

ISLAMIC SOURCES OF THE CORE VALUES OF THE HIZMET MOVEMENT

The full document has been published in Turkish. To make the content more readily available, we have prepared a summary that highlights the key points of the original text in English. While the complete version is currently available only in Turkish, it will soon be published in additional languages.

Islamic On the Core Values of the Hizmet Movement

The Hizmet (Turkish for ‘service’) Movement is a civil society initiative grounded in Islamic and universal human values. It embraces peaceful coexistence and service to humanity through social responsibility and philanthropy, prioritizing education, dialogue, and humanitarian aid. Rooted in volunteerism, it welcomes religious, social, and cultural diversity with a peaceful spirit.

On September 21, 2021, the International Day of Peace, the movement publicly introduced its vision and values through the release of the Core Values of Hizmet Movement. Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi described this effort as “a promising step for the future” and congratulated those who contributed.

There are numerous references to Hizmet’s identity as a values-driven movement throughout Gülen’s writings, sermons, and conversations. When academics visiting him used the term “Gülen Movement,” Gülen rejected the phrase, clarifying that it was not tied to an individual but to people gathered around high human values. He emphasized that the movement is the voluntary effort of people motivated by conscience and responsibility, each inspired by their cultural and religious heritage, not by compulsion. The term Hizmet Movement reflects this spirit and is widely used in media, academia, and civil society.

Although Hizmet’s participants had lived and embodied its values from the outset, they had never been formally published. There have been efforts to define and document the movement’s identity and vision throughout the 2000s but the work on identifying the core values began after the founding of the Alliance for Shared Values (AfSV) in 2012. Workshops and consultations were organized in the U.S. and Europe to clarify the vision and core values of movement participants. The first draft was completed in 2014, later refined by an editorial committee, and presented to over a thousand movement participants. Feedback was also gathered from social scientists, theologians, philosophers, civil society experts, and longtime Hizmet contributors. After incorporating this feedback, the text was finalized with broad consensus and published on September 21, 2021.

The declaration aims to guide Hizmet volunteers and institutions operating in an increasingly globalized world. It sets out twelve values that are universal, rooted in Islam, observable in behavior, and broadly accepted. More personal and inward-looking virtues such as sincerity, loyalty, and brotherhood were excluded, though moral virtues are referenced generally.

The values declaration received highly positive responses from friends and observers. However, three experts independently emphasized a common point: while Hizmet already embodies these values in practice, it is equally important to demonstrate their foundations in Islamic sources. Some observers doubt that Muslims can genuinely uphold such universal values, pointing to other groups that also claim allegiance to the Qur’an and Sunnah but act in contradiction to them. Hence, showing the roots of Hizmet’s values in the primary sources of Islam was seen as a critical need.

In response, a joint working group was formed with participants from AfSV, the Islamische Akademie für Bildung & Gesellschaft (Islamic Academy for Education & Society) in Germany, and the Wise Institute in the U.S. This project, launched immediately after the 2021 declaration, examined Qur’anic verses and commentaries, hadiths, the Prophet’s biography (sīrah), the practices of the companions, and opinions of Islamic scholars. Its purpose was to demonstrate the Islamic origins of the Hizmet Movement’s Core Values.

The Core Values declaration serves as a guide and compass for future generations of Hizmet participants, while also acting as an “identity card” for outside observers to better understand the movement’s aims and principles. Hizmet’s vision is not centered on an individual or group, but on the uniting of voluntary efforts for the common good of humanity. Supported by education, dialogue, and humanitarian service, these values seek to contribute to building a peaceful world.

Ultimately, the Core Values project articulates Hizmet’s spirit of volunteerism, its grounding in both universal and Islamic values, and its vision of peace in an institutional framework. The movement’s understanding of human and social responsibility provides a platform for cooperation across diverse cultures and faiths.

I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to all who supported the preparation of this valuable work from the very beginning.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee,

Dr. Alp Aslandoğan

Alliance for Shared Values

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RESPECT FOR HUMANS AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The Hizmet Movement emphasizes that every human being possesses intrinsic value and dignity simply by virtue of being human. All people are equal before the law, and no one is inherently superior to another. Movement participants uphold all human rights and freedoms as outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizing social justice and equal opportunities as essential components of human equality.

Respect for human dignity and rights is a core principle of Islam and a foundational value of the Hizmet Movement. Rooted in the Qur'an, the hadith, and the works of classical Islamic scholars, this principle asserts that every human being is inherently valuable, none holds superiority over others, and all are equal before the law. Social justice and equality of opportunity are seen as natural extensions of this understanding.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses affirming human dignity and equality. For example, Surah Al-Isra (17:70) describes humans as honored by God, superior to most of His creation and provided with means of sustenance. Surah Al-Baqara (2:30-32) highlights humanity's unique status as conscious, knowledgeable beings. The Qur'an also emphasizes justice and equality under the law, instructing believers to act impartially, even when judgment may affect themselves or close relatives, and to uphold truth and fairness in all matters.

The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) sayings further reinforce human equality. He stated that no individual is superior to another based on race, ethnicity, or social status, emphasizing that all humans descend from Adam and share equal worth. His actions exemplified this principle, such as appointing Usama ibn Zayd, the son of a freed slave, as commander over senior companions, and delegating administrative duties to the blind companion Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum. These examples illustrate the practical implementation of meritocracy and equal opportunity, countering social hierarchies and prejudice.

Islamic scholars throughout history have consistently interpreted the faith to affirm human rights, equality, and justice. Imam Abu Hanifa maintained that human rights are inherent to all, regardless of religion. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized that humans, as God's most valued creations, possess innate rights and that justice is essential for societal well-being. Ibn Rushd (Averroes) stressed the universality of legal equality, asserting that justice must be applied impartially to maintain social order. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi explored the human's cosmic significance, underscoring that respect for freedom and fundamental rights is vital for human dignity.

Fethullah Gülen expands on these ideas, asserting that respect for humanity is simultaneously respect for God and that all humans deserve recognition and protection of their rights. He emphasizes that social justice and equal opportunity are necessary for individuals to realize their potential and for society to flourish. Gülen advocates that wrongdoing by others does not justify committing injustice and that equality and fairness are foundational to societal harmony.

RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW

The Hizmet Movement emphasizes respect for the law and legal frameworks, maintaining that no individual stands above the law. Participants conduct their activities with sensitivity to human dignity, national laws, and universal legal principles, ensuring their organizations operate transparently and are accountable according to local regulations.

Respect for law is a fundamental teaching of Islam, essential for both societal and individual order. Islam commands the preservation of justice and the supremacy of law, ensuring human rights and dignity. The Hizmet Movement's commitment to law reflects these core Islamic principles.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses underscoring the importance of justice and adherence to law. For example, Allah commands believers to deliver trusts to their rightful holders and to judge fairly: "Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice." Another verse emphasizes impartiality, instructing believers to uphold justice regardless of personal interests or family ties.

Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) also stress the significance of law and justice. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught that legal measures must be applied equally to all, and that justice is indispensable for societal harmony. One *hadith* instructs that legal penalties must be enforced impartially, regardless of the complainant's influence or social status. In a society where status, wealth, or ethnicity previously dictated justice, Islam introduced equality before the law, as exemplified in the Prophet's farewell sermon declaring that no individual is superior to another based on race or lineage. Historical examples, such as the Hudaibiyyah Treaty and the administration of companions like Abu Bakr and Umar (r.a.), demonstrate adherence to legal fairness, transparency, and accountability, even when leaders faced personal challenges or disagreements.

Islamic scholars have consistently interpreted texts to uphold justice and equal application of the law. Imam Mâverdi describes justice as a divine balance foundational to societal order, while Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the absence of justice leads to oppression. Ibn Khaldun frames justice as both a religious duty and a cornerstone of governance. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi highlights that the rule of law ensures societal peace and the protection of individual rights, asserting that equality under law is essential for social stability.

Fethullah Gülen expands on these teachings, stressing that respect for law is inseparable from Islamic ethics and crucial for individual and societal well-being. According to Gülen, a society that upholds the rule of law achieves both moral and social harmony, while disregard for legal norms risks chaos. He emphasizes that respect for law is a personal virtue with widespread societal impact, cultivating fairness, compassion, and responsibility. Gülen also stresses that legal adherence is not merely a civic duty but a reflection of faith, reinforcing the centrality of justice and law in Islam.

PEACEFUL AND POSITIVE ACTION

The Hizmet Movement is fundamentally committed to peace, embracing positive and constructive approaches while rejecting violence in all forms. Its participants seek to promote human welfare and social harmony through nonviolent means, reflecting a deep commitment to fostering societal well-being.

The Qur'an consistently emphasizes peace, coexistence, and justice, encouraging believers to avoid conflict and act with patience, forgiveness, and fairness even when faced with oppression. Muslims are instructed to maintain peaceful relations with communities of differing faiths, highlighting justice and societal harmony as central guiding principles.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), known as Al-Amin for his trustworthiness, exemplified non-harm, mutual respect, and integrity. His teachings emphasize that a true believer is one from whom others feel secure, advocating fairness, goodwill, and responsible conduct. He encouraged treating others as one wishes to be treated, establishing the foundation for peaceful interaction and constructive engagement.

Islamic scholars have long reinforced these principles, emphasizing alignment of words and actions, humility, generosity, and harmonious relationships with both allies and opponents. Figures such as Hasan al-Basri and Imam Gazali stressed ethical conduct as essential to social cohesion, while Mevlana highlighted love as key to peace and Yunus Emre demonstrated its practical application in daily life.

In modern times, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi embodied peaceful and constructive action by enduring persecution without retaliation, promoting positive action through moral and spiritual strength rather than coercion, emphasizing patience, forgiveness, and integrity even in adversity.

Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi further develops this vision, presenting peaceful and constructive action as a core expression of Islamic principles. He stresses reconciliation, building bridges of friendship, and acting with sincerity and goodwill, avoiding hatred or destructive behavior. Positive action, according to Hocaefendi, involves adhering to values and service-oriented methods without fostering animosity, seeing diversity as a source of enrichment rather than conflict.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The Hizmet Movement actively promotes the equal participation of women in all areas of social life, advocating equal opportunities without discrimination. This commitment is rooted in Islamic principles and is supported by the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the insights of modern thinkers like Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi, who provide guidance for empowering women while maintaining faith and morality.

The Qur'an affirms the inherent equality of men and women in creation and in moral, social, and religious responsibilities, emphasizing that all humans originate from a single soul and are created as complementary pairs. Both sexes share accountability in religious duties such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and charity, and the Qur'an addresses women's rights in areas including marriage, inheritance, custody, divorce, financial obligations, and participation in commerce. Early Qur'anic reforms corrected pre-Islamic injustices, granting women fixed inheritance shares and enabling them to advocate for their rights, illustrating a framework for both legal and social empowerment.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplified these principles in practice, ensuring women were treated as equal partners with clearly defined rights and responsibilities. He advocated fairness in marriage, inheritance, and daily interactions, emphasizing that the best among people treat their wives well. He also encouraged women's education, with learned figures like Hafsa and Shifa bint Abdullah serving as teachers of literacy and medical knowledge, underscoring women's vital role in social, educational, and religious life.

Islamic scholars have historically affirmed women's legal and social rights, including property ownership, legal autonomy, and public participation. Figures such as Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Maturidi, Ibn Hazm, and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi emphasized the importance of women's moral and educational development for the wellbeing of families and society. Nursi encouraged women to maintain virtue while contributing actively to social, economic, and educational spheres.

Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi highlights that men and women are complementary rather than competitive, advocating for women's full engagement in societal, educational, and professional life. He emphasizes removing cultural and legal obstacles to equality and providing practical support for religious and personal needs, such as appropriate facilities for worship and childcare, enabling women's active participation without compromising faith. Early education and the removal of societal prejudices are crucial for empowering women globally.

By promoting education, professional opportunities, and social empowerment, the Hizmet Movement operationalizes these principles, fostering women's knowledge, confidence, and capabilities. Women's effective participation in society is both a religious and moral imperative, and Hizmet's initiatives demonstrate a practical commitment to realizing this vision, reflecting Islamic teachings and universal human values while contributing to the development of empowered, socially responsible individuals worldwide.

ETHICAL ACTION

Hizmet participants ground their activities in both universal ethical norms and Islamic moral principles. Core values such as honesty (*sıdık*), trustworthiness, justice, and safety guide their conduct. The movement emphasizes that not only must goals be just and legitimate, but the means of achieving them must also conform to ethical and lawful standards. In the Hizmet framework, adherence to ethical and moral principles is both a personal virtue and an essential element of being a complete human and a faithful Muslim. Volunteers are expected to ensure that their methods, like their objectives, align with universal moral standards, reflecting the Qur'anic principle that legitimate ends require legitimate means.

The Qur'an transforms individual moral responsibility into a comprehensive social value system. Principles such as truthfulness, justice, trust, and accountability are portrayed as foundational to societal order and peace. For instance, believers are instructed to fear God and align with the truthful, reflecting the integration of personal morality with community consciousness. The Qur'an also emphasizes justice in governance, the responsible fulfillment of trust (*amanah*), and impartiality regardless of wealth or status. Ethical obligations extend beyond personal conduct to societal roles, where fulfilling duties with integrity ensures social harmony. In addition to these obligations, Qur'anic guidance prohibits behaviors that harm individuals or society, such as deceit, theft, slander, or corruption.

The Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) operationalize these principles, demonstrating their practical application in daily life. Truthfulness, reliability, and justice are not merely aspirational but become habitual traits shaping both personal character and societal interactions. Hadith literature underscores that morality is inseparable from faith: the best believers are those with the most virtuous conduct, and ethical failings like lying, betrayal, or exploitation erode trust and societal cohesion. The Prophet's guidance also stresses proactive responsibility, such as preventing injustice, exemplifying that moral duty encompasses both individual and communal welfare.

Islamic scholars have expanded this ethical framework. Hasan al-Basrî emphasized vigilance and internal moral accountability; Imam al-Mâturîdî highlighted innate human responsibility and moral discernment; Ibn Miskawayh advocated social ethics as inseparable from communal life; and Imam al-Ghazâlî linked wisdom with moral development, asserting that disciplined self-control fosters virtuous character. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî emphasized the inseparable connection between faith and morality, advocating positive, law-abiding action and perseverance in ethical development. Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi further articulates a practical, holistic vision of ethics: moral responsibility encompasses thought, speech, and action, guiding interpersonal respect, societal harmony, and civic engagement. He emphasizes that achieving just goals requires legitimate means and that ethical behavior should permeate all areas of life, from personal conduct to education and public service.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM

Participants in the Hizmet Movement embrace societal and individual diversity as a source of richness, provided it does not conflict with fundamental human rights. They engage in constructive and peaceful initiatives to ensure that differences in belief, religion, or culture do not become a cause of conflict. Pluralism is seen not merely as a modern necessity but as an essential part of a Qur'an-centered life, valuing individuals as they are and appreciating diversity as a collective human asset. This approach aligns with universal human rights and Islam's ethical principles. Differences are understood as manifestations of God's creative will, deserving respect and consideration.

The Qur'an presents diversity as a means for human acquaintance, dialogue, and collaboration. Verses emphasize that God could have created humanity as a single community but chose otherwise to test humans and encourage them to compete in doing good. Differences in language, color, belief, and thought are therefore expressions of divine wisdom. While diversity has sometimes led to historical conflicts, this reflects the misuse of free will rather than God's design. Such differences are seen as signs (*ayat*) inviting reflection, offering opportunities for mercy, understanding, and moral growth rather than division. The Qur'an also clarifies that inherent traits like race cannot confer superiority; moral responsibility and piety (*taqwa*) are the true measures of human value, enabling peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.

The Sunnah, as preserved in the Hadith, reinforces pluralism and respect for sacred values. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) demonstrated practical examples of human dignity across religious lines, such as standing in respect for a Jewish funeral and advocating freedom of religious choice, illustrated by the revelation of the Qur'anic verse "There is no compulsion in religion" (Baqara 2:256). The Prophet's pluralistic vision was institutionalized in the Constitution of Medina, securing religious and social rights for Muslims, Jews, and polytheists, and framing the 'ummah' as a political and social unit inclusive of different faiths.

Islamic scholars historically elaborated on pluralism and coexistence. Imam Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf, and Shaybani developed principles for the rights of non-Muslims living under Islamic governance, while Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'i emphasized the protection of sacred sites and practices. Imam Ghazali argued that attacking others' sacred values is both sinful and socially disruptive. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi highlighted diversity as a divine reflection, urging love, cooperation, and constructive relationships with people of different faiths to prevent ignorance and hostility.

Fethullah Gülen emphasizes that effective pluralism requires acknowledging each individual's identity, cultivating tolerance, and engaging constructively with other cultures while remaining faithful to one's own values. He asserts that respecting sacred values is both a moral obligation and a foundation for global peace, advocating for international recognition and enforcement of this principle. Pluralism, in this view, is not about imposing uniformity or adopting others' beliefs but about learning to live together respectfully, viewing differences as opportunities for moral and societal enrichment.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND ALTRUISM

Being a volunteer in the Hizmet Movement is entirely a matter of personal choice. Participants contribute to projects that reflect the Movement's core values and benefit humanity, offering their time, knowledge, effort, or financial resources according to their means. The Movement fundamentally rejects compulsory participation; involvement arises from individual will, awareness, and responsibility. Voluntary contributions, whether material or spiritual, stem not from external pressure but from a sense of moral duty, and volunteers seek only God's approval rather than worldly recognition or reward. In this context, voluntarism reflects conscious choice, while selflessness entails sacrificing personal comforts to aid others.

The Qur'an emphasizes this principle through numerous passages encouraging sincere giving. It highlights that charity should be offered without expecting fame, status, or repayment, aiming solely for God's satisfaction. True generosity is not about repaying a debt but cultivating virtue, fostering a character of disinterested kindness that strengthens social cohesion. The Qur'an also teaches that true moral excellence ("birr") is achieved by giving what one values most—not merely surplus resources—including time, effort, knowledge, and comfort. Such acts, directed toward the most vulnerable members of society, embody both sincere intention and social responsibility.

The Sunnah and Hadith reinforce this ethic. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) stated that "the best of people are those most beneficial to others," defining moral worth by the positive impact on society. Voluntary acts of service, whether through financial support, education, or emotional assistance, are active expressions of social responsibility and are rewarded both spiritually and morally. Other Hadiths emphasize helping those in need, assuring that even small acts of service are recognized by God, highlighting the profound intertwining of personal virtue and social contribution. Moreover, the Prophet stressed living among people, sharing in their struggles, and maintaining patience and compassion, positioning community engagement and mutual support as central to Islamic ethics.

Islamic scholars have long highlighted the importance of voluntary service and selflessness. Hasan al-Basrī linked generosity to spiritual asceticism, emphasizing giving without expecting worldly returns. Junayd al-Baghdādī defined "ihsan" as giving without expectation, framing voluntary service as an expression of sincere monotheistic consciousness. Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî encouraged continuous and selfless generosity, likening it to a flowing stream that benefits all it touches. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî expanded this principle, emphasizing the voluntary sacrifice of wealth, time, comfort, and even personal desires for the collective good, guiding volunteers to prioritize others' welfare over personal benefit.

Fethullah Gülen further situated voluntary participation and selflessness within a framework of conscious, moral choice. He describes it as dedicating oneself to the happiness of others, motivated by inner conviction and the pursuit of God's approval rather than institutional obligation. Hizmet volunteers worldwide exemplify this ethos in education, dialogue, and humanitarian work, combining rational, Qur'anic, and historical guidance with personal initiative. Their service is both ethical and devotional, grounded in a balanced understanding of human needs, spiritual commitment, and social responsibility.

CONSULTATION AND SHARED WISDOM

Participants in the Hizmet movement benefit from collective wisdom that emerges through the exchange and discussion of diverse perspectives. The Qur'an and the Sunnah emphasize consultation (*istişare*) as a fundamental principle in both individual and societal life. The Qur'an highlights that one of the distinguishing traits of believers is conducting their affairs through consultation, while the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplified this principle in family, social, and state matters. Islamic scholars have continued this tradition, institutionalizing consultation through mechanisms such as *ijtihad*, *ijma*, and *shura*, embedding collective reasoning at the core of religious, intellectual, and social life.

The Qur'an consistently underscores the importance of consultation, from state governance to child-rearing. For example, the Queen of Sheba consulted her advisors on state matters, and parents are instructed to mutually agree on issues such as the duration of breastfeeding. Family disputes are also addressed through consultation, and if spouses cannot reach agreement, mediators from their families may be appointed. The Qur'an encourages seeking advice from those with knowledge, warning against acting solely on impulsive or individual judgment, even in matters such as verifying security information or rumors.

The Hadith and Sunnah illustrate consultation as a practical, guiding principle. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) incorporated consultation in decisions regarding prayer announcements (*adhan*), family issues, accusations against his wife, and crucial security matters like the Battles of Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq. Even when the majority opinion differed from his own, he respected the outcome of consultation, as in the case of the defense strategy at Uhud. During the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, he sought his wife's advice to implement a divine command for peace, demonstrating consultation's role in balancing divine guidance and practical decision-making. The Prophet also emphasized proper etiquette for consultation, stressing that advisors should be trustworthy, empathetic, and consider issues as if they personally faced them.

Islamic scholars continued to prioritize consultation in governance and community decisions. After the Prophet's passing, the companions selected leaders through consultation, while later generations employed *ijma* to achieve consensus on critical matters. Bediüzzaman emphasized consultation (*shura*) as essential not only in politics but across societal and intellectual spheres, advocating collective reasoning to address the increasingly complex knowledge and challenges of our times.

Fethullah Gülen has consistently practiced consultation throughout his life, applying it in both personal and societal matters. From local initiatives to global projects, education, humanitarian aid, and dialogue, decisions within the Hizmet movement are made through systematic consultation at all levels. He highlights that consultation ensures sound decision-making, distributes responsibility, transforms diversity into richness, and fosters broad societal ownership of initiatives.

CIVIC NATURE AND INDEPENDENCE

The Hizmet Movement is a civil and independent initiative, unaffiliated with any state or political entity. Its volunteers emphasize active, participatory citizenship and the internalization of democratic culture, while respecting individual political preferences. They reject the politicization of religion or its use as a tool for political ends. Civil character and independence are core values of the movement, reflecting its nature as a voluntary initiative formed through individuals' conscience and free will, without reliance on political parties, ideological groups, or state power. Volunteers maintain their personal political views while ensuring that the movement itself is never reduced to a political ideology, a stance rooted in the ethical and spiritual principles of the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This approach encourages volunteers to uphold law, justice, and civic responsibility worldwide, embodying the balance prescribed by the Qur'an and Sunnah in a modern context.

The Qur'an provides foundational guidance not only in faith, worship, and ethics but also in social, political, cultural, economic, and legal matters, promoting justice, freedom, and the common good. It strictly opposes using religion for worldly or political gains and emphasizes moral integrity. For example, believers are instructed to uphold justice regardless of personal biases, group loyalties, or political affiliations, highlighting universal ethical responsibility. The Qur'an also emphasizes consultation (shūrā) in decision-making, fostering pluralism, participation, and collective reasoning. Freedom of belief and conscience is central, as faith must stem from voluntary conviction rather than coercion, and religious principles should never be instrumentalized for political advantage. The Qur'an also stresses cooperation in goodness and social responsibility, linking spiritual integrity with active citizenship.

Prophetic teachings further reinforce these principles. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) modeled justice, consultation, freedom, and independence of religion from political manipulation. Hadith emphasize that just leaders are closest to God, while the misuse of religion for worldly gain undermines both faith and society. Justice is thus not only a governance principle but an ethical obligation. Consultation (shūrā) and moral accountability in social, familial, and political matters reflect the democratic culture promoted by the Sunnah.

Classical Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazālī, Farābī, Māwardī, and Nizāmülmülk also underscore that religion must remain independent of political ambitions. Al-Ghazālī warns that political entanglement corrupts religion's essence, Farābī stresses that politics should serve truth and justice rather than desire, Māwardī highlights the social erosion caused when religion is politicized, and Nizāmülmülk observes that the misuse of religion undermines both state authority and public trust. The consensus across these scholars is that faith cannot be reduced to political ideology without causing moral and societal decay.

Modern thinkers Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen uphold this principle. Nursi consistently refused to let religion be used for political ends, emphasizing that Islam transcends political calculations and serves universal truths. Gülen similarly warns that reducing religion to political ideology diminishes its universal, ethical message. Both emphasize that civil and independent religious initiatives allow volunteers to uphold democratic values, civic responsibility, and social harmony while maintaining their personal political freedom. Gülen particularly stresses that democratic culture must be instilled from an early age through education, enabling citizens to exercise their rights responsibly and participate actively in society.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Participants in the Hizmet Movement view contributing to society and addressing social problems as a moral and religious responsibility. They see themselves as members of the human family, sensitive to the challenges humanity faces, and committed to serving others. From the perspective of Islamic thought, social life is not only a space to meet personal needs but also a sphere of responsibility and a test of moral conduct. Members of the Hizmet Movement act with awareness of their duties toward society, beyond personal or institutional benefit. Active citizenship, therefore, is an ethical attitude rooted in respect for human dignity, justice, and responsiveness to social needs, reflecting a sincere, faith-driven sense of obligation.

The Qur'an frames humans as responsible agents on Earth, tasked not only with individual worship but also with building society, upholding justice, preventing wrongdoing, and promoting good. Believers are encouraged to contribute to the peace and well-being of their communities while pursuing their own spiritual growth. Commands such as enjoining good, forbidding evil, protecting the poor and orphans, and fostering cooperation demonstrate that the Qur'an envisions the faithful as proactive, socially engaged individuals. Humans are described as "caliphs on Earth," responsible for justice, morality, and social order. Good deeds are measured by their impact on others, reinforcing that faith must translate into socially beneficial action.

Prophetic teachings further illuminate active citizenship. The life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplifies engagement with all segments of society—helping the vulnerable, visiting the sick, supporting orphans, and promoting social solidarity. Notably, he stated, "The best of people are those most beneficial to others," emphasizing service without discrimination. Another teaching encourages confronting wrongdoing according to one's ability, framing resistance to injustice as a religious duty rather than an optional act. The Prophet's parable of passengers on a boat illustrates that societal well-being depends on everyone's responsibility, rejecting a "not my problem" mindset. Islamic scholars reinforce this understanding. The concept of *maslahat*, or public benefit, highlights the ethical and legal obligation to pursue societal welfare. Scholars such as Al-Shatibi and Al-Karafi emphasized that neglecting communal responsibilities renders the entire community accountable. Elmalılı M. Hamdi Yazır emphasized the interdependence of individuals and society, while Bediüzzaman Said Nursi actively promoted education, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence to address social problems, encouraging all societal groups to contribute to collective welfare.

Fethullah Gülen extends these principles in modern contexts. From his youth, he exemplified active citizenship through education, dialogue, and social initiatives. He encouraged interfaith understanding, established educational institutions for economically disadvantaged youth, and promoted humanitarian projects such as disaster relief and family support programs. Gülen's approach integrates faith, civic responsibility, and social contribution, demonstrating that active citizenship involves fostering dialogue, solidarity, and democratic engagement while addressing societal challenges.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Volunteers in the Hizmet Movement view the environment as a sacred trust to be preserved for future generations, recognizing its integral role in human life, both biologically and spiritually. The human relationship with the environment extends beyond utilitarian purposes, encompassing moral and theological responsibilities to maintain ecological balance. The Qur'an emphasizes the divine order (*nizam*) and balance (*mizan*) in creation, highlighting that every element of the ecosystem reflects God's power and should not be considered insignificant. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplified environmental consciousness through his words and actions, transforming ecological awareness into both personal and societal responsibility. Islamic scholars have elaborated on the human-nature relationship, grounding environmental sensitivity in ethics and philosophy, thereby framing environmental protection as a theological, moral, and social imperative.

The Qur'an provides universal principles for environmental stewardship, presenting nature as a living, speaking, and instructive entity. From ants to celestial bodies, all creation is portrayed as valuable and a source of lessons for thoughtful observers. Surah titles and verses, such as Bakara (Cow), Nahl (Bee), and Neml (Ant), signify the importance of each ecological component. The Qur'an illustrates that even small creatures, like mosquitoes, serve as divine examples, emphasizing the significance of all life. Stories of the Prophets interacting with animals, such as Solomon speaking with birds or Noah bringing pairs of animals onto the Ark, underscore the interdependence of humans and other species. Animals are described as communities ("ummah"), highlighting their essential role in maintaining ecological balance.

The Qur'an also warns that human mismanagement leads to environmental disruption, describing the consequences of imbalance, corruption, and wastefulness (*israf*). It teaches moderation in consumption, the preservation of natural resources, and the ethical use of land and water, linking ecological responsibility with moral, social, and spiritual accountability.

Prophetic traditions (Hadith and Sunnah) reinforce these principles. The Prophet prohibited harm to plants and animals, emphasized mercy toward all creatures, and demonstrated respect and care through his interactions with animals. He encouraged planting trees, ensuring animals were not overburdened, and treating them as entrusted beings rather than mere property. Acts of care for animals are regarded as charitable deeds (*sadaqah*), promising spiritual reward. The Prophet's teachings on cleanliness, moderation, and non-harm extend to both the human and natural environment.

Islamic scholars, from Ibn Sina to Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, elaborated on these teachings, emphasizing ecological ethics, respect for all living beings, and the observation of natural signs as lessons from God. Bediüzzaman highlighted the moral significance of even small creatures, advocating for environmental consciousness and the protection of animals and plants as a lived practice. Fethullah Gülen continues this tradition, urging Muslims to preserve nature as a divine gift, warning against ecological degradation, and promoting environmental education, including publications, community initiatives, and awareness programs.

HOLISTIC VIEW TOWARD HUMANITY (AND UNITY OF THE MIND AND THE HEART)

Human beings possess both material/physical and spiritual dimensions. The Hizmet Movement emphasizes that the development of humans requires attention to both these dimensions, integrating rational inquiry and scientific methods with spiritual disciplines. This dual approach does not see the mind and heart as opposites but as complementary forces that together enable human flourishing, grounded in a long tradition of Qur'anic guidance, the Prophet's Sunnah, and historical scholarship.

The Qur'an presents humans as multi-dimensional beings, encompassing body, intellect, heart, conscience, emotions, and soul. It calls individuals to use reason, engage in reflection, and pursue scientific knowledge, while simultaneously purifying the heart, disciplining the self, and nurturing spiritual growth. Intellectual engagement is framed as a responsibility, not merely the accumulation of knowledge. Reflection, contemplation, and critical thinking are emphasized: understanding the universe through observation leads to recognition of divine power. At the same time, the Qur'an stresses that the heart is the center of understanding, faith, and moral perception; knowledge without the heart's integration becomes incomplete. The ideal human combines intellect and emotion, inquiry and submission, thought and faith, achieving both understanding and ethical refinement.

The Hadith and Sunnah reinforce this holistic perspective. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasized that human responsibility requires intellectual maturity, moral discipline, and spiritual awareness. One hadith notes that true intelligence involves controlling the self and preparing for the afterlife, linking reason to ethical action. Another highlights the centrality of the heart: if the heart is sound, the whole self functions properly. Together, these teachings stress that intellectual, spiritual, and moral development must progress simultaneously; neglecting any dimension impedes human perfection.

Classical Islamic scholars, including Ibn Sîna, Al-Ghazâlî, and Imam Rabbânî, elaborated on the interplay of mind, heart, and spiritual discipline. Al-Ghazâlî described the heart as the locus of both knowledge and moral capacity, illuminated by reason but perfected through spiritual purification. Ibn Sîna stressed that intellectual attainment alone cannot achieve ultimate truth; it must be combined with moral action. Imam Rabbânî similarly emphasized that reason without the heart risks confusion, and the heart without reason risks error; only their integration leads to true knowledge of God. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî further highlighted that Islam educates the entire human being, addressing intellect, heart, conscience, soul, and self-discipline, as well as social and political dimensions. He argued that knowledge and spirituality must be harmonized to avoid skepticism or fanaticism and to achieve genuine progress.

Fethullah Gülen (Hocaefendi) extends this vision to contemporary life, emphasizing that human development involves the full interplay of mind, heart, and spiritual faculties. He maintains that intellectual and emotional faculties, informed by divine revelation, enable humans to attain both personal fulfillment and societal benefit. Knowledge, moral conscience, and action must be cultivated together to realize the human potential in both worldly and spiritual dimensions.

In practice, the Hizmet Movement embodies this holistic approach through education, dialogue, humanitarian efforts, and community engagement worldwide. It integrates scientific knowledge, moral conscience, and practical action, aiming to develop individuals who are intellectually capable, morally grounded, spiritually aware, and socially responsible. This

balance of mind and heart forms the theoretical foundation of the movement while guiding its global initiatives.