



**RELIGION AND IDEOLOGY**

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**Emrah BOZKURT**

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We have covered in detail the definition of religion in the Western and Islamic literatures and what religion is according to the Qur'an in the above sections. We will not attempt to explain what religion is again in this section. However, the definitions of religion that we will take as a basis will be the Qur'an's objective-subjective definition of religion, which will be based on the Qur'an's definitions of religion as the true religion, Islam, which is determined by the measure of Allah, and the false religions outside of it. The topic we will cover is what ideology is, how it is formed, its similarities with religion, and whether ideologies are also religions according to the Qur'anic definition. From this point on, we will use the concept of religion by distinguishing between true and false, by which we mean the structures of true and false religion as defined by the Qur'an above. The main difference between the true religion and the others is consistency. "In this web of beliefs every thread is connected to another thread."<sup>1</sup> Based on Evans-Pritchard's statement, we can explain coherence as follows: The true religion is not a human formation, it is the establishment of a system suitable for man by a power that created him, and therefore there is a consistency in the system it has established. However, this is not the same with other structures; they are full of internal contradictions rather than consistency and are not universal. This is why the same structure that can bring order to one society can bring disorder to another. The true religion, on the other hand, is sent for all humanity and has a universality that can accommodate various localities. However, it is important to note that what the Qur'an says "this is the religion" should not be understood in human terms, but as the sender intended it to be understood. In this context, we should open a separate parenthesis for a better understanding of the subject: Allah did not leave the task of explaining the Qur'an to anyone else, He did it Himself, and He gave His reasons for doing so: "Elif, Lâm, Râ. This is a Book whose verses have been made perfect and then explained by Allah, Who judges rightly and knows all things inwardly."<sup>2</sup> And why did Allah make the explanation? "This is so that you may not serve other than Allah."<sup>3</sup> Because if the task of explaining the Qur'an were given to men, we would equate the interpretations of men with the word of Allah, and we would become servants and obedient to men in the name of obeying Allah. The question may come to mind, what is the duty of the prophet<sup>4</sup> if Allah is the one who gives the explanation, Allah gives the answer from the mouth of His prophet in the continuation of the verse: "And I am the one who warns you and gives you good news

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, *Tarih ve Toplumsal Kuram*, çev.: Mete Tunçay, İstanbul 2012, s. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Kur'an-ı Kerim, Hud 1.

<sup>3</sup> Kur'an-ı Kerim, Hud 2.

<sup>4</sup> See also: "We have also sent down the remembrance to you so that you may make clear to those people what has been sent to them." (Nahl 44); "Remember when Allah took a promise from those who were given the Book: 'You will make it (the Book) clear to the people and never conceal it.'" (Al-Imran 187); "O People of the Book, our messenger has come to you explaining to you many things from the Book which you have concealed." (al-Ma'idah 15); "And there are some of them who twist their mouths as if they were reading the Book, so that you may think that what they say is from the Book, but it is not from the Book. Moreover, they say, 'This is from Allah,' but it is not from Allah. They knowingly attribute this lie to Allah" (Al-Imran 78).

through the Book.”<sup>5</sup> It is in this context that one should approach what religion is, and this is what we mean by the true religion.<sup>6</sup>

The word “ideology” is derived from “idea”<sup>7</sup> and the English suffix “-logy”. Looking at Oxford Dictionaries, one can realize that the original form of this suffix was “-ology”<sup>8</sup>. The two basic meanings of the word “idea” are: “an idea or idea of a possible course of action or plan of action.” And “a purpose or goal (for a specific idea).”<sup>9</sup> Thinking of these two meanings together actually gives us an extremely important definition. In this narrative, idea means to put forward an idea or an idea of a possible plan of action towards a goal. In other words, it is quite possible to interpret it as a plan, a way, a procedure or even a method. The fact that its synonyms are “plan”, “design”, “project”, “aim” supports what we are saying.<sup>10</sup> Another meaning (which is given as a sub-meaning of the second meaning) is “an opinion or belief”.<sup>11</sup> That is, “an opinion or belief”. When we look at all these three meanings, the general conclusion we come across is this: “Idea is an idea, a plan, a discipline that is acquired and adopted as a result of an act of thinking as an action plan and road map for a specific purpose.” In this respect, it is a method for reaching the goal. If we return to the suffix -ology and look at the word ideology/ideology, ideology is: “refers to a specific discipline and plan pursued towards a specific goal, i.e. a method.” Ideology is a term with many definitions. Some people use it in a pejorative sense: I have my beliefs, he has his ideology! For others, the term is neutral, identical with “world view”. Mannheim made a useful distinction between these two views of ideology. The first, which he called the “total” conception of ideology, suggests an association between a particular set of beliefs or worldviews and a particular social group or class. The second, what Mannheim calls a “particular” conception of ideology,

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<sup>5</sup> Kur'an-ı Kerim, Hud 3.

<sup>6</sup> For the Qur'an's structure for understanding, see: “It is a Book whose verses have been revealed in the form of Qur'anic verses in Arabic for a people who know.” (Fussilet 3); “Allah has sent down the best of words in a book similar to each other, in two parts (containing verses). It makes those who fear their Lord tremble; then their hearts and bodies soften with the knowledge of Allah; this is the way of Allah. He who prefers it will be guided by it. No one can say that he whom Allah says is astray is on the right path.” (Zumar 23); “It is He Who has sent down this Book to you. In it are the perfect verses. They are the mother of the Book. The others are verses that are similar (to those muhkamms). Those whose hearts are slippery follow a verse from those verses that is similar to what they have in their own minds, in order to create sedition. And they want to interpret it. But no one knows its interpretation except Allah. The scholars whose feet are on the ground say: 'It is all from our Lord. None can attain this knowledge except those who have a firm stand.” (Al-Imran 7).

<sup>7</sup> Cambridge Dictionaries has another definition of the word. “an understanding, thought, or pictures in your mind”. When considered together with the meanings in other dictionaries, it is clear that the word idea has the meaning of “idea”, understanding and opinion: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/turkish/idea>, (29.3.2017).

<sup>8</sup> The dictionary defines the suffix as “usually as -ology”:  
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/-logy>, (29.3.2017).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/idea>, (29.3.2017).

<sup>10</sup> See the synonyms section in the specified dictionary:  
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/idea>, (29.3.2017).

<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the use of the word belief in the explanation of the word ideology proves the accuracy of the interpretation: the set of ideas and beliefs of a group... For the mentioned meaning of the word “Idea” see: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/idea>, (29.3.2017); For the meaning of the word ideology see: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ideology>, (29.3.2017).

is that of ideas or representations that can be used to maintain a particular social or political order.<sup>12</sup> Let us quote Evans-Pritchard again on the state of the ideological man through the concept of mentality: “He cannot escape his own web of beliefs, because it is the only world he knows.”<sup>13</sup> There are many such people throughout society, who cannot get out of their own ideological mold, because they do not want to look at beliefs other than the one they are caught in, for many reasons, but they are always deceived, because they have never seen or attempted to see any other world except the one they know; they live their lives in a shallow way. Thinking is indeed painful. Because it creates awareness and leads to doubt. Thinking seems like a burden. That's why the vast majority of people, in order to avoid thinking, hypnotize themselves with an ideology or a belief they find themselves in. The similarity in structure between ideology and religion is that they are both worldviews, they both try to offer an order to people. Just as ideology is a term, religion is a project of presenting a “way of life” along with a “worldview”. In this context, all theistic, secular, ideological structures that offer a way of life to human beings are all religions in the eyes of the Qur'an. The Qur'an divides these religions into true and false. As we have already mentioned, it calls the religion that is guided by Allah true and all other structures false. There is always a guiding force at the center of a person or group that organizes ideological structures, or in the center of distorted religious structures. In Islam, the true religion, Allah is at the center. The ideological form of Islam is manifested in the idea of the believer's total submission of himself to Allah. A special form of this submission is man's submission to the Shari'ah. The community that is formed is not headed by a ruler, but by Allah Himself. When a tribal leader who converted to Islam said to the Prophet, “You are our ruler,” the Prophet replied, “Allah is the ruler, not me.”<sup>14</sup> Just as ideological structures are social organizations, so is religion, and even if their sources are not the same, their goals are common: a life project for humanity: “Islam is the direct rule of God, the sovereignty of the God who looks down upon his people. The principle of unity and order, known in other societies as *civitas*, *polis*, *state*, is represented in Islam by God. Allah is the supreme force working for the common good. Thus the public treasury is 'God's treasury', the army is 'God's army' and even public officials are 'God's officials'.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the leader of Islamic ideology is God.

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Burke, s. 101.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Burke, s. 100.

<sup>14</sup> Şerif Mardin, *a.g.e*, s. 70.

<sup>15</sup> See place.