

# 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD ISLAMIC FORUM



## Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice



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STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT

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“Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice”

( 01-03 March 2018, Istanbul )

Every belief system has its own ontology, epistemology, moral (akhlak), law, politics, economy and imagination. In the pre-modern era, the concept of existence to the concept of knowledge, the concept of knowledge to the morality, moral approach to the understanding of the law, legal infrastructure to the politics, and at the same way political understanding constituted to the economic understanding. Which means, the economy in the modern era; the determinants of the other factors we have listed above are still present; the structure that emerged during this period solved traditional structures all over the world and naturally, the field of politics was reshaped all over the world in this frame.

In the Western society, the birth of Protestantism and Political confinement of the Catholic Church reveals the style of secular politics. Europe, an irresistible political, military, economic and intellectual power in this period, has reached in a position to influence and transform the rest of the world. In this context, the "Western political perception" has been tried to be transferred to any adaptation, from the top down to the different belief geographies, without being subject to transformation.

The nature of Christianity, more exactly Catholicism's concept of existence and information with the nature of sacred texts, more particularly from the Islamic viewpoint of existence and information, and beliefs as it is totally different, the transfer of the "Western-style Politics" without any limitations have caused some serious problems. As a result, some Islamic countries have completely rejected this new system of politics, revealing different "Islamic" structures that are not seen in their historical past in the modern era, others are not questioning modern politics. They have turned into deeply disorganized political structures in their own way.

Despite the secularism in the West, the Catholic Church's existence was completely ended. Although the church was constantly subjected to reforms, it continued to exist as the most important representative of the Christian identity in modern times, with struggling against communism, leading Christian public on important social issues, supporting the legitimacy grounds of political structures, and so on. Today, the Church continues to exist as an indispensable institution in the Vatican pioneer.

There are some similarities of perspective between Islam and Christianity in the sense of being in existence, but there are serious differences as well. Structural differences exist between the two religions in terms of knowledge, morality, law, politics and economic interests. Therefore, it is not

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## Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice

possible to talk about a structure that has religious, sociological and political functions similar to the Church for the Muslim world. The emergence of Islam and the growth of peculiar political structures to the Islamic world in the form of sacred texts as it is in the Catholic Church, emerged not as a political reflection of the hierarchy of religions, but rather as a result of the sociological and economic constraints of time. Religious identity is the constituent of this structure.

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic worlds had one way or another, political leadership that represented its identity. Understanding of Secular Politics started to have influence all over the World and the Caliphate being submitted to the Grand National Assembly, this institution has become dysfunctional and Islamic identity is deprived of leadership or structures representing it.

Nature does not accept empty spaces. An identity without leadership structure cannot be envisaged. As a result of the disappearance of the leadership structure, the identity will either be lifted or divided into sub-identities under a number of leadership structures. As in the 20<sup>th</sup> century all over the world, the Islamic world has also been the scene of efforts to create a modern political unit based on nation-state identity. On the other hand, it maintains the Islamic identity based on a strong belief system. The efforts to create "national Islamic perception" in some countries have remained inconclusive for reasons such as the specific belief system of Islam and the qualities of religious texts. Numerous attempts have been made in the form of legal or underground activities at the state or community level to fill this void in the field of identity, including the whole Islamic world.

At the state level, Saudi Arabia and later Iran were found to be leaders of the Islamic world. However, the misalliance between vision, means and targets has led to the initiatives in this regard of being futile or transforming into highly functional tools used by the great powers in modern international relations. The "underground" initiatives that emerged with the vision or ambition to fill up this void are at least as effective as the efforts at the state level, but transformed into constructs that can have extremely dangerous consequences not only for the Islamic world but for the whole world. Al Qaeda, ISIL and the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey, and those that reached unprecedented levels of activity, have emerged in such a gap. Such structures may be interpreted by the logic of "representation struggle" or they are extremely suitable to be used for "intelligence operations". It is inevitable that similar problems are constantly on the agenda unless a legitimate leadership structure is created to represent Islamic identity.

Throughout the history, the Islamic world has not had political structures based on a religious hierarchy similar to the Church - unless it's exceptional and temporary situation. In the world of Islam, administrators have the opportunity to create politics, social, political and economic regulations in the field that's opened for them with the name of law. On the other hand, the structure of the religious texts is in Catholicism, and in the principles of faith or practice, it is a matter for the clergy to change as they wish. Conducting political discussions without taking this structure exclusively into the domain of Islamic

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identity will not give healthy results. For this reason, the studies to be carried out in the field will be based on "the original belief and practice of Islam" as well as "Modern political, sociological and the fact that the economic conditions imperative for the nation-state" needs to be considered.

On the other hand, in terms of history and current conditions, it is seen that the lack of leadership in the Islamic world has the potential to the serious problems not only for Muslims but also for the whole world. In this respect, it is inevitable of the central religious authority. Considering today's conditions, this authority should be appropriate to the nature of Islam, but at the same time contemporary internationalism must be taken into account. Leadership structure to be formed; possessing high representation ability, must be participatory and encompassing. Otherwise, there is no way to prevent structures such as ISIL. Because the actual source that feeds these structures is ideological. It is unthinkable to end similar problems as far as ideology is concerned, unless reasonable and legitimate alternatives are created.

The discussion of "Clerical Authority" problem from religion, politics and sociological perspectives is inevitable obligatory under current conditions. Islamic world is obliged to discuss the subject by considering its own needs and requirements of international conjuncture. It is necessary that providing unify by protecting multicultural structure, block terror attacks and preventing Muslims from illegal movements in order to satisfy interests of Islamic world.

One of main problems in Islamic world is challenges in creating ideas intellectually. The problems generate dilemmas about how Islam can be interpreted and implemented. The intellectual weakness makes the reflection of Islamic core values impossible in modern world. In some situations, groups which defend same opinions may face to conflicts since different concepts are used for same facts.

Islam civilization has interactive relations with neighbor civilizations because of its central location. In modern times, especially within the globalization term, the relation is turned to atmosphere where Islamic world has become passive. The passiveness, not only for Muslims but also for all around the world, caused arising of significant issues. Therefore, leadership problem in Islamic world should be tackled under requirements of zeitgeist by considering unique values.

In this forum; leadership problems of Islamic identity within modern time is projected to contribute to Islamic countries and world by considering historical roots of accumulation of civilization. **8<sup>th</sup> World Islam Forum** which will be held under "**Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice**" main theme aims to contribute to discourse union of Islam world, to accelerate creation of thoughts, to improve the image of Islamic countries, and to bring Islamic accumulation to the service of all humanity.

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## Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice

### Main Theme

Spiritual Authority and Integration in Theory and Practice

### Sub-Themes

Islamic Political Accumulation and Clerical Authority

Common Values and Differences: Union within Multiculturalism

The Possibilities of Clerical and Political Leadership in the Face of Contemporary Social, Political and Economic Conditions

Politic/Religious Leadership in the Context of Relations among Civilizations: Possibilities and Threats

Threats which is Originated From lack of Religious/Politic Leadership in Counter Terrorism

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