Social Change and Religion*

Toplumsal Değişim ve Din

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Abstract

Change is an inevitable fact of all communities and all institutions that make up societies. Religion as a social organization that brings social orders into being and keeps them together is anything but a section and a crucial factor of social change. A change event that may occur in an existing part of the social structure may eventually affect almost all the infrastructures in the existing structure system. Alongside with the modernism (before and after); It's obviously true that a rapid and effective change process is experienced in almost every field in all societies affected by the process. In the functioning of the aforementioned process, religious perceptions and tendencies gradually change in this phenomenon, as well.. As it is known, important events that occur in social systems can cause sudden and surprise needs and a number of problems aimed at meeting these needs, and these emerging problems affect almost all institutions, including religion, and force themselves to adapt to change. The institution of religion, which is an important element of the social order, is almost in contact with the whole of this system. Religion is accepted as an effective system that performs absolute functions that are important for the ongoing social order. The reflection of some goals and needs of the social order is seen in the functions of the phenomenon of religion and in the structures it creates in order to fulfill these functions. The purpose of this study is to understand the complex relationship between religion and change. For this purpose, first of all, conceptual analyzes were made and the subject of social change was examined. Then, the functions of the phenomenon of religion in the process of social change have been discussed. Thus, this study is important in terms of defining social change, religion and change phenomenon and determining what they are.

Keywords: Sociology of Religion, Change, Transformation, Social Change, Religion, Religious Change

Öz

Değişim, bütün toplulukların ve toplumları oluşturan bütün kurumların kaçınılmaz bir gerçeğidir. Din kurumu da toplumları vücuda getiren ve bir arada tutan bir sosyal kurum olarak; toplumsal değişmenin hem bir parçası hem de temel bir etkeni pozisyonundadır. Toplumsal yapı içerisinde mevcut bir kesimde meydana gelmesi olası bir değişme olayı, en sonunda mevcut yapı sistemi içerisinde bulunan hemen hemen tüm alt yapıları da etkilemesi söz konusu olabilmektedir. Modernizm süreci (öncesi ve sonrası) ile beraber; süreçten etkilenen tüm toplumlarda hemen hemen her alanda hızlı ve etkili bir değişme sürecinin yaşandığı bilinen bir gerçektir. Anılan sürecin işleyişi içerisinde de dinsel algılayış ve eğilimler

de bu vetire içerisinde tedricen değişime uğramaktadır. Toplumsal sistemlerde meydana gelen önemli hadiseler, bilindiği üzere ani ve sürpriz ihtiyaçlara ve bu ihtiyaçların giderilmesine matuf bir takım problemlere sebep olabilmekte, ortaya çıkan bu problemler din dâhil neredeyse bütün kurumlara dokunarak, kendilerini değişime adapte olmaya zorlamaktadır. Toplumsal düzenin önemli bir öğesi olan din kurumu da neredeyse bu sistemin bütünüyle irtibat halindedir. Din; devam edegelen sosyal nizam için önem arz eden mutlak fonksiyonları icra eden etkin bir sistem olarak kabul görmektedir. Toplumsal düzenin kimi gaye ve ihtiyaçlarının yansıması; din olgusunun gördüğü fonksiyonlara ve bu fonksiyonları yerine getirmek adına meydana getirdiği yapılarda görünmektedir. Bu çalışma, toplumsal değişim, din ve değişim olgularını tanımlama ve ne'liğini saptama adına önemlidir. Kavramsal çözümlemelerden sonra din ve değişim arasındaki kompleks münasebeti anlamaya yönelik çalışmada evvela toplumsal değişim konusu irdelendikten sonra din olgusunun toplumsal değişim sürecindeki işlevleri tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Din Sosyolojisi, Değişim**,** Dönüşüm, Toplumsal Değişim, Din, Dinsel Değişim*

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous systematic scientific research carried out on the social universe until now show that almost all human societies have been subjected to some kind of change in relation to various and multifaceted factors (Günay, 1999; Turhan, 1969). As is known, society is a structure and a social system consisting of social phenomena or social institutions. At the same time, this system consists of a network of social relations whose content and norms are determined by social institutions and structures (Bilgiseven, 1995). In almost all societies during the historical development process, some changes and transformations in social and cultural content can occur through contact with different religions, cultures and civilisations (Sinanoğlu, 2008). What is meant to be indicated by these social and cultural changes and transformations are the changes that occur and are observed in the structure, religion and culture of a community (Bottomore, 1977).

The desire to understand social change is one of the factors that have paved the way for the emergence of the science of sociology (Şentürk, 2014). In particular, the processes of social change and transformation that occurred and continued to accelerate after the Industrial Revolution have attracted the attention of social scientists (Freyer, 1963). All these processes and events have led them to investigate the causes and consequences of social change and their effects on social life and structures. Some important events that occur in social orders cause the emergence of urgent needs and a series of problems to meet these needs (Erol, 2011), and these problems affect almost all social institutions, including religion, and lead them to a climate of change. Religion, which functions as an important part of social structures, is in contact with the entire social order.

Religion is a basic divine system that performs certain functions within the social order. The needs, aims and objectives of the social order are reflected in some functions put forward in the religious dimension and in the structures created to perform these functions. In the structure of (almost) every society living in the world arena, it is known that there is a religious belief system associated with the divine and the existence of a structural system with strict adherents of this system. In this respect, religion is a reality that has a universal format and is related to the structure of the societies in which it takes place (Aksu, 2005). In

dynamic societies, the main function of religion is to ensure what the socio-religious and cultural heritage is and what is expected from individuals, as well as the transfer of this important heritage to new generations in accordance with the original (as far as it is influenced by all vital forms and in all its articulated forms). On the other hand, from a functional point of view, it is a fact that in communities subjected to change, religion not only transmits the socio-religious and cultural heritage to new generations, but also prepares the target generations for possible changes and transformations.[1] In this respect, the relationship between religion and social structure is a socio-religious reality that is subject to sociology (since it is the manifestation of religion in social life).

Due to this reality, it can be said that there is a complex relationship between social change and the phenomenon of religion. This relationship is shaped within the framework of an interaction that takes place on a social or individual basis. In addition, due to the rapid occurrence of social phenomena in recent centuries, a more intricate picture is observed day by day. However, it can be said that religion has undertaken two separate and almost contradictory tasks such as preserving and maintaining socio-religious and cultural values and contributing to the changes and transformations that have taken place and are likely to take place. From this point of view, it is seen that the complex picture is gradually increasing. On the one hand, ensuring the transfer of the heritage created by religious culture and some important features acquired through the use of religious knowledge to the next generations, and on the other hand, ensuring the adaptation of religious education and life processes to the changes experienced are among the main problems that religious changes are exposed to from a social point of view.

Social change is a general social phenomenon that almost everyone feels in one way or another. For example, our elders, who are older than us in terms of age, refer to some social and religious values that have changed and transformed (and, according to them, degenerated) by comparing their childhood and youth periods with the present day. Mostly, the longing for past experiences is expressed in these sentences. The younger generation, who are the representatives of the next generation, learn about the adventure of change from the complaints of the older generation, who are the representatives of the previous generation. Clichéd expressions of lamentation such as "Oh where are those old Ramadan's; oh where are those old holidays!" etc., which inform us about the existence, direction and speed of the alleged change event, provide us with clues that lead us to satisfactory information on this subject (Yılmaz, 2019). From a scientific point of view, the effort to "have a permanent idea about the existence of a change" based on such discourses and reproaches will be insufficient. The change experienced and the transformation process brought about by this change must be investigated, questioned, systematically and methodically examined on a scientific plane. With a study to be conducted in this way, it will be more accurate to make

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[1]   For more information see: Yılmaz ARI, "Din Ve Otorite Kavramları Bağlamında Sünnilikte Dini Otorite", *İlahiyat Alanında Araştırma ve Değerlendirmeler*, ed. Fevzi Rençber, Yılmaz Arı vd., (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2021), 163-188.

predictions, observations and criticisms of the social traces and reflections of the change experienced/exposed to. In the last two centuries, the processes that have accelerated social change have continued to increase (Kirman 2004). As one of the most important main elements of social life, the institution of religion is also affected by these rapid social change processes. In this respect, it is important to analyse the traces of social change and the religious-social change it brings with it (even if it is a process of mutual interaction).

Ethical Declaration: I declare that this study is a translation and that it is among the studies that do not require ethics committee permission and that I have all the necessary permissions to publish translation.

2. SOCIAL CHANGE

Life and society are in a constant state of change. Heraclitus' statement that "no man ever steps in the same river twice" and the phrase "there is nothing permanent except change" reveal a presupposition that change has taken place inevitably and will continue to take place (Vergin, 1993; Hilav, 1993).

Change refers to the transition of a phenomenon, object or organism from one state to a new and different state. It is a very difficult situation to keep and maintain the current situation as this situation means being static. The preservation and sustainability of such a static feature within the concept of time does not seem possible (Günay, 2011) because the fact of change shows its inevitable effect on beings. In this context, change has palpable, dynamic and visible effects on individual and social basis (Arslantürk and Amman, 2001). It is not possible to talk about an entity that is not affected by change and a society without change (Dönmezer, 1982).

Social change refers to the process of transition from existing situations to a completely different and new situation in social structures and relations, especially the institutions and organisations that make up societies (Bird, 2017). Social change is a collective phenomenon that is impersonal, affected by the modes and conditions of social life with a universal logic, and takes place within the common living space (Okumuş, 2012). In a broad sense, the concept of social change is used to describe the changes that occur in social relations and the changes occurring in the social structure in a special sense (Kirman, 2011). Scientists engaged in the science of sociology are interested not only in the processes taking place around the concept of structure, but also in changes affecting behaviours, norms, values, cultural meanings (Yeşilmen, 2020) and social relations (Subaşı, 2014).

Social change, in Rocher's words, "consists of observable and controllable transformations in short periods of time" (Rocher, 1968). From this point of view, social change is a change that can be traced and observed in the structures of societies. Social change also has physical and social boundaries. In other words, it is possible to observe and analyse social change in a geographical area or in a socio-cultural framework. This emphasises the two main elements of change that are based on social life in a particular place

and specific to that place. Village, town and city constitute the physical structure elements of social change. Social groups, social relations or existing mobile transitions in social strata, which cause population mobility, organise social life itself in the socio-cultural sense.

At the centre of social change is the human being. Humans are the beings that can both affect and be affected in every event that has social characteristics. Therefore, human is the most important part of social change (Okumuş, 2012). Undoubtedly, this change cannot be completely limited to the human element. As change is a process that starts and continues to develop, the concept of time is a second and important element of change. Sociologist Rocher's definition of social change as "transformations that can be controlled and observed in short time intervals" draws attention to the time dimension (Rocher, 1968). In addition to these two important elements, considering the fact that there is a geography (physical environment) where every change takes place, the dimension of 'space' where the change takes place gains importance as a third element. In the words of sociologist of religion Celaleddin Çelik: "Generally, social change is handled in a certain process accompanied by differentiations occurring in social, cultural and spatial dimensions" (Çelik, 2011). Therefore, we can say that human, time and space come to the fore as the three main elements of change. It is possible to classify the basic codes of social change as follows:

✓ The main factor in social change is the change of structure.

✓ Social change necessarily finds an explanation in a certain period or time.

✓ Continuity is essential in every social change. In other words, observable transformations are continuous (Doğan, 2007).

As the concept of change does not involve a differentiation in terms of value judgements such as good or bad, it differs from the concepts of development and progress, which indicate a conscious effort. Depending on this feature, it can be said that social change can be fulfilled forward or backward (Bilgiseven, 1968). In the light of these data, it is possible to define social change as follows: It is a process that affects the structure or functioning of social life in a way that is not temporary and superficial, changes the course of history and includes every observable transformation in its period.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Although changing the opinion, thought, attitude or perception of an individual, association, group is not considered a complete social change, in order for a social change to be in question, all these opinions, thoughts, attitudes mentioned must spread to a wider social arena and must be accepted by an environment close to the general society (Özgüven, 2012). So what are the characteristics of a social change event? To summarise briefly, it is possible to say the following:

✓ Social change is a structural phenomenon (Ülken, 1989).

✓ There is no society/community that does not experience social change.

✓ The speed and direction of social change are not always the same. It can be forward-backward as well as fast-slow.

✓ Social change is an objective concept that does not contain value judgements and opinions such as good-bad-beautiful-ugly, etc.

✓ Social change is a process of change based on a long-term period (Özgüven, 2012).

✓ A change occurring in an institutional structure can also affect other structures.

✓ A change in a society can be spontaneous or forced.

✓ The speed of social change occurring in the concrete structures of the social order is higher than the changes occurring in the abstract-spiritual structures.

✓ Changes and transformations that are attempted to be implemented before the social structures are ready for change can lead to social crisis in social structures.

✓ Social change according to Marx: It will emerge as a kind of conflict between classes (Erkal, 2012).

✓ Social change is a continuous process of change. These class changes, rather than being artificial and finite, arouse the belief of continuity and popularise this idea.

✓ Social change is a collective event process that necessarily affects the society or a large part of the society (Doğan, 2011).

4. SOCIAL CHANGE AND RELIGION

What is meant by social change is actually the changes that occur in the existing structure and functioning of the basic institutions that make up the social structure, which are visible and whose effects are clearly felt. Social structures formed by social institutions are not independent of each other. Existing institutions actively maintain their existence in social life in an indirect/indirect relationship with each other. In this context, the social change event, no matter in which institution it starts, will somehow have an impact on all existing structures that are not independent from each other and are somehow in social relations.

Religion is one of the most important institutions that constitute the social structure. The phenomenon of religion, which has strong social relations with other institutions and whose influence can be felt, can be both the main factor and the object of this mutual change process due to the social relationship(s) it has established with other institutions (Akyüz & Çapcıoğlu, 2008). Prominent sociologists of religion such as M. Weber, J. Wach, G. Mensching, E. Troeltsch, G. Le Bras, who made sociological approaches with systematic, historical and comparative perspectives, focused on the examination of social change and religion relations. Especially after World War II, the rapid social changes that societies have been exposed to and the reflections of the changes in religious life have led sociologists of religion to address the

relations of religion with the phenomenon of social change and to analyse and interpret the interaction that occurs in this process.

Today, the main axis of the effective and rapid social changes occurring in the relations of modern societies with the reality of religion is the effect of secularisation. In the case of Turkish society, these effects have a profound impact on almost all the areas of socio-religious life of societies in transition from community-style social relations to society-style social relations, or among modernisation efforts, between tradition and modernity. It can be said that these deep traces and effects cause some conflicts, contradictions and crises in such societies (Günay, 2011). At this point, religion and its relations with social change appear as an significant phenomenon (Okumuş, 2009).

As a result of the existence of an absolute relationship between social change and religion (Bird, 2017), it becomes clear that religion has effects that slow down, prevent or reinforce social change. It is known that religion has been influencing and guiding societies since ancient times and has assumed many positive or negative roles in change processes. In these aspects, the phenomenon of religion is a power that changes or transforms when social conditions become suitable (Okumuş, 2009). The relationship between religion and social change is reciprocal. This is because sometimes religion is an influential element in social changes while sometimes society can be the main actor of religious changes. In this respect, in order to fully understand religion or social changes, it is necessary to comprehend the mutual relations between these two factors and their social dimensions. The degree of this relationship and the direction of its development depend on several factors.

5. SOCIAL CHANGE AND CHANGE IN RELIGION

It is a possible sociological reality that change in social institutions and areas occur in some way (Şahin & Alpay, 2019). It is another possible reality that the institution of religion, which is one of the social institutions and socio-spiritual phenomena, is also subject to social and cultural transformation and change (Toker, 2009). Individuals change, values change, societies change, events change and, of course, phenomena also take their share from the change process (Özgüven, 2012) that exists in the fabric of social reality. Religion is a social phenomenon and is not independent from society. There is always a mutual interaction between religion and society. As Ünver Günay said: "Likewise, religion, as a social event, will inevitably be affected by social events and changes occurring in society" (Günay, 2011). Based on all these realities, the occurrence of a change in the religious structure appears as an inevitable situation or expectation.

Apart from the fact that the phenomenon of religion is affected positively or negatively by social change, what is important here is that the institution of religion, in the face of differentiated social situations and new needs and expectations emerging in the society in the course of the process, has renewed its essence and format and emerged into the flow of social life with a newer understanding, interpretation and, in fact, a new exit and

solution proposal, etc. Here, although not directly, the existence of an indirect effect of social change on religion is noticeable. Buddhism, which is one of the religions that can be exemplified in this regard, has found the opportunity to spread beyond the borders of India, the social ground where it emerged, and has found the opportunity to spread to other geographies and has interacted with various values, cultures and belief forms in new places where it has spread and adapted them to themselves. In addition, Buddhist phenomena such as Zen Buddhism, Lamaism and Chinese Buddhism have emerged (Günay, 2011). For example, Chinese Buddhist missionaries explained Buddhism to the local Chinese people and achieved success in this endeavour, thus creating a religious structure in which Taoism, one of the local belief elements, and Buddhism transmitted by the missionaries were kept alive in the same pot (Arslan, 2018).

A religious change that takes place together with social change may also have effects on the religious legal system. Although it is a field determined by the original sources of religion, it is possible that some religious provisions may change according to the developing environment and diversifying conditions (Sargın, 2003). With the process of change, religions may also enter into a tendency and process of making a series of voluntary innovations in their legal structure. After all, it is not possible to regulate the problems that may arise from the complex social life and social relations that are likely to be experienced in the future with the rules of law that are static and closed to change (Tunaya, 1975). Thus, in the process of change, religion revises itself in an institutional sense and renews and changes some of its legal or religious rules and principles. Moreover, this process of change and transformation brings a "dimension of flexibility" to the religious field in a way that can respond to innovation, mobility and social needs.

6. RELIGION AS AN ELEMENT THAT SLOWS DOWN SOCIAL CHANGE

When examining the relationship between social change and religion, it is seen that the element of religion shows a more patronising and traditionalist attitude towards social change (Bird, 2017). It can be said that the element of religion, which functions more as a function that slows down, brakes or endeavours to prevent social change (Vergin 1985), helps to preserve the existing structures against the phenomenon of change with this particular feature (Mardin, 1992). In this way, it can be said that religions take on the character of a kind of stabilising unit and perform a function that protects the existing social and religious stability. In this respect, the existence of religion is the most important element of stability for public life. In this respect, we can mention the continuity of a socio-religious life stabilised by the phenomenon of religion in social life.

The fact that religions slow down social change stems from the function of religious essence and content to integrate the society. As Berger states;

"every people has other tendencies, aspirations and perspectives, which are often in conflict with one another. Despite all these differences, the emergence of an integrative order such as the phenomenon

of religion makes one wonder. This situation shows that religious relations are the strongest among the ties that enable societies to stay together and bring about solidarity with a common sense of belonging, disregarding individual changes" (Berger 1999, 82).

Social structures and the institutions that constitute them generally develop a kind of resistance to change in a mode characterised by an instinct to protect themselves. It can be said that the phenomenon of religion also tries to prevent the processes of change in general or to slow down the pace of this process. The fact that the phenomenon of religion exhibits intricate features with cultural dynamics, as well as the fact that it often exhibits features that cannot be separated from each other, strengthens the resistance to the process of social change. Despite everything, social change is not completely prevented. After a certain point, the reaction and resistance to change begins to break down in the light of this fact. Desired concessions are started to be taken from the society based on the desire for change. If it is needed to list the religious factors that slow down the process of change, it would be possible to say the following:

- ✓ The presupposition that the religious texts contained in the holy books are divine and unchangeable. Acceptance of new and universal interpretations.

- ✓ In cases where religious references are the main source of the legitimacy of the belief or practice in the area where change is desired, the wishes and acts of change are either prevented or prevent the change from being felt quickly and thus slow down the process. For example; as in the issue of "Qurayshism of the Caliphate".

- ✓ Belief in the Hereafter, Fate and Destiny: Such belief patterns, which are present in religions, can be seen as the main obstacles that have a slowing effect on change. Individuals and societies with such beliefs may show a passive attitude in the face of change and do not show a positive approach towards change by taking shelter under the wings of providence.

- ✓ As in the case of Hinduism, religions that contain features similar to the "Caste System" are sources of great resistance that slow down change.

- ✓ Material or spiritual fulfilment from religion slows down change.

- ✓ Deterrent punitive measures taken by religious authorities to preserve religion: Punishments such as hadd, killing, etc. For example, a person who apostatises is killed in order not to set an example.

- ✓ Fear of eternal punishment.

- ✓ The introverted and closed attitude of national religions such as Judaism is a situation that slows down the element of change considerably.

✓ In the West, religion and adherence to religious practices have been the most dominant element of transition and change in preventing, delaying or ensuring the transition to democracy.

As can be seen, religions and the culture of religious life formed accordingly are institutions that generally resist change and slow down the process of change after they have established their own systems.

7. RELIGION AS AN ELEMENT THAT ACCELERATES SOCIAL CHANGE

Through meaning they add to human life and the excitement they create in individuals or communities, we can say that religions are an active element of a possible change process in the formation times when they acquire their first followers or in the process of opening up to a new centre/area ('communiqué' / 'hijra') and the desire to spread in this arena. As seen in the rapid spread adventure of Islam, which is accepted as one of the divine religions, what triggered the change in the arena of religious and socio-cultural life in the Arab society, which was the addressee of change, was the new religion that was attractive with its exciting message.

When the message proclaimed by new religions is accepted by the individuals who make up the society, the change usually takes place with the rejection of the customs, traditions and practices of the old beliefs that the religion considers superstitious, the denial and destruction of the old structures and symbols of belief (such as idols) existing in some religions, but at the same time with the continuation of some customs, traditions, practices, symbols and structures that are compatible with the divine religious message, ensuring the continuity of the new religious belief with the adaptation of the people to the new religious belief and the acceptance of the change process. The new religion, which deals with humanity, allows the continuity of the old religion(s) by accepting some features and practices that it thinks will adapt to its own structure from the characteristics of the old religion(s). Sometimes it blends some old forms of religious beliefs and various practices shaped in the cultural harmony of this belief in its own belief pot, transforming them and allowing them to continue in this way. In cases where transformation cannot be achieved, by completely eliminating the belief patterns and religious-cultural practices of the existing structure, the new religion builds magnificent institutions of change in their place and positions them in place of the old(s). In any case, we can say that the new religion continues its movement of change rapidly by dictating/accepting its own codes in almost every aspect of life. It is possible to briefly list the issues that accelerate the change process and have an impact on it as follows:

✓ Religions can be the driving force of religious change. The mysterious structure of the new religious teachings and arguments offered to individuals by the new religion, the mystical reward-punishment system such as Heaven and Hell, and religious

arguments that caress the rebellious spirit of change such as the rejection of tradition stand out as a driving factor especially in the young generation.

✓ The perception/expectation of a new prophet expected in some previous sacred texts is important as one of the main factors triggering change: As in the case of the Biblical Paraclete.

✓ The propaganda of the new religious divine message that denigrates the old belief system accelerates the questioning of the desire for change and the desired area of change: For example, the religious beliefs of the ancient Arab society are called Jahiliyya beliefs.

✓ New religions play a leading role in bringing about a rapid change in some of the issues they value: The change in the balance between the love of the world (dunya) and the desire for the hereafter is important in ensuring that individuals who accept the new religion in Arab society run to the institution of Jihad, which Islam attaches importance to, and that the rank of martyrdom is a desired state.

✓ Religions encourage rapid developments in the socio-economic field: Islam's active operation of the institution of zakat and the Prophet's command "all of you give alms" and the Prophet's directive to his Companions who questioned how to do this, "work; give alms, and earn a living with some of it" pointed out there is no room for inertia in the social and economic system and the desire to produce a potential that can turn into a social, commercial and economic vitality have come to the fore with these incentives and played a leading role in the desired change. Some of the Companions who responded to the order became an economic power in the society they lived in. It is also known that the Protestantism served the formation of modern capitalism with its religious structure and ethics of activity, which encouraged the capture of liquidity density and the collection of capital, and that the Japanese nation experienced a rapid industrialisation process by continuing their religious values and teachings.

✓ In addition to the expansionist policy of religions with universal claims such as Islam, Christianity, etc., the claims and slogans that prioritise change and progress contribute positively to the adventure of change of these religions.

✓ Islam's communique and Christianity's missionary efforts are a triggering factor in terms of change and transformation.

Apart from the fact that the phenomenon of religion is an obstacle, slowing down or braking issue in the face of change, it is also a reality that it can be an element that reinforces social change. It can be said that the aspects of tradition, conservatism and change that exist in the structure of society are also valid for the phenomenon of religion. Thus, religions become the centre of social change in a rapid manner in their new emergence and expansion

periods. In the following process, they accelerate this change with the creation of some religious structures and institutions and can systematise the change.

8. RELIGION AS A FACTOR PREVENTING AND OPPOSING SOCIAL CHANGE

Every religious belief, which enables the individual to establish a connection with the divine, carries traditionalist-protective principles in accordance with its nature, and in cases where it is slow in adapting to its basic principles or is considered contrary, it may be the subject itself that delays social change and even prohibits this change (Günay, 2011). In other words, obedience to some sacred religious texts, religious-mystical symbols, customs and traditions can turn a religious belief, especially a religious belief that has completed its institutional structuring, into a form that preserves the ongoing system, and in this case, religion becomes a structure that often closes its doors to innovations and protects ongoing ancient values and shows a strong brake effect against social change (Vergin, 1985).

When examining the relationship between religion and social change, it cannot be denied that religion is protective and conservative in the face of change, and with this conservative attitude, it performs a function that disrupts, brakes or prevents the process of social change, and that it favours the existing order against the movement of change, and that the phenomenon of religion has a conservative and protective face in addition to the fact that it actually has such a function. In the words of sociologist Ejder Okumuş,

"indeed, religion can be an element of stability by protecting the existing social order and arrangements. It can be said that religion is the most important factor of social stability. Religion can ensure a balanced continuity in state and social life by maintaining stability" (Okumuş, 2009, 326).

Sociologist Durkheim, who focuses on the protective (conservative) function of religion in the process of social change, states that the phenomenon of religion has vital functions in the stabilisation of folk structures and the preservation of the elements that make up the social structure (Mardin, 1992). Accordingly, religion appears as an element of stabilisation in sociological terms. In this respect, this stable stance of religion functions as an active subject that prevents social change. When we look at the foundations of the factor of religion as a factor that prevents the change process, it is possible to say the following:

✓ The desire of religions, as a traditionalist and conservative element, to protect the institutional systems and structures they have created within themselves

✓ Uncertainty about the extent of the dangers of change (future anxiety-fear)

✓ Concern about the tendency of adherents to distance themselves from religious beliefs and practices

✓ Preservation suggestions in hymn texts

✓ Sacred words spoken by prophets, who are considered to be religious guides, in order to preserve religion and religious practices

- ✓ Willingness to prevent social and religious controversy, debate and turmoil

- ✓ The idea of protection from damage caused by political rivalries

- ✓ Belief in the Hereafter

9. SOCIAL CHANGE AS A MOTIVE AFFECTING THE PHENOMENON OF RELIGION IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION

Change is a dynamic process that affects the phenomenon of religion positively or negatively. There is a complex two-sided relationship between religion and social change rather than a one-sided relationship (Sezer, 1981). The stereotyped worldviews of religious teachings alone do not affect the social structure; in fact, religious experience and life are affected by the changes and transformations in social life. Religious beliefs and socio-religious and cultural values are the most invisible and slowest transforming elements of the social structure. Even so, changes and transformations in social life are reflected in religious life with a movement that includes manifestations and rituals (Sunar, 2015).

The existence of a social change process that positively affects religions in the process of social change is a sociological and religious reality. From time to time, some change and transformation events and processes that occur in the social structure can be in favour of religions and religious arguments and can perform important functions in this context. From this point of view, the emergence of Confucianism in China coincided with a period of rapid social change, transformation, conflict and disorder in the country. At the same time, the emergence of Buddhism and Brahmanism coincided with the increase in civil struggles in India, the intensification of conflicts between the indigenous people and the Aryans, the intensification of feudal wars and the intensification of social authority (influence) fights between the Kshatriyas and Brahmans (Günay, 2011).

It is possible to give an example of social change as a factor that positively affects religion in the context of the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, a modernism movement against or outside of religion sometimes led to the weakening of religious values, but at other times, it can be said that the fight against religiousness in particular led to the strengthening of religion. At the same time, it can be said that the change movement that emerged in the Turkic Republics in the process of Soviet dissolution and disintegration in line with their independence led to a revival in the Islamic sense (Güngör, 2020).

Another example of religiosity being positively affected by social changes is the fact that changes in population, social migration and urbanisation have had a significant impact on religiosity, congregational affiliation, religious organisation and religious factionalisation in our country and in the Middle East. It can be said that some religious groups and political parties, which are known as Islamist in Turkey, have reached a relatively certain quantitative and organisational strength due to factors such as population growth, changes in social class structure and urbanisation (Okumuş, 2009).

Ziya Gökalp, who showed serious interest in the field of sociology of religion in Turkey, also pointed out that the Arab geography faced the threat of Byzantium on the one hand and the Sassanid and Abyssinian Empires on the other hand, that the Fil (Elephant) Incident made the Hejaz Region very uneasy, and that Islam tended to sprout and grow in such a harsh environment of pressure and change (Günay, 2011). In addition to all these facts, it is possible to summarise the elements of change that positively affect the phenomenon of religion:

- ✓ The claims of religions such as Islam to be universal are among the dominant factors that affirm the process of change.

- ✓ Tajdid and revival movements in religions contribute to the religious change of the change process.

- ✓ Conflict and disorder in some societies...

- ✓ Social migration, changes in demographic structure, urbanisation process...

- ✓ The phenomenon of religiosity, congregational loyalty and community membership, religious organisations, factions...

- ✓ New religious movements, political partisanships...

- ✓ The immense pressure during challenging change environments...

- ✓ Changes and innovations in mass media.

- ✓ The awareness atmosphere or consciousness created by events such as secularism, worldliness, etc.

- ✓ The climate of transformation that occurs due to tough and challenging pressures and elements of change...

10. SOCIAL CHANGE AS A MOTIVE THAT AFFECTS THE PHENOMENON OF RELIGION IN A NEGATIVE WAY

It is a sociological reality that religions affect social change negatively, just as it is a sociological reality that social change affects religions negatively (Berger, 1995). The phenomenon of religion, while presenting a new sociological-religious understanding of life/culture of life to the societies in which it is manifested, comes under the influence (indirectly/indirectly) of the social environment in which it aspires to live. In this process of mutual interaction, the phenomenon of religion is also affected by the existing social environment in some way (Abuzar, 2011).

Religions that are affected by the process of social change may cause a conflict between their internal dynamics and a kind of internal strife, fight, contradictions, antagonism, etc. among pious individuals. This situation can be exemplified by the changes that emerged in the Western world with the Renaissance process and the changes in the

Christian faith with the birth of the Protestant belief system of the Reform adventure that occurred in relation to the changes that emerged in the Western world, and the religious-based fights that occurred much later. On the other hand, the emergence of various factions, political actions and seditions due to the effects and traces of the changes that emerged in the adventure of Islamic belief and struggle, especially starting from the period of the caliphate of Hz. Osman, as well as the emergence of sectarianism and sectarian tendencies in the following periods can also be given as an example. It is also known that conflictual and dialectical religious theories, especially K. Marx, and religious theories of social scientists such as E. Durkheim, etc. claim that the events and processes of change affect the phenomenon of religion in a negative way (Okumuş, 2009). It is possible to briefly list how and in what way change affects religion as follows:

- ✓ In the process of change in societies that evolve from a traditional to a modern structure, a process of religious dissolution begins.

- ✓ In societies that adopt a secular mentality and world view, a negative situation emerges in terms of institutionalised and traditional religious structures and forms, norms, customs, traditions, values and beliefs.

- ✓ There is a negative impact on traditional religious education processes.

- ✓ The perspective on the world and otherworldly life becomes detached from religious arguments and may become increasingly distant.

- ✓ The phenomenon called worldliness, which is increasingly complained about by the conservative sector, is experienced and this reflex process can make religious people suffer.

- ✓ Some forms of assistance with religious identity such as charity, solidarity, the culture of infak and zakat in Islam, etc. remain in a religious dimension that is ignored, are pushed to the background and a society model that evolves into an extremely individualistic and selfish social structure can be observed.

- ✓ The tendencies such as factionalisation, schism etc. are increasing and diversifying. This situation may cause religions, which are the means of ensuring social unity, to be overcomed by the mode of disintegration/separation and, in fact, to become the religious reference/tool of disintegration.

- ✓ It can be said that increasingly diversified mass communication and social media tools are hindering the ancient traditional and religious teaching heritage and are instrumental in the distortion of some values.

- ✓ It is a fact that missionary activities, etc. have caused losses in some religious circles that cannot preserve their own religious heritage and cannot equip the new generation with sufficient knowledge and equipment as a result of their widespread

use of extensive communication and advertising networks. (The experience of religiousness influencing other religious universes by taking advantage of new means of change).

As can be seen, religions cannot fully protect themselves from social changes and can be influenced by direct and indirect means and references. This is because all religious beliefs and acquisitions are at the same time under the obligatory influence of the sociological region in which they grow and spread.

CONCLUSION

Social change is a process that affects the structure or functioning of social life in a temporary, shallow and non-symbolic way. At the same time, it is a social process that changes the course of history and includes every change and transformation movement that can be observed in the time period in which it is experienced. The notion of change does not involve a transformation in terms of some value judgements such as good/elite or bad/bad etc. Therefore, change is differentiated from the notions of progress and development, which indicate a purposeful endeavour. Based on this feature, it can be said that social change can occur either forwards or backwards.

It is not possible to talk about a generally accepted and agreed theory of social change in sociology. The reason for this can be seen in the fact that the theories of social change approach the issues of change from very different angles. For this reason, it is very difficult to make an effort to classify this issue. It is important to carry out a classification study for the convenience of readers and researchers in order to be familiar with the subject and to have different perspectives. From this point of view, the issue of change can be discussed at length by including a classification of the typologies of social change theories in another independent study.

It is a known fact that the phenomenon of religion is one of the main elements of the reality of change that is experienced and likely to be experienced in the social sense. Since ancient times, it is known that religions have had a great impact on all social orders and systems that have emerged in the arena of social life. Weber emphasises that modern capitalism, which continues to develop and spread in Western societies, is based on the fact of religion. This shows us how important a factor of change religion is.

Traditional societies are societies shaped around the factor of religion. In the process of transformation in social life evolving towards industrial society, religion has lost its power in determining and shaping social life. Although there are multiple reasons for this situation, when analysed in general, it is seen that the main reasons for the social change in religion are:

- ✓ The decline of religious understanding as it was known in ancient times
- ✓ The emergence of religious understandings that differ from individual to individual
- ✓ Qualitative loss of religion on an institutional basis

✓ The religious worship dimension is relegated to the background

✓ The emergence of new religious interpretations and views

In the nature and scope of influence of every change event, there are social tensions that occur or are likely to occur in the short term (ready to be mobilised). Social order actors and communities consisting of individuals want to maintain the existing social order by prioritising the stability factor at the vital level. At this stage, the factor of religion, which is considered as a symbol of stability and insurance of cohesion among the elements of social order, comes into play. If a single religion continues to exist in the basic vital flow of the social order in societies where religion finds a body and a field of action, it is a fact that this situation has become a structural style (structural element that turns into a systemic style) within the social order in the society in which the existing religion interacts.

In summary, it is a sociological and historical reality that in addition to the processes of change in societies, the phenomenon of religion is also in an effort to contribute to the process of change or to postpone/suppress/prevent it. The fact that the phenomenon of religion has relations with societies on the basis of reciprocity makes it inevitable for religion to be confronted/exposed to the realities of social change. For this reason, it is possible to state the following in the context of the phenomenon of change and religion in the process of mutual interaction:

✓ Social change can be the main cause of religious change.

✓ Social change can become an element that slows down/blocks/postpones/delays/suppresses and prevents social change with a conservative/traditionalist attitude in order to maintain the status quo.

✓ Religion can be an element that reinforces/supports/contributes to social change.

✓ Religion can also be a major cause of social change.

Authorship Contribution

The translation work was carried out as a single author and there is no conflict of interest with any person or institution-organization.

Ethics Committee Declaration

The study is a translation captive and does not require ethics committee approval as it is not based on human or animal research in terms of its nature and content.

DEDICATION / İTHAF / إهداء ²

This article is dedicated to the scientists, students, health workers, religious officials, journalists, babies, children and innocent civilians who lost their lives as a result of Israel's brutal, barbaric, inhumane and illegal attacks on universities, schools, hospitals, refugee camps, homes, mosques and churches in Gaza. Israel's attempt to expel more than two million Gazans from their homes and lands is inhumane. All Israeli occupations and attacks that violate international law, human rights and freedoms are crimes and therefore Israel must be prosecuted.

Bu makale, İsrail'in Gazze'deki üniversitelere, okullara, hastanelere, mülteci kamplarına, evlere, camilere ve kiliselere düzenlediği vahşi, barbar, insanlık ve hukuk dışı saldırıları nedeniyle hayatını kaybeden bilim insanları, öğrenciler, sağlık çalışanları, din adamları, gazeteciler, bebekler, çocuklar ve masum sivillere ithaf edilmiştir. İsrail'in iki milyondan fazla Gazzeliyi evlerinden ve topraklarından sürgün etmek istemesi insanlık dışıdır. İsrail'in uluslararası hukuka, insan hak ve hürriyetlerine aykırılık içeren tüm işgal ve saldırıları suçtur ve bu nedenle yargılanması gerekmektedir.

هذه المقالة موجهة إلى العلماء والطلاب وعاملين في مجال الصحة ورجال الدين والصحفيين والرضع والأطفال والمدنيين الأبرياء الذين فقدوا حياتهم بسبب الهجمات الوحشية واللاإنسانية وغير القانونية التي شنتها إسرائيل على الجامعات والمدارس والمستشفيات ومخيمات اللاجئين والمنازل والجوامع والكنائس الموجودة في غزة. فما تريده إسرائيل من نفي وتهجير أكثر من مليوني فلسطيني من أراضيهم ومنازلهم هو أمر غير إنساني. إن كافة ما تفعله إسرائيل من هجمات تتنافى مع حقوق الإنسان والحريات والقانون الدولي هي جرائم ولهذا السبب يجب محاكماته

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² It is a dedication added to the text by the translator after obtaining the author's permission due to the importance of the subject. For the article from which this text is taken, see: Yılmaz Arı, "Bir İnsanlık Suçu Ve Soykırım Trajedisi: İsrail'in Filistinlilere Uyguladığı Devlet Terörü Nedeniyle Yargılanması Gerektiğine Dair Bir Değerlendirme". *Darulhadis İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 5 (Aralık 2023), 22-44; To read the article in English, see here: Yılmaz Arı, "A Crime against Humanity and the Tragedy of Genocide: An Evaluation That Israel Should Be Sued for State Terrorism against Palestinians", çev. Mustafa Turan, *Uluslararası Dorlion Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi (DASAD)* 1/2 (Dec. 2023), 445-465.

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