabs also took action. Both sides resorted to publications disparaging each other.

As explained in detail in the previous section, the Turks did not welcome Islam with drums and pipes. The Turks embraced Islam after a long resistance. This period was painful and agonising. After this encounter in 642, the conflict between the Turks and Arabs reached its peak during the Umayyad period. With the fall of the Umayyads, there was a softening between the Turks and the Islamic empire. It would take a long process of 300 years, and only in 940 would this conversion be complete. This was inevitable. It is unthinkable that societies and nations, consisting of individual people, would immediately embrace new trends and ideologies in areas such as religion, philosophy, and art. People and societies cannot easily break away from their old habits and values.

The spread of Islam is based on the principle of holy war, known as "jihad". It comes by force of arms. Other nations will choose Islam and become part of the Arab empire. It is unthinkable that the Turks, who are extremely attached to their independence, would surrender their independent states of their own accord. Moreover, during the period when the Turks encountered Islam, the Arab empire was ruled directly by the Umayyad family, who were Arab nationalists. In this environment, it was impossible for the Turks to voluntarily give up their independence and surrender to the Arabs. Furthermore, in the name of religion, they would have to pay tax upon tax to the Arabs.

For all these reasons, the Turks' conversion to Islam would be a long process. Şerafettin Turan divides this transition into three phases.¹⁴⁸ In the first phase, individual conversions to Islam occur among the Turks. This period spans approximately from 642 to 761. In the second stage, some Turkish tribes convert and begin to take on roles in the Islamic army and administration (751-868). In the third stage, mass conversion begins. The first Islamic Turkish states are established (868-940). Meanwhile, old beliefs mix with Islamic beliefs. New combinations emerge. In reality, no belief can completely eradicate the belief that came before it. All religions develop by assimilating the beliefs and traditions of the religions that came before them. None of the revealed religions can rid themselves of the remnants of primitive religions. At their core, revealed religions are based on evolution. They preserve the customs and rituals of ancient religions.

Christianity produced great enlightened religious figures such as Luther and Erasmus during the Middle Ages. These enlightened thinkers criticised the religious backwardness of their times. Christianity, clergy, and superstitions came under heavy attack from these two thinkers. Both started from the individual's personality and freedom. Luther placed greater emphasis on the divine aspect of this personality. Erasmus, on the other hand, focused on the human aspect. Both, as humanists and theologians, placed great value on the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. For Luther, the holy books are everything. Erasmus, on the other hand, has reviewed many works by Greek and Roman thinkers. According to him, the Bible does not have the final say. Following these progressive statements, Luther breaks away from the Roman Church. With his critical ideas, he pioneers a new chain of churches under the name of the Protestant Church. Innovative clergymen made this line even more distinct. After Calvin came Erasmus. He opposed following Luther. There is a difference between Luther and Erasmus in terms of the places they travelled to. Unfortunately, Luther travelled to and saw very few countries. However, clergymen need to see many places.

Muhammad presents himself as the successor to the Jewish and Christian prophets. With a distinction, Muhammad spreads his teachings in regions where Christianity has not spread; Islam emerges in that region because it suits the Arabs and Muhammad's personality. However, the main determining factor is the existence of a void in belief in that region. Religious ideas are like water. They flow to where they can be easily reached. Just as Judaism played a significant role in the spread of Christianity, it also played a significant role in the spread of Islam. At that time, there were Jews and their religion in the world. Jewish traditions were initially maintained in Mecca and Medina. But eventually, the people split into two groups: Christians and Muslims. The boundaries of Christianity became the boundaries of Roman-Greek culture. Islam, on the other hand, reached Europe under the Turkish flag. The most interesting aspect is that both Christianity and Islam originated from Judaism, and both formed major centres of power in different countries around the world, while Judaism, the original source of both, remained completely stunted.

The beliefs of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost have existed among the peoples of Western Europe since ancient times. Easter is the universal summer festival from the era when ancient people worshipped nature. Three thousand years before Jesus, the nomadic Jewish people called this festival "Pesah." To secure God's mercy, they sacrificed the firstborn of their flocks. After the Jews settled in Palestine and began farming, the tradition of unleavened bread was added to this sacrificial ceremony. Later, this ceremony took on the character of a religious festival commemorating the joyous day of the Jews' exodus from Egypt. However, at its root, this festival is a belief in nature, given in honour of the God of nature who dies in winter and is reborn in spring.

Christians adapted this nature worship festival to the Bible and transformed it into a magnificent religious festival honouring the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Iranian festivals of Mihrgan and Nowruz also originate from the same source. The Hıdırellez festival among the Turks also has the same roots. The trace of the old belief has been preserved in the name of "Hızır" (greenery). The Hızır-İlyas traditions in Turkish folklore bear the traces of the most ancient Mithraic culture.

In this context, Roman and Hellenic idolatrous traditions managed to infiltrate Christian culture. Christian clergy, unable to resist popular inclination, replaced idols with images and sculptures of Jesus, Mary, the apostles and saints, along with the cross. Thus, Christianity incorporated many traditions of idolatry into the very heart of the church.¹⁴⁹

h. Akbar the Great

We understand that there is an old tradition of religious debate among the Turks. Indeed, in the 17th century, we witness a similar religious debate in the Indian court. Let us take a look at this religious debate:

Akbar was the third of the Indo-Turkic emperors. He lived from 1542 to 1605. He was an extremely intelligent and open-minded person. He constantly acquired knowledge about history, philosophy and religious rules by educating those around him. He had a mystical disposition. In a country like India, where the world's major religions intermingle, he showed great interest in religious beliefs and conflicts. From the very beginning, his most sincere wish was to establish friendships based on tolerance between different religions, sects and races. In the 1570s, Akbar began to harbour doubts about Islam, and two or three years later he had a divan built in his palace. He named it the House of Worship. In reality, it had nothing to do with a temple. Religious debates were held there. He gathered sheikhs, seyyids, scholars, court officials, and those interested in religion. He organised debates. Initially, only Muslims participate in these discussions. In 1576, he wants to go on the Hajj, but they dissuade him. However, doubts constantly linger in his mind. After a while, he wants to give up his habit of eating meat, but he cannot. During the same period, he organises a hunt on the banks of a river. The hunt lasts four days. Many animals are killed. On the fourth day, the circle is narrowed. The mass killing of the animals cornered in the centre begins. At this moment, Akbar Khan suddenly stops the hunt and forbids the killing or wounding of living creatures. After the hunt, religious debates resume. For the first time, Christians, Hindus, Zoroastrians, and Sabians participate in the religious debate. The Zoroastrian scholar Mahyarci becomes the most influential figure in the debates. His influence on Akbar is clearly perceptible. During those days, worship of the sun and ceremonies with candles are ordered. Some believe Akbar to be a Zoroastrian, but the sultan deceives them again and delivers a sermon on a Mevli day. He then warmly welcomes a Christian delegation. He ordered his sons to learn Christianity. The Christians placed great hope in the sultan, believing they had won him over, but their hopes were dashed, as Akbar Shah remained committed to Islam.

But Ekber is studying the principles, rules and rituals of Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. He thinks long and hard about each one. He finds each one sufficient and satisfying. He likes Islam the most, but he is turning away from it because of the formalism and intolerance of religious scholars. On the other hand, he also likes many principles of the Zoroastrian, Hindu, and Jain religions. However, he does not join any of them. Ultimately, he proposes a religion composed of the synthesis of all religions

He calls this the "divine religion." He convenes a large assembly to explain the new religion. There, he addresses the differences between religions. He describes the evils of religious strife. He advocates that all religions should unite in one religion, but that none should disappear. In this way, God will be realised. Thus, people will attain peace and countries will attain security. This new religious quest has an important benefit: it also prohibits the Hindu customs of burning women whose husbands have died and marrying off young children.

Akbar Shah is making considerable efforts to spread his own religion. But he does not resort to force. He also wants to convert his foster brother to this religion. But his foster brother cannot withstand this pressure and flees to Mecca. However, he is disgusted by the greed he sees in Mecca. Upon returning from the pilgrimage, he too chooses the Divine Religion. But the number of those who choose the Divine Religion does not exceed a few thousand. Upon Akbar's death in 1605, the Divine Religion disappears entirely.

Niyazi Berkes takes a slightly more optimistic view of this event. In his opinion, Ekber was a ruler who had not fallen into the hands of the official ulema. In a country like India, where religions coexist, he was open-minded enough to ask questions such as "what is religion", "what is it good for" and "what is it not good for". Akbar joined the Chishti order during its revival against the Naqshbandi order, under the leadership of its then-famous figure, Sheikh Selim. At that time, Chishti Sufism attracted Hindus more than the bigoted ulema. Akbar wanted to use this to create a political imperial union. It is not considered heresy for someone like Akbar, who considered himself the most powerful emperor in the world, to want to understand the religious arguments of these men, especially for the purposes of trade, recognition, and perhaps even missionary work. Berkes does not believe that Akbar established a religion that worshipped him and spread it.¹⁵⁰

Collectively speaking, there are very few nations on earth that are so interested in religion. Turkish identity has always shown great interest in beliefs that seek to explain the unknown. Until they find Islam, which will be their final destination, they try all the religions of the world one after another. They live with tolerance to the end in the context of religion and belief. They are not content with adhering to separate and diverse religious understandings. They enter various religions one after another. They have become people of separate religious beliefs among the peoples of large countries. They see no harm in abandoning a religion they do not find suitable for themselves and adopting one they find suitable instead. They do not consider belonging to different religions and sects a cause for hostility or alienation. Even after becoming Muslims, they continue to show interest in other religious beliefs, such as , , , , , and , , as they did before.

They continue to show interest in other religious xml-ph-0005@deepl.internal beliefs xml-ph-0006@deepl.internal. They translate religious texts into their languages. They ask questions to theologians. They organise debates on religious issues. They invite as many representatives as possible from different religious beliefs to these meetings.

Ultimately, the Turkish spirit is fundamentally universal in terms of faith. According to this understanding, all faiths can and must coexist in peace. This is the view they defend. Their understanding is close to the concept of contemporary secularism. According to French scientist Jean-Paul Roux, "This has been one of their greatest contributions to civilisation."¹⁵¹ Because of this interest, Turks see no harm in trying out many religions. The interesting thing is that in Turkey, it is the nobility who choose religion rather than the common people. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir explains this situation as follows:

This is a characteristic of our nation. The course of our history has developed this characteristic. The plateau and military life we have lived for centuries has elevated a social command and discipline system above all else. Will the authority representing this social conscience be a khan, a chief, or a council? It is sufficient that there be an office whose will can dominate the entire nation... Then, even if the laws coming from it change the entire order of life, they flow easily into the soul of the nation like water.

In fact, there is no need for us to foresee or approve this will coming from above. While we appear to be loyal to the sultan, if he tells us to "Depose your sultan," if we hate hats but he tells us to "You will wear hats," if we keep our women hidden behind veils but he tells us "Women will participate in daily life," then what he says always happens. This is how the historical wheel of progress appears to us. ¹⁵²

The author's judgement is as follows:

"Any kind of revolution can happen in Turkey, but only through the law!

How is it that such a tolerant nation today exhibits a bigoted social structure?

This stems from the centuries-old medieval fog that surrounds Eastern societies. Valuable researchers such as Şevket Süreyya Aydemir and Niyazi Berkes have understood our social structure well. All efforts at progress have been constantly opposed by the argument that 'religion is being lost'. For example, Niyazi Berkes wrote the following lines from Pakistan in 1958:

Thousands of bearded men dressed like pilgrims in the tea houses. People lying down, playing the gramophone with their thumb. People sitting openly on the side of the street, urinating, relieving themselves. When I first saw this in Karachi, I couldn't believe my eyes and said, "What is this man doing there?" Looking more closely, I realised; the man was sitting there, doing his business in plain view of everyone passing by. He was watching the comings and goings with a carefree air.

That road was actually an asphalt road. But there was no pavement. A dark blue, filthy stream flowed along the asphalt. The man had managed to land right in the middle of it, surrounded by little piles of human waste. The stench of filth and urine. Don't ask.

I'm writing this to you. If I told the intellectuals here, they'd kill me. The most merciful would say, "There's no such thing; you saw it wrong," and then call you blind, a liar, a slanderer.

This is what they call Islamic civilisation. They plan to establish an "Islamic State" on top of this. The laws will be based on the Quran and Sharia!

Many professors at universities (most of whom studied at Oxford or Cambridge, very few in Germany) are passionately debating the ideology of establishing such an Islamic state. Some of the speeches I listened to seemed like utter nonsense to me at times. Their outward appearance is also quite something. Some wear fez hats, some black caps. Some have beards, some wear turbans. A few have hennaed hands. Some resemble pilgrim fathers. But they are all "doctors". Some are "scholars". In our country, this word carries a slightly derisive connotation. Not here. They are the equivalent of our "Ord. Prof. Dr.", but they must surpass them all in terms of the "Islamic State" ideology!

There are more "allâme" outside the universities. They are people with the power to make others do what they want. One of them (he had a very loud name, but I forgot it. For example, names like "Pride of Islam" or "All-Knowing Scholar of the World." There are so many that I can't remember which one I'm talking about.) Yes, this scholar stood in the middle of a boulevard like McLeod Boulevard one day, holding his cane upright:

-Last night in my dream, it was revealed to me; Sheikh so-and-so is lying in a shrine- he said.

If you dare, say "no." The fellow had built some kind of tomb or shrine there; it was up to his mercy.

Educated, enlightened people tell me these things. I can't believe what they're saying.

-Can such things happen?- I ask.

"They do," they say.

I am gradually coming to understand the true role of these religious "scholars." The Islamic State is religious terrorism under totalitarianism. It is thanks to the terrorism perpetrated by these individuals

is why the professors I spoke to at the university talk such nonsense. Woe betide those who don't speak that way! Otherwise, there are intelligent, knowledgeable people among these professors. Perhaps many. But there is clearly no freedom of thought.

Moreover, when a discussion about the ideology of the Islamic State begins, such a race starts that you wouldn't believe. Whoever talks the most nonsense about this ideology, whoever uses the most demagoguery, whoever insults Western civilisation the most, becomes the most famous.

Therefore, it seems to me that the reason professors educated in Germany say such absurd things is not out of ignorance, but out of fear.

Just think about it, Enver, if one day we go back to beginnings like the Menderes era and the people in the minds of these religious "scholars" take over, the same things will happen in Turkey. Religious policies will emerge. Talk of a Sharia state will begin. Words like Kemalism and secularism will be unmentionable. Those who speak against what the Sharia advocates say will be labelled infidels, communists, or reds. Aren't such people already called "leftists" now? Weren't we paraded in the newspapers for two years as "leftist professors"? One day, all intellectuals will be branded the same. Because I know that just as the conditions I described to you in Pakistan have deep roots in that society, they also have seeds here. And one day, these seeds will sprout; just as in Pakistan, if intellectuals spout nonsense or remain silent, these seeds will take root. Now imagine the madness that will engulf everything." 153

The situations described by sociologist Niyazi Berkes from Pakistan also have their roots in Turkey. Much water has flowed under the bridges between 1958 and 1995. The state sought to form a front against Communism with the "Green Belt" measure. Under American supervision, the "Turkish-Islamic" combination was put forward as the most effective force against Communism. This idea, whose degree of Islamism and Turkism was never fully understood, shaped the state's educational agenda. It developed as a short-term, cheap method of political success. Religious exploitation became the easiest means for provincial politicians elected from liberal right-wing parties to reach their constituencies. However, the loud-mouthed politicians waiting in line in the provinces always left those in the capital behind. As a result of these increasing setbacks, the Madımak Hotel in Sivas was burned down and the writers and artists inside were killed. The events that surprised Prof. Berkes in Pakistan in March 1959 have now occurred in Turkey. This time, it is time to ask ourselves the following questions:

In a country where material civilisation has spread through asphalt roads, railways, ports, mines, factories and universities, why has there been no revolution in mindsets or social structure? How is it that modern civilisation and the Middle Ages coexist in this country? How is it that everything associated with backwardness – in a country where there is no salvation except through a great and profound social revolution – has become cherished values? How will we emerge from this in the future? For example, it is now Ramadan. Preparations have long since begun at the university. I am following it with interest. I read the rector's written instructions. There is no breakfast or lunch in the dormitories. Fasting is compulsory. Tea, coffee, cigarettes and water are banned at professors' meetings. No radio will be played. There are professors who are officially members of the Communist Party in the neighbourhood. All of them are "purda" and fasting. They themselves are of this mindset. So, how is such dualism possible? It seems to me that if we hadn't had an Atatürk and his legacy, we would be just like this. Indeed, aren't we heading in that direction today? Perhaps one day girls will be forced to wear burqas to university here too. Already, the places where girls take their exams are being covered with curtains. Girls who are "purda" – and even more so those who are not – are exempt from attending classes, even in veiled carriages. Private tutors go to their homes, and when they are ready for exams, they come in tightly closed, curtain-covered carriages and take their exams in these curtain-covered places. There is democracy, after all, and no one interferes with anyone's preferences. In the class I teach, there are three female students under the so-called "tent" covering. I have never seen their faces or heard their voices even once. They sit in a separate area of the classroom. When the bell rings, they leave first, followed by the male students. 154

In Turkey in 1990, all the events that took place in Pakistan in 1958-59 were repeated. Religious education was made compulsory in the secular state. The most severe insults against Atatürk were hurled in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. A person sitting in the presidential chair sent a telegram to the birthday celebration of a madman who had become a symbol of reactionaryism. A college-educated, civilised-looking member of parliament proposed a bill to move Friday prayer times to the holiday period. Leftists who considered Atatürk a reactionary began to speak of the stagnation of Atatürk's reforms. In this environment, one feels compelled to rebel like Niyazi Berkes and cry out:

"Where are you, Atatürk? Will those from the generation you raised only understand you better when they come to the East? Haven't some of those young people, whose pure blood you boasted about, already turned towards the backwardness I see? Oh, let them not come here to understand you. They may learn such skills that they will carve your name into the pages of Turkish history at a depth where it will never be read again. I already sense that the path they have taken is leading to the same things for Turkey." 155

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