

RELIGIOUS ADVICE IN NEWSPRINT:  
THE CASE OF BÜYÜK DOĞU

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2015

RELIGIOUS ADVICE IN NEWSPRINT:  
THE CASE OF BÜYÜK DOĞU

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
CULTURAL STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 2015

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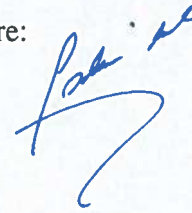
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## ABSTRACT

### RELIGIOUS ADVICE IN NEWSPRINT: THE CASE OF *BÜYÜK DOĞU*

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September 2015, 84 pages

This thesis is an inquiry into the use of religious advice itself. As the main element of constructing a religious life, the practice of religious advice giving is a larger concept than simply uttering rights or wrongs. It is the tool which connects the two worlds, and produces “worldly” and “sacred” activities, paradigms, knowledge by treating the source of faith. This treatment always consists of some interpretation. While the differences in the co-existence of various forms of Islam(s) is a clear result of this situation, the role of “agents” is obviously crucial in the process. This work aims at unveiling this constructive aspect of religious advice, and focuses on the case of *Büyük Doğu* journal. It questions the act of sending religious messages through modern means of communication and within changing sense of temporality with the modern age. *Büyük Doğu*'s project of constructing a pure religious life by means of religious advice and a journal in an environment where the religious community can hardly hold on to its values and cannot even see them materialized most of the time which is mostly expressed with the word “crisis,” is analysed depending on the theories of modernity and nationalism.

**Keywords:** media, religious advice, *Büyük Doğu*, nationalism, modernity

## ÖZ

### YAZILI BASINDA DİNİ NASİHAT: *BÜYÜK DOĞU* ÖRNEĞİ

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Eylül 2015, 84 Sayfa

Bu tez dini nasihat pratiklerine dair bir araştırmadır. Bir dini hayat oluşturmanın temel elementi olarak dini nasihat verme pratiği basitçe doğruları ya da yanlışları söylemekten çok daha fazlasını içeren karmaşık bir olgudur. Bir anlamda, dini nasihat, inancın kaynağını oluşturan malumatı işleyerek iki dünyayı birbirine bağlayan, “dünyevi” ve “kutsal” faaliyet, paradigma ve bilgi üreten aracı ifade eder. Bu işleme eylemi daima yorum içermektedir. Bu durumun net bir sonucu olarak çeşitli İslam biçimlerinin birlikte var olabilmelerinin yanında, aracı kullanan aktörlerin rolünün hayati olduğu da açıktır. Bu çalışma, dini nasihatın bu kurucu yönünü aydınlatma amacıyla *Büyük Doğu* dergisine odaklanırken aynı zamanda modern çağın yeni medya araçları ve kendi zamansallığı içerisinde nasihat etme durumunu sorgulamaktadır. Dini cemaatlerin değerlerine zorlukla tutunabildikleri ve çoğu kez gerçeğe dökemedikleri, sık sık “buhran” sözcüğü ile ifade edilen bir halin yaşandığı bir ortamda, *Büyük Doğu* dergisinin dini nasihatler ve dergi yoluyla saf bir dini yaşam inşa etme projesi, milliyetçilik ve modernite teorileri eşliğinde analiz edilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** medya, dini nasihat, *Büyük Doğu*, milliyetçilik, modernite

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude, first of all, to my adviser Professor Mahmut Mutman who guided, encouraged and supported me not only in the process of writing my thesis, but also during the whole time I spent in his programme. I would like to thank Assist. Prof. Aslı Telli Aydemir and Assist. Prof. Fatih Altuğ who spent their valuable time for and contributed to the completion of this work. I would also like to thank to all the professors I had the chance to work with at Istanbul Şehir University, who made my work and studies an enriching and joyful experience, most notably Assoc. Prof. Fahrettin Altun, Prof. Irvin Cemil Schick, and Professor Ferhat Kentel.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Religious Advice

With Durkheim's well-known definition, "unified systems of beliefs and rituals relative to conceptions of the sacred,"<sup>1</sup> religion has two constituent aspects, roughly, one theoretical and one practical, which can most easily, though incompletely, be expressed with the widely-used words, belief and worship. These two aspects of religion differentiate it from meta-narratives, philosophies, worldviews and living modes by their self-reflectivity. By self-reflecting, I mean that the aspects bear a sincerity which can seem strange to the modern man who is accustomed to look for a scientific-rational basis for truth and legitimacy. Religions can be seen as transparent forms of the sources of "knowledge" we deal with in modern life.

For instance, in terms of the aspect of belief, religions, in what they present as truth, differ from other narratives, with their open demand for "faith" in their claims. Even though religions present their proofs for the rightfulness of the vision they suggest, in the last instance, it is "faith" they demand on behalf of the "believer," unlike modern "ideologies" which demand a rational confirmation of a certain logic. Although this is an interesting topic in itself, the subject of this thesis will focus more on the self-reflective nature of the practical aspect of religion.

To be able to grasp the idea of self-reflectivity of "practice" in religion, it will be better to start from the metaphorical bottom, the ultimate purpose of the practical aspect of religion, which is to create (both individually and socially) a religious life. The difference between a life that is religious, and a separate, religious part of life should be noted.<sup>2</sup> The difference here at stake will also help us realize the not very visible yet constructive roof of a religious life (the former). While for a person, worshipping activities and religious rituals are enough to create a particular section

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<sup>1</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 44.

<sup>2</sup> One can also claim that the former is the religion's target, while the latter is a modern notion.

of life that is sufficient for us to call “religious,” a religious life – the theoretical ideal that the religion aims to achieve – one that puts religion at the center and acknowledges it as the primary source of truth and therefore of individual actions and wider circles, on the other hand, requires more. But before naming it, we should continue working our way up from the bottom.

In any case and naturally, the visible emergence of a religious life is still only possible with religious activities/rituals (worshipping, rituals, praying etc.). But beyond this religious acting lies huge fields that religion still yearns to interact with, and even dominate. Islam, for instance, organizes life so inclusively that we see almost every corner of it become a discussion topic for the religion. The objectives may differ, values attributed can change, but as much as the so-called five pillars of Islam, from trade, marriage, social interactions, domestic relations... to evaluating the smallest details of existence, the religion can cover everything. One wonders, can there really be anything forgotten? Or, can anything other than a religion (dare) grasp human life so completely?

If the travel range of a “religious life” is so wide, and if other than a catalogue of worshipping activities, social, political, economic, even natural topics are also within this range, even at the beginning of a discussion, it is difficult to talk about pure and clear-cut “divine” rules established to cover every inch of life by a certain religion, regulating one’s life accordingly, unless we believe in a divinity shadowing everywhere ready to say something for every action which of course renders life meaningless. Of course this is why there are (the Qu’ranic or prophetic) orders, mostly general ones, and patterns of behaviour: to be interpreted-utilized (plus analogies). A different way to express this idea is to say, in an old fashioned way, that humans have free will and they make decisions and fill the blanks, with religious matters as much as anything else. This, a simple deduction, yet also a surprisingly controversial condition due to easily conjecturable reasons, shows us: what comes with belief requires to be treated, and the more it wants to cover life the more it needs to be treated.<sup>3</sup> Historically, we see that this treatment gives two results: they generate legal systems and religious laws to be implemented by means of force, and they can generate all “the rest.” The subject of this thesis is “the rest.”

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<sup>3</sup> Another word for this treatment is of course “agency” which, as we will later see, makes full use of the word’s capacity.

Unless we are talking about a legal system implementing religious laws, or direction applied by force, when there is a religious life in question, or even a claim to it, one thing is certain; there must be life-organizing religious “messages;” to be given, taken, employed, arranged, propagated, transformed (together with time or conditions), developed, dealt with, obeyed, questioned, used as means for salvage or damnation... or to sum; to be circulated and be worked dynamically among the individuals of a community.

By message, or to put it better, religious message, I mean any such words and ideas that are conveyed to someone else or to one’s own self, within a very broad religious context. These messages can be about basic faith related subjects, holy orders, or issues that are not directly religious. (Ideas can be repetitions, interpretations, explanations-exegeses... that are formed to be conveyed to someone else.) In a way, message-giving/sending is the broadest form of religious practice. In a world where the dogma has such a strong authority that it can establish a relationship with everything, everything can be a religious topic and can be learned “properly”; how to believe, what to believe in, how to pray, what to pray, how to eat, what to eat... So it can be said that the circulation of these “messages” that organize a “religious” life – as much as they are organized within it – is a wider phenomenon than sets of religious rules or criteria and even inclusive of them. From another angle, it is the very circulation of these messages, the activity itself that is the hallmark of an autonomous (in the sense that it is a realm outside of a legal system) religious life.

The self-reflecting nature of these “messages” shows itself in the form we will name them. The organization of life in accordance with an ideology, doctrine or a worldview, of course, requires that messages related with them be spread, propagated. But a religion differs from others, again with its traditional “sincerity,” this time in its efforts for spreading constitutive messages. Just as it asks for “belief,” and does not present a straight line of logic to be followed, it spreads its ideas in the form of an open “advice,” and the action depends on the authority of God – in a system which bases all on the authority of God, who must have created all and guides his creations in the best way – which makes any other reason or justification for the action secondary, if not redundant. Since what religion asks for is “belief,” a religious environment is created with an immense network of sermons from the smallest detail to the largest and most complex issues. Since every message will in

the end depend on God, as long as it does not become a law, or imposed forcefully, a religious message will be, first and foremost, an “advice.”

In this world organized by religion, “life-organizing messages” in the form of advice, are the source of energy, the incentive of activities in the “proper,” right, just, beautiful etc. ways. They are the electrical grid of a huge metropolis. Religious behaviour, rules and rituals cannot cover this system, on the contrary, they, the city’s machinery depend on the power the grid provides. Life-organizing religious messages indicate a bigger concept, the grid at work in the religious community is an organism which is incredibly functional yet still so uncertain and flexible in terms of the products it gives.

## **1.2. Outline of analysis**

This thesis aims at unveiling this constructive aspect of religious advice which is a new concept itself for the study of religion with the way it is concretized as a well detailed concept in this work. In this respect, the case of *Büyük Doğu* will be the first application of analysis by means of this viewpoint. Therefore, more than negating or assisting ideas already uttered on *Büyük Doğu*, or the Islamist tradition belonging to it, it focuses on using the journal as an experimental object for a better understanding of a significant turning point in the utilization of the tool of religious advice.

Chapter II defines the concept of religious advice as “*nasihat*” starting from the basic idea of simple advice, and continuing with developing a general structure for the Islamic advice. Thus, a clear idea of what is meant by religious advice and *nasihat* is established. Also the relationship between agent, interpretation and essentially religious elements in the making of the Islamic advice and the role of the Islamic advice in building a religious life are structurally explicated.

Chapter III discusses the historical background of the idea of “crisis” of religion in the modern era in accordance with theories of nationalism and modernity. First, the connection between religious advice and the religious community is emphasized based on Benedict Anderson’s ideas on religious communities and nations. Later, Liah Greenfeld’s emphasis on the priority of the concept of nation in the construction of modernity and modern life is explained. The idea is further elaborated with Daniele Conversi’s meditations on the ideas of faith in progress and

the cult of modernity. Finally, the roots of the idea of progress is discussed from the perspective of the historian, Reinhart Koselleck.

Chapter IV examines the journal of *Büyük Doğu*, specifically the issues published between years 1943 and 1952, based on the idea that the whole journal itself is an attempt of creating a complete religious life through a modern by means of *nasihat*. First, in line with the issues explicated in Chapter III, in the first part of this chapter the journal's specific understanding of modern crisis is revealed. Then, certain elements of *nasihat* are examined by taking a close look at the solution or *nasihat* built in the journal as a reaction to the sense of crisis in question. The analysis in general aims at discussing the results of and the motivations behind the act of giving religious advice through the modern means of communication by focusing on a particular example. In addition, it is also targeted to shed light on the effects of changing dynamics of building a religious life.

## CHAPTER II

### DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF “*NASIHAT*”

Advice is itself a broad notion. The lexical meaning is “recommendation as to appropriate choice of action,” which immediately brings forth the question of “appropriateness” which refers to “right or suitable, fitting” which is once again vague and indefinite.<sup>4</sup> An advice makes sense only with a certain basis on which what it encompasses can be evaluated. So, in order to determine why an action is appropriate one needs to have a reason, an anchor point. This anchor point can be medical, professional, traditional etc. and as our case will detail, religious, and in particular Islamic. Of course, each will have its own properties and ways of functioning, and will show differences in themselves. Then, the question is, given the peculiarity of each category, can we draw a general model or list a set of descriptive properties for an Islamic advice? This is the subject of this chapter which will lay out the basics for further analysis. As the best starting point to do this, I will begin by naming what I am trying to put together. To refer to every kind of Islamic advice, I will simply propose “*nasihat*” in this work.<sup>5</sup>

In *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, Imam Al-Ghazali writes:

Dear readers, friendship is the result of good love for one another and bad conduct is the root of hatred, envy and enmity. The result of good conduct is praiseworthy. The merits of good conduct in religion are not secret. God praised His Prophet: “You are certainly upon a sublime character” (68:4). He said: “Attributes which will take the majority of people to Paradise are God-fear and good conduct.” Hazrat Osamah-b-Sharik reported: “We asked: Messenger of God, what good attribute has been given to man? He said: Good conduct.” The Prophet said: “I have been sent to perfect good conduct.” He also said: “What will be heaviest in the Balance will be good conduct.” He said: “God has not made the conduct constitution of people such that fire will

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<sup>4</sup> “Advice,” accessed October 15, 2014, <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/advice.html>.

<sup>5</sup> As the Turkish derivative of Arabic roots, *nasihat* (which refers to advice in Turkish with an additional emphasis on the wisdom/experience of the source) will also be useful in terms of providing analytical harmony when one focuses on texts from the Turkish media, and more specifically *Büyük Doğu*.

burn them. In other words, Hell-fire will not be able to burn one whose character and constitution are beautiful.<sup>6</sup>

In another century, in a different manner, Rumi advises:

The hearts of all are upon the Kaaba. The hearts are one in their longing and love for the Kaaba, and in that there is no room for separation. That love is neither belief nor non-belief, for it has nothing to do with the various roads. Once we arrive, this argument and war and those differences in the roads—this woman saying to that man, “You are false, you are an infidel,” and that man saying the same about her—once we arrive at the Kaaba, we realize that such fighting is over the roads only, and that the goal of all is the same.<sup>7</sup>

From Abdul-Qadir Gilani:

Ask from God pleasure with His decree, or the ability to be merged in the action of the Lord because in this lies great comfort and unique high heaven in this world and it is also a big gate of God and a means to the love of God for the believing slave. So whomever God loves, He does not chastise him in this world nor in the hereafter. In these two virtues lie contact with God, union with Him and an intimate connection with Him. Do not be engrossed in your efforts for the pleasures of this life and for such shares are either not allotted to you or are so allotted. So if you are not allotted, it is foolishness and stupidity and ignorance to make efforts in obtaining them and it is also the greatest of all punishments as it has been said: “Among the greatest punishment is to strive for what is not allotted by Providence.”<sup>8</sup>

From *The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State*:

The Quran did not provide a basic framework for statehood. The Prophet did not rule on the issue of political leadership and succession. Perhaps this is because God never wanted state authority to have a role in the growth of Islam. All three of Islam’s founding dynasties and the era of the first four caliphs succeeded in many areas, but failed dramatically in the area of political stability.<sup>9</sup>

From Maududi’s *Jihad in Islam*:

... But the truth is that Islam is not the name of a ‘Religion’, nor is ‘Muslim’ the title of a ‘Nation’. In reality Islam is a revolutionary ideology and programme which seeks to alter the social order of the whole world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals. ‘Muslim’ is the title of

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<sup>6</sup>Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-Id-Din*, Vol.2, trans. Fazl-ul-Karim (Karachi: Dar-ul Ishaat, 1993), 87.

<sup>7</sup>A. J. Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi* (Iowa: Omphaloskepsis, 2000), 175.

<sup>8</sup>Muhyuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani, *Futuh Al-Ghaib: (The Revelations of the Unseen)*, trans. Maulana Aftab-ud-din Ahmad (New Delhi, India: Kitab Bhavan, 1981), 127.

<sup>9</sup>Tarek Fatah, *Chasing A Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State* (Ontario: John Wiley&Sons Canada, Ltd., 2008), 224.



that International Revolutionary Party organized by Islam to carry into effect its revolutionary programme. And ‘Jihād’ refers to that revolutionary struggle and utmost exertion which the Islamic Party brings into play to achieve this objective.<sup>10</sup>

Aside from their differences and widely – historically, politically, ideologically, geographically – ranging characteristics, these examples have been gathered together, first of all, to create a general idea of what is meant by *nasihat*, and to point out their most basic, explicit and therefore easily go unnoticed purpose, which is simply, giving advice. Each of them, explicitly or not, before uttering their words on the topic they deal with, silently or loudly, talk to us “in the name of their religion.” Ages may be left behind, positions taken can turn upside down, messages may be confident, well-sourced or easy-going, direct or indirect, assertive or aloof, smooth or assuring; but each and every argument always passes through the authority of God, which condemns them to become – or keeps them within the limits of – a piece of *nasihat* whatever their shape or form is (poem, academic work, speech, sermon). This condition has quite significant conclusions which will be gradually explicated.

## **2.1. Making of *Nasihah***

To explain the concept better we can make use of a metaphor. In terms of the duality that resides in its making, *nasihat* reminds us of the way a “compasses” work.

### **2.1.1. The fixed leg**

What does it mean to give advice in religious terms (*nasihat etmek*)? In other words, how does an advice become religious? The answer is, on the one hand, directly related to the religion at stake. Since, to begin with, *nasihat* means recommendation as to appropriate choice of action in accordance with Islamic ways, it means that it will depend on the authority of God who is supposed to be the one determining what is right or wrong. But what exactly is the authority of God?

The most explanatory – of itself and of others – of all the signs he sends, of course, the Quran is the main representative of this authority in Islam. It is the source of knowledge, dogma from which judgments can be made and what is right or wrong

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<sup>10</sup> Abul A’la Maududi, *Jihad in Islam* (Beirut: The Holy Quran Publishing House, 2006), 5.

can be learned. (To this we can also add the other prominent representative of the divine authority, the Prophet and his *hadith* and *Sunna*.) But this dependence on the Quran and therefore on the authority of God, is not as constrictive as it seems.

Theoretically, in order to be considered valid, any Islamic argument, first of all, should be in accordance with the Quran. But, even though the message ideally cannot contradict the holy book, whether the advice given is seen “true” or “false” by the receiver of the message, will not change the fact that, the message is still a “religious” one (it will be enough to remember tons of religious messages contradicting each other, even though there is no doubt they are all Islamic.) as long as there is some sort of connection between the sacred source and the message. In other words, one can speak or give advice in the name of religion without being true or loyal to it, or to express in another way; the moment one sails from the Quran and starts speaking for himself, the unquestionable authority of God, does not guarantee anymore how it will be represented. If it is possible to give religious advice even when one contradicts the sacred source, then, what makes an advice a religious one is not only the word of God itself. There should be something else that makes *nasihat* possible.

The subjection to the Quran is a complex situation. A connection established between this main authority and the *nasihat* given is not a simple direct correspondence between the Quran and the advice given. Obviously, the authority of God too can be manipulated, interpreted, obscured or even replaced by means of various strategies. In addition, secondary representatives (in various degrees) can replace the primary representative of the authority of God, or the Quran, during the process. In other words, the *nasihat*-giver can also depend on various other sources or references such as the *hadith*, the sectarian or tariqa or philosophical traditions which have created an utilizable basis, or simply personalities who have already uttered their own judgments and *nasihats* on the subject, and in some cases, simply scattered symbols, ideas which do not reflect a solid base – possibly since all of these are pre-acknowledged to be Islamic, therefore the products of the Quran.

When all things considered, what is certain is that the complexity of the relationship between the utterer and the absolute authority, does not constrict the ways of *nasihat*-giving, on the contrary, the authority of God has a lot of representatives ready to be utilized through connections by referrals or analogies. All in all, however, we can say that something works behind all these sources and

gathers them together and makes them valid foundations for connection with the authority of God, and this is the idea of the “sacred.” A strong sense of “sacredness” is at work behind every representative as the sacred basis of the arguments developed.

Defining the sacred is a difficult task, but here it will be better for us to start with Durkheim’s well-known definition of the sacred as things that are “set apart.” But this definition itself is not enough since, as Matthew T. Evans argues, it is not able to indicate the distinction between the transcendent and the earthly. He states: “The sacred, on the other hand, should be conceptualized as something that may or may not be associated with the supernatural.” His own approach “is to define religion as substantively concerned with the supernatural but the ‘sacred’ as referring to the ‘set apart.’ In this case again they are related only when they overlap, i.e., when a sacred object is also a religious object.”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the authority of God and the Quran are, of course, examples of the sacred, but with their untranslatable, untouchable nature they are also transcendent entities – which differs them from, let’s say, a “mosque” – because the former does not have an earthly existence, and for the latter (the Quran) the earthly existence is, to a certain degree, denied simply by a denial of any kind of change and any possibility of equality between the Quran and the things with a similar kind of earthly structure (such as other Arabic or foreign works, sentences, books, translations). On the other hand, as we have already mentioned the transcendent might still have representatives that are earthly and ordinary, and this, the mixing of the earthly and the unearthly, is the point when the secondary representatives are born.

Again to refer to Evans, he separates the sacred into basically four categories: personal, spiritual, civil and religious.<sup>12</sup> According to this categorization, things set apart and “imbued with other worldly meanings” are examples of the religious sacred.<sup>13</sup> What is interesting here is the idea that things can be worldly but “meanings” they carry are transcendent, the sacredness born in this relationship, is something that does not arise directly in things themselves, instead it is a meaning bestowed upon them by a certain religious understanding and belief (which guarantees the “otherworldly” part of the definition), and as a result, a sentence, a

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew T. Evans, “The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts,” *Review of Religious Research*, vol 45, no.1 (September 2003): 35.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

place, a human, a cow, or a stone can be (religiously) sacred entities. The transcendent, in this case (the rule of) God, the actual otherworldly, might be claimed to be acting on earth also by means of these earthly things that are imbued with necessary meanings, or to put it differently, sacralized.

Demerath rightfully warns about that “religious activities do not always have sacred consequences, or put more helpfully, the degree to which the consequences are sacred is a critical variable that must be explored.”<sup>14</sup> But in general, it will not be wrong to say that things “imbued with other-worldly meanings,” or that are associated with the transcendent closely and positively, a sense of sacredness is easily emitted and transmitted when we interact with them. And when the case is *nasihat*, this is even quite evident. To explain this we can now return to the random samples given at the beginning of this chapter.

If we list the ways of connections with the sacred in the examples we have given, it can be seen that; 1) Ghazali tries to prove his argument by a well-detailed, Quranic, prophetic, traditional source-based explanation, 2) In Rumi’s message, a relatively poetic connection between human relations and unity and the transcendent is created through the metaphor of the “Kaaba” and “Hajj,” 3) Gilani gives an advice about a way of living based on a kind of esoteric knowledge about “how God performs” and “Fate” functions, 4) Tarek Fatah advices on why Islam should be kept away from theocracy depending on the idea that “first caliphs” politically failed, and “God’s will” on the subject, 5) Maududi exhausts the meaning of “Jihad” and holy struggle to justify his idea that Islam is the name of radical ideology.

But the flexibility and the variety of the ways of establishing a connection with the sacred in these examples, should not be considered only a result of a strategic manoeuvre of the advise-giver to speak in the name of religion or a possibility to create an illusion of sacredness, or even to clarify his argument; it also marks a “necessity.” If we ask: what is the function of this sense of necessity in each sample? The answer is: they all guarantee and reflect the recognition of divine authority. Something ungraspable—God’s will behind his authority—can be recognized. The relation and harmony of certain sacred sense of the sacred with certain arguments is significant, but this relation always breaks off since the whole - truth including that of the Quran and all references of God always refers to belief...

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<sup>14</sup> N. J. Demerath, “The Varieties of Sacred Experience: Finding the Sacred in a Secular Grove,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 39, no.1 (March 2000): 4.

And therefore, no matter how complex it is, the relationship with the sacred always ends up becoming a true-or-not declaration of faith, i. e. the terminus is always an expression of belief.

The authority of God can be represented by this image of a “sacred center” (the result of a controlled free-play extracted from the Quran, then the hadith, traditions, established norms, to the most cloudy feeling of presence of these [religious sacredness]...). “A sense of sacredness,” sometimes so figurative that only depends on images or symbols, or even unspoken things, and sometimes arises out of a big “academic” study is, in the last instance, what is depended on by the utterer in order to erect the fixed leg of the compasses and summon the support of absolute authority.

Thereby, the condition refers to an essential skeleton which needs to be there, regardless of the figures it carries. In the moment of uttering in the name of religion, a sense of sacredness by means of the utilization of recognized sacred elements should, no matter what, be ready to connect the present word (by means of this sacredness) to the transcendent, which in the end means a subtle declaration of a recognition of the authority of God, and the suitable base for the rest of the process. If one wants to speak for God’s religion, he must recognize his intangible authority which can only be expressed positively with “faith” which can only be shown by the presence of the sacred within the argument. In the end, then, the utterer first states and lays his (or the appropriation of) faith in God as the foundation of his argument by a mediation of the sacred, then this faith stands as the guarantor of the rest which we will be calling the free leg of the structure. And the circle is completed when the argument becomes a *nasihat* by ending up depending on/confirming its starting point, the transcendent truth.

Then, the first fact we need to establish about the concept of *nasihat* is that “the kind of advice given, necessarily has a – strong or weak – connection to a sacred doctrine.” The other leg of the compass will explain the second reason of this natural necessity.

### **2.1.2. The free leg**

The necessity of recognition as explained above concerns the advice-giver. The condition has another facet which is related with the transcendent force.

It is not hard to predict that in time a religion like Islam which wants to bring order to all the human life, will need modifications of its basic rules, new regulations for every part of social and individual life and their blind spots and previously ignored issues, new developments, complications etc. but apart from these, *nasihat* can work on various topics because of the much more fundamental need for the survival-inscription of the authority of God which is, as explained before, the necessary condition for the existence of religious advice (a mutual dependence).

If the transcendent wants to continue to exist on an “ordinary” field, it needs to act so and be “alive,” which means that it must engage in earthly activities [and “probably” be ready to utter its word or give its verdict or “at least” give the means for providing answers] when its authority is in question. This being “ready” is not a simple activity of preparing lists of what to-do or not.

We need to start with the “word.” The Quran as we have already mentioned, with its particular condition, is the first and most powerful step of this inscription of the authority in an earthly manner. But it has an in-between status, as an earthly transcendent, being both the word of God himself and a message in an earthly way/language. As the word of God, it cannot be changed, it says what it is going to say, only once, in the form of frozen sentences, and makes no compromises. This, indicates the perfection the holy book has. But also, the Quranic words are subject to any other rule or the linguistic structure with other Arabic words/texts, they depend on a grammar etc., to transmit their message, which means there are possibilities of “mis-interpretations,” or more innocently, that a plurality of meanings for the holy book is, first of all, a linguistic requirement. We see here a small paradox; while the Quran cannot be flawed, and therefore must be able to give the message it wants to give, it can also give multiple results when one interacts with it. It immediately makes one ask: how can the authority be inscribed, as it is, or how can it be inscribed without being deformed? The answer is: the question is wrong, i.e. there cannot be an objective true-or-false inscription of a transcendent force as if it is a matter of “knowledge” and not “belief”, but only inscription that can be evaluated only as a matter of belief within a belief system.

As an interesting note, it is stated in the Quran that the plurality of meaning is not only positive, but also a negative potential: “... As for those who believed, it has increased them in faith, while they are rejoicing. But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it has [only] increased them in evil [in addition] to their evil” (Q9/125-26).

The Quranic verses create believers and disbelievers at the same time. We may take this *ayat* as an indication of how the paradox is resolved by the “subject.” In other words, what matters is that there is a mortal subject in relation to a transcendent truth.

Although the Quran is considered a complete entity with its words and truth, the message, the divine essence enveloped by the signs can still never be completely reduced to sentences. Therefore the only clear-cut variable is the mortal subject with his irreducible “subjectivity”, who undertakes the mission of generating the authority of God, and thereby determining the shape of the reflections of the Quran which can be realized in a scale of positive and negative values. What does this mean in accordance with the activity of the divine authority? Apparently the particular condition of the Quran amounts to more than a democratic ethos. It changes what it touches on, instead of being changed by those who want to touch, and for the “divine authority” this is the most significant phase. Of course no interpretation can be the end of the story, no mind can fully grasp it, but these are not the main target of the divine anyway... Interpretations and exegeses cannot replace God’s words, therefore they are not equal to the earthly emergence of God’s will (or God’s will cannot be reduced to them)—such an idea would be seen as blasphemy. Therefore elaboration of God’s word is not a substitute, but a produced effect, an always lesser<sup>15</sup> yet more flexible unit.<sup>16</sup> Its peculiar stance is this-worldly and yet nevertheless it is blessed with the other-worldly, divine force. It helps in the actual inscription of the divine authority by the subject who acts by performing either on his own (self) or by transmitting messages for others to be performed in the end to build a “religious life.”

As the tool which brings the divine message into play (an artistry with belief), giving life to it in ways needed and within the frames determined, *nasihat* also includes the “movement” of a free leg from the still, fixed, sacred center to anything that will be suitable for the intended result. Departing from the fixed center by means of the sacred as explained previously, the peculiarity of this movement is that it can go in any direction, only to create the same circle in the end: recognition of divine authority. *Nasihat* is thus the tool that maintains the transcendent force in this world,

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<sup>15</sup> Said Nursi, for instance, names his books in words such as Rays or Flashes in order to show they are lesser products of the Quran.

<sup>16</sup> The word of the Qur’an does not change from person to person, yet a *tafsir* for instance, can modify meanings in accordance with present needs.

by turning everything into a subject matter for religion, and by promulgating the established doctrine with a complex utilization of the sacred, while constantly expanding the range of religion. The free leg and its free movement which refers to every non-sacred element and the ways of construction of the argument, are therefore the crucial parts of this tool of inscription. As it will submit to the authority it departs from, by reproducing it in the form of belief, the free leg refers to a self-contained, submissive free-play.

A *nasihat* may be any statement that is uttered with the purpose of leading the receiver of the message to what is considered right and appropriate as long as the reason is considered Islamic, and is achieved by a well-established sense of sacredness in the last instance. An explicit sermon repeating a Quranic verse about the importance of praying at certain times of the day in accordance with today's conditions, or the advice of getting up early in the morning for a healthy life and receiving God's grace are equally valid examples of *nasihat*. As the second fact, we can say, then, "even though it must start with a definite sacred basis, the kind of advice given, takes place in a field of unlimited possibilities."

We can now conclude that what makes the authority of God alive in a this-worldly sense should be the function of these reading activities. This structure connecting the transcendent divine force with the earthly gives us an interesting, multi-faceted tool utilized for the "formation" of performing subjects; beneath its surface, a very complex and dynamic mixture of belief, knowledge, emotions, creative and philosophical engagements might reside, instead of a cliché-stereotypical view of a didactic, tedious sermon and a smart discourse analysis applied on it.

While the two parts detailed here explains how it comes into existence, the movement it displays requires an explanation of the factors shaping it, in addition to creating. The way a *nasihat* will take shape depends on two elements; agents and the way agents function. Now we need to take a look at the practitioners of this tool.

### **2.1.3. Agency in *Nasihah* and "Character"**

The compasses metaphor also gives us the representation of what the duality in the religious advice-giving gives birth to. When the dogma is just repeated, in the end, since there will necessarily be a departure from a sacred center (as the



reproduction and expansion of the dogma or more precisely the authority of God, requires firstly that its products be different from it), giving *nasihat* consists an act that creates a distance or a “gap” between the two legs in order to create a circle. To put it more clearly, the gap refers to the degree of “in-exactness” between the two (where the signs are not direct correspondences of their references.) But the difference here also bears a hierarchical structure and an imbalance. This is a movement from the holy to the ordinary. What creates a difference between a sacred/transcendent basis and a construction laid on it, is of course the “non-sacred,” in other words, human elements. The resulting product which carry the non-sacred, human elements, can never be, either in terms of respectability or validity, equal to its sources, which are pure. The movement of the free leg of the compass inescapably leaves behind a gap, an irreducible difference.

When a religious advice is given (for instance, about the importance of having good relations with neighbours to be a better Muslim), even the closest circle will be perceived as farther to the truth than a pure divine expression that envelops truth. Naturally, the gap in question here, indicates a question of “legitimacy” for each and every message. Indeed, every kind of advice is tested by the receiver according to several individually changing elements, faith, tradition, education and related unpredictable factors. Therefore, although the reception of the message will not be a subject topic for this work, we can still look at the condition from the side of the utterer, and reach some elements affecting the reception of *nasihat* through the ways that shapes it.

To put it once more, every utterance of *nasihat* consists a movement from the unchanging, sacred source to the ordinary which gives result to a gap between the sacred source and the message intended. At this point of indetermination, the role and the importance of the message sender is evident. This condition has two results. First is related to the resulting significance of the personality of the religious advice giver.

The one who sends the message is not wiped away by the anchor point; indeed, his personality is as important as the message he gives. Inasmuch as the message sender takes strength from the authority of the dogma/God, the message he gives depends on his character (*şahsiyet*). The dangerous distance from clear-cut and therefore safe rules and truth, the lack of authority born out of this gap, or the possible hesitation the human element can give rise to, are mostly sealed with the

personality of the message sender. So, it is not hard to infer that the greater the personality, the better this distance, controversial aspects will be closed, or the mortal voice shall be disregarded or suppressed. The *nasihat* at stake can even be acknowledged as valid as what the dogma declares. Important figures may be held up as examples such as the imams of sects, well-educated and sometimes quite famous religious scholars, the leaders of a *tariqa*, or guiding personalities, leading individuals of small communities, etc.

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AND TIME

In 1988, in the Islamist magazine, *Diriliş (The Revival)*, the Turkish poet Sezai Karakoç wrote an article series called “The Great Crisis of Our Civilization” in which he presents one of the innumerable examples of the articulation of the anxiety felt by the religious people at the time:

The great crisis is the deep trauma of our soul, the shaking of our civilization in its very foundations. First we have to accept this.... We are experiencing the greatest, the most serious and the most comprehensive crisis in the history of Islam. We must see the reality; we cannot bury our heads in the sand. We should not fool ourselves.<sup>17</sup>

The urgency and the seriousness of the language is actually quite a common feature in this style of statement of warning, even though Karakoç here proposes a novel approach by introducing the notion of civilization. A careful reading of his articles helps us see the general lines of this widespread perception of crisis by the Turkish Islamic community of the period.

First, the East-West dichotomy seems to be indispensable as constitutive of the moral struggle between the good and the bad. At the beginning, there is “a very happy life” in an ideal past.<sup>18</sup> Then, the Muslim world makes mistakes:

We forgot ‘the bad’, ‘the outsider’, and ‘the wild’; we ignored them for a while. We heard about the rumours that the West was busy with something new, we heard, even saw, but we pretended we neither heard of nor saw it. As if this engagement with ‘the bad’ would prevent us from our own ‘good’ and ‘beautiful.’<sup>19</sup>

The Western development was worthy of attention; it was a serious mistake not to give sufficient attention to it. In the end, “before the Westerners had invented such elaborate weapons as nuclear weapons... we, the Muslims, should have invented them.”<sup>20</sup> In this logic, the bad do bad things, the good makes mistakes. Therefore, in this relationship, the West is both the inferior and the powerful one.

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<sup>17</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi III,” *Diriliş*, October 31, 1988, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi VII,” *Diriliş*, November 28, 1988, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

The terrible situation of the Islamic world is because of the good letting the bad do bad things. In other words, the crisis refers to a sense of unjust defeat incompatible with the nature of things.

But in these analyses there is always hope: “The Western soul is an analyst. But the Eastern soul is prone to synthesis.” Then Karakoç explains how the West applies a “methodical, systematic” analysis to problems and gets satisfied with it, while the Eastern soul considers things as a whole and looks for a unity with the mechanism. Islamic soul is neither of those. It consist of both synthesis and analysis. “One day, like a miraculous, divine eagle, it will find the opportunity to take the both spirits under his wings.”<sup>21</sup> The barbarous child with its powerful yet abused and incomplete weapons, is bad, but under the right wings, or, if he obeys, he can be promising:

We hope that, when the path of unity, the Islamic epoch, was revived once more in all its grandeur, historians, archaeologists, anthropologists trained as the soldiers of the Revival will reinterpret the past civilizations and provide a new opening into these scientific fields.<sup>22</sup>

The solution therefore does not reject most of the already-proven-useful-goods of the West, the infidel, the secular, the bad or modernity. Everything is useful with the right re-interpretation: “the movement of revival embraces” every field from “metaphysics” to “science, art, literature and political solution.”<sup>23</sup>

This unshakable faith in the essential superiority of one’s own values easily turns the struggle into a universal one: “In fact, in appearance it is the Islamic world which experiences a crisis, but on an invisible level, the whole world is in the claw of a universal crisis.” “Instead of the ‘good’ dominating the ‘bad’, there is the ‘bad’ dominating the ‘good’ and rendering him immobile.”<sup>24</sup> The wish that the power changes hand is constantly repeated with huge promises.

What is most problematic about this kind of “crisis narrative,” which is typical of the Islamist tradition in Turkey? The crisis narrative always offers an open-ended structure as a solution: there is obviously a crisis, there is something wrong, wrong is due to the bad, the bad gives hope, the good should fix it. There are naturally two crucial questions, “How?” and “Until when?” The former question

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<sup>21</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi V,” *Diriliş*, November 14, 1988, 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi I,” *Diriliş*, October 17, 1988, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi X,” *Diriliş*, December 19, 1988, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi III,” *Diriliş*, October 31, 1988, 3.

engulfs and assimilates the latter during the process. Answers to the former question varies according to the priorities of the crisis specialist, but regardless of the methods they always indicate a future goal that is written down roughly as: “once again the Muslims should prove better than their enemy.” The method repeats the wish. Because anything less contradicts the nature of things. Thus, the latter question, “Until when?” which refers to a time schedule determining the actions and the possible resolutions, can receive only one answer, articulated in various forms always repeating the end of the answers to the former question: until the miraculous, divine eagle embraces everything, until the past once again glows in all its glory, until we sit at the throne, all of which come down to a single statement: “until there is no crisis.” In this case, while the state of crisis is synonymous with an ordinary life (and the “ordinary” here should involve the sum of present conditions surrounding us and determining our environment), a life which must be lived on the verge of extinction within the greatest crisis of history until an inexact future, the solution promises a global paradise torn out of time and place. Theoretically both extremes, the paradise in the future and the crisis at the moment, are two reference points, which cannot be any more distant from each other. This ideal depending on the writer’s wish and faith, owes its existence more to the acceptance of the idea of crisis than the crisis requires the solution desired.

Maybe Karakoç is right when he writes, “the depression is neither political, nor ideological. It is literally a depression of soul.”<sup>25</sup>

The questions I want to find an answer for in this thesis can be formulated as follows: what does it mean to give religious advice in a period when the sense of crisis is so strictly associated with the sense of a religious life, or the state of crisis is acknowledged almost as an inseparable aspect of it, especially if we consider the fact that the act of giving religious advice as explained in the first chapter is the building stones of a religious life and sense of community? What happens if one tries to build a “life” by connecting the transcendent and the ordinary in a moment of tension felt almost like an urge of survival? What is the function of “*nasihat*” in this process realized in an environment where the idea of nation and the new means of media dominate all social life?

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<sup>25</sup> Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi X,” *Diriliş*, December 19, 1988, 3.

Before taking a close look at the case of *Büyük Doğu* journal to observe the reflections of these questions and derive answers from it, first we need to understand the actual contents of this idea of crisis commonly felt and articulated by the religious community in modern ages. Since the method of religious advice originally belongs to the religious community, without understanding the historical condition of the religious community, every explanation relating the question to modernity, secularism or an idea of unnatural defeat as the one we see in Karakoç will be incomplete.

### 3.1. The Religious Community

In *Imagined Communities*, “Few things are more impressive” writes Benedict Anderson, “than the vast territorial stretch of the Ummah Islam from Morocco to the Sulu Archipelago, of Christendom from Paraguay to Japan, and of the Buddhist world from Sri Lanka to the Korean peninsula.”<sup>26</sup> Quite large bodies of the past religious communities are another source of amazement for the modern man who as in the self-reflectivity of the religion, once again encounters a kind of “simplicity,” rather than a complexity, which this time generates a strangeness in terms of its size. The simplicity in question here, is about the way language is employed in the process.

Benedict Anderson suggests two basic points regarding religious communities. First, he states that these large groups such as the Islamic Ummah or the Christendom “were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script.” Written Arabic in the case of Islam, “functioned like Chinese characters to create a community out of signs, not sounds.” “In fact,” he says, “the deader the written language—the farther it was from speech—the better: in principle everyone has access to a pure world of signs.”<sup>27</sup> I would suggest that instead of being far from speech, it is about being purely symbolic to the degree of becoming devoid of a direct referent. But this direct “meaninglessness” of the sign makes another meaning possible: the sign itself could mean “something that is purely sacred,” or the sacred itself.

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<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

If an idea wants to embrace more people, no doubt, it should be simple and static enough to be grasped and shared by a large body; accordingly, the more people it embraces, the simpler it should be represented. In the end, every individual has a unique form of understanding which could also be expressed as “the singularity of the signified.” In this respect, the deadness of the sign Anderson mentions is not actually about its death but maybe its purification from all possibility of profanity, which in the end nothing but a sense of sacredness is left in it. And after all, while the transcendent is the ungraspable, every human being may have a sacred of her own. As a result, a sign which signifies the sacred unequivocally is universal enough to bring different races and geographies together.

The second element which makes the act of imagining such communities possible is about the inevitable hierarchical structures in the making of these groups:

But even though the sacred languages made such communities as Christendom imaginable, the actual scope and plausibility of these communities cannot be explained by sacred script alone: their readers were, after all, tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans. A fuller explanation requires a glance at the relationship between the literati and their societies. It would be a mistake to view the former as a kind of theological technocracy. The languages they sustained, if abstruse, had none of the self-arranged abstruseness of lawyers' or economists' jargons, on the margin of society's idea of reality. Rather, the literati were adepts, strategic strata in a cosmological hierarchy of which the apex was divine. The fundamental conceptions about 'social groups' were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-oriented and horizontal. The astonishing power of the papacy in its noonday is only comprehensible in terms of a trans-European Latin-writing clerisy, and a conception of the world, shared by virtually everyone, that the bilingual intelligentsia, by mediating between vernacular and Latin, mediated between earth and heaven.<sup>28</sup>

It is possible to repeat a similar account about the Islamic community as well, even though not completely the same. First, in terms of vitality, Arabic was in a better position than Latin, and therefore it had a broader profile of speaker who had direct access to their sacred source. And secondly, in the religion of Islam, the hierarchy was not as strict as in Christianity, a topic which requires more attention yet will not be examined here. But still there were experts, a group of people who had higher positions in a hierarchy depending on religious knowledge. But here what is really significant is Anderson's insufficient emphasis on the flexible role of this

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 15-16.

“strategic strata.” These mediators “between earth and heaven” do not only function as bridges between vernaculars and sacred languages. Their role is not limited to having a command of a set of professional knowledge in the modern sense. They are individual worlds themselves, mediating between the person and the universe. And they are as much readers as anyone else. Check for instance, the Kurdish theologian Said Nursi’s approach to the Qur’an:

The Wise Qur’an, which makes our Master known to us, is an eternal translator of the great Book of the Universe. It discloses the treasures of the Divine Names hidden in the pages of Earth and the heavens, and is the key to the truths behind events, the All-Compassionate’s treasury of favors, and the eternal addresses coming from the Unseen beyond the veil of this visible world. It is the sun of Islam’s spiritual and intellectual world, its foundation and plan, and the map of the worlds of the Hereafter. Furthermore, it is the Divine Essence’s expounder, lucid interpreter, articulate proof, and clear translator, as well as that of its Attributes and essential Qualities. It is humanity’s educator, trainer, guide, and leader, as well as true wisdom, a book of wisdom and law, prayer and worship, command and summons, and invocation and knowledge of God. It contains books for all of humanity’s spiritual needs, and is like a sacred library offering books from which all saints, eminently truthful people, and all purified and discerning scholars have derived their own specific ways.<sup>29</sup>

What is the difference between a translator and a reader? A translator has to be loyal. More than reading, to recreate the message in another form, he must listen to it. On the other hand, reading is an open-ended activity; there is no pressure on the reader, and no interpretation is final in this act, therefore depending on the reader the meaning can vary endlessly. If the Qur’an translates the Book of the Universe; it is not just a reader, it transfers something already said. The “able readers” of the Qur’an, then, are none but able readers of this translation of the message inherent to the universe. This is an occupation in contrast with every kind of specialization. It is holistic yet always in contact with particulars.

For example, it calls the sun “a moving lamp.” It does not mention the sun for its own sake but because it is the “mainstay” of the order and the center of the universe’s system, and order and system are two ways of learning about the Creator. By saying: And the sun runs its course (36:38) ...

Now consider how science and materialistic philosophy deal with the sun: “The sun is an enormous mass of burning gases. It causes the planets, which have been flung off from it, to revolve around it. It is of such and such size

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<sup>29</sup> Said Nursi, *The Words*, trans. Hüseyin Akarsu (New Jersey: Light, 2005), 253.



and is of such and such qualities...” Such a description gives no perfection of knowledge to the spirit, but only a terrible dread and bewilderment. It also approaches the matter in a way different from that of the Qur’an.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, this is about engaging in a relationship in which something that the modern notion of objective knowledge cannot obtain arises. It consists of an effort which requires wilfully inclining your ears to “what is.” “The sun is an enormous mass of burning gases” is a way of reading, speaking “for its own sake,” or to put it differently, to represent it for its own sake. The Qur’an, however, is not the representative, but the first audience of it and then the translator: in sum, a mediator between its reader and the existence. Nursi suggests the Qur’an’s way is learning as listening to the universe. This is a crucial point and should not be mistaken for revealing/building a metalanguage. If I may put it Roland Barthes’ terms, there is no supra-language/myth built upon a base object-language whose first-level signs are the sun and the contents in its scientific description. The two points of Nursi’s short analysis of the words from the *ayat* does the opposite. First he says that the ayah pointing out “revolving” of the sun naturally indicates the orderly exercise of potency in the rotations of night/day and summer/winter which in total, corresponds to nothing but greatness in the human sense. Second, the metaphor of “lamp” is meant to remind the man of the sun’s role in a coherent system. The whole account aims to get closer to the being and “raise an awareness” about something that is already there.

Now we can connect the relation between the two points Anderson proposes regarding the religious community. The sacred language and the able ones are the key factors for the existence of this community, this act of collective “imagining.” The sacred source explicatory of the universe is read by the able ones who will also expand its message by preparing a kind of paradigm for the community which will be will be formed around them while at the same they will hold together by means of the pure symbol of sacredness.

Even though he stresses that their language “had none of the self-arranged abstruseness of lawyers' or economists' jargons, on the margin of society's idea of reality,”<sup>31</sup> Anderson leaves the actual activity untouched. As its structure has been explained in detail in Chapter 1, *nasihat* corresponds to the relationship between the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 15.

two. It follows, then, at the heart of the religious advice there is the advice on how to read the existence as Nursi exemplifies. The so called dogma itself is not static articles, but a living translation unfolded by able mediators in various forms, and then once again received by the individuals sharing the same idea of sacred to build a community. It is not about a set of beliefs as much as it is about a mental paradigm constructed by a multi-layered dialogue between the sacred text and the universe, the sacred text and the mediators in question, the mediators and the commoners who are all gathered under the same pure sign; and therefore can be renovated in accordance with its interpreter.

One more question is left, however. Since it can be a whole thesis subject itself, I will content myself with a brief note. What makes the mediators such as Said Nursi in question able readers? In the religion of Islam, it is possible to say that for the religious community, this kind of professionalism, which as we noted, is the opposite of modern specializations, still depends on mastering an “activity”. The difference lies in the fact that the activity mastered is a spiritual one not an earthly one. Of course to be able to interpret the Quran, one would need certain training in technical matters. But more than his academic knowledge, what makes the able one earn the respect of the community who will gather around him is his mastering of the religious practice. The most obvious example of this is the idea of sainthood. In other words, only those who master the Islamic ethics (which means purification for the person) can fully understand the essence of the religious message. A higher Muslim is simply the one who does what a higher Muslim should do and organizes his life according to the truth by training and purifying, before anyone else, himself. This opens up a huge field of “self-care” technologies in the religious practice but will not be further discussed here.

### **3.2. Singularity of the European experience**

A common language and able ones who awaken to the “truth”... After laying out the essentials of a religious community, Anderson continues with the historical transformation of this situation to lay out the conditions that gave rise to the idea of “nation.”

Following the late Middle Ages, “for all the grandeur, power of the great religiously imagined communities and the unselfconscious coherence wane[s]

steadily,” mainly due to the territorialisation of faiths, and the gradual demotion of the sacred language and the rise of vernaculars. By territorialisation of faiths, Anderson refers to a kind of widening of cultural and geographical horizons, and gives an excerpt from Marco Polo as an example of the birth of “a competitive, comparative field” which can be seen when Marco Polo defines Christianity as the “truest” among many others, rather than “true.”<sup>32</sup>

In the Middle Eastern context, again, it is possible to suggest quite different paths for both issues. Islam and Judaism in general are in a different position in comparison with Christianity especially in terms of “cultural horizons.” This competitive-comparative field Anderson mentions, had been an inherent feature of many Islamic communities.<sup>33</sup> If Anderson’s point considers a mostly intellectual transformation, the fact that Islam was born in an environment shaped by innumerable belief systems including both pagans and monotheists, and built complex theological relationships and legal arrangements in relation to them, is sufficient enough to mark an earlier difference. If it emphasizes geographical conditions, the central position of the Islamic world which allowed it to reach from Spain to China within a few centuries, itself presents a natural wideness of “horizon” which the European-Christian world could reach only much later in history. Could we deduce, then, the modern European has lost his interest in the “comparative” field opened up at the time of Marco Polo? All in all, this particular topic requires a larger and more detailed discussion on its own.

Also, it is difficult to talk about a demotion of Arabic in the sense that Latin experienced. On the contrary, Arabic was a unique example as a strong colonizer language to the degree of assimilating the entire population of foreign speakers. Kees Versteegh summarizes the extent of Arabic influence: he states that in the course of interaction between Arabic and other languages within the boundaries of Arabic-speaking world, “large groups of speakers shifted from their own language to Arabic. If this shift was complete, the original language became extinct—e.g., Coptic in Egypt—in which case it is usually called a *substratal language*. If the shift was incomplete, the speakers continued to use their own language along with Arabic as a second language...” And “Outside the Arabophone area, however, the interference

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<sup>32</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 16-18.

<sup>33</sup> The Christian world itself was quite far from being homogenous, and which Christianity exactly belongs to this transformation, is another question that requires attention.

pattern was the reverse: here the local languages were preserved but they were heavily affected by the interaction with speakers of Arabic...”<sup>34</sup> (470-71). Regarding many regions that were once a part of the Arab empire and later separated from it, he states:

Since in all these areas, as long as they belonged to the Arab empire, Arabic was the language of prestige, hundreds, sometimes thousands, of loanwords found their way into the languages spoken there, and in some cases there was a certain degree of phonological, morphological or syntactic influence. But even in those areas that never formed part of the Arab empire, the influence of Arabic as the language of Islam was felt. In large parts of Africa, in Central Asia (Turcophone areas), in parts of India and Southeast Asia Islam became the majority religion, and in its wake the Arabic language was introduced as a vehicle of religion and culture. Moreover, even though these areas were never annexed by Arabic-speaking people, commercial relations with the central Arabophone area were often very intense, and although Arabic never replaced the indigenous languages, the commercial contacts left many traces of Arabic influence.<sup>35</sup>

Just by taking this much information into account, we can identify three distinct forms of relationship came into existence between Arabic and other languages. Each of these paths were shaped by particular political, geographical and cultural factors on their own.

Once again, it will be enough for us to note the distinct historical process developed in Europe during the process which led to the emergence of the idea of nation.

### **3.3. Time and Nation**

In Anderson’s work, the actual critical point about the rise of an idea of nation lies in the analysis of the element of “time.” Transformation from imagining one form of community to another one is most of all related to the transformation of the sense of time.

Anderson states that in the pre-modern times, there was “an idea of simultaneity,” “wholly alien to ours.” It is “close to what Benjamin calls Messianic time, a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present.” According to this

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<sup>34</sup> Kers Versteegh, “Linguistic Contacts between Arabic and Other Languages,” *Arabica*, T. 48, Fasc. 4. *Linguistique Arabe: Sociolinguistique et Histoire de la Langue* (2001): 470-71.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 471.

idea, the people of the Middle Ages had a sense of time in which “meanwhile” had little significance. Once again borrowing from Benjamin, he says that our conception of simultaneity which is “an idea of 'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar,” took place of the former.<sup>36</sup>

This modern sense of homogenous, empty time can be observed in the novel and the newspaper. The novel, for instance, presents an environment in which members of different “societies” existing together can be connected without knowing each other or ever being acquainted. Its characters are linked together by performing on their own but “at the same clocked, calendrical time” which can be grasped by the omniscient reader. The conclusion from this is evident: “the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time” which is “a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.” For instance, “an American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.”<sup>37</sup>

The newspaper’s companionship with the novel in this topic is not a coincidence:

What is the essential literary convention of the newspaper? If we were to look at a sample front page of, say, *The New York Times*, we might find there stories about Soviet dissidents, famine in Mali, a gruesome murder, a coup in Iraq, the discovery of a rare fossil in Zimbabwe, and a speech by Mitterrand. Why are these events so juxtaposed? What connects them to each other? Not sheer caprice. Yet obviously most of them happen independently, without the actors being aware of each other or of what the others are up to. The arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition (a later edition will substitute a baseball triumph for Mitterrand) shows that the linkage between them is imagined.<sup>38</sup>

A newspaper creates a bricolage of reports that are most importantly independent of each other even though there may be certain categories or arrangements determining their organization in the paper. This in the end requires the

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<sup>36</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 25-26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

reader to imagine a link between them. The imagined linkage between events, Anderson explains, has two sources: “The first is simply calendrical coincidence. The date at the top of the newspaper, the single most important emblem on it, provides the essential connection—the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time. Within that time, 'the world' ambles sturdily ahead.”<sup>39</sup>

Anderson unsurprisingly skips one significant question which is another chicken and egg problem: Which actor comes first in this interaction between the community and the means of communication or technology in general? Even though he does not ask the question directly, it is possible to say that the answer may be found in the second source of the imagined linkage in question: “The second source of imagined-linkage lies in the relationship between the newspaper, as a form of book, and the market... In a rather special sense, the book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity.”<sup>40</sup>

In this perspective, the newspaper is merely an 'extreme form' of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity. Might we say: one-day best-sellers? The obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing—curious that one of the earlier mass-produced commodities should so prefigure the inbuilt obsolescence of modern durables—nonetheless, for just this reason, creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction.<sup>41</sup>

How can we think of the first source of this linkage without the second one? The calendrical coincidence connecting various unrelated events are actually put together not by the mind of the reader but by a proper medium. To a degree, without the medium there cannot even be an “empty time” at least in this particular sense. Even though the “potential” of such an imagination lies in the reader, the medium rather than its form. And the medium here, regardless of its form, cannot come into existence without the printing press and the market.

A new sense of time assisted by technology and the market; three elements coming together to constitute the basis of an exact analogue of the idea of nation: this is more or less the formula of the newspaper which reminds us how closely associated the modernity is with the historical successor of the religious community. The idea of nation is almost wrapped up in it. Considering that, regardless of its

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 35.

truth-value, Anderson describes pre-modern societies as essentially religious, the relationship between nationalism and modernity might be the key to understanding the modern crisis of the religion. Before further dwelling on the role of “time” in the crisis, first we need to take a brief look at the relationship between the concepts of nation and modernity.

### **3.4. Nation and Modernity**

For many scholars nationalism and modernity are inseparable. Among these Liah Greenfeld’s points regarding the precedence of nationalism is noteworthy.

In contrast with traditional modernist and primordialist approaches to the question “Are nations modern?” Greenfeld instead proposes that it is actually modernity itself that is nationalist. While modernists such as Benedict Anderson think that the essence of nationalism “lies within the ‘structures of modernity’ (free markets, bureaucratic state, print media, highly evolved means of communication), themselves reflective of the very late - capitalist or industrial - stage of human development”, primordialist base their views on ethnic groupings and see the emergence of nations as a natural process. For Greenfeld there is another possibility which states “that the nation is a modern phenomenon, but it is not a product of modern conditions, but instead is the very cause of modernity.”<sup>42</sup> Modernity is “a state of being, rather than a stage of development,” so one should “look for the principle behind its characteristics” generally associated with labels such as “social mobility; modern state, bureaucratization and centralization; industrialization or capitalism; and secularization.”<sup>43</sup> But “historically, the emergence of nationalism predated the development of every significant component of modernization.”<sup>44</sup> Neither industrialization of capitalism nor secularization of culture could come into existence without a nationalist ground first. And this view also provides a reasonable explanation for how the political, economic and cultural features of modernity are connected among themselves. “Nationalism is a fundamentally secular and humanistic consciousness based on the principles of popular sovereignty and egalitarianism”. And these three characteristics, namely secularism, egalitarianism

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<sup>42</sup> Liah Greenfeld, “Modernity and Nationalism,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications), 233-35.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 236-37

<sup>44</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 21.

and popular sovereignty are the blueprint of modern culture.<sup>45</sup> This view is apparently based on the idea that for new forms of political economic organization to be possible, a “transformation in the conception of social order” is necessary, as “human reality is culturally constructed.”<sup>46</sup> For instance, for the flexible stratification system both capitalism and industrialization requires arises from the principle of egalitarianism. Or the existence of state could not be imagined without an idea of sovereignty separated from the person of the sovereign. As a result it is concluded that nationalism “represents the cultural foundation of modern social structure, economics, politics, international relations, education, art, science, family relations, and so on and so forth.”<sup>47</sup>

I believe that Greenfeld’s emphasis on the nation’s indispensability for the existence of a condition called modernity rather than an idea arisen out of difficult combinations, is significant also as it indicates to the possibility that the modern crisis of religion can have its roots in the differences between the different communities of the same species. And this is I believe apparent most prominently in the differences of the communal mindsets of the two forms of communities. For instance, Greenfeld states:

The focus of nationalism on this world as ultimately meaningful and the principle of popular sovereignty combine to render social reality changeable and place the responsibility for its shape in the hands of the earthly living community - the nation. The focus on the life in this world dramatically increases the value of this life to the individual and inevitably leads to the insistence on a good life, however defined. One is no longer expected to submit to suffering or deprivation, unless one has special reasons to do so, for the general reasons for such submission - the expectation of rewards in the beyond, transmutation and migration of the soul, the duty to witness to the glory of God wherever one is called, or the sheer impossibility to change one's condition - no longer apply.<sup>48</sup>

As another example, Greenfeld adds to this earthliness the idea of “competition” which is inherent to membership in the nation. According to this idea, in nations an individual ties his sense of dignity to the nation’s collective dignity which is a condition ensuring one’s investment in the nation’s dignity which in return gives rise to winners and losers in a global sense since “prestige is a relative good”,

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<sup>45</sup> Liah Greenfeld, “Modernity and Nationalism,” 239.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 239.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 241.



which in the end results in “an endless international competition.” This is another reason why we attach so much importance to rivalries in many spheres of collective endeavour.<sup>49</sup> The difference between a nation as such and a religious community in which theoretically the only criteria for superiority is, as the prophetic saying goes, “piety and good action”, is evident. Moreover, the difference in question also marks the difference between the sources of respectability. While for the religious community it is piety (which is most visible in self-care) that is the ultimate goal and every form of service to the religion is valuable only as much as it contributes to the people’s righteousness which will serve them in the Hereafter, for the nation a piety which does not contribute to the national dignity will naturally have little significance.

In terms of the insistence on a good life in “this” world, a general condition of earthliness she associates with nation, Greenfeld’s argument indicates that the co-existence of religion and nation will inevitably lead to the merging of many normally incompatible elements as exemplified with the criteria of respectability, focal points of individual investment etc. Naturally such issues will produce different results from one topic to another. But they indicate a condition which comes after the existence of nation. We need to dig a little further and look for the factors which make nation a community whose focus is on this world as ultimately meaningful. Even though secularism, egalitarianism and popular sovereignty inherent to nationalism can explain how the political, economic and cultural features of modernity are connected, there is still enough room for us to ask why they follow a particular pattern.

Daniele Conversi offers yet another reversal of the idea and accepts nationalism as “a crucial component of a broader ideological matrix” which he names modernism. Conversi says that modernity is generally treated “as a ‘fact’ and rarely as an idea,” and instead he offers an idea of “modernism” as “a wider ideological category, which establishes modernity as the founding parameter of a new era implicitly defined by the belief in unlimited progress.”<sup>50</sup> Conversi believes that “modernism” is still the most popular “ideology.”

All modern ideologies were formulated within, and as responses to, the crises brought about in different stages and periods by the end of an era, variously labelled as agricultural society, the Ancien Re’gime, the Dark Ages, pre-

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>50</sup> Daniele Conversi, “Modernism and Nationalism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* (February 2012), 14. Tandfonline 10.1080/13569317.2012.644982.

modernity, or in other ways: by opposition to what preceded it, the term 'modernism' can be used to encompass all those world visions that fully embraced modernity and its consequences, trying to conceive new scenarios of 'togetherness' based on the unconditional acceptance and endorsement of the coming changes.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore Conversi identifies a "common thread hovering above nationalism" which is the sum of ideological discourses, artistic expressions and political practices gravitating around the 'need to be modern'." Even though he uses the term in his own particular understanding, the essence of this "ideology" can be detected with notions we are quite familiar such as "progress", "growth" or "development."<sup>52</sup>

In the process, non-Western ideologies and approaches were discarded and destroyed after being labelled as 'anti-modern'. 'Development' itself became an ideology or, even more, a 'global faith' imposed by the West on an often-recalcitrant world. For Christopher Lasch, with its belief in a linear, steady, indefinite rise in living standards as the inevitable destiny of mankind, the 'faith in progress' assumes the eschatological trappings of established religions.<sup>53</sup>

The faith in progress is not a figure of speech. According to Conversi this "cult of modernity, progress and development became the *ide'e fixe* of the industrial and post-industrial age", and permeated "not only all other ideologies, including nationalism, liberalism, fascism and communism, but also every major aspect of modern social life."<sup>54</sup>

What Conversi calls modernism injects into nationalism an underlying faith which leads people to a path in which individuals and nations either keep up with a constantly progressing world or "fall behind". Departing from this idea, Conversi states that "concepts such as modernism, nationalism and Westernization became often inseparable."<sup>55</sup> In this general order of things, however, one significant fact has yet to be established into words. From Anderson to Conversi scholars often take it for granted that the idea of nation always comes together with nationalism. Even if this is the case most of the time, theoretically it does not have to. The presence of nations is indispensable for any other modern "ideology" and a modernist perspective while nationalism is not. In a sense, nation is what makes it possible for

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 15.

Conversi's "modernism" to permeate into "every modern aspect of social life."<sup>56</sup> In this respect, it is possible to re-formulate Greenfeld's argument: "nation", or to put it better, people imagining a community in the particular form of nation is the precondition of modernity.

As explained before with the analogy of the newspaper, imagining a nation, such as millions of fellow Turkishmen, even though one has no idea about them largely depends on the individual's faith "in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" in time, in other words, on the new sense of homogenous time. In a way, as different from the religious community, for the existence of this kind of an imagination, there must be a sense of "history" which will allow the imagining of a community moving up and down in it.

### 3.5. A New Temporality

In *Futures Past*, German historian Reinhart Koselleck talks about a similar idea and explains the emergence of the concept of progress with early modernity which he calls *neue Zeit*. For Koselleck, this is not just a new period, but a fundamental change in the understanding of time itself. And the emergence of this new sense of time depends on the end of the previous one:

It was only when Christian eschatology shed its constant expectation of the imminent arrival of doomsday that a temporality could be revealed that would be open for the new and without limit. Until then, it had been a question of whether the End of the World would occur earlier than anticipated; now, calculations concerning the timing of doomsday shifted gradually into a receding distance, to a point where it was no longer a matter of controversy. This orientation toward the future occurred following the destruction of Christian expectations through religious civil wars which, with the decline of the Church, had at first appeared to herald the End of the World. The advance of the sciences, which promised to discover and bring to light even more in the future, coupled with the discovery of the New World and its peoples, had a slow influence at first but helped create a consciousness of a general history which led into an altogether *neue Zeit*.<sup>57</sup>

It is quite surprising that in *Futures Past*, Koselleck almost never touches on the idea of nationalism. But even hereinabove, the idea of nation is obviously the apparent development in this story until he arrives at *neue Zeit* (modernity). It is not

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press), 232.

a coincidence that the time when “a consciousness of a general history” comes into existence coincides with the era of nation. After all, one of the most immediate results of a consciousness of history is the idea of communities moving up and down in history.

While this new consciousness is stated to have led to modernity, modernity also gives birth to a new understanding of time:

To elaborate, an outcome of so-called modernity (Neuzeit) was that at the end of the eighteenth century the idea of a “new time” was constituted. The concept of progress, which at that time was largely coincident with “history,” encapsulated a form of historical time which was subject to constant renewal. The common achievement of both concepts was that they renewed and extended the horizon of future expectation.<sup>58</sup>

The end of the eighteenth century is the time when the process is fully completed. In the eighteenth century, the idea that for the last three hundred years people were living “in a specific period distinct from the era that had preceded it” had prevailed.<sup>59</sup> The sense of taking place in a specific period which may have different life span of its own and difference from previous ones is a form of time which is different from natural time even if it depends on it. In this “historical time” things undergo constant change.

What is significant for us is the mentioned transformation in the “horizon of future expectation” by means of the concepts of modernity, and “progress” encapsulating historical time.

Roughly speaking, until the mid-seventeenth century, expectation of the future was bounded by the approach of the Last Judgment, within which earthly injustice would find its transhistorical settlement. Fate was to this degree both unjust and merciful, and it was taken for granted that even then men had to exercise foresight and behave accordingly.<sup>60</sup>

According to Koselleck, modernity opens up a time when the difference between experience which is “present past” and expectation which is “the future made present” increasingly expanded: “More precisely, that Neuzeit is first understood as a neue Zeit from the time that expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experience.”<sup>61</sup> Previously, then, the expectations

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 196.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 234.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 287.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 259.

cultivated on a world where eighty percent of the populations were peasants living in a natural cycle, were “subsisted entirely on the experiences of their predecessors, experiences which in turn became those of their successors.” Even if this situation did not mean that there was no change, it was very slow. “As long as the Christian doctrine of the Final Days set an immovable limit to the horizon of expectation (roughly speaking, until the mid-seventeenth century), the future remained bound to the past.”<sup>62</sup>

The essence of the new sense of time flourishes as a result of this new horizon of expectation which frees itself from the past experience.

The opening of a new horizon of expectation via the effects of what was later conceived as “progress” changed this situation. Terminologically, the spiritual *profectus* was either displaced or dissolved by a worldly *progressus*. The objective of possible completeness, previously attainable only in the Hereafter, henceforth served the idea of improvement on earth and made it possible for the doctrine of the Final Days to be superseded by the hazards of an open future.<sup>63</sup>

As a result of the freedom gained, while the past turns into a field from which one can no more harvest predictions in order to project onto the future, the future itself becomes a field of innumerable possibilities. But more importantly the field of possibilities is interpreted, by means of the idea of progress, as the field of moving forward towards an earthly better, towards an unlimited development. Koselleck finds “the impact of science and technology” as the primary reason behind this perception of progress.<sup>64</sup> Regardless, however, as the most significant result, the new sense of future replaces “spiritual profectus” with a “worldly progressus”.

The growth of one form of improvement to the detriment of the other clearly shows for whose benefit does the time works. It is easy to conclude the idea of Hereafter will naturally lose its active influence on people more and more. In other words, the displacement or the melting of spiritual profectus is an event larger than itself. It also expresses the displacement of a whole paradigm, which is in itself transformable but still depends on spiritual improvement, belonging to the religious community by means of the able readers in question.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 263-64.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 265.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 197.

### 3.6. The Crisis and Religion

If we return back to where we started, now it is easier to understand the famous crisis not only of Islam but of the religion itself. A modern age based on nations, supported by its own means of communications, economic and political structures which as a whole held together and glued to each other by a particular sense of temporality leading to a faith in progress as a result of a particular historical process in the West, seems to be functioning for the disadvantage of a faith whose priorities are always in the next world. Naturally, in this scene of events, the nation, whether it is the egg or the chicken of the story, seems to be the more adaptable one. It is obvious that building a religious life in an environment where the religious community can hardly hold on to its values and cannot even see them materialized most of the time, is a significant problem waiting to be solved. In the case of Islam we see that the problem is accompanied by a sense of defeat widespread in the Muslim world as a result of well-known political and historical events of the recent centuries. While this condition further complicates the process, it even leads to difficulties in the process of defining the problem, its causes and results, let alone possible solutions.

At this point, as the main tool of building a religious life, we can expect seeing something new also in the way religious advice utilized. To observe it, and look for answers to the questions specified at the beginning of this chapter, in the next chapter I will focus on the case of the Turkish journal *Büyük Doğu*.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**THE CASE OF BÜYÜK DOĞU:**  
**THE CRISIS OF ISLAM, THE CRISIS OF EVERYTHING**

Maybe before anything else, we should first recognize *Büyük Doğu* as a journal of huge missions. It can be said that *Büyük Doğu* by itself started a certain trend in the Turkish media and politics.

An Islamist magazine called *Vesika* published between the years 1975 and 1977 introduces another magazine of the same vein: “In this period when we entered a certain accounting with the West, *Pınar* is one of the vanguard forces of the army of faith whose general is *Büyük Doğu*.”<sup>65</sup> This kind of paying homage to the master is common in such papers. Another writer from *Vesika* writes: “The intellectual who is able to reach an idea of order and give the struggle of our civilization, knowingly or unknowingly owes himself to *Büyük Doğu* and therefore to Necip Fazıl.”<sup>66</sup> This is not an exaggeration. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1905-1983) is considered to be one of the most significant names of the Turkish Islamist thought. His significance is partly due his creative role when he emerges as an ideologue which according to Murat Güzel makes him a “transition figure” who established a dialogue between Islamism, nationalism and conservatism in the Turkish political and ideological setting. He is the figure who created the language and grammar which allows soft transitions between the three political views.<sup>67</sup> The creativity in question is not limited to his “style.” For some, his interpretation of Islam which is put forward in the form of a detailed ideological structure which proposes social and political cures based on the revelation is something completely new for the Turkish intellectual and society. In a way he turns upside down the traditional way of understanding the religion.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Mustafa Fatih, “Pınar,” *Vesika*, January 1, 1976, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Erdem Murat, “Büyük Doğu ve ‘Rapor 1’,” *Vesika*, April 1, 1976, 30.

<sup>67</sup> Murat Güzel, “Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 5, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem (Istanbul: İletişim, 2003), 334.

<sup>68</sup> Abdurrahim Karadeniz, “Büyük Doğu’nun Siyaset, Toplum ve Devlet Tasarımı: İdeolojya Örgüsü.” *Hece* 97 (2005): 16.

While his influence leads to an “army of faith” in question, pointing out his university education in France and close familiarity with the Western culture, it is also stated that Necip Fazıl is someone who wants to reach a common ground between the West and the East.<sup>69</sup> Whether it is a war on or the critique of a civilization, since no fight in the name of religion can be without “advice”, *Büyük Doğu* as the starter, the general and the shaper of this struggle is the perfect object of study for us to look for a detailed understanding of the modern condition of the tool of religious advice.

My analyses in this chapter is based on *Büyük Doğu* issues published between the years 1943 and 1952. While for the content analysis I will focus on the years between 1943 and 1948 with an additional emphasis on the section titled “İdeolocya Örgüsü,” for the analysis of form and arrangement, I will use the issues published between 1948 and 1952.

#### **4.1. The Definition of *Büyük Doğu***

What makes a periodical such as *Büyük Doğu* so influential within the Islamist community? The answer is given in the first issue published in September, 1943: “*Büyük Doğu* is the name of an ideal,”<sup>70</sup> writes Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. This first lines of the periodical gives the start of the ideological coding of the “ideal” which will continue for years in the section titled “İdeolocya Örgüsü.” In a sense, the struggle or the war Necip Fazıl and his *Büyük Doğu* starts,<sup>71</sup> begins with the first lines of the periodical. An ideal is the first and foremost promise and the soul of the periodical.

He then explains the application zone of this ideal as limited to the Turkish nation whose identity and soul is fixed in the East, and declares: “If one day we see within the borders of the Turkish land that the good tidings of our true dream permeates things and events, this will be the name of the scene which will crystallize

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<sup>69</sup> Dursun Ali Tökel, “Bir Medeniyet Eleştirmeni Olarak Necip Fazıl.” *Hece* 97 (2005): 56-57.

<sup>70</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Büyük Doğu’ya Doğru İdeolocya Örgüsü,” *Büyük Doğu*, September 17, 1943, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Before *Büyük Doğu*, in 1936 Necip Fazıl Kısakürek issues another periodical called *Ağaç*. Even though a materialist-spiritualist dichotomy can be observed in it as well, Cantek notes that the kind of spiritualism in *Ağaç* does not exactly coincide with Islam. See: Levent Cantek, “Büyük Doğu,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 5, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem (Istanbul: İletisim, 2003), 646.



in front of us: *Büyük Doğu*<sup>72</sup> This ideal is equal to a wish at the same time. What exactly does this wish include, however, unfolds itself in a long time. Interestingly enough as it gets unfolded, and gets more complicated and more detailed, it becomes less in touch with reality until turning into a struggle of designing an utopia called Great Sublime State (Başücelik Devleti) and more.

In the Issue 17 from February, 1944 under the headline “Global Apocalypse and Us”, *Büyük Doğu* is explained as an answer to a state of urgency and a necessity:

What is this new soul, ideal and order we must integrate without having a sip of water or sleeping one second if the need arises, as it already came to maturity???

*Büyük Doğu* has been published to answer this question and will only try to answer it as long as it is published!!!<sup>73</sup>

In a time of war and global turmoil, Necip Fazıl says, the need for a new soul, ideal and order is clear. By this way, the first declaration of *Büyük Doğu* as a dream or a wish turns into a matter of survival. The answer is not completely announced yet, but it should be realized without even having a sip of water or sleeping at all. In a way, *Büyük Doğu* becomes a “project” about which one of the first things we know is its urgency and necessity.

As the section of “İdelocya Örgüsü” develops and the contents of the project explains itself, what it promises becomes clearer:

The hole of the key that we lost inside ourselves and in our own pockets then like blind people gropingly searched for it outside and in other fronts, and the more we searched the more we lost, the more we lost and the more we thought we found, and the more we thought we found the more we increased our loss... This is what BÜYÜK DOĞU is; and this is our job!.. (2070)<sup>74</sup>

The ideal basically opens the door to something the nation had in the past but lost in time and even in its own pocket. The attempts at bringing this “something”

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<sup>72</sup> “Eğer bir gün Türk vatanının sınırları içinde, sadık rüyamızın müjdesini eşya ve hadiselere sinmiş görürsek karşımızda billurlaşacak topyekün manzaranın ifadesi şu olacaktır: *Büyük Doğu*.” Ibid. (my translation)

<sup>73</sup> “Vadesinin son anı geldiği için, icap ederse bir yudum su içmeden ve tek saniye uyumadan bütünleştirmeğe mecbur olduğumuz bu yepyeni ruh, mefkure ve nizam nedir???” *Büyük Doğu*, işte bu sorunun cevabını vermek için çıktı ve çıkmakta devam ettikçe yalnız bu sorunun cevabını vermeye çalışacak!!!” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Dünya Kıyameti ve Biz...” *Büyük Doğu*, February 4, 1944, 2. (my translation)

<sup>74</sup> “Kendi içimizde ve kendi cebimizde kaybettiğimiz, sonra körler gibi el yordamiyle eşya ve hadiseleri sığayarak hep dışımızda ve başka cephelerde aradığımız, aradıkça kaybettiğimiz, kaybettikçe bulduk sandığımız, bulduk sandıkça kaybımızı artırdığımız anahtarın kum üzerindeki yuvası... BÜYÜK DOĞU budur; işimiz de bu!..” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Biz,” *Büyük Doğu*, November 2, 1945, 2. (my translation)

back were apparently wrong moves which resulted in the worsening of the wound. What is this thing that the nation has lost? Since Necip Fazıl in this article directly refers to a kind of national glory in the past by explaining the gradual loss of ground against the attacks of the “West”, we can say that it is a state of “success” whose criteria is determined by the present mindset. The emphasis on the loss of success or superiority is at the same time an emphasis on a state of “failure” which as it is a national one, simply means being defeated. The project is the keyhole which will open the door to success, the state of winning again if the act of turning the right key is realized.

In January, 1948, the project is once again defined as a “perfect and pure system of salvation” which “...connects what is advanced, what is the most advanced, to the name of Allah whose will shall occur whatever the circumstances are,” and which “completes the circle between yesterday, today and tomorrow without breaking it...”<sup>75</sup> The project becomes more divine in time as, what it depends on, is gradually explicated. But apart from the divine aspect of this ideal, which will later surround it completely, the emphasis of progress is not only interesting, but also crucial since a large portion of this salvation system is dedicated to a future in two senses. First, the project of *Büyük Doğu* is a project of development aiming at a national “progress” in almost every sense; and second, the hope in this direction completely depends on an idea of an open “future” when this development is realized, because the future is, among other things, a land of possibilities.

To sum up, the ideal of *Büyük Doğu* is *a dream of a national project of salvation aiming at repairing a past glory to end a state of defeat by offering modern development and solutions with a religious base in a time of urgency to be realized in the future*. While salvation, solution, defeat and urgency indicate in different degrees the state of crisis it identifies, the rest of the items—nation, progress, past, future and religion—are the keywords of the project which will fight against it. The modern yearnings of this ideal, its nationalist perspective merging with religious zeal targeting a state of crisis, creates a perfect case of hybridity for the analysis of religious advice in a modern setting and its possible distinction from previous times.

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<sup>75</sup> “... ilerinin en ilerisi son ileriye, nihayet ne olsa dediği olacak olan Allah ve Peygamberinin isim mihrakına bağlayan; ve dün, bugün ve yarın arasındaki daireyi kırmadan tamamlayan, eksiksiz ve tezatsız kurtuluş sistemi...” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ok Yaydan Çıktı!” *Büyük Doğu*, January 23, 1948, 2. (my translation)

Since the project defines itself against this state of crisis, we first need to explain what it acknowledges as “crisis.”

## 4.2. The Definition of Crisis in *Büyük Doğu*

In *Büyük Doğu*, by means of various sections of the periodical, the project identifies and promises solutions for three kinds of crisis. Considering the fact that *Büyük Doğu* was first published towards the end of the Second World War, the first one is closely related with the contemporary events developing at that time.

### 4.2.1. The Global Crisis

The world war is itself, of course, enough to mark a world crisis. But *Büyük Doğu* recognizes it as a larger concept. It is made up of two sub-crises: the crisis of the civilized and the crisis of the non-civilized. In “The Global Apocalypse and Us”, Necip Fazıl notes that “civilized humanity consists only of the West”,<sup>76</sup> and “despite the thousands of competences it cultivated to this day,” civilized humanity, the West missed the chance of creating a “material and spiritual order.”<sup>77</sup> In another article, “The Crisis of the West” he gives a picture of “the loss of soul” in the West by identifying the Western thought and philosophy as “a chain of doubt and convulsion”. The West looks like a “sand clock whose upper part is empties while the lower part gets full.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that he defines the West as “nothing but a dry miracle of mind in close relation with the broad material plan.”<sup>79</sup>

In this superficiality both a “magnific” activity and work goes hand in hand with “a soul unable to go beyond the external relief of things and events” as the “cities, city squares, streets, behaviours, all the forms and tools, all the measures of order and all the samples of thought and art of the West” shows.<sup>80</sup> In the last

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<sup>76</sup> Another point worth mentioning about Necip Fazıl is that as Aktay puts, “among the second and third generation Islamic intellectuals, Necip Fazıl is, perhaps, the first and the single personality who was born and grown in İstanbul.” Yasin Aktay, “Body, Text, Identity, The Islamist Discourse of Authenticity in Turkey” (PhD diss., The Middle East Technical University, 1977), 209.

<sup>77</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Dünya Kıyameti ve Biz...” *Büyük Doğu*, February 4, 1944, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Batının Buhranı,” *Büyük Doğu*, November 19, 1943, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Batı Nedir?” *Büyük Doğu*, October 1, 1943, 2.

<sup>80</sup> “...ekseriyetle plastika çerçevesini, yani eşya ve hadiselerin dış kabartmaları, mekan cümbüşleri kadrosunu aşmayan bir ruh... bu hükmün sadakatine, Batının şehirlerini, meydanlarını, sokaklarını, tavırlarını, bütün şekil ve aletlerini, bütün nizam ölçülerile bütün fikir ve sanat örneklerini şahit gösterebiliriz.” Ibid. (my translation)

instance, a cover title summarizes this approach: “What we do not have: The West Means System.”<sup>81</sup>

What these examples from Necip Fazıl’s analysis shows us is that understanding the the West or “the civilized world” and its own crisis takes a lot more space than the influence of contemporary events and world wars. Necip Fazıl’s writings cry out an admiration underneath the apparent antagonism to the West. It is possible to say that the crisis about the West, or the civilized, or the victorious, or the “materially” developed is more a reproach targeting the West for holding something dear but not being worthy of having it.

The other part of the state of global crisis refers to the condition of the uncivilized, which is the East. Another cover photo from October 1946 issue gathers photos from different parts of Asia with the headline “This is the East!” Each photo has a one word explanation subtitle such as “Pretension,” “Striving,” “Poverty,” “Charade,” “Slavery,” “Imitation.”<sup>82</sup> Just like the West, the East too, which here includes not only the Middle Eastern people but also the Far Eastern regions<sup>83</sup> (2031), takes its share from the ambiguity in its description. “Everything came from the East” writes Necip Fazıl, “Eveything, that is, our very soul...”<sup>84</sup> While the national identity is targeted to be fixed as an Easterner not a Westerner, the East itself becomes the opposite of the West, which represents “the simple mind”: “Spirit, miracle, magic, poetry; the soul and the knowledge, the disposition and the character of the beyond, intricacy, entanglement, puzzles, everything unreachable are in the East with all their poles of Truth and Superstition.”<sup>85</sup> The ancient duality is at work and also explains the crisis of the East: “...equal to its glory and magnificence, the East also had a weakness.” Unsurprisingly this weak spot is nothing but “the simple mind”.<sup>86</sup> The title of this article is “First, We Should Believe in the East!” In a way, the heavy criticism present in the cover photo is justified by the fact *Büyük Doğu* embraces the Eastern identity which theoretically turns every criticism in this

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<sup>81</sup> “Bizde Olmıyan Şey: Garp Sistem Demektir!,” *Büyük Doğu*, September 27, 1946, 1.

<sup>82</sup> “İşte Şarkın Hali!” *Büyük Doğu*, October 4, 1946, 1.

<sup>83</sup> As interesting note, Necip Fazıl excludes the Japanese nation from the Eastern civilization as they “have never contributed to the maya of East” and in the end became “mimetists.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Doğunun Mizanı...” *Büyük Doğu*, October 15, 1943, 2.

<sup>84</sup> “Her şey Doğudan geldi; her şey, yani ruhumuz...” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Herşey Doğudan geldi” *Büyük Doğu*, September 24, 1943, 2. (my translation)

<sup>85</sup> “Ruh, mucize, masal, büyü, şiir; ve ötelerin, giriftlerin, bilmecelelerin ilmi, ruhu ve mizacı yalnız Doğunun...” Ibid. (my translation)

<sup>86</sup> “...Doğunun, ihtişam ve azametine denk bir zaafi oldu... Doğunun katili olan ok, maddeye seyislik eden basit akıldan ve onun emrettiği miskin icaplardan ibaret...” Ibid. (my translation)

direction into a self-criticism which is, of course, supposed to be something positive. And once again the crisis in question is beyond a present condition. The East, the defeated, the uncivilized, the underdeveloped is accused of making this crucial mistake of losing its own “depth” and being defeated to the “superficial” West in the realm of earthly matters which finally turned it into “the beggar of the West.” The crisis in question is this state of defeat.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4.2.2. The Local Crisis

*Büyük Doğu* also identifies a national crisis, which has two distinct periods with different qualities: “pre-Tanzimat, post-Tanzimat”. In the pre-Tanzimat period, the crisis of the Turkish people is about “losing the chance of absorbing the Western miracle without losing the native character, which would be losing the love and ecstasy of faith, and then imprisoned in its shell.” The post Tanzimat crisis, however, is about “not being able to penetrate through the shell of the West to eat its fruit and to pass from secondary to primary status, under the influence of a helpless psychology of bewilderment and dread.”<sup>88</sup> The main character of “both of these periods” says Necip Fazıl, is “coarse and simple *softa*”. These two characters are unaware of the fact that they are “the same.”<sup>89</sup> This description is close to the crisis of the East except that it has distinct periods of the same mistakes. According to this idea, in the first period, the “bigotry” misinterprets the faith and practices it without any depth, and thus refusing what makes the West a victor. They were responsible for not being able to develop together with the West. The bigotry in the second period is about misinterpreting the West and trying to imitate it without really understanding it. While the result of the former is an “intellectual crisis”, the result of

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<sup>87</sup> “Nitekim Batı, fethettiği mekan zemini üzerinde topyekün hayata hakim görünmenin imtiyazına erdi; böylece başlangıçta zaman aleminin sanatkarı Doğu, sonunda mekan dünyasının zanaatkarı Batının dilencisi oldu.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Doğu ile Batı yanyana...” *Büyük Doğu*, October 8, 1943, 2.

<sup>88</sup> “İlk buhran devremizde, bağlı olduğumuz iman manzumesinin vecd ve aşkını kaybettikten sonra, kabuğa mihli kalmak yüzünden, Batı harikasını hemen müşahede altına alıp ciğerlerimize sindirmek ve şahsiyetimizi kaybetmeksizin kanımızda eritmek imkanından nasıl mahrum kaldıksa; ikinci buhran devremizde de, ayrılmak bilmez bir hayret ve dehşet psikolocyası altında, Batının kabuğunu bir türlü oyamadık, meyvasını yiyemedik ve taliden asliliğe geçemedik.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Bizim Buhranımız” *Büyük Doğu*, November 26, 1943, 2. (my translation)

<sup>89</sup> “Her iki devrenin de kahramanı, ham ve kaba softa olduğu halde, bu iki ham ve kaba softa, hakikatte birbirinin aynı olduklarından habersiz, zahirde birbirine zıt iki temayül vesilesile birbirine düşmandır.” Ibid.

latter is “moral crisis.”<sup>90</sup> In sum the nation has been caught in an “intellectual and moral crisis.”

One question possible to come out of this account is when exactly the nation was not in crisis. This finds answer in the article “The Crisis in the East”. “From the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century” there were instances of personal crisis among the rulers. When these people were successfully eliminated, the good rule was passed from the ill people to the healthy one. This process ends after the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the “greatest crisis” of the East begins.<sup>91</sup>

The thesis that before the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was a healthy process, identifies the moment of loss, which also points to the past glory the project of *Büyük Doğu* aims at recovering.<sup>92</sup> A far point in the past covers a time of glory where people used to interpret the religion in a healthy way, and even when they did not as it might have happened occasionally, the system was mysteriously capable of cleaning itself by eliminating them.

The local crisis is the loss of this past happiness. This is a crucial point since the most significant part of the project, the result expected is located so back in history that it is of course not possible to discriminate this ideal past from a “dream”, let alone evaluating the conditions shaping this happiness or bringing them back from the glorious past. But on the other hand, the idea, or more correctly, the belief in the idea that there was such a happy time, is at the same time as mobile as possible because it depends on the faith guaranteed by Islam. In this case, the only thing needed to connect these two particular faiths is a sign that they are connected. This sign is of course the state of victory. When only a nation maintains a victorious and dominating state, this can be taken as the sign of their happiness, which also implies that they live the essence of Islam.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> “Ve nihayet ilk buhran devremizden evvelki nurlu günlerimizin ruhi kök muvasalasını zayıflatmak yüzünden, fikri buhranın içinde müthiş bir ahlaki buhran hengamesini davet etmiş olduk.” Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> “Doğunun daima Muhteşem Şark görüldüğü ve mukaddes emaneti bir kavimden öbürüne devrederek yalnız buhranlı kavmi tasfiye etmekle kaldığı devir, 8inci Asırdan 16ıncı Asır ortalarına kadar sürer. 16ıncı Asırdan sonra ise, Doğu, hükümlanlık hakkı bakımından tasfiye edilmiş ve Türke intikal etmiş milletleriyle, Türkün şahsında, topyekün en büyük buhranını kaydeder.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Doğuda buhran” *Büyük Doğu*, February 15, 1946, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Murat Güzel notes that the nationalist-conservatist history writing in Turkey exemplified by names such as Yavuz Bahadıroğlu, Yılmaz Boyunağa, Mustafa Müftüoğlu and Kadir Mısıroğlu, are highly influenced by Kısakürek’s style of history narration. See: Murat Güzel, “Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,” 339.

<sup>93</sup> In his article “Writing an alternative history: The memory politics of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek” Fahrettin Altun focuses on the poet’s struggle for producing an alternative history especially for the period between 1839 and 1960. According to Altun, Necip Fazıl’s main objective is to invalidate the Kemalist discourse of memory which is dominant during his time. His analyses conclude that Necip

### 4.2.3. The Crisis of Islam

The third form of crisis is directly related to Islam, or more correctly, the Islamic life. Necip Fazıl uses the word corruption or deterioration (“*bozuluş*”) instead of crisis (“*buhran*”) to imply that the mistake belongs to the practitioners of the religion as the way of living a religion is something corruptible, but the religion itself cannot undergo this kind of a crisis in terms of its own truths as they have a timeless validity. As a result, it is not the religion itself but its practice is in crisis.

The corruption in question is explained in accordance with a timeline. It starts in the era of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.<sup>94</sup> From this period to the present time, the process includes innumerable elements ranging from corruption and perversion of religious class, rote learning, disloyalty, external conspiracy, the Jews, Masonry, moral corruption, prostitution, etc.<sup>95</sup> About the last period of this corruption, Necip Fazıl states: “There is no need for an analysis nor an explanation as to how Islam was corrupted in the last period. What is obvious does not require explanation.” This last period, which is nothing but the Republican era, differs from previous ones with the fact that it had a certain “purpose and outcome”. In this period, there are clear enemies of Islam who equals the Muslim to the “ignorant, dupe, backward, bigot, fanatical, vulgar”. In this period, “what was completely gone was Islam, while what replaced it was nothing.”<sup>96</sup>

### 4.2.4. The Function of a Crisis

We need to examine all three forms of crisis carefully in order to reach a healthy conclusion on the concept of crisis defined in *Büyük Doğu*. Although each circle of crisis is analyzed one by one in several articles, it is obvious that they are

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Fazıl’s strategy of reading history by means of dualities such as materialism vs spiritualism and villains vs heroes, leads to a similar structure to the Kemalist discourse. See: Fahrettin Altun, “Alternatif tarih yapmak: Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’in hafıza siyaseti,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 123 (2012).

<sup>94</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam Nasıl Bozuldu? 1- Kanuni Devrinde” *Büyük Doğu*, February 6, 1948, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam Nasıl Bozuldu? 4- Meşrutiyet Devrinde” *Büyük Doğu*, February 27, 1948, 2.

<sup>96</sup> “Son devirde İslamın nasıl bozulduğu, hiçbir izah ve teşhise muhtaç değildir. Ayan olan, beyan istemez.” “Artık İslamın bozuluşu, ilermerkez ve anilermerkez her istikametten, her şubeden ve her macera şekliyle tamamlanmış; ve onun yerine ne geleceğinin ve bu gelen şeyin ne olacağıının anlaşılması için zemin açılmış oldu: Giden şey İslam, gelen şeyse hiçti.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam Nasıl Bozuldu? 5-Son Devirde” *Büyük Doğu*, March 5, 1948, 2. (my translation)

connected to each other not only by relations of time but also with a certain underlying logic:

1. The main information about the idea of crisis in these articles is that all three forms are about state of affairs contrary to the nature of things. According to the *Büyük Doğu*, the West is victorious but it is inflicted with a dry mind; the East betrays its own nature and loses its essence; the Turks first misinterpret Islam and then misinterpret the West, ending up with the loss of their morality and thought; and finally *Islam becomes deprived of people who are able to understand and practice it.*

2. The disruption in the nature of things indicates that there was a time when everything was in its proper place. A far point in the past marks a time of happiness. This era must be the one when everything refers to the opposite of today. But determining the time when everything is the opposite way is not as difficult as it seems. It is the contemporary condition, which marks the West as the only civilized part of the world that gives the clue. A time when the East held superiority is a sign powerful enough to signify that Islam was understood and practiced properly by devout Muslims. *In other words, political state of superiority refers to a healthy religious life, while defeat means corruption.*

3. First two points function as the proof of the third. The one who is responsible from the current crisis is neither fate nor some sort of stranger. The West achieves a material development but cannot be expected to correct itself since it does not have the source of truth as its struggle with different ideologies demonstrates. As for the East, it is actually guiltier since there was already a right example in its own body. The East lost its soul too but it also lost the chance to develop as the West did. Turks as the most important Muslim and Eastern nation reflect in their history all the main factors of this process of decay. Hence *Büyük Doğu* identifies the guilty as the native subject. If the guilty is at home, then the problem should be solved by “us”. *Büyük Doğu* upholds this responsibility by defining itself as a national salvation project which aims at saving all tree circles by curing the problem within national borders. In conclusion, *the concept of crisis as a whole is the raison d’être of Büyük Doğu.*

But a crisis whose history goes centuries back and at the same time is a matter of dire urgency requires both an explanation and a justification to stand up. *Büyük Doğu* presents an explanation to this problem by giving the exact profile of the guilty and justifies its own mission by incessant opposition and criticism. The two figures



explained in the national part of the age of crisis, the two bigots, to put it differently, the religious fanatic and the westernization supporter are proposed as the genealogical figures of this corruption. By this argument, *Büyük Doğu* not only explains the development of a problem but also directly hands over the guilty to the reader. The only thing left to do is to prove this guilt in a way suitable to the medium. A large part of *Büyük Doğu* magazine treats simply the subject of *national problems*. The common aspect of all these problems is that they are directly or indirectly due to the crisis theorized in the section titled “İdeolocya Örgüsü.” Now we should see what Necip Fazıl means by the “outcome” of the last period of the crisis which dominates the perspective of journal.

### **4.3. The Result of the Crisis and *Büyük Doğu*'s Criticism**

But what exactly does *Büyük Doğu* criticize? Although the answer is almost “everything,” there is a very deliberate and quite handy structure behind these seemingly chaotic decisions. It is possible to follow this logic by departing from the guilty figures of the two bigots. The line separating their reign, the Tanzimat separates the kind approaches to the idea of westernization. The first bigot closes his eyes to the Western miracle, while the second one is unable to understand what being a Westerner means (which is “system” as expressed in the cover photo). While the former rejects the West and loses his Eastern soul, the latter rejects the East and fails at understanding the Western mind. Thus, both fail at adding the secret of the Western success to what “we” really are. As a result, even though in different ways, they are “the same” in not being able to be neither an Easterner nor a Westerner. Both attitudes produce the same results: Underdevelopment and moral corruption. Since these mistakes directly damage the nation, they are identical to acts of treason, and both figures are traitors to the nation and the religion. A drawing depicting a man with a cap hanged on the gallows and a caption written “Mr. Imitation” on his neck displayed in the cover of December 1946 issue, gives the obvious message with additional emphasis of a steadfast title: “When we hang this man we will be Saved!”<sup>97</sup>

In other words, the essence of self-criticism mentioned before, transforms into a kind of symbolic traitor hunt. And the two branches of the anomaly detected at

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<sup>97</sup> “Bu Adamı Asınca Kurtuluruz,” *Büyük Doğu*, December 6, 1946, 1.

home are broad enough to bring every kind of problem together, and provide the idea of a crisis with a great mobility, allowing the *Büyük Doğu* project to penetrate each and every single national issue from the simplest everyday events to the largest political decisions without conceding from its mission at all. For the sake of simplicity, we can gather critical pieces of the periodical under two basic categories: those related with not being a European (or a developed-civilized country) which will be referred to as “underdevelopment”, and those related with not being an Easterner which is equal to “moral corruption.”<sup>98</sup> Of course, since the power is currently at the hands of the latter bigot, they are the major target of the criticism.

It is almost not possible to discuss the complete inventory of each categories but it will be enough to show the diversity for the sake of our thesis.

#### 4.3.1. Underdevelopment

In the article titled “Being a European” Necip Fazıl states that “a century long Westernization process did not bring us an inch closer to the European” and criticizes the national imitation and copying of the West:

Even to display and regain the values we lost, the easiest solution is at least to be an actual European a bit, as we are not capable of being an Easterner who understands the east with its actual and superior meaning.

Our contemporary bigots who are neither Easterners nor Westerners will never see and understand these nuances.<sup>99</sup>

The contemporary bigot is the main reason behind the underdevelopment, the failure of realizing “at least being an actual European a bit”. He has, however, innumerable ways of achieving this failure.

A cover photo from January, 1946 is a good example. The title says: “The water-wheel in Anatolia.” Each part of the water-wheel expresses one problem of the Anatolian Turk: “I am without a goal,” “I am without inspiration,” “I am without a

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<sup>98</sup> Levent Cantek states that in the second period of the journal, the moralist emphasis leaves its place to a social project which is defined by Islam. But it should be remembered that the journal never quits using the moralist language or content. In a way, there is a certain development process in the journal which is as a whole quite coherent in itself rather than a change of perspective. See: Levent Cantek, “Büyük Doğu,” 647.

<sup>99</sup> “Hale bakın ki, kaybettiğimiz kıymetleri bize gösterip tekrar buldurmak için bile en kolay çare, gerçek ve üstün manasıyla şarkı kavramış bir şarklı olamayışımıza karşılık, hiç olmazsa sahiden biraz Avrupalı olabilmeğe bağlı kalıyor.

Ne Şarklı, ne de garplı olan bizim asri yobazlarımızdır ki, bu incelikleri ebediyen göremiyecek ve anlayamayacaktır.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Avrupalı Olmak” *Büyük Doğu*, January 2, 1948, 2. (my translation)

strategy,” “I am thoughtless,” “I am ignorant,” “I am without a doctor,” “I am without tools.”<sup>100</sup> This composition exemplifies Necip Fazıl’s idea of “intellectual crisis” we mentioned under the title local crisis above. We can present this condition and the problems it gives birth to as the two sub-categories of underdevelopment.

Intellectual crisis is constantly criticized especially as related to the “scarcity of intellectuals” in the nation: “We have been in a deep state of scarcity for a hundred years! This is neither a scarcity of gold, nor tin nor factory nor stall nor wheat... Briefly and simply put, this is a scarcity of intellectuals; scarcity of real intellectuals...”<sup>101</sup>

According to Necip Fazıl, a real intellectual is a man of action who has a good control over “all the material and spiritual branches of work and efficiency” in a society, and developed “a general and practical perception” of them with an “analytical and composer mind”. This includes being a proper sample with the “wife he gets, the child he brings up, the book he reads, the house he builds” etc.<sup>102</sup> This is the ideal social engineer. The lack of intellectuals are of course accompanied by the lack of thought and ideas. For instance, in the article, “Why Did We Come to a Deadlock?” Burhan Belge complains of the failure of creating a “dome of ideas” after the War of Independence due to the lack of intellectuals.<sup>103</sup> In another article, Suphi Nuri İleri focuses on the condition of youth and their lack of an ideal, a “faith for which they will die willingly.”<sup>104</sup>

Naturally, the main target is the Republican reforms and secular nationalist tyranny. In April, 1947 Cafer Seno gives a good summary of B. D.’s early approach to the CHP government by criticizing famous six arrows one by one. Contrary to its own principles declared, the CHP is a threat to the national will with its one-party rule, fails at providing the needs of the worker and the villager, harms the national identity by damaging Turkish language and history, practices a kind of heathenism by degrading religion and religious tradition under the cover of secularism, governs

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<sup>100</sup> “Anadoluda Dolabın Hali,” *Büyük Doğu*, February 8, 1946, 1.

<sup>101</sup> “Yüz yıldır derin bir kıtlık çekmekteyiz! Ne altın, ne kalay, ne fabrika, ne tezgah, ne maden, ne buğday kıtlığı... Kısaca ve sadece münevver kıtlığı; gerçek münevver kıtlığı...” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Kıtlığımız” *Büyük Doğu*, April 5, 1946, 2. (my translation)

<sup>102</sup> “Biz, olgun bir cemiyette, maddi ve manevi bütün verim ve iş şubelerini kuşbakışı bir tertip içinde ruhuna sığdırmış ve bütün şubeler arasındaki ahenk zavayesinden umumi ve ameli bir idrak rüşdüne ulaşmış, tahlil ve terkib kafalı münevverlere muhtacız! Alacağı kadın, yetiştireceği çocuk, okuyacağı kitap, yaptıracağı ev, döşeyeceği oda, bürüneceği kılık, takınacağı eda üstünde, köklü bir zevk ve ölçü sahibi insanlar manzumesi...” Ibid. (my translation)

<sup>103</sup> Burhan Belge, “Niçin Böyle Kaldık?” *Büyük Doğu*, November 9, 1945, 8.

<sup>104</sup> Suphi Nuri İleri, “Mefkure Eksikliği,” *Büyük Doğu*, December 21, 1945, 6.

the economy with a greedy merchant mentality to the detriment of the people, destroys the actual possibility of improvement by its formalist, mimetic, blind reformism.<sup>105</sup> But it should be noted that especially two topics among these attract the greatest attention of B. D. writers: language reform and anti-religious policies.

The absence of an original Turkish city,<sup>106</sup> the terrible condition of the system of culture and national education,<sup>107</sup> “unstable, colourless, baseless” journalism,<sup>108</sup> political parties “without a worldview,”<sup>109</sup> sportsmen accustomed to thoughtless lives<sup>110</sup> are some of the relatively lighter topics of criticism.

### 4.3.2. Moral Corruption

As noted before, moral corruption in *Büyük Doğu* refers to not being loyal to the native values which are the Islamic ethics regarded as the main source of the Turkish soul:

Our morality is nothing but the Muslim ethics which is an entirely exceptional one. While in the past ages, the raw and vulgar bigot dried the aspect of pure love and genuine faith in it, in recent times, the apish bigot who is a blind admirer of the European, destroyed the essence of its source; and since our revolution did not bring a new understanding of ethics, today’s crisis of morality was born.<sup>111</sup>

This crisis of morality can be separated into two categories: general immorality and woman related-immorality. In an article titled “Our Wounds”, Necip Fazıl lines a few problems common in society: obsequiousness, favoritism, thievery, bribery, prostitution, alcohol, murder, gamble, deceit, falsehood, hypocrisy, hate, denial (of faith), distrust, levity, disorder.<sup>112</sup> While such problems are treated as a package under titles related to morality, many pieces including reports, interviews, photography comments focus on the corruption related to the Turkish women by means of particular topics.

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<sup>105</sup> Cafer Seno, “Altı Yol Ağzı,” *Büyük Doğu*, April 18, 1947, 3.

<sup>106</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Nerede bizim şehrimiz???” *Büyük Doğu*, May 5, 1944, 2.

<sup>107</sup> Kazım Nami Duru, “Eğitim Sistemimiz,” *Büyük Doğu*, January 25, 1946, 3.

<sup>108</sup> Kazım Nami Duru, “Gazeteciliğimiz,” *Büyük Doğu*, June 21, 1946, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “(Parti)lerimiz,” *Büyük Doğu*, June 28, 1946, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Spor ve Fikir,” *Büyük Doğu*, May 2, 1947, 11.

<sup>111</sup> “Bizim ahlakımızsa, baştan başa müstesna bir ahlak manzumesinden ibaret Müslümanlık ahlakıdır ki, eski çağlarda ham ve kaba softa bu ahlakın saf aşk ve halis iman cephesini kurutmuş; yeni çağlarda da Avrupalıya körü körüne hayran taklitçi yobaz bu ahlakın öz kaynağını yıkmış; inkılabımız da kendi içinden yeni bir ahlak telakkisi getiremeyince bugünkü ahlak buhranımız doğmuştur.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ahlakımız: 2” *Büyük Doğu*, December 17, 1943, 2. (my translation)

<sup>112</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ahlak Yaralarımız” *Büyük Doğu*, December 31, 1943, 2.

The passion of luxury common among women,<sup>113</sup> obscenity in beaches<sup>114</sup> are some points of criticism. But the real emphasis is on the abuse of female students in education and immoral practices of the national education system. A cover photo from May 1946 displays female students with mini shorts and indecent moves in in the National celebration of May 19, with a title “These are our School and Family Girls” with an explanatory text: “The scene from 10 days ago: No. You cannot encounter this scene in Europe...”<sup>115</sup>

Apart from frequently emphasizing that even Europe is not this corrupt, the reproduction of controversial photos without hesitation increases the effect of such drastic events, sometimes also depicted with lively imagery. For instance, in the interview section, Halil Nusret Ertüz makes a story out of his visit to the scout camps of the Ministry of National Education and the events in the camp. He describes a dance scene which is also visited at night and watched by “many officials and workers of State Railways located close to the camp, with their eyes popped out”:

Male teacher Selim Duru plays the king... The teacher called Mehlika is the queen... The princess, the heroine of the fire dance, is a girl named Serap...

...And Serap, she is completely naked just like the girls in primitive tribes... A bra on her breasts and on her legs the smallest cover item one similar to a man’s bathing suit ... Her long hair either covers her body parts or completely reveals them... There is a group of naked servants, together they draw circles around the fire with strange body movements.<sup>116</sup>

Another short work from H. N. Ertüz focuses on working woman whose workplace and life conditions he defines as “one of the most chronic social wounds” and describes again with lively imagery the immoral workplace environment in factories and changing rooms.<sup>117</sup>

#### 4.4. Conclusion

*Büyük Doğu*’s definition of crisis is at once, a global, national, and religious one. The idea of crisis of Islam, the East, the West, and the Muslim Turk develops in a theory which is largely coherent in itself. Each part has its own function. The

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<sup>113</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, “Lüks,” *Büyük Doğu*, April 25, 1947, 6.

<sup>114</sup> D. Nail Altuncuoğlu, “Plajlarımız,” *Büyük Doğu*, December, 19, 1947, 15.

<sup>115</sup> “Bunlar Mektep ve Aile Kızlarımızdır,” *Büyük Doğu*, May 31, 1946, 1.

<sup>116</sup> Halil Nusret Ertüz, “Kızlarımız ve Kamp,” *Büyük Doğu*, October 11, 1946, 15.

<sup>117</sup> Halil Nusret Ertüz, “İş Hayatında Kadın,” *Büyük Doğu*, November 7, 1947, 3.

global crisis ensures the reader that even though the West is superior and follows a half-right path, it is still defective; the national crisis provides the empirical evidence for the crisis and reveals the necessary enemy to the naked eye. But the crisis of Islam in this story differs from the other two drastically. First, it always refers to something that is lost either in the depths of the past, or recently (glory, honor, morality, etc.). It has either disappeared or is simply not present at all. The crisis is a condition of defection which is sharpened by the absence of the cure which means that this is not necessarily a complex or unsolvable puzzle problem at all. On the contrary, the crisis, or the analysis of the crisis is based on a logic which makes things as simple and perceivable as possible. The problem is formulated in a clear-cut manner: West/East, mind/soul, civilized/uncivilized, winner/loser, infidelity/faith, development/mimetism, corruption/morality, progress/bigotry. If the sides are already such clear then there is already a war. What *Büyük Doğu* does is to add just another binary opposition: idle man/man of ideals. In such a simple war, then what the man of ideals should do is to bring back from the past what is absent. What he should be is apparent from the clear depiction of the enemy and the series of oppositions. In contrast with the clear and plain nature of the role, the strategy of bringing things back is where things finally get complex and lose their transparency.

We had already mentioned that B. D. is defined as an “answer” to all the structure of problems constructed. The story of crisis was a simplified foundation for the solution provided. And the solution, or the project is a religious message, or *nasihat*.

#### **4.5. *Büyük Doğu* As Religious Advice**

What is the solution *Büyük Doğu* as a salvation project offers? As the medium of journal is the location where the project starts and develops and comes to a conclusion in terms of its theoretical coding, regardless of its actual possibility of realization, *Büyük Doğu*'s solution cannot be more than what its medium allows it to be: that is to say, a “message.” Therefore we must treat this project by starting from this observation. I would like to argue that the medium sends its message always in two forms: the message in the text and the message in the form. Starting with the former, I will analyze each one separately.

#### 4.5.1. *Büyük Doğu*'s Message and *Nasihah*

In the article “Islam and Everything” Necip Fazıl declares the structure of his project:

Our source which by its constant folding up reaches a total unity and by its constant unfolding surrounds eternity, like the focal point at the center of a corner, has a proper noun with two syllables; and our transaction has a common noun with two syllables...

...The name of our source is ISLAM; and the name of our intersection is EVERYTHING...<sup>118</sup>

This marks the simplest explanation of what the *Büyük Doğu* project is: “*nasihat*”. In another article titled “Salvation” Necip Fazıl defines same “prescription for global emancipation” in different words: “...Allah’s Book being in our right hand and the humanity’s greatest library of thought and work being in our left hand, to find ourselves in exuberance!..”<sup>119</sup> *Nasihah* gives us the method of *Büyük Doğu*.

By departing from an Islamic centre, Necip Fazıl knowingly or unknowingly emphasizes that that “everything” he will say will be a religious advice, which makes this an act of contributing to a religious worldview or directly to a religious life. But what is interesting here is that it aims at using the full potential of Islamic advice giving. In other words, *Büyük Doğu*'s advice is to build a complete “life” out of its discourse. On the other hand, this should not be so strange for a project aimed at solving the problems of the whole world.

As those who will realize this project, Necip Fazıl defines himself and his equip as people “burned in all the Western and Eastern thought, then out of these ashes reached an integrated and solid comprehension.” This enables them to “account for the truth” and to “attempt making everyone account for it.”<sup>120</sup> In other words, as a person with full consciousness he explains his own ability to give advice

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<sup>118</sup> “Bir zaviyenin başındaki mihrak noktası gibi, üstüste katlana katlana tekte karar kılan, altalta açıla açıla da sonsuzluğu kuşatan menbamızın, iki heceli bir has ismi vardır; munsabımızın da iki heceli bir cins ismi...”

“Menbamızın iki heceli has ismi İSLAM’dır; munsabımızın iki heceli cins ismi de, HERŞEY...”  
Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam ve Herşey” *Büyük Doğu*, July 5, 1946, 2. (my translation)

<sup>119</sup> “...sağ elimizde Allahın kul parmağı girmemiş biricik Kitabı ve sol elimizde insanoğlunun olanca fikir ve iş kütüphanesi, bir şahlanışta kendi kendimizi bulmak!.. Kurtuluşumuzun ve dünya çapında kurtarıcılığımızın reçetesi sadece budur; ve bu reçetenin temel unsuru İslamiyettir.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Kurtuluş,” *Büyük Doğu*, April 18, 1947, 2. (my translation)

<sup>120</sup> “...bütün Garp ve bütün Şark fikir çileleri içinde pişe pişe kül olmuş, sonra bu küllerden artık parçalanmaz bir idrake varmış, böylece hakikati muhasebe edebilmiş ve herkese muhasebe ettirmeğe kalkmış...” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam ve Herşey” *Büyük Doğu*, July 5, 1946, 2. (my translation)

to others in order to *raise an awareness in them*. Again we are familiar with the concept as explained in previous chapters.

Something new greets us in relation with the target of *nasihat* which is once again not really strange in the age of nations. This time nothing can provide a better sample than a poem:

### **This Is Our Anthem!**

...

March, oh the golden generation of the iron Oghuz!

The number is small, the time is quick, the path is long

Hold the divine light-full hand of the Guide!

Depart for the conquest of the right, beautiful and eternal!

... <sup>121</sup>

In the poem, Necip Fazıl gives the formula of action. The two actors are evident: the Oghuz and the Guide. The Guide may specifically signify the Prophet here, but in the last instance it means Islam. By the Oghuz who are the ancestors of the Anatolian Turks, Necip Fazıl identifies his audience. Of course, a religious advice can be given to a Turk, or any other identity, but building a religious life or a worldview based on Turkishness which is equal to the idea that a person can take an Islamic advice on account of his Turkish identity which is interchangeable with his Muslimhood, is a strange situation which necessitates the presence of the idea of nation, or to put differently it is the result of it. For instance, Necip Fazıl says:

Are you a good and clear-hearted Turk? If you are not pawing concrete manifestations of dreadful scenes of our moral disaster with one hand, and if you are not pointing to the only diagnosis with regard to the much needed morality with the other, then it means that you are not performing your sole national duty.

Today, someone who is able to get sleep under these social conditions which he carries over his shoulders is not a good and clear-hearted Turk. We are in a time when a good and clear-hearted Turk would cry his eyes out! <sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> ““Yürü, altın nesli, demir Oğuz’un!/Adet küçük, zaman çabuk, yol uzun/Nur dolu elinden tut, Kılavuzun!/Fethine çık (doğru), (güzel), (sonsuz)un!”

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Marşımız Budur!” *Büyük Doğu*, November 1, 1946, 3. (my translation)

<sup>122</sup> “Siz, iyi ve temiz bir Türk müsünüz?.. Eğer bir elinizle bugünkü ahlak faciamızın müşahhas tecelli pılanındaki tüyler ürpertici manzaralarını pençelemiyor; öbür elinizle de muhtaç olduğumuz ahlakın mücerred inşası bakımından varılması mümkün yegane teşhise işaret etmiyorsanız, tek vatani ve milli borcunuzu yerine getirmiyorsunuz demektir.



The source for caring about morality is Turkishness. However, a few issues later we find the following statements:

Our only source of morality can ever be Islamic ethics in full appellation. We could not understand this; this was what needed to be understood; this is what should be understood.<sup>123</sup>

What is the real source of morality? If the source is Islamic ethics, then in order to be a moral person, it should be enough to be a good and clear-hearted Muslim. But being a good and clear-hearted Turk is a further requirement. In other words, being a good Muslim is not enough, or *Büyük Doğu* simply does not care about being a good and clear-hearted Muslim. *Büyük Doğu* cares about the condition of a good and clear-hearted Turk. The choice is evident. Then the Turkish identity here is the real source of morality. Why is this significant? As the most important effect of this situation, we see that there is actually no religious community here. The ideal audience of B. D. is nation which can be religious whenever it needs. And every good related to Islam can be exported to the character of Turk since it is a larger circle. And those good traits like being an “iron” Oghuz can be kept by the genuine owner. The word Turkish can turn into Muslim or connect to Islam whenever it needs to, while the word Muslim will not always match the word Turkish. And finally, when we think of this together with the method explained as “Islam and Everything”, we see that the subject Muslim Turk replaces the sole Muslim and the Muslim Turk is the main character who will talk about, and reach the judgment about “Everything.” The reason between the interchangeability of Turk and Muslim reveals itself in the advice of *Büyük Doğu*. Now we should take a look at how the potentials of “Islam” and “Everything” come together to create the particular religious advice of *Büyük Doğu*.

#### 4.5.2. Interpretation

The strategy for the conquest in question is determined by Necip Fazıl as the nine keys. In “Islam and Reform” Necip Fazıl declares that what should be done is

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Bugün, omuzlarındaki içtimai şartlar altında, gözü uyku ve vücudu et tutabilen insan, iyi ve temiz bir Türk değildir. İyi ve temiz Türkün, ağıya ağıya su kesileceği gündeyiz!” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ahlakımız” *Büyük Doğu*, March 1, 1946, 2. (my translation)

<sup>123</sup> “Bizim, olmuş ve olabilecek ahlak kaynağımız, adıyla ve sanıyla İslam ahlakıdır. Bunu anlayamadık; anlaşılacak olan buydu; anlaşılacak olan budur.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Bizimki” *Büyük Doğu*, March 15, 1946, 2. (my translation)

nothing but “finding Islam in itself without adding anything to it from outside.”<sup>124</sup> In the article titled “Symphony” he describes the “worldview” and the “cause” of *Büyük Doğu*. as a “pure and real Islamic spirit” which “embraced yesterday, today and tomorrow, and all the Eastern and Western worlds with their rights and truths and experiences.”<sup>125</sup> The idea of a pure and real Islamic worldview embracing whatever it wants is a paradox in itself yet it is still one way of interpretation made possible by *nasihat*. “The nine keys” are the result of this interpretative move and the name of the pure Islamic worldview in question.

These nine principles are: Spiritualism, Moralism, Nationalism, Character, Community, Circumstance, Order, Intervention and Limits to Capital. Spiritualism refers to having a metaphysical worldview which consists of reading things and events without being limited by just visible and physical causes and effects. It aims at saving “robotized” people from the contemporary crisis of materialism they live in and covers every science and field but itself covered by Islamic borders which is expressed as a “horizon” called “Allah(ism).”<sup>126</sup> Moralism is roughly explained as having Islamic-nationalist ethics, patterning yourself on the heroes with Islamic ethics from the past and acknowledging that the West also struggles for such an ideal by giving fight against itself.<sup>127</sup> Nationalism of *Büyük Doğu* claims to be a progressive, anti-racist, non-exclusionist understanding of a certain ideal of Turkishness which refers to sharing a certain mode of belief, thought, dream, memory, language etc.<sup>128</sup> Character is the principle of giving the right to represent in every field to the people who are the “superior characters” and therefore most deserve it.<sup>129</sup> The principle of Community supports the idea that the individual should sacrifice his personal “appatite” and “ego” for the good of society and in return the society should protect the individual’s right to reach the “right, beautiful and eternal.” It also addresses to and forbids idleness.<sup>130</sup> The principle of

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<sup>124</sup> “... Ve her şey, İslamı, ona dışarıdan hiçbir şey katmaksızın, kendi içinde arayıp bulmaktan ibaret, namütenahi basit ve bir o kadar girift bir düstürda toplanmaktadır.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İslam ve İnkılap” *Büyük Doğu*, May 23, 1947, 2.

<sup>125</sup> “Bu senfonya, BÜYÜK DOĞU’nun dünya görüşünden; ve bu dünya görüşü, sadece saf ve gerçek İslam ruhunun, dünü, bugünü ve yarını, hakları, hakikatleri ve tecrübeleriyle bütün Doğu ve Batı dünyasını kucaklamış olan davasından ibarettir.” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Senfonya” *Büyük Doğu*, April 26, 1946, 2. (my translation)

<sup>126</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan birincisi: Ruhçuluk,” *Büyük Doğu*, February 18, 1944, 2.

<sup>127</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan ikincisi: ahlakçılık,” *Büyük Doğu*, February 25, 1944, 2.

<sup>128</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan üçüncüsü: milliyetçilik,” *Büyük Doğu*, March 3, 1944, 2.

<sup>129</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan dördüncüsü: şahsiyetçilik,” *Büyük Doğu*, March 10, 1944, 2.

<sup>130</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan beşincisi: cemiyetçilik,” *Büyük Doğu*, March 17, 1944, 2.

Circumstance refers to the domination of every form of “human productivity” by “a superior value judgment.” It seems to be a principle better explained by examples than definitions: “in appetite Turkish tobacco, in value Turkish currency, in order the Turkish military, in beauty the Turkish woman, in strength the Turkish man” etc..<sup>131</sup> The principle of Order is what its name declares. It aims at arranging all relations in society under strict instructions so as to create an order similar to a prayer in the mosque where everyone bends or stands together in an orderly manner behind the imam.<sup>132</sup> Interventionism refers to the ideal that allows the state as a will beyond individuals to dominate each individual for his own sake. The state has the right to control every individual and “a bit superior than the father on his child, than the husband on his wife, than the doctor on his patient” etc..<sup>133</sup> Limits to capital is the economic aspect of the salvation project. It proposes a system “between capitalism and socialism, eliminating the wrong aspects and appropriating the right aspects of each.”<sup>134</sup>

There is no need to go further than these definitions because they themselves are enough to reveal one unsurprising fact without leaving any place for doubt: the worldview is not literally pure. First, we should explain the variety in this impurity. Each principle has a reactionary, a reformist and an idealist dimension. Spiritualism marks a reaction to the materialist worldview, reforms it with religious cure, and provides the basic mindset for the order to be established. Moralism, as we have seen its practice in *Büyük Doğu*, is a reaction to a general condition of immorality which includes familiar stuff as well as new phenomena such as working women, luxury addiction or cinema, aims at curing an illness-wound, and determines a certain form of ethics as a necessity for the ideal in the future. *Büyük Doğu* nationalism also has reactionary elements criticizing racist and pan-Turkist perspectives aims at reaching an ideal form of nationalism. The principle of character is nothing but “the necessary privileging of the creative class,”<sup>135</sup> as Necip Fazıl himself puts. It simply means replacing the current and past “bigots” with the project’s own class who will be the founders and fair rulers of the new order. Communitarianism keeps its main target as

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<sup>131</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan altıncısı: keyfiyetçiliğimiz,” *Büyük Doğu*, March 24, 1944, 2.

<sup>132</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan yedincisi: nizamcılık,” *Büyük Doğu*, March 31, 1944, 2.

<sup>133</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan sekizincisi: müdahalecilik,” *Büyük Doğu*, April 7, 1944, 2.

<sup>134</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan dokuzuncusu: sermayede tahdit,” *Büyük Doğu*, April 14, 1944, 2.

<sup>135</sup> “Şahsiyetçiliğimiz nasıl insanlar arasında ibda çilesi çeken sınıfı imtiyazlandırma davasından ibaretse, keyfiyetçiliğimiz de, bütün insani verim çerçevelerini, üstün bir kıymet hükmüne bağlama işi...” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “9 anahtardan altıncısı: keyfiyetçiliğimiz,” 2.

reinforcing the ideal of community by obtaining the individual's approval and self-sacrifice for a more meaningful-idealist society. The principles of intervention, circumstance, order, and limits to capital are directly governmental principles criticizing quantification-is, disorder, capitalism and socialism etc. in the name of a "world saving system."

As a whole then, none of the nine principles are totally new. On the contrary, their existence and their forms depend on non-Islamic-modern variables, to some significant extent. Almost all of these non-Islamic variables, what they react to (materialism, working women, racism, capital, etc.) and identify as wounds to be cured, take place in the present time, and this means they are actually acknowledged as contemporary realities. In this respect, the present time reveals the defection, or wickedness, or unseemliness of itself. Even issues related with "development," which is openly desired, are deficient or imperfect because of the soullessness prevailing in the present. The ideal itself is only theorized and left to a future time. The past is the most significant and the most controversial domain.

In *Büyük Doğu*'s theory, the "past" functions as the field where either the justification or the guarantee of the ideal resides. The past guarantees the ideal because it hosts the successful application of the source. For instance, the ethics proposed by *Büyük Doğu* is exemplified by Necip Fazıl as the ethics of the "conqueror janissary."<sup>136</sup> In other words, the janissary, or the fair judge, the great king, the glorious empire, or any other success story of the past demonstrates the truth of this ideal. In addition, the past also justifies it by hosting the "faith" which once upon a time perfectly prevailed over the world and created the janissary and other good characters. The past becomes the domain of the essence of this ideal to be established. Islam thereby is an unrealized potential inherited from the old, still living in the present but whose reality is only fully apparent in the past. But this is where we see the most significant problem of the whole project: the very real and "new" economic, political, cultural conditions of the present time which urgently expect to be reformed, (which are also what makes the present different from the past and which as a whole popularly known as modernity), form the largest part of reality and cannot be easily dismissed. Ideas can be recruited from the past, but the past itself is something which will never return as it is. As explained in the previous

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<sup>136</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "9 anahtardan ikincisi: ahlakçılık," 2.

chapter, the modern time is where the past experience can no more be directly reflected onto the future. The future with its complete openness for innumerable “isms” itself witnesses this fact. In this case, there are only two choices for someone who wants to import the good from the past but whose warehouse is full of the new stuff in the present: either what is new will be rejected and destroyed to build a pure ideal in its place, or what is new will be purified to be able to stand together with the pure which is possible here by being made Islamic.

I will not further analyse the solution, or the project in itself. By a “pure and real Islamic” system what Necip Fazıl means is a converted modernity. The distinction between the two categories of criticism we previously tried to depict also give us what is confirmed as convertible and what is not as well as the principles themselves express. Under this data, we see one crucial source of distress. Underdevelopment in the form of thoughtless intellectuals, tool-less villagers, bad journalism, wrong education, stupid sportsmen etc. are expressed not really for the sake of humanity, or religion, but for the sake of nation as they directly risk a healthy nation. Similarly familiar moral defects which will naturally be complained about almost in every age and society, should be erased “within these borders”; people should learn to obey, order should be sacralized. The idea of nation so strongly embraced by *Büyük Doğu* seems to be the main determinant of what can be Islamicized.

It is unthinkable therefore that what sets the nation back can be Islamic. But this does not mean that the faith in question has no saying in the process. On the contrary, the idea of nation is the first thing to be Islamicized. A converted nationalism expressed with the formula of “the Oghuz and the Guide” gives the clue. Morality is related with being “a good and clear-hearted Turk”. The twist lying here should be repeated; what is converted is not the Turk, but the idea of nation, and later nationalism. Conversion inescapably consists of purification. By purification, the Oghuz and the Guide formula refers to the acknowledgement of the basis of the new age. On the other hand, this purification provides the chance to get rid of innumerable problems. If nation is purified, then for the believer there is no need to deal with the package came with it.

So what we see is a situation of convergence. A peace between Islam and modernity is reached by means of a converted nationalism.<sup>137</sup> What is significant here is how the conversion of nationalism and modernity is achieved. The question is directly related with role of the *nasihat* in the connection established between these elements.

The religious advice in *Büyük Doğu* depends basically on two facts, which make the nine principles Islamic: the claim for the good, and the critique of the bad. The critique of the bad is theorized as the great crisis (of Islam). And everything proposed (advised) by *Büyük Doğu* we have seen, is born in this state of crisis as well as departing from “Islam”. In this respect, the faith in the corruption (or the disruption of the nature of things and the terrible faith of Islam) is as strong as the faith in Islam. So much that the former can even be called a prerequisite for the latter faith. To be a good Muslim Turk one must cry for the corruption with the way it is described in the magazine!

Building on this, everything uttered, proposed, suggested, theorized in order to save things from the crisis (to save the believer, to save Islam, to save the world) in the name of religion are basically religious advices. Now it is clearer that “everything” interpreted by means of Islam here refers to modernity and nationalism. In other words, to summarize, *Büyük Doğu*’s message is a general religious advice on how to come to an understanding of modernity, and nation and what the modern age brought with itself (which consists of good things desired and bad things hated) depending on a supporting emphasis on a state of crisis. The result is nothing but a form of religious life negotiating with the variables in question.

Now, I will focus on the other two of the structural elements of *nasihat* in *Büyük Doğu*’s message.

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<sup>137</sup> Cantek states that *Büyük Doğu*’s the emphasis of religion in the journal is the result of an endeavour of disinfecting modernity and reconciling it with “tradition.” However, what he means with this “tradition” is unclear. If a certain form of conservatism is meant, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek is already the founder of it. If a religious tradition is meant, emphasizing religion to reconcile modernity with religion is not a big discovery. The journal’s journey in time of course indicates certain external influences on the development of the project but we need to see that purifying modernity in question by means of the purification of the idea of nation serves before anything else, to the survival of religion in an environment where it seems to be a total stranger. See: Levent Cantek, “Büyük Doğu,” 653.

### 4.5.3. Sacred Base

What are the sacred elements which connect Necip Fazıl's interpretation to the transcendent and provide the necessary justification? The answer can be easily observed by means of the nine keys.

The articles of the nine keys mentioned previously belong to the year 1944. After two years these principles are first published, they are republished in 1946 issues with small changes in the texts. For instance, in the second version of the article on moralism, a sentence is added to the end of the text: "Islamic ethics... This is what we need."<sup>138</sup> The second version of the article "Nationalism" is the one which undergoes the biggest update. The idea of nationality and Turkishness is further elaborated with additional emphasis on the importance of the concept of faith (iman). For instance: "Here is our nationalism: Turkish soul committed to Islam..."<sup>139</sup> The ending paragraph of the second version of the principle of character declares that *Büyük Doğu* replaces "the sovereignty belongs to the nation" with "sovereignty belongs to the *Hak*."<sup>140</sup> Once again the second version of the principle of order adds a sentence stating that the order is "the most respectful condition" for "the human being blessed with existence by God."<sup>141</sup> At the end of the second version of Interventionism, Necip Fazıl makes the addition: "Our interventionism is the most intimate fibre of the root of faith from which we grow."<sup>142</sup> At the end of the second version of limits to capital article: "Let me immediately add that this this new system is nothing but the eternal Islam."<sup>143</sup>

What we should understand from these additions is not that Necip Fazıl unsuccessfully tries to trick the reader. What is apparent is that he reinforces the sacred element to strengthen the connection with the transcendent. He might, surely, believe that the principle of "limits to capital" is eternally Islamic, as long as there is the possibility of developing arguments in this respect. But Necip Fazıl makes a decision. Instead of elaborating on the interpretation he practiced to connect the principle in question with the Islamic truth, he simply prefers to amplify the sacred

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<sup>138</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Ahlakçılık," *Büyük Doğu*, May 10, 1946, 2.

<sup>139</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Milliyetçilik," *Büyük Doğu*, May 17, 1946, 2.

<sup>140</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Şahsiyetçilik," *Büyük Doğu*, May 24, 1946, 2.

<sup>141</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Nizamcılık," *Büyük Doğu*, June 7, 1946, 2.

<sup>142</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Müdahalecilik," *Büyük Doğu*, June 21, 1946, 2.

<sup>143</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Sermaye ve Mülkiyette Tedbircilik," *Büyük Doğu*, June 28, 1946, 2.

elements. The strategy of connection applied is basically writing and emphasizing more about the sacred elements such as “Islam, faith, morals, God” etc.

This simple act of writing and noting Islamic things which can be seen in every article, regardless of topic, section or page is the basic way of establishing a connection with the transcendent. The most significant question is then about the meaning of these sacred elements and symbols: what does writing Islam and writing it more mean for *Büyük Doğu*? Why does Necip Fazıl prefer amplification over elaboration? The answer lies in the result of the act of amplification and the historical conditions. More symbols means more representation. Even just mentioning Islam and faith directly, or issues related to them is an act of representing the faith in a battlefield where the representation itself is a weapon. Solely representing Islam means defending it considering the political conditions of the period:

New regime took important steps towards establishing secularism just after the proclamation of the republic. The caliphate was abolished on March 3. Thus, together with madrasas the ministries of Sharia and Foundations were closed. Training of religious officials was brought under state supervision and the number of religious officials decreased considerably. Swiss Civil Law was adopted in 1926. This was followed by an education ideology in primary schools which considers the ulema as responsible for the decline of the Ottoman Empire. In newly opened schools, the ulema was deemed as ignorant and reactionary fanatics who exploited Turkish society.<sup>144</sup>

Under the changing conditions came with the Republic, the banishment of the Muslim identity from government and the general victimization of the community, which do not need to be explained here in detail or explicated as these issues are well-known, makes the issue of public visibility a crucial factor. In this respect, Necip Fazıl and his *Büyük Doğu* meet a crucial need in basically two ways. First is by simply giving voice to the victimized either by representing their faith, by shouldering their ideals, hopes, dreams and of course every kind of displeasure. And secondly, by defending the faith in such a difficult environment which means nothing

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<sup>144</sup> “Yeni rejim, Cumhuriyetin ilanının hemen ardından, laikleşme doğrultusunda önemli adımlar atmaya başladı. 3 Mart’ta hilafet kaldırıldı. Böylece Şer’iye ve Evkaf bakanlıkları ile medreseler de kapatıldı. Din adamlarının yetiştirilmesi, devlet nezaretine verildi ve din adamlarının sayısında önemli bir azalma görüldü. 1926 yılında İsviçre Medeni Kanunu benimsendi (Toprak 1981, 54 dn). Bunu, ilkokullarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun gerilemesinden ulemayı sorumlu tutan bir eğitim ideolojisi izledi. Yeni açılan okullarda ulema, Türk halkını sömüren cahil ve gerici fanatikler olarak nitelendiriliyordu. Yaratılan bu izlenimle, dini yükümlülüklerine bağlı Müslüman bir Türk’ün karşılaşmasının yarattığı rahatsızlık, günümüzün okul müfredatında halen varlığını sürdürmektedir.” Şerif Mardin, *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı: Modern Türkiye’de din ve toplumsal değişim*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları), 246.



but “self-sacrifice.” There is a single perfect example to observe the two concepts. In the article titled “Büyük Doğu, Youth and the People” it is first reported as follows:

When our journal was closed down and we were imprisoned, a young man from Kayseri had a mental breakdown due to his sorrow and so his body was shaken because of some complications. Then, in his deathbed, he called only his Allah and *Büyük Doğu* until the time he passed away. This incident which is a symbol of Turkish youth and nation is a wonder, first of its kind in world history, seen between a publication and its reader.<sup>145</sup>

And then a letter from the reader is shared in which lies a powerful statement as such: “You saved our religion, morality, language and taste, from the monster whose burning breath we feel down our neck. It would be an honourable admission if history named you as ‘The Saviour II.’”<sup>146</sup>

About the letters sent to the magazine, it is stated on the same page: “Turkish common conscience, Turkish nation and youth who are quiet and do not utter their real voice and hold their outcry between their jawbones and molars, always tell us with these letters how much they adhere to our ideal. ... we endure so much sorrow and misery only to be worthy of this reward.”<sup>147</sup>

In a way, the state of affairs which is theorized as the great crisis by Necip Fazıl leads to a condition in which a significant part of the intellectual validity of one’s act of anchoring himself on the sacred source depends on pure “effort”. In a time when a question of survival is felt at stake, naturally the intellectual depth of arguments leave their place to brave words of resistance. But, by offering a system purely Islamic and capable of saving the world, *Büyük Doğu* does even more than that; it gives hope and promises heroism. If we return back to the rest of the Anthem of *Büyük Doğu* we see that the conditions of the age are expressed in the poem as follows: “the number is small” as there are not many people to realize the ideal, and “the time is quick” which makes it an urgent work, and “the path is long” because

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<sup>145</sup> “Kayseri’de bir genç, mecmuamızın kapatıldığı ve bizim zindana atıldığımız zaman teessüründen dimaği bir arıza geçirmiş, bu yüzden bünyesi sarsılmış ve bazı ihtilatlarla yatağa düşerek ruhunu teslim edeceği ana kadar yalnız Allahını ve Büyük Doğuyu anmıştır. Bütün Türk gençliği ve halkının sembolü olan bu vaka, cihan tarihinde, neşir vasıtasıyla okuyucusu arasında, ilk defa görülmüş bir harikadır!” Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Büyük Doğu, Gençlik ve Halk,” *Büyük Doğu*, January 23, 1948, 6. (my translation)

<sup>146</sup> “Siz; dinimizi, ahlakımızı, dilimizi ve zevkimizi, nefesinin yakıcılığını hissettiğimiz korkunç canavarın midesine inmekten kurtardınız. Tarihimiz sizi “Kurtarıcı II” namı ile kaydetse hiç şüphesiz ki, şerefli bir itirafta bulunmuş olur.” Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> “Susan, gerçek sesini çıkarmıyan, çılgılığını çene kemiklerinin arasında, dibinde ve öğütücü dişlerinin kısılcacında zapteden Türk umumi vicdanı, halkı ve gençliği, mefkuremize ne nisbette bağlı olduğunu bize hep bu mektuplarla haber verir. ...biz yalnız bu mükafata layık olmak içindir ki, bu kadar kahr ve ıstıraba göğüs germekteyiz.” Ibid.

there is a lot to do since the damage, as explained before, is great. The project is difficult, but in the last line what it promises is a “conquest”! Conquest is a magical word, unlikely to be used in an age where cities are destroyed by means of a few bombs, and the countries are gracelessly invaded, devastated and exploited rather than gloriously conquered. It is clear that conquest is a call to heroism. But in this particular context, in which no such conquest is possible anymore, it works as a metaphor for daring the impossible. Simply put, it means sacrifice.

Necip Fazıl does not only share his Islamic view but also his act of self-sacrifice. He promises the same heroism for those who will follow him. This is such a powerful emphasis that the moment a sacrifice, a cost or a disaster is mentioned, it becomes a direct symbol of sacredness. Here we need to pay attention to a significant detail. The situation in question shows us that just as self-sacrifice, heroism or sainthood are individual attributes, a note or emphasis on self-sacrifice can bless a word, a message, and an advice with a sacred character.<sup>148</sup>

In sum, then, we can say that act of self-sacrifice and the role of guardianship shouldered through the reproduction of the sacred symbols and references to them by all available means of the periodical are the fundamental elements of the sacred connecting *Büyük Doğu*'s interpretation to the transcendent.

#### 4.5.4. Character

Who is the voice of the *Büyük Doğu*'s message? Is it enough to propose Necip Fazıl alone as he is the leading ideologue of the project and the leader of the *Büyük Doğu* staff? If personality in *nasihat* refers to the hand moving the compass and determining the circle to be drawn, I believe we need to take into account much more than a name, including the factors influencing the name himself. So far we have only dealt with “the message in the text” as we noted before. But now it will be better to discuss the subject of personality in tandem with “the message in the form.”

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<sup>148</sup> Yasin Aktay's comment on the Islamist discourses of wrongedness is worth mentioning. According to Aktay, there is more than a simple aspect of will to power in this emphasis of being victimized at stake which Necip Fazıl also frequently uses. Apart from being a search for power, the Islamic community historically experienced a kind of “disembodiment” which means that they were “deprived of their organs to speak, to hear, to act in any way etc. as the realization of the religious existence.” For this reason, he defines it as the condition of a “diaspora,” which is “the Jewish name of the experience of banishment.” See: Yasin Aktay, “Body, Text and Identity: The Islamist Discourse of Authenticity in Modern Turkey,” 206-207.

#### 4.6. A Journal's Religious Advice

In the second chapter we had discussed the symbolic significance of the medium of newspaper in relation to nationalism, modernity and the new sense of time. A journal which has the same structure and features with the newspaper, naturally points to the same theoretical results. As Anderson puts, considering the basic structure of the medium, the newspaper or in this case the journal is the best example to observe the idea of nation. The content of a journal just like the newspaper is connected through “the single most important emblem” which is “the date on it.”<sup>149</sup> Of course a journal can be more specialized than a newspaper and focus on particular topics, but in terms of connecting the variety of its content, the date on it is still what forms the skeleton of the medium. The second point about the newspaper's condition as a mass product, “a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity”<sup>150</sup> might be more valid for the journal than the newspaper since the act mass consumption in a form almost similar to a mass ritual is much more evident and deliberate if we think about the “specialization” of the journal in question. The two points regarding the newspaper shows us that the new “the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time” connect people to each other even when they are not present for each other by connecting topics that are not directly related as a result creating a mass consumption which makes it possible to imagine a community called nation.

Considering the fact that a medium is both the result of the circumstances of the age produced it and at the same time the reproducer of its age's circumstances, the journal too carries in itself certain potentials. Most basically, as indicated before, these potentials can be gathered under two categories: those related with representing a new sense of imagined community, and those related with the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time. *Büyük Doğu* utilizes both of these potentials on various levels.

First, in *Büyük Doğu* it is targeted to build a community which shares the same principles solely by means of the medium. The ideal in this respect is so generous that it aims at re-structuring first a whole nation, then the whole world. Without the potential of reaching the “nation” by means of the journal and making

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<sup>149</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 33.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

the people of Istanbul and the people of Maraş imagine a community consuming the same principles at the same time, it is obvious that one could not imagine planning such an ideal or project.

Second, the possibility to imagine a project to be realized in the future and the periodical development of its theoretical basis, but more importantly the crisis which is the foundation of it, depends very much on the “steady onward” movement of the journal in time. It provides the reader with a week between the issues to contemplate the content and the writer with the flexibility to extend his project over a long period of time. And meanwhile, not only discussions on the critique of the country’s agenda and other assistive content may be conveyed to the reader to keep the perception of crisis alive the way it is coded in the theory section, but also all this story constitutes a common memory for the community consuming it together for years.

The third point is about the linking of the “unrelated” content together as Benedict Anderson notes. However, neither in the newspaper nor in the journal, even in the most mainstream forms of the media, it is not possible to say that the content is really that “independent” and only linked together by means of “date” and the act of “consumption”. There is after all an authority who decides what will be consumed. Especially the journal with its clear-cut sections and its ability to incorporate more variety in terms of content than the newspaper, the arrangement itself matters significantly. And this is also where I will look for *Büyük Doğu*’s “message in the form.”

First, we should introduce the sections of *Büyük Doğu*. For this I will focus on the years 1949-51 when the journal already established a stable form and theoretical basis. For the sake of simplicity, in accordance with the message aimed at in the journal, we can distinguish four fundamental categories into which the content are distributed: ideology coding content, directly religious content, critical and agenda-related content, worldview reflective content.

For the ideology coding sections, the most obvious example is of course “İdeolocya Örgüsü” along with “1001 Çerçeve,” (again from Necip Fazıl with a more flexible, essayist language), and personal articles of writers such as Salih Zeki Atay or Cafer Seno about morality, nationalism etc. which generally take place on the second and the third pages. These articles naturally contain criticism but their focus is on expressing what is right, reinforcing the theoretical aspects of the project. In addition to these there are also many poems from both professional and amateur

names (mostly in the section called “Köşeniz”) which are artistic expressions of their writers’ appraisal of and dedication to the “mission”.

The critical content are made up of: “Dedektif X Bir,” which is a section where illegal activities, political corruption etc. are documented and names related are revealed; “Röportajlarımız” which is a section where social corruption related topics are either narrated or interpreted together with interviews; “Hadiselerin Muhasebesi” which is the report section where the country’s agenda is interpreted mostly by a critical language, and where we can also find political columns. There is also the section of “Davanız-Davamız” in which articles sent by the reader who express various social problems in accordance with the *Büyük Doğu* perspective are shared.

Among the directly religious content are: “Çöle İnen Nur” which is the section where Necip Fazıl’s prophetic biography book is serialized; “Tasavvuf” in which Sufi terminology and practices are explained; “Mektubat’tan Parçalar” in which random parts from Imam Rabbani’s *Mektubat* are published; “Nur Risalesinden” in which random parts from Said Nursi’s *Risale-i Nur* are published; along with some biographies of famous Islamic personalities such as Imam Şafi,<sup>151</sup> Ibn Sina<sup>152</sup> etc., and some prophetic sayings and quotations. These sections are generally between the fourth to the sixth pages.

The category I named as the worldview-reflecting consists of content about how the *Büyük Doğu* project and staff evaluates art, literature, history, science, civilization. For instance, the section called “Müspet İlimler Sanat Olunca” treats different scientific (astronomical, biological, technological, physical) topics by Haluk Nur Baki. While the section is careful about using an objective-scientific language it also tries to include a religious perspective sometimes such as the article “Body and Spirit on the Muslim”<sup>153</sup> or more indirect yet still purposeful articles such as “Alcohol” discussing the ill effects of drinking.<sup>154</sup> There are also more “secular” sections such as “Dünyada Fikir ve Sanat” which consists of reports from Académie Française, French literature, and the world of art in general. Also literary works such as the play, *Siyah Pelerinli Adam*, short stories from different authors, more art-concerned poems, and even film scripts such as *Battal Gazi* are published or

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<sup>151</sup> MK., “İmam-ı Şafi,” *Büyük Doğu*, October 28, 1949, 7.

<sup>152</sup> Mekki Üçışık, “İbni Sina,” *Büyük Doğu*, February 3, 1949, 7.

<sup>153</sup> Haluk Nur Baki, “Müminde Beden ve Ruh,” *Büyük Doğu*, November 3, 1950, 14.

<sup>154</sup> Salih Murat Uzdilek, “Alkol,” *Büyük Doğu*, January 20, 1949, 15.

serialized in the journal belong to this category. And finally articles of history mainly focus on the Ottoman Empire whether for giving good examples of justice or the bad effects of Ottoman recruitment system, or the destructive effects of Tanzimat, or the cultural aspects of the past.

It is possible to add more examples for each category, but these will be enough to explicate our point. What the distribution of the section under these categories indicates, of course, is not that the article content functions only the way the category indicates, but that the focal points of the sections are named by these categories. Accordingly, this distribution lead to a map of *Büyük Doğu*'s priorities and even strategies for answering the question of "how to be the savior." We, in fact, encounter the naked structure of the *Büyük Doğu*'s advice.

The sacred centre here is of course the directly religious content and sections. By means of this content, B. D. shows where its one leg firmly stands. At the same time it reproduces significant works of the Islamic theology and tradition. The reproduction is the most effective indicator of the journal's own identity. It also connotes that the journal is affiliated with the "pure", majestic origin of Islam located in the past. This commitment implies that the act of guardianship (identical to "service" in this period) is declared and self-sacrifice is ventured. Maybe one of the most interesting examples of this situation is that *Büyük Doğu* also gives excerpts from the works<sup>155</sup> of contemporary names such as Said Nursi, who is himself under the threat of going to the prison in that period due to his religious activism. In other words, it is quite a serious risk for *Büyük Doğu* to give Nursi a voice in the journal. But this was a good journalistic strategy. By publishing credible Islamic writers and scholars from the present or the past, *Büyük Doğu* managed to incorporate them into its own body and to create a larger Islamic community. Mostly they are first approved by the project, and then contribute to it willingly or unwillingly by becoming a part of it.

The critical content is mostly interested in proving the decay in different layers of society and the state, revealing the enemies, and establishing the terrible reality-crisis of the contemporary Muslim Turk. In this respect, this content is crucial because it is keeps the tension alive, and this is necessary for an open-ended mission.

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<sup>155</sup> Said-ül Nursi, "Nur Risalesinden: Ene - Ben," *Büyük Doğu*, February 27, 1949, 6.

The most interesting part, the worldview-reflecting is the part of interpretation where the judgements on history, art, civilization, science, and culture are directly or indirectly declared. In other words, writings in this section give examples of how to be both pious and modern, how not to fall into the trap the first bigots of the downfall fell into, and how to be able to keep a taste in civilization by not humiliating yourself and damaging your own values as the Republican bigots did. As a whole these sections are the applications of being a modern Muslim Turk, they teach how to have a taste in art, how to have manners, how to read and see the native history, how not to fall prey to the bigotry of both kinds.

Regarding the ideology-coding content and sections, we can say that they are naturally the theoretical basis of the whole strategy applied in the journal. They “explain” why certain things are true and why certain things are wrong, and give the broader instructions and infrastructure of how one should read the rest of the journal.

#### **4.7. Character**

Now we can ask for the last time: who is the leading advice-giver, the voice in *Büyük Doğu*?

We should repeat the message first. All the interpretation depending on the many ways of sacred connection result in a pile of religious advice. We can name everything proposed in the form of criticism or principles a religious advice based on the sacred truth. The past where the real practice of the Islamic truth was lived properly is where the source of the solution lies. The present is a flock of problems where no one ones how to act properly. And the future expects the ideal to be realized by importing the right from the past and projecting it onto the wounds of the present chaos. How this projection should be done is clearly explained with “the nine keys”, on the basis of guardianship and self-sacrifice through the reproduction-reminding of the sacred. This was more or less the message we depicted as *Büyük Doğu*'s religious advice in the ideational plan. But a broader but less mentioned solution surrounds this salvation project as we observe from the distribution of the sections in the journal.

In general this broader strategy is one that categorizes, one that builds a “religious” life with the help of “sections”. This is a huge move determining the category of pure Islam (directly religious), the category of corruption (the critical),

the category of heroism (the ideology coding), and the category of properly modern (worldview-reflecting). This is an advice, which not only builds a life but also one which splits life into categories just like a regular journal. In fact, this general advice is equal to the journal itself. Producing a proper way of looking at “everything” is an act very similar to a journal producing its own sections and treating them one by one in accordance with its priorities. This naturally gives the journal a sense of unity, it becomes a “work” materialized. But the disparity between a journal and a life is clear. They can never have the same depth nor the same order. A journal therefore, by itself will never claim to be a solution for a whole life, but a man can.

By creating categories in itself, a journal creates its own order, and its own textual or formal “reality.” Together with the “community” reading and consuming it, this virtual reality widens its area of influence. But most importantly, since it moves within time towards an open, unending future this virtual reality is literally “alive”. So it is possible to depict an alternative world by means of “orderly” categories inside a journal and create a community of its own dwellers by “selling” it and if it can attract attention and survive through adequate consumption, regardless of the size of the world you create, as long as it continues to be published it will continue to move in time and be alive. And if the world corresponds to the needs of the consumer, all the more so.

In fact there is no reason not to see the world in *Büyük Doğu* as a virtual reality created mainly by Necip Fazıl, a world in which secular nationalists and immorality are beaten to death, hundreds of years-long history becomes an exciting story of treason and explained like water off a duck’s back, the West runs at full gallop soullessly to its apocalypse while creating wonders at the same time and representing the only civilized part of humanity, the religion of Islam needs to be protected and then suddenly saves the world, surpassing the geographies, the East gives no hope except the iron Oghuz, purely Islamic yet highly modern utopias are founded, anthems are composed, elegies are sung, in a period that is the best of times and the worst of times. Almost like an epic. After all, it is the highest dream of every poet to write the epic of his nation. We can say, then, *Büyük Doğu* and Necip Fazıl are very close. The name, *Büyük Doğu* refers to the identity of the journal this time. As one of the beauties of the new age, brands have their own identities. While a book is someone’s work, a paper or a TV channel or a website can become “beings” who can send messages. And *Büyük Doğu* has a character of its own, like any other



journal or newspaper, but with an additional savior potential coded in its genes. And again like the others, this character too is both fictional and not. It is fictional in the sense that it is – literary or not – a creation, a writing, and it is not fictional in the sense of its real-life effects which themselves create their own reality and make people recognize its separate existence from its founding fathers. So looking back now, it is not really strange that the young man on his deathbed mentions *Büyük Doğu* along with his God.

I will claim that one side of the advice-giver's face belongs to this character called *Büyük Doğu*, created by Necip Fazıl, and seemed to be mainly commanded by him. But, this is the hardest part to decide. To what degree did Necip Fazıl believe in and had control of his creation? It makes one remember the two couplets also published in the journal:

### **The Friend of God**

I saw the friend of God, fourteen years ago from now;  
In an evening, the time, was as beautiful as to freeze...

### **Barge Spike**

You looked at me just once with eyes burning;  
And nailed into my soul its big barge spike!<sup>156</sup>

His encounter with Abdülhakim Arvasi marks a turning point in Necip Fazıl's life.<sup>157</sup> It is the moment he becomes a believer. In this respect, his transformation is very old fashioned. The friend of God, expressed as “*evliya*” (friend in Arabic) in Turkish, refers to Abdülhakim Arvasi here, and the word is used in general for those who are respected for their closeness to God. Most of the time this closeness also refers to a secret part of their lives in which they can obtain “*keramet*” (supernatural signs) or esoteric knowledge. In terms of *nasihat*, they are one of the most obvious examples of the professionalism in self-care through the Islamic ethics. Therefore, it is easy to guess that their words will close the “gap” immediately, and be as valid as a “non-holy” word can be. The first poem partly expresses this fact. The powerful

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<sup>156</sup> **Allah Dostu**

Allah dostunu gördüm, bundan on dört yıl evvel: Bir akşamdı ki, zaman, donacak kadar güzel...

**Temel Çivisi**

Bana, yakan gözlerle bir kerecik baktınız: Ruhuma, büyük temel çivisini çaktınız!

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Noktalamalar,” *Büyük Doğu*, February 13, 1948, 2. (my translation)

<sup>157</sup> “He was advocated in the mid-thirties with a Naqshibendi Sheikh Abdülhakim Arvasi and was religious-politicised from this point forward.” See: Yasin Aktay, “Body, Text and Identity: The Islamist Discourse of Authenticity in Modern Turkey,” 204.

influence of this unique personality is more evident in the second couplet. It can turn someone into a different person. A different person but not completely. While this is the act that transforms Necip Fazıl (who now knows that such transformation is possible, as good as he knows himself), in return, Necip Fazıl's act to transform things is *Büyük Doğu*. The differences are obvious: A poet instead of an *evliya*, an angry journal instead of burning eyes, political activism instead of self-care, a call to heroism instead of barge spikes... Something remains the same, however, and continues to function in order to "transform". This is also what Necip Fazıl endows the personality of his journal with. The capacity to give religious advice he inherits from Arvasi is transferred to *Büyük Doğu*. Necip Fazıl is like an Abdulkhakim Arvasi for the journal. And regarding the tool of *nasihat*, this is something new.

Unlike the masterpieces of the past, *Büyük Doğu* has its own personality and life, moving forward in time and in the meantime sending its own religious messages to actual people to the degree of building its own community (an unbeliever body giving religious advice). *Büyük Doğu* is no doubt a double personality itself created by the aspects of being a journal and an ideal which, as we explained before, have their own particular yet interdependent messages. Both of these aspects are shaped and directed by Necip Fazıl. And both of these messages (the message of the ideal, and the message of the journal) use the structure of *nasihat*. And their results coincide with each other. So far it is clear that this is a two sided relationship in which the medium commits all the possibilities it can offer to its master Necip Fazıl who in return builds an existence for it by giving it a body (journal) and a soul (ideal). But there is one crucial factor. Whether it is the body or the soul, journal was previously imprinted with something whose master could not change (and maybe even oblivious to): "the new time".

As we explained in the second chapter, the date, "the onward clocking, homogenous, empty time" was a particular result of the particular history of the West. The existence of this new temporality which is "open for the new and without limit" starts with the loss of the doctrine of the Hereafter. Koselleck explains this as the common achievement of the concepts of modernity and progress. If the future was not bounded by the past anymore, there was no longer the limit set by the Final Days, a condition which opened a Pandora's box called the new horizon of expectation by Koselleck. The spiritual improvement left its place to worldly progress. And while the community embodying all these new "values" is nation, the

newspaper is stated to be the first representative medium of this new time. Once again, such concepts are the particular products of a particular history.

What does this fact mean? It basically means that every time the medium is used, what happens in it will be surrounded by this concept of open future. The chance to connect all the unrelated material and establish categories for them until a meaningful order and a particular world is created, is a possibility depending on two factors as we mentioned: the arranger who creates the character of the journal, and, with Anderson's words, "the date on it". This means that the date is constructive just like the arranger. The journal or the newspaper gather their content and give them a new order and bind them together for the incessant onward movement towards an open, empty future. In other words, any message given takes place within a temporality which was itself created by the idea of progress (and therefore constantly emitting signs of the concept). Naturally, this means that when the ideas or beliefs which originally belong to the doctrine of the Final Days (which in simpler words means that they are messages whose first and foremost purpose is to take someone's attention to the fact that there is a limit to the time itself) take place in an environment which itself takes no notice of the Hereafter. Regardless of the form you give to your religious advice, the media will nail it down in the present, and when the time is up, it will send it to the past by itself moving to the future. The words will belong to a date which will every day become more and more distant to you. In other words, the medium will consume its own content as a fuel for itself, for the alternative world created in it to constantly change itself in order to move forward in time, and to stay "alive." Messages consumed will get ready to become words in the past (which will function as the waste yard of consumption in this process), and before any possibility of changing or transforming its consumer, it will first make him know that he himself moves towards a future with a movement which consists no warning about its own terminability because for the world created by the medium, the future will refer to the field which sends "the new" content periodically, in a stable way, all due to the sheer existence of the journal or the newspaper which takes this kind of temporality for granted. Meanwhile the consumption will create its own community out of consumers, people who are not present to each other, but still have to imagine each other as they are brought together by this act, and since they are brought together by this medium, will, one way or another, follow the same movement with it which will result in expecting the new from the future to be

consumed and sent to the waste yard of the past. The experience will belong to a temporality removing the limits of the future, the same with the one belonging to the concept of nation.

In terms of the use of *nasihat*, what this situation means is, at the very least, a paradoxical meeting of the opposites. Since every *nasihat* will be depending on a faith which bases itself on the on the doctrine of the Last Judgement, trying to “build” a full-body religious life by means of such medium or any other entity in which the idea of constant progress and open future is inscribed will naturally embody the same paradox. Even when everything goes right, there will always be a disparity between the words and the life produced by the experience of time. Such words designed according to the expectation of a trans-historical judgement will try to imply that there is death for the time, at the very moment when they are actually hold in the arms of the time to be killed in order to contribute to the production of the exact opposite of their claim. At this point I want to go back to Karakoç’s text we quoted in the second chapter:

If we look from the viewpoint of fate and metaphysics, it could be asked that “as the real one is the next world, should not our situation in the hereafter existentially take precedence over our position in this world, in a way, should not our position here be determined by the hereafter? Maybe. Theoretically, or more precisely, in terms of truth and in terms of the essence of truth, this may be the case, as a matter of fact this is the case. But what difference does it make? We look from here, we take the chronology, time circle and starting point from here, and therefore the priority is here. If it were possible to look at things from the hereafter, we would see that the priority was there. Since we are now here and look at things from here, we have to consider and accept priority in time from here. How many people could look at things from “there” while they are still here? How many people are there who have merged the two worlds and made them one? *Erenler* [*evliya* or the saints] do that. They almost already live there. But we cannot extend this to whole of humanity.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> “Kader açısından, metafizik açısından bakıldığında, belki denecek ki: “asıl olan dünya, o olduğuna göre, oradaki durumumuz da, varoluş bakımından, bu dünyadaki konumumuzdan önce gelmeli, adeta burdaki konumumuzu, orası tayin etmeli değil mi?” Olabilir, iş teorik açıdan, daha doğrusu hakikat açısından hakikatın hakikatı açısından öyle olabilir, hatta öyledir; ama bu neyi değiştirir? Biz, buradan bakıyoruz, kronolojiyi, zaman çemberini, başlangıç noktasını buradan alıyoruz; bu durumda, öncelik burada oluyor. Eğer, ahiretten bakılması mümkün olsa, önceliğin orada olduğunu görürdük. Madem ki biz, şimdi buradayız ve buradan bakmaktayız, zamanda önceliği buradan düşünmek, kabullenmek zorundayız. Kaç kişi buradayken, “ora”dan bakabilir. İki alemi burada birleştirip tek alem yapmış kaç kişi vardır? Erenler öyledir, adeta şimdiden “orada” yaşamaktadırlar. Ama bunu tüm insanlara teşmil etmemiz mümkün değildir.” Sezai Karakoç, “Medeniyetimizin Büyük Krizi VII,” *Diriliş*, November 28, 1988, 2. (my translation)

Maybe this is the point for the believer when something really changed rather than stories about underdevelopment. Maybe all this story is about the difference between being better than the European as a Muslim, and being a better Muslim. The open declaration that thinking about the “other side” is only theoretically acceptable, and practically impossible means that a Muslim can believe like a Muslim but it is better not to act like the *evliya*. This is an expression of the desire to alternate between two times according to circumstances. And the idea that one should live the new time in a converted, tamed way, is nothing but a veil over this desire. I will not try to correct the thought in the paragraph above by lecturing about how the idea of Hereafter first should function as an internal control system for the Muslim and itself should not be considered like the opposite of the “here” or “this” world. It is enough to say that *Büyük Doğu* is nothing but the result of the effort of looking at things from “here”.

The incompatibility of the two senses of time is tried to be overcome by means of utilizing the religious advice in accordance with the new requirements. Starting from the medium of journal, and continuing with the nation and the state, this is an endeavour of being a Muslim “by looking at things from here”. Two facts makes this possible: *nasihat* and self-sacrifice. By all the criticism and advices regarding almost on everything *Büyük Doğu* purifies first of all its own project. Acting like a “European” living a tasteful, civilized life is trouble-free as long as you swear on the not-very-Islamic-things of your environment, and give good advice on how things could be right. This opens up a lawful area where one will be at the same “like them” and “better than them”. For instance, it is desired that the principle of “Spiritualism” when merges with a scientist, and then his scientific research, it will purify the whole science itself, and the scientific development desired will be legitimate and possible. Not only will this make a desired life possible but also will help the religion itself. Other principles can be compared to this sample. And at one corner, all the self-sacrifice in the name of this ideal will continue to justify its sustainability, until it is realized. What about the place of the paradox we mentioned a little before? Apart from what history thought us, the theoretical results of the situation are clear enough too. The disparity between the word and the act we explained through the medium due to “the date”, shows itself in Necip Fazıl’s ideal too. The time enveloping the medium, envelops the ideal-maker. Both personalities (*Büyük Doğu* and Necip Fazıl) are one in that. The result of the acceptance of the

new time in building a religious life leads to the destruction of one possibility, the elimination of one thing which cannot blindly move in an onward clocking, homogenous, open, empty future from which an incessant arrival of the new is expected: the religious community.

In the West, what the idea of nation, progress or open horizon of expectation eradicated is nothing but the religious community and the life originally belonged to it. The presence of nation means that there is a community looking at things from here toward an unending horizon, in comparison with a religious community who will be built around those who professionalize in “merging the two worlds and making them one”, and will organize a life by means of advices gushing and emanating from such sources. Necip Fazıl as the Muslim maker of his project disregards this fact, which is also engraved into the medium he uses in order to build a religious life and bring salvation for the whole world. His project does not revolve around Islam as he expected, but his Islam does revolve around a character called the developed West. The struggle to become a Muslim is either replaced by the struggle to become better than the West as a Muslim or turns into a sub-category of it. The religious life he built belongs to the nation. The categories are already there to solve all the paradoxes this condition will bring about. For a man to easily escape from paradoxes, to easily go between the here and the there. When it is better to be here for the Muslim Turk, he can be here, and build, for instance, a nation state which will impose a shared ideal of Turkishness over anyone inside the borders; and when it is better for the Muslim Turk to be there, he will be there, and curse everything immoral once again inside the borders. Interestingly enough even if the religion is the one who is hardly squeezed into this life only with the help of categories, it is also the one which justifies and takes the responsibility of every act in the rest.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Religious life is something constructed. Whether it is realized by means of narratives, modern means of communication or simple speech, the inescapable involvement of “*nasihat*” in this process has quite significant results.

The faith on the side of the believer is at the same time what sentences him to a particular kind of responsibility which is the responsibility of building a life for himself according to the requirements and demands of the idea he submits. In other words, before the particular demands of any faith, there is this responsibility of building a religious life. Faith is something different from knowledge, but at the same time produces its own knowledge; it only emerges at a moment of absence (*gayb*), but at the same time it is able to establish innumerable connections between things as the proof of what is absent. Religious advice refers to the very flexibility of faith in this constructive capacity. By establishing right connections between the source of his faith and the rest, one can “design” a whole life.

By *nasihat* we referred to the micro activities performed while designing a religious life. The act of religious advice can be considered as a kind of purgatory ground between the essence of faith and the world outside (including the person’s inner world). It is the tool which connects the two worlds, and produces “worldly” and “sacred” activities, paradigms, knowledge by treating the source of faith. This treatment has been explained as always consisting of some interpretation. While the differences in the co-existence of various forms of Islams is a clear result of this situation, the role of “agents” is obviously crucial in the process. But as being a middle ground between the worlds indicates, the role of the agent does not only consist of the interpretation of the sacred source but also of the interpretation of “the world outside.” In this respect, what we called the “character” of the agent, is as constitutive as the faith to whom the tool of advice originally belongs. In other words, to a significant degree, the inscription of the transcendent will on earth is an inscription in the image of the agent.

Since it is a “faith” in question, any case of conflict between what is perceived as “reality” and “belief,” will surely result in a feeling of anxiety which is, if not larger-than-life, possible to be equal-to-life. For the analysis, I wanted to detect a point of anxiety for which there is no better example than the modernity itself. On a superficial level, the modern life is easily perceived as one which is full of identity struggles. But faith must have, and in fact has an exceptional condition solely because of the fact that it is as constructive as what one perceives as objective reality. To observe it, we focused on the journal of *Büyük Doğu*.

Through the analysis it was demonstrated that *Büyük Doğu* is first of all a result of this point of anxiety which refers to the incompatibility between what is perceived as reality and faith. In order to overcome the sense of the defeat of one’s faith, it was shown that the journal “interprets” the condition of “crisis” as much as and maybe more than in interprets its faith. By means of binary oppositions, a particular history is narrated in order to give meaning to the crisis experienced. As a result, we see that the interpretation of “the truth” is based on an endeavour of getting rid of the sense of being crushed and of regaining a sense of superiority lost ages ago.

It is possible to say that the huge project designed by *Büyük Doğu* owes its existence to the tool of *nasihat*. Even though everything can be a topic of religious thinking, With *Büyük Doğu* we see that “Everything” turns into a particular topic. In other words, the project promises using the full potential of the tool’s interpretative move. Naturally, the result is a loss of depth in religious arguments in respect to significant and broad issues. But this also means a reversal in the utilization of *nasihat*. The modern, age as the case of *Büyük Doğu* and the use of self-sacrifice as an element of sacredness indicates, marks a time when *nasihat* is not only used to build a religious life, but also to protect it at the same time. In other words, since *nasihat* refers to a constructive message, one that inscribes a visibly absent authority in worldly terms, by means of the simple act of religious advice, complex problems are solved in one stroke, and the belief in the idea that one can protect the purity of his faith in the face of new challenges and balances of power.

Another aspect of the case of *Büyük Doğu* shows us that the medium which envelops the religious advice is a significant factor as much as the particular use of the tool itself. Either by means of the possibilities it provides such as building a community easily out of consumers or making it easier to create an alternative reality



to the one that is incompatible with the agent's faith, or by means of the temporal framework to which the journal condemns its content, the influence of the journal in the formation of the particular advice is evident and strong. On the same grounds, it is possible to evaluate the varying effect of other media used to send a religious advice. The idea of an open future set free from the chains of the idea of hereafter is itself a potential which can be observed in different media in varying degrees. For instance, while for the journal the potential of constructing an alternative reality is mostly in a textual environment except from some photographs, a TV program or even a video game will refer to different possibilities with representing time and temporality and therefore they will have their own particular relationship with ideas or messages related to a faith which based on a certain understanding time which is always in contrast with those of the media as it will set a limit to the future itself.

In a wider circle, the analysis of *Büyük Doğu*'s story of crisis and religious message demonstrated that the relationship with modernity and the idea of nation also had significant effects on *nasihat* and therefore the idea of Islam itself. The way Büyük Doğu, and especially Necip Fazıl Kısakürek reads and interprets modernity shows us that just like the medium of journal itself, the agent in question is also under the influence of a perspective of time promoting a quiet faith in progress and which is largely coherent with the world desired to be purified or reformed by him. The way time is acknowledged this way – as whose reflections in the project which separates the mission objectives of *Büyük Doğu* as those related with past, present, and future, shows – by the agent, results in the co-existence of two times which can replace each other according to current requirements. But this condition, as much as it provides the possibility of coming to an understanding with modernity, also gives birth to hybrid, contradictory situations such as a radical nationalist and religious life produces.

Lastly the eradication of the religious community itself seems to be related with the way *nasihat* utilized. By completely submitting the tool to the idea of “nation,” to a community which promotes worldly existence rather than merging worlds, not only restricts the emergence of “lives” which can be shaped by the religious community gathering around a centre prioritizing a finite time and spiritual improvement, together with the effect of the media which themselves are the result of an alien time and priorities and paradigms, the possibility of creating this kind of a life within and by means of messages framed by these conditions is questionable.

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