The Birth and Death of Islamism

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ABSTRACT

What happens when an ideological movement whose *raison d'être* is to challenge the existing political system and government structure, and one that gains its identity and character from criticizing power, takes control of the government? Turkey no longer has a noteworthy Islamist project. We must place this vanishing, or death, at the end of the story, a story that begins with its birth. When Muslims are able to express themselves through democratic means, they move away not only from violence, but also from an ideological Islamic interpretation. The death of Islamism in Turkey can therefore be explained by the wide-open channels of democracy. In such a free and democratic setting, there is no environment for Islamism to survive, especially when it is fit into a different mold through the support of the government.

The expression "the death of Islamism" is a metaphor. It describes the disappearance of a main political movement, more precisely; the loss of the oppositional character of an ideology, giving life to the AK Party government. What happens when an ideological movement whose *raison d'être* is to challenge the existing political system and government structure, and one that gains its identity and character from criticizing power, takes control of the government? In this case, a political movement based on an Islamist ideology was transformed into a political party in order to come to power democratically. What was once a political movement based on the faith of Islam has been softened and modified in order to be compatible with democracy's rules, and once it carried this idea into government, the Islamic ideology vanished, just like the caterpillar who makes its cocoon and then breaks out of

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this cocoon as a butterfly. This metaphor argues that the AK Party government transformed Islamism, by injecting it into the democratic system, from a totalitarian ideology into a moderate democratic one.

In July 2012, a debate over this metaphor began between Ali Bulaç and myself.[1] Ali Bulaç is to this day one of the most reputable and important names in Islamist thought. He is a highly talented intellectual and has significant influence on the latest generation of Islamists. It is very difficult to imagine an Islamist who has not read his books, which have been deemed indispensable for those interested in the Islamist ideology.[2] When we worked as columnists at the same newspaper, I put forward a claim that Islamism disappeared with the AK Party government in opposition to him. The debate continued in a levelheaded manner and, expectedly, others joined in. Pandora's box had been opened. The issue grew with the input of Etyen Mahçupyan,[3] Şükrü Hanioğlu,[4] and other writers who still hold on to their Islamist identities. Thus, the freshest views available to judge the state of Islamism in the Turkey of 2012 have emerged.[5]

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I believe that the course of this debate and the arguments as well as objections put forth support my claim. Islamism does not really exist in Turkey as a live and vigorous organism. The fact that the debate over whether Islamism is dead or alive is being carried out in the manner of an autopsy alone proves this point.

If we consider Karl Manheim's "ideology-utopia" distinction, we would have to label Islamism as utopia. And what happens to all utopias happened to Islamism as well: it vanished when it took power. Turkey no longer has a noteworthy Islamist project. We must place this vanishing, or death, at the end of the story, a story that begins with its birth.

Islamism's Past

Islamism is an ideology that is a century and a half old. There is a credible doctoral thesis, supported by strong evidence and primary sources, which shows that its birth year was 1868 and birth place Istanbul. This thesis was mine, and was titled *The Birth of Islamism as a Political Ideology*. Since I first published it in 1991,[6] there has not been an alternative starting date or location put forward in Turkey or in any other country. This research, which looked at Islamism's transformation from a traditional religion into an ideology, uses the terms "Is-

lam's intellectual formation," "Islamic vocation", and "the union of Islam," and emphasizes that the purpose they served was completely new and they constituted a new ideology.

Briefly, the story I tell in *The Birth of Islam* is as follows: The New Ottomans, who were the first democratic progressives of Turkish modern history, began an opposition movement against the enlightened-despotic dictatorial government represented by Ali and Fuad Pashas in 1867. Islamism became an ideology through and within this opposition. The still unrivaled Turkish prose writer, Namık Kemal (1840-88); the similarly important poet Ziya Pasha (1825-1880), whose couplets are still used as proverbs today; and, one of the turban-wearing *ulama*, Ali Suavi (1839-1878) were some of the main figures of this opposition.

A private-personal incident served to bring this movement onto the historical scene. The Egyptian viceroy's (Khedive) younger half-brother Prince Mustafa Fazıl Pasha got into a disagreement with the Porte over the inheritance rights. As a result of this disagreement, he financially supported the opposition movement in order to pressure the government. Thus, supported by this prince, the New Ottomans were able to flee to Europe, and they were the first effective modern democratic opposition. Through the newspapers they published in Paris, London, and Geneva, they developed a striking and surprising language of opposition and initiated a movement. It must be noted that, except for Ziya Pasha, this entire small group of intellectuals was under the age of 30 at this time.

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Let us reiterate and emphasize. The government was not in the hands of a traditional-despotic power; it was in the hands of the Tanzimat bureaucracy. The Tanzimat bureaucracy was a new governing class, which was trying to use Western methods to create a central-surveillance state, open to European civilization and values, almost completely composed of diplomats who spoke excellent French, and followed developments in Europe on a daily basis. The power was not in the palace, but directly in the hands of these enlightened bureaucrats. Ali and Fuad Pashas, the last and most effective two examples of this generation, generally referred to as the Tanzimat dictators, governed the Ottoman Empire unchallenged. During this era, which ended in 1871, Abdulaziz in his palace had little more authority than a notary. These enlightened despots put in place a series of centralizing reforms, called the Tanzimat reforms, in order to keep the empire together. Western laws were translated and adopted. The justice system

was reorganized according to Western methods. Serious steps were taken in the educational field in order to create an Ottoman people. Almost all of the modern Western institutions transmitted to the Republic of Turkey (the State Council, Government Accounting Bureau, what is now the University of Ankara, Galatasaray High School, and the Medical School) originate from this era.

The dynamics that developed Islamism and made the New Ottomans history's first Islamists were shaped during these modernization moves and the efforts to create an Ottoman people. The first principle was equality. The removal of all legal-political inequalities between Muslims and non-Muslims with the Reform Edict of 1856 led to a reaction from the Muslims who saw themselves as the dominant group. For the New Ottomans, this Reform Edict was known as the "Concessions Edict," implying that non-Muslims could not become equal to Muslims, but actually acquired a privileged status. These reactions to equality from the people gave the Islamist intellectuals grounds to oppose the government—namely Ali and Fuad Pashas—who legitimized this equality using Islam.

The second dynamic was the Tanzimat reforms and there was already a large space for Islamist criticism against these Western-inspired reforms. Instead of taking laws from the West, these intellectuals were defending the use of the Islamic *sharia*. They discussed reinterpreting areas of *sharia* that had been kept out of the government throughout Ottoman history and having them as the foundation of the government. Thus, they gave life to a Salafism that we can describe as a kind of "return to the original sources." For example, while *sharia* was not used in criminal law and in public law in Ottoman practice, these intellectuals requested a supra-Ottoman interpretation and for *ukubat* (Islamic criminal law) to dominate.

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The third and perhaps the most obvious dynamic was the shaping of the idea of cooperation across the Islamic world as a result of easier transportation and communication. Similarly to Pan-Slavism or Pan-Germanism, this was to turn into a political union, Pan-Islamism. The Ottoman intellectuals directly took this "union of Islam" idea and transformed it into a mass ideology in the form of a kind of nationalism.

Finally, we must add the democracy perspective that made the New Ottoman movement original. These Islamist intellectuals like all the Islamists that came after them demanded democracy. However, they attempted to shape this

demand for democracy, and politically conceptualized it, using unique Islamic molds, and this was repeated by others after them. For example, consultation instead of democracy, consultation (*shura*) councils instead of parliament, and oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) instead of elections were the new terms. As a result, an ideology that competed with modern political ideas, philosophies, and ideologies took shape.

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tradition for itself, it never used this heritage. However, the continuity of ideas and formulas are evident. When you compare two articles from a century apart, Ali Suavi's article on democracy in the Islamic community and Maududi's article "Islam and the Government," you find similarities that are hard to believe. But among these similarities, you cannot find the material connection visible in their references.

Turkish Islamism

Islamism has taken a dominant position in the ideological spectrum of the Islamic world as an alternative societal and political project. This ideology, which is based on divine revelation and that brings answers and solutions to all the questions and problems of the modern world using the terms of the divine truth, has long been the main political backbone of Islamic communities. Despite this, during its 150-year history, this ideology has always remained an opposition movement. This powerful political movement was always systematically kept distant from power. Islamism—even in the Abdulhamid era—was never officially protected or safeguarded at the governmental level. To solidify this argument: the governments of Muslims never had any issues with "Islamizing the government" while tackling real problems. Policies based on Islamic cooperation were only used when they were compatible with political reality—such as during Abdulhamid's rule.

The Turks are historically unique in this sense. In other Islamic communities, Islamism arose as a resistance movement to foreign invasions. When the real issue was to end foreign invasion, this anti-imperialist ideology was reduced to a jihadist doctrine. Turkey, however, was not under foreign invasion. Turkey was a state and the only way to prevent potential foreign oppression was by making the state stronger and more durable. This is why Turkish Islamism has been a modernization project in sync with democratic theses from the beginning

rather than a jihadist doctrine. Modernizing the people was the precondition for competing with the West. The state was to be modernized and impermeable

Turkish Islamism was marginalized through two branches: Nourism, the apolitical movement, and the National View tradition which was open to all types of compromise and pragmatism

walls were to be built using the synthesis of Islam and the West in order to block the West. The difference between the violent jihadist movements in other Islamic communities and the compromising-cooperative syntheses that try to strengthen the Turkish community, founded on common denominators, is a result of these different historic experiences. Indeed, this historic experience explains the Arab nationalism (the Baath movement) in Middle Eastern countries that were a part of the Ottoman Empire until 1918 as opposed to the stronger Islamist movements in countries that became Western colonies earlier.

An example of the ability to create a synthesis between Islam and the West is that throughout the history of the Republic, two ideological programs were created that were full of positivist reasoning and arguments. One was Kemalism, and the other was the National Outlook Movement's "Just Order" project.[7]

However, the main reflex was the tendency to develop very flexible and compromising positions in any situation. Turkish Islamism, despite being subject to the injustices of military guardianship from time to time, developed in a democratic setting. Important figures of such mainstream movements as the Jamaat al-Islamiyya and the Muslim Brotherhood, for example Maududi and Qutb, were used for "renewal", but the political project always remained "national." The phrase the National Outlook, which channeled Islamism's rich intellectual and community potential into democratic politics, used "national" as an adjective – a symbol of this localization. The Islamists' preference to stay out of the stringent ideological encampments of the Cold War and the general violent environment also has to do with this strong historical experience.

The main structure that empowered Islamism never had any relation to such attributes as intellectual capacity, originality of ideas, and theoretical richness. Islamism only showed the ability to successfully represent societal opposition, an ability based on the large commonality between the Islamists and society. This commonality was not the rigidity in "fundamentalist" Islamic movements, but the plain piety that expresses itself through religious symbols.

Turkish Islamism was never a unique ideology during the Republic era. Today's Islamism has no debt to the New Ottomans or the powerful Islamism of the Second Constitutional era. Today's source is Egypt (the Muslim Brotherhood

Photo: REUTERS, Handout

Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal makes a speech during the congress of Turkey's Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Ankara September 30, 2012. Erdogan trumpeted Turkey's credentials as a rising democratic power, saying his Islamist-rooted ruling party had become an example to the Muslim world after a decade in charge.

and Sayyid Qutb) and Pakistan (the Islamic Party and Maududi). After 1979, the Iranian revolution was also influential and was met with sympathy in the Islamist community. But mainly, as a foundational political project, it developed with Necmettin Erbakan. Islamists with different tendencies also supported the National Outlook when they had to make a choice. There are two main reasons for this lack of originality in Turkish Islamism. The first was because the democratic channels were open, even if limited, and because there was an immediate power problem. The second was government experience and tradition.

The sharp edges of ideologies must first be rounded. In Turkey, which was not a colony (unique in the whole world, except Iran) or—especially during the Cold War—under a long-term mandate, there was never the basis for radical ideological formulas. On the other hand, Turkish Islamism was marginalized by the Nour movement that developed and became mainstream under the leadership of Beduizzaman Said Nursi. Nourism kept the masses, who constitute Islamism's natural audience, and especially the rural elites, away from political polarization and damaging political infighting. This religious-social movement, which was Turkey's biggest and most reputable of such movements, adopted an apolitical strategy. Instead of making political demands and becoming political, they chose to remain a social group by contributing to society's social needs and religious sensitivities. The Fethullah Gülen movement today has brought this tradition to

a very successful level. Turkey's own internal dynamics have contributed to the development of this compromise-seeking apolitical religiosity, and at the same time, to limiting Islamists' space. For this reason, Islamism has always remained a foreign and imported ideology in Turkey. This "indigenousness" issue continues to constitute a serious problem to Islamists today.

The first intellectuals to transform Islam into a modern totalitarian ideology were such people as Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi, and Ziya Pasha who had all been brought up in Istanbul. As stated above, they had formulized and defended the Islamic Union and argued that *sharia* should be implemented in every aspect of life. However, they compiled this ideology in Paris and London, where they had fled so they could form an opposition. No one person was the reason behind this ideology; but the social context and ideological environment of that time resonated in their intellectual world.

Today, there seems to be a broad agreement that Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) was the founder of the Islamist ideology. Turkish Islamists, despite not knowing him very well, have deep respect for him. The conventional view is that the Al Manar tradition went from Rashid Rida to Mohammad Abduh, and from there to Jamal al-Din Afghani. However, this claim is Western as it was they who first recognized and presented Afghani as Islamism's founding father, which was based on British and Dutch orientalists who had worked in their countries' Muslim colonies. The era that this claim was created was when the German government was becoming close with Sultan Abdulhamid and using Muslim peoples in colonies as foreign policy actors, especially in India against Britain, and Orientalists such as Brown and Hurgronje claimed that Islamism (Pan-Islamism) was an ideology created and supported by Germany against England.[8] The name that was associated with this thesis was Jamal al-Din Afghani, who was very close to Western secret services at the time and requested an assignment from England to put down the Mehdi revolt in Sudan (1881-1899). This claim also harbors an insult towards the Islamist ideology. Indeed, when Afghani was being declared its founding father, it was implied that Muslims did not have the necessary intelligence and accumulation to create an ideology like this, and that this could only have been accomplished by a figure like Afghani working with Western secret services.

As a political ideology, Islamism goes against the historic tradition of Islamic communities, Islamic understanding, and the experience of coexisting in peace. Even the mobilization of religion for political goals is problematic as it transforms Islam into an instrument of opposition against a broad spectrum, from the West in the general to the government in the country, and transforms religion into a party to enmity and competition. Another debate is over whether Islam indicates a type of state. There are some interpretations that say a religion

that encompasses all of reality and all of eternity must indicate a type of state. This interpretation gives Islamists the main framework on which they base their ideological rigidity and their demanding and assertive style. However, once this question is answered, there is a split and no agreement. In reality, this is enough to refute the Islamists' argument as how are we able to fully understand and perceive the type of state that God wants? Does the multitude of different opinions over the type of state prove that it is not possible to know the type of state that God wants?

If we regard Islamism as an accumulation of all the ideas and political movements of the modern age and as a competitor to the West, Ali Suavi deserves to be known as its founder

> Another and perhaps a more important point is the universal changes in the social basis of Islamism around the world. In Turkey, these changes were relatively tame and the transition to new elites who expressed themselves using Islamic motives happened without any political conflict or significant upheaval

and pioneer. Let me summarize: Suavi was the one who put the key idea that "sovereignty belongs to God" into modern Islamic thought in order to compete with the West's beliefs. He is also the one who used Islamic jurisprudence and *fatwas* to challenge Western laws. For example, he asked, using the Latin word for sovereignty, "Who is the Souverain?" His answer was "al Haqimu Huvallah" (the sovereign is Allah).[9]

Islamist thought in modern times has been formed around answers given to questions asked in the West. Before that, Islamic civilization was aware of the triangle of Greek, Roman, and Judeo-Christian thought, and Islamic philosophy and its mysticism developed through dialogue with these different philosophies (from superstitions and Aristocratic philosophy to theological problems), at times internalizing these discussions.

Modernism, which developed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and is the material and ideological basis for the West's domination in the world to this day, is also what Islamic thought is the antithesis to. In short, Islamic thought in modern times was formed with Western modernization as a reference. If you take this and turn it into an ideology that influences the masses, offers solutions to immediate political problems, and answers the questions of the modern world in an effort for Islam to dominate over society and politics, this is what we call Islamism. This ideology, in its current form, entered Turkey in the 1960s. It breathed life into the National View tradition, and with the government of AK Party it turned into moderate Islam, a true conservative ideology, and then vanished.

Turkish Islamism was marginalized through two branches: Nourism, the apolitical movement mentioned above, and the National View tradition which was open to all types of compromise and pragmatism. The National View either absorbed Islamism into its eclectic structure, or radical Islamists felt obligated to support the National View parties when taking a political stance.

The Islamists took power in two ways. Nourism was represented by center-right governments. The story often told by Nourists of a dialogue between Süleyman Demirel, one of the most popular people in the past 50 years of Turkish politics, and a Nourist leader, will give an idea about this type of government. The Nourist leader Önder asked Demirel to give a spot in the cabinet to someone who represents them. Demirel, who is famous for his demagogy, responded by saying "I will be there, I represent you." Nourism, while not directly defending a political project, maintained good relations with the state by supporting these center-right governments. The same applies to larger groups who prevented radicalization. The National View, who were in government three times before the AK Party took power, similarly left a legacy that softened radicalism. Necmettin Erbakan served as deputy prime minister under Ecevit, a social democrat, in 1974, the same time when Turkey invaded Cyprus. This is one of the most extreme examples of Islamist eclecticism: an Islamist leader takes pride in what was called a success by nation-state standards.

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I had discussed this process in 1996 when I used Ibn Khaldun's political change theories based on the competition between the Hadaris and the Bedouins to analyze the Welfare Party government.[10] I described the Welfare Party as "the Bedouins' party" and claimed that their eventual victory had Hadaricized them. I believe that this analysis has both been confirmed in the last 16 years and that it explains the current disappearance of Islamism, which represents modern Bedouins.

Let us first recall Ibn Khaldun's conceptualization.

On the one hand, there were the Bedouins who lived in difficult conditions and were economically suffering, and on the other, the Hadaris who lived behind thick city walls in luxury and splendor. Due to the habits of wealth, the Hadaris were focused on worldly gains, their essence had become impure, and they had lost the majesty and respect in their behavior. The Bedouins, in comparison, stayed altruistic and good as a result of their tough conditions. They were braver and tougher. "The Hadaris were laying in peace and comfort, and left the job of protecting their wealth and lives to those who delivered and governed them, they left protection to their protectors and guards; and were lulled

to sleep behind the city walls that surrounded and protected them like a fortress. The Bedouins, on the other hand, had become savage and wild out in the open, deprived of protectors or guards, not living in places protected by walls, and had thus had to protect their own selves. Relying on their power and courage, they could be found by themselves in vast areas. Resistance had become their habit and bravery had become their character."

I applied Ibn Haldun's descriptions to the ANAP-DYP-DSP and the CHP on the one hand, and to the RP on the other. While the Hadaris were consumed by their internal conflicts, the RP found a gap in the city walls and took over the city. Of course, this is not how the incident unfolded. The events of February 28 interfered. But the same Bedouins gathered and re-entered the city walls even stronger, and they have now been governing the city for ten years.

Ibn Haldun's Bedouin-Hadari distinction does not end here; the main reason I am using this example is the conclusion it leads to. This important Maghrebi thinker used these long descriptions and comparisons to show the fate of the Bedouins who had dominated the city. After establishing their rule over the Hadaris, the Bedouins rapidly started to emulate them: "Their [the Bedouins'] entire pursuit becomes living in tranquility, plentiful livelihood, wealth, and blessings under the umbrella of comfort and peace under the state, and their goal becomes building residences, buying expensive clothes, and following the wealthy in order to increase these material belongings. They live in wealth and opportunity as their production allows, and give importance to abundance and appealing boon. As a result, their toughness from their Bedouin life vanishes, and their solidarity and heroism weakens."

Ibn Haldun's sociological analysis from six centuries ago ends with the argument that the Bedouins will eventually become similar to Hadaris, and that sooner or later a new Bedouin group will emerge and take over the city.

In the modern era where time flows quickly, this process is of course rapidly developing. The Bedouins of yesterday are the rulers of the city today. The ten-year AK Party government has introduced new elites from below who chal-

> The AK Party has used this opportunity very well. Prime Minister Erdoğan's expression, which he often repeats, that "We have nearly entirely ended assimilation" should be interpreted as the Turkish state's sympathy, through the AK Party, with the Kurds for the attacks directed towards them. The AK Party ended the forced assimilation policies, and instead implemented voluntary integration policies

lenged the current elites. When you add a government project to plain, warm, and genuine piety, Islamism forms. You cannot question anyone's devoutness; but it is evident that Islamism has a demand for power in the democratic competition. It is natural for Islamism to evaporate once this demand is met. What is left behind is only piety. A piety in which class differences widen becomes the source of new internal tensions.

The Eroding Effect of the AK Party on Islamism

Perhaps one should first ask this question: How did Islamism take power? The answer to this question also explains the government's eroding effect on Islamism. The last military coup on February 28, 1997 was the final move to remove the Islamists who had come too close to power and to internalize them. This was the only military coup directed against Islamism and it was successful. The Islamists were removed from the government. The Refah Party was closed. Their staff was rendered ineffective. The lower number of votes for the Refah Party in the elections of 1999 compared to earlier elections shows that this attempt to alienate them from the government had succeeded. However, this victory for the military was a Pyrrhic victory. After an economic crisis, and the increasingly large Kurdish problem, it had to open the doors of government to the Islamists in order to overcome its legitimacy problem.

The 2002 AK Party government solved the legitimacy problem that the February 28 events had led to. The e-memorandum's failure on April 27, 2007 to achieve its goals and close down the AK Party—even though everything had been prepared—followed by the responding attack of the Ergenekon case and the refinement of the military guardianship order, all show the power that the AK Party has, the power to have the legitimacy of the nation-state. The AK Party's practical response was to look at the Kurdish problem.

Turkey's Kurdish population is too large to be ignored. The nationalist revolt started by the PKK gained support in parallel with increasing violence. Today, the only bond that still exists between the Kurds and the rest of Turkey is the AK Party. There is no need to emphasize that what we are talking about is the Islamism that is present in the AK Party. The nation-state's own nationalistic policies left the Kurds outside of government. The nation-state's pressure awakened the desire in the Kurds to create their own nation-state. The murders during the 1990s, whose perpetrators are still unknown, drove the Kurds to the PKK. In order for the government of the Republic of Turkey to be able to continue to have legitimacy, it needed an actor to establish a bond with the Kurds. The AK Party filled this vacuum at exactly the right time. In order to maintain national unity, it was necessary for the state to reject the nationalistic nation-state policies

and create solidarity through moderate Islam. The AK Party fulfills this, evident from the PKK's use of "the AK Party government" rather than its previous term "T.R." (the Turkish Republic). The fact that the state is synonymous with the AK Party for the PKK shows that Kurdish nationalism is struggling against Islamist state policies.

The AK Party has used this opportunity very well. Prime Minister Erdoğan's expression, which he often repeats, that "We have nearly entirely ended assimilation" should be interpreted as the Turkish state's sympathy, through the AK Party, with the Kurds for the attacks directed towards them. The AK Party ended the forced assimilation policies, and instead implemented voluntary integration policies. A Kurdish state television channel is one of the most important indicators of the switch to these integration policies. Just like the organs of a dying body gives life to another, Islamism has alleviated the Turkish nation-state's problem with the Kurds.

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As I was writing this article, the world's agenda was overtaken by the mass violence in the Islamic world as a result of the *Innocence of Islam* film. It is evident that the only goal of the *Innocence of Islam* was to provoke Muslims. From the sponsors of the film to its length, from its plot to its actors, everything indicates that it was intended to bring Muslims out on the street and to spur them to violence. The crime of "incitement to murder" was openly committed by the filmmaker. The reality behind the movie may be complicated, but the intentions and the desired outcomes are clear.

The reason we are sure is the sociology and the social psychology of the Muslim world. Since Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*, the reaction of the Muslim world to insults directed towards Islam, the prophet, and the holy book are very well known. The caricature crisis and the burning of the Qur'an incident are both examples of the mathematical precision of the reaction given by the Muslim world to these kinds of insults. Thus, in the future, similar insults will lead to similar reactions. Those who want to cause disorder will continue to use these types of insults.

The real question is why this wave of violence did not touch Turkey. The Turkish people are very devout and they are especially sensitive about what is sacred to them. But no one is burning or destroying anything. The real reason for the violence in the Middle East is not sensitivity to religion. It is because these peoples have gotten in the habit of expressing themselves through violence in every case. There is no other explanation for why the violence in Libya and

Afghanistan was not seen in Turkey or Egypt. While the Turks are pious and sensitive to the sacred components of their religion, no one resorts to violence over this type of incident. It does not even occur to anyone to spill blood over it.

The bond between Islam and violence is superficial. The nonexistence of a bond between the violence that arises in Muslim societies in this kind of situation and Islamic principles shows that Islam is not the source of violence. On the contrary, the leaders who are respectfully followed by their people condemn violence and try to calm people down. There is no religious reasoning for the violence. In order to understand this, one must look at the social and political lives of these communities that are intertwined with the violence. Once people begin to use guns and spill blood, they start to use these methods to solve all of their problems. Libya is a case in point. In Afghanistan, problems have been solved by violence for over 33 years.

This explains the sociology of the disappearance of Islamism in the government. When Muslims are able to express themselves through democratic means, they move away not only from violence, but also from an ideological Islamic interpretation. The death of Islamism in Turkey can therefore be explained by the wide-open channels of democracy. In such a free and democratic setting, there is no environment for Islamism to survive, especially when it is fit into a different mold through the support of the government.

Endnotes

1. The debate began with three consecutive articles by 'İslamcılığın seyri" (19.7.2012), "İslâmcılık nedir?" (21.7.2012) and "İslâmcılığın Üç Nesli" (23.7.2012), and my critical article titled "İslâmcılığa ne oldu?" (24.7.2012)

2. Ali Bulaç is a prolific writer. Aside from many foundational works such as translations of the Qur'an, he has also written many books focusing especially on modern Islamic thought. To name a few: *İnsanın Özgürlük Arayışı*, *Çağdaş Kavramlar ve Düzenler*, *İslam ve Fundamentalizm*, and *İslâm Dünyasında Düşünce Sorunları*.

3. Etyen Mahçupyan wrote a series of articles starting with "Seküler İslâmcılık", August 8, 2012, in his column in *Zaman*.

4. Şükrü Hanioğlu published three very important articles under the title ""İslâmcılık tartışması üzerine notlar," called "Kavram", "Kökler" and "İslamcılık ve entellektüel alan" (September 2, 9, and 16, 2012) on his column in *Sabah*.

5. There were many articles on the subject in newspapers like *Zaman*, *Yeni Şafak*, and *Star* as well as in online newspapers. In addition, the magazine *Aksiyon* made the debate its cover story.

6. Mümtaz'er Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslâmcılığın Doğuşu* (Istanbul: İletişim Press, 1991).

7. 'Adil Düzen' was the name of the ideological concept that was adopted and defended as a party program by Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the National View. This program also shows the limits that an Islamist party can reach in a democracy.

8. Edward G. Browne, *Pan-İslamism*, (Cambridge: E.F. Kirkpatrick, Lectures on the History of the Nineteenth Century, 1904).

9. Ali Suavi, "El Hakimu Hüvallah," *Ulûm,* No 1 (1871), p. 18 and subsequent pages.

10. Mümtaz'er Türköne, "Refah İktidarda," *Türkiye Günlüğü*, No 41 (July-August 1996).