地震に対する観光客の反応：1999年のママルマラ地震の例

著者：アスラン・スコル、カヤ・ベクタス・キバール

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The Perception of Earthquakes in the Muslim World: Example of the 1999 Marmara Earthquake in Turkey

Şükrü Aslan¹
Kibar Kaya Bektaş²

Summary:
Earthquakes are unquestionably a force of nature. However, the social perception of natural events is different depending on the spatial, cultural and temporal context. Therefore, both the acceptance of these natural events and meaning attributed to them, as well as resulting protection strategies can vary. In this article, the perception, approach of Muslims to the Marmara earthquake that occurred in Turkey in 1999 and in which countless people lost their lives, will be examined as an example of the world of related cultural meaning.

Key words: Earthquake, Society, Culture, Islam

Introduction:
On August 17th, 1999 an earthquake of 7.4 on the Richter Scale occurred in northwestern Turkey, a densely populated region in the industrial heartland of the country. More than 15 thousand people lost their lives and the earthquake also caused significant economic damage estimated at approximately 6.5 billion U.S. dollars. The earthquake had a major negative impact on society: between 400 and 600 thousand people were left homeless and 30% of employees lost their jobs (Worldbank Report, 1999). According to the report of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey published in 2010, 48,901 people were injured, 505 people were maimed and 96,796 buildings were destroyed or badly damaged by the earthquake.

Being a migration centre, the earthquake zone contains a significant part of the population of Turkey including Istanbul. So the earthquake immediately influenced the whole country in a social sense. Many national and international campaigns of support for those who suffered from the earthquake were organized.

On the other hand, the political climate in Turkey, social polarization and the rise of

¹ Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Department of Sociology
² Graduate Student at Mimar Sinan Fine Art University, Department of Sociology
Islamic political movements and the radical attitude of the secular regime against Islamist groups, have been linked to the earthquake. The earthquake became the subject of debate as an object of political divide. In this respect the February 28th process considered as an attempt by the Turkish Armed Forces’ (TSK) to interfere in politics is noted. As a result, restrictive precautions against Islamic groups have turned into a hard political struggle with the earthquake. Therefore the earthquake was not only a physical event but also caused a political quake: the consequences of the earthquake have not been discussed in the context of the earthquake, but in terms of social structure, values, culture and politics.

This article focuses on this dimension of the process in terms of the perceptions of Islamic groups to the earthquake. How have the groups in question handled the earthquake as a reason for this polarization, how have they have evaluated it, what lessons have they taken from it and what have they recommended to the society about protection from earthquakes and healing the wounds? This article seeks answers to these questions.

The Marmara earthquake has been selected as a major disaster from recent history to illustrate the perception of Islamic groups to the earthquake. Certainly other larger or equivalent size earthquakes have been experienced in the recent history of Turkey. In this context, major earthquakes whose epicenter was Adapazari occurred in 1943, 1957 and 1967. But the Marmara earthquake is the one in which Islamic groups could put forward their opinions related to the earthquake in the clearest and most comprehensive way. For evaluation, perception, precaution and views of these groups regarding the earthquake, news and comments from Islamist newspapers and academic literature have been scanned.

I. Conceptual Discussion: The Earthquake and Society

Some sections of conceptual and theoretical discussions in this article that make it possible to understand the perception of the Islamic world towards the earthquake are to some extent related to the “risk society”. The other and main section is

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3 February 28th process refers to the decision issued at a National Security Council meeting on February 28th 1997. It is a political intervention against “reaction” or “religious reactionism” conducted by armed forces and bureaucracy. The political decisions that have gone down in Turkey's political history and the implementation of these decisions have caused changes in political, administrational, judicial and social domains and these decisions are accompanied by a number of implementation measures that victimize Islamist groups.
related to the updating of Islamic references. In other words, it is an approach to understanding and significance of today’s world based on the hadith and holy book of Islam over the course of history.

“Risk Society” is a result of present or recent time analysis of social development. Conceptualizations of social analyses have generally been classified as traditional, modern and post-modern. We generally can see all these distinctions in discussions on “modernism”. But the “risk society” that has been discussed in recent years is a new analysis that has gone beyond these conceptual distinctions. The basis of the discussion is associated with second modernity coined by German sociologist Ulrich Beck (Beck, 1998:9-10) and later resumed by British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1999), comes from removal of borders and differences between natural and cultural. This situation means new relation between the natural and cultural one. For example, although the perforation of the ozone layer is a natural event, it is caused by a life-style that is constituted by a values system based on capitalist society and its overconsumption. The capitalist life-style based on overconsumption is not “natural”. Therefore, nowadays, there is debate over which event is natural and which is cultural because boundaries have become increasingly ambiguous.

According to the basic claim of this approach, the dual distinction based on modern rationality of black or white has lost its significance or become meaningless, because risks are substantially hybrid structures: that is to say that major disasters have occurred as a result of human activities. According to Giddens (1999) the distinction between natural/exogenous risk and fabricated risk is important in this respect; because to him, societies faced more natural risks such as earthquake, flood, and epidemics in the past. In contrast, today there is more serious worry about the destruction of nature by humans (Kasapoğlu & Ecevit, 2001;2/3).

Culture has appeared in this discussion as a key concept. Culture is a phenomenon that is directly associated with temporality and spatiality. In other words, it is possible to identify the idiosyncratic culture or cultures of each time and each space. For this reason, earthquakes like other natural events may be subject to different perceptions, opinions and approaches.

Some areas of discussion on this issue can be conceptualized under the title of “Disaster Sociology”. Disaster Sociology is a relatively new field of study started in
America in the second half of the 1960s and later continued in German sociology. However, important theoretical studies have been published since 1990. One example is by Richard Stuart Olson who made an argument of “political disaster” and disaster policy based on the consequences of disaster in the political arena. (Olson, 2000). Dombrowsky discusses how disaster is defined and how it should be defined (Dombrowski, 1995).

The relationship between the earthquake and social responses and cultures is also a specific sphere of discussion. Anderson has made important contributions with studies indicating how societies which have been affected by unusual natural events normalise the concepts of risk and disaster in local culture (as cited in Kasapoglu & Ecevit, 2001).

The perception of Muslim groups about the causes of the earthquake can be evaluated in terms of these discussions. As we are able to see, understanding and explanation among Islamic groups is based completely on religious references. For in this view there is an assumption that all natural events are preordained. Therefore, it has become of key importance to turn to religious references and to understand them. As Küçükcan and Köse emphasize; religious beliefs give the people who believe an approach and a point of view. People use religious concepts which reflect this point of view and this approach when they explain events. For such a person, religious concepts make the explanation of the event, its origin and the power behind it more meaningful. In this sense, religious symbols and belief systems are a very important source of meaning. In other words, religion is a sphere of quest for meaning that correlates people with holy. In such cases, religion steps in as a whole system that allows the possibility for interpretation of events encountered and experienced. (Küçükcan & Köse, 2000; 70/71). This approach takes us to the approach of Ulrich Beck that natural events are actually a result of cultural activities and may be explained culturally. In summary, depending on whether people live according to divine desires or not, “everything comes from God”. According to Küçükcan & Köse the important point is not to attribute all responsibilities to GO for the result of good and bad events, God just takes part as an agent and actor. So, rather than intervene and change the flow of events, God has merely conducted

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4 One concept developed in this context is “earthquake culture”. It is the result of experiences societies have gained in earthquakes. The statement that “we have to learn living with the earthquake” is an earthquake culture.
and in fact the responsibility belongs to human. However, this means exclusion of secular/earthy concepts by religious people when they explain events. That is to say, interpretations expressed in both religious and secular terms indicate that both types of interpretation and signification exist in the human mind in tandem, rather than in paradox and conflict. (Küçükcan & Köse, 2000; 75). But in reality it is not possible to say that these two approaches do not include paradox or conflict. We will be able to see it more clearly in the article.

II. Explanation of the Earthquake among Muslim Groups: “Providence of God”!
In Islamic literature, the explanation of “earthquake” derives almost entirely of religious references. In the discussions that followed the 1999 earthquake, Islamist scholars, columnists, representatives of religious constituencies and religious citizens from different fields of study, all of whom define themselves first with “Muslim” identity, expressed their opinions.

A common feature of these opinions, accompanied by anger against practices of the regime mostly described as profane, is that the earthquake is a warning from God in response to the deviation of people from religion on earth. This view has drawn attention as the common view of almost all Muslim writers.

II.I. “Providence of God” Thesis versus Modern Science
This view primarily draws a line between “modern science and itself. In this context, general acceptance of the earthquake as a natural event has received radical criticism. The view of inconclusiveness of modern science in explaining the earthquake has been advocated among the intellectual Islamic groups in detail. Some writers have criticized that science has taken a stance against society because while the earthquake is being evaluated in TV channels and newspapers it has been handled as a natural event and there is no connection with the will of almighty God. This situation has offended most Muslim people. (Gürsoy,2000;236). Below are examples of the opinions of some people among the aforementioned intellectual environment.

The assessment of Ali Bula who is considered a leading scholar and intellectual of the Islamic community, is as follows:

According to given information, the earthquake has occurred on the fault line that is 50-65 kilometres long and it lasted 45 seconds. It is as short as flame zone in our
concept of time; however, it is too long for us, in 45 seconds buildings are razed to the ground. Well, does an earthquake solely consist of this information? That's to say, if we explain the geophysical side of it, does it mean that we have explained the earthquake completely? From today's perspective, all descriptions consist of “almost everything can be done with the help of scientific knowledge”. But there are some factors that modern science does not deal with. If there is a sensitive order between the rank and objects of universe and if there is an invisible and incredible relation between the flap of butterfly’s wings which has perched on a thin branch and the movement of a large planet on his path, someone needs to look for the influence of other factors that behind the major disaster called earthquake. Human is a small universe, universe is a big human and if the human goes wrong, universe goes wrong, too. (Ali Bulaç, Zaman Newspaper, 19th August 1999)

The view of the earthquake as a natural event has been perceived as so “strange” and “awkward” that one leading Islamist writer has expressed it with this statement: “in the past they used to be called natural disaster” (Hekimoğlu İsmail, Zaman 28th August 99): his point being that such a view should remain in the past. Another leading Islamist writer’s opinion on this matter is clearer:

I do not explain earthquake as positivists, atheists, and rationalists do. Fault line, breakages, quake of earth… all these are, of course, explanations, but there is something beyond it. Unbelievers cannot understand this. This universe, earth, ground and sky have a creator and owner. Even a little fly cannot flag its wing without permission, creation and will of God. This side of earthquake needs to be thought. There are two troubles in our country for a while. The one is excessive, aggressive and merciless religious hostility; the other is vile and outrageous religion exploiters among the Muslim. Muslims have left the religious rules. So I think, the earthquake is a warning from God to the enemies of religion and Muslims who have not done their religious duty. Allah knows the truth of everything. (Mehmet Şevket Eygi, Milli (National) Newspaper, 21st August 1999)

Another writer has criticized the view that the earthquake is a natural event within the framework of internal logic

We are able to find the fault line that caused earthquake but no technology can prevent the movement of this fault. For example, can we prevent its movement by
placing beams to the both sides of this fault line and screwing those beams to each other? Let’s produce any solution that comes to mind, we will see that: It’s impossible to carry out any planned solution. We are faced with great strength, with magnificence of Allah. All of us have to look within ourselves. Love and respect Allah. Humans are weak in the face of earthquake. He/she sees and lives the divine power with all magnificence. (Resul tosun, Milli (National) Newspaper, 21st August 1999)

After the 1999 earthquake, the same author bemoans the attention that is shown to Prof. Dr. Ahmet Mete Işıkara who is the head of Turkey’s most important institution of earthquake research and says “If only you believed in the Prophet as you believe in Işıkara”.

In Islamic literature, this common approach is so dominant that sometimes people who have been educated in the science of geology show the same tendency. Geological Engineer Nevzat Bayhan provides an example:

In our opinion, the Creator who sends the human into this world and gives all blessing to him but never giving him full reign. Not only the occurrence of an earthquake, but even the falling of a leaf from the tree is according to the command and will of the Creator. He knows everything and He is almighty. (Gerger, 2000:277/279)

Local authorities whose towns have been severely damaged by the earthquake issue statements in the same manner. One of them is from Ekrem Yüce, the Mayor of Erenler, Adapazari. His opinion is as follow:

In our town there was an earthquake on 17th August but it was beyond the earthquake, “little pandemonium broke out”. As if “little pandemonium” broke out Adapazari and Erenler districts were razed to the ground! It is impossible to explain it with concrete eyes. Of course, it is a geological event; it is a physical event. Geological event has completely overwhelmed the physical event. Movement of earth has completely wiped away the beings above the ground. That is just description. Why this event happened? We cannot answer this question! The answer is obvious. This is completely Divine Providence. (Gerger, 2000:88)
Actually, many comments/analyses have been made about the inconclusiveness of science in Islamic literature. However, let me end this section of the article with another important conservative author’s statement:

Those who want to explain everything with science how will they explain solar eclipses that occurred at the day when Prophet Mohammed was born and died and also attempt of transferring his tomb to Damascus? Therefore, it is important to examine earthquakes from a scientific perspective and benefit from science is mandatory to struggle with earthquakes. Moreover this is the order of religion. But it is obvious that it will not happen without prayer. Without praying from the heart, good intentions and a life based on consent, it is useless to have technology and science. (Nazli Ilıcak, Yeni Şafak Newspaper, 23rd August 1999)

II.II. Religious References of “Providence of God” Thesis

How the thesis that the earthquake is God's providence is grounded has appeared in Islamic literature as another matter for discussion. The common tendency has indicated that the main references are in Quran and Hadith. Those who write about this issue in the theoretical field have tried to prove the thesis of “God's providence” as much as possible based on these sources. An example including detailed explanation is as follow:

The verses of Zilzal narrate the earthquake as the time of judgement. It is stated that when the intensity of earthquake increased to 12, doomsday will accrue. Because the mountains will start walking. “When the sun is folded up, stars fall, losing their luster and the mountains vanish like a mirage.” (Tekvır/1-3) as it stated in verses. “When the earth is shaken to her convulsion, mountains are broken down, crumbling and become dust dispersing...”(Vâkıa Sûresi/1-6) ... “The day men will be like scattered moths. Mountains will be like carded wool.” (Karia/4-5) “When the deafening shout comes... on the day a man will flee from his brother, mother, father, wife and his sons.” (Abese/33-36) “... eye is dazzled and the Moon is eclipsed, The Sun and Moon are brought together. On the day man will say, “Whither to flee.” Not at all, there is no refuge. With thy Lord alone will be the place of rest that day.” (Kiyame/7-12) “They are waiting only for a single blast which will size them while they are still disputing. And they will not able to make a will nor will they return their families.” (Yâsin/49-50) (Abdullah Aymaz, Zaman Newspaper, 27th August 1999)
The same view is repeated by another author:

_Scholars of Islam have associated the earthquake with the chapter of “Zilzal” in the Holy Quran and they have said that the chapter is the reminder of doomsday. They are right. Feelings of people who lived through the earthquake are completely in this direction._ (Özey, 2000; 294).

Sometimes radical assessments that can create new discussion have been made in the aforementioned literature which proposing that it is common sense that whatever we experience today is prophesied in the Quran and Hadiths. An example:

_In many Hadiths our Prophet has informed that these sins will cause the earthquake. For example two of them are as follow: “When the prostitution pervades, earthquakes happen.” And “When the God want to destroy a city, he gives people an opportunity to commit adultery.” (Mutlu, 1999; 23/24)_

Another author emphasizes that, “The Prophet warns people after an earthquake in Hadiths as: “O People! Your Lord warns you. Take his warning seriously.” (Arslantaş, 2003; 150) It is written in literature produced in that period that Prophet of Islam mentioned about fifteen sins that cause the destruction of his people and so cause the earthquake:

“To give the government property to particular people and depriving others from it. Counting fiduciary as boot. Thinking the Zakat as an inevitable loss. Obedience of a man to his wife in every condition (for example if man’s financial situation is not good, and his wife tells him “Accept a bribe, eat usury, steal and do whatever I want” and he obeys her). Revolting against mother. Obedience of someone to his/her friend in every condition. Annoying his/her father. Speaking loudly about earthly things in the prayer room. Offering treats to someone because of fearing his harm. Ruling of a nation by despicable people. Drinking too much alcohol. Wearing silk clothes. Emergence of women singer. Proliferation of musical instruments (that is, thinking life as it is made up of joy). Cursing or insulting any of the ancestors. (Mutlu, 1999; 25/26)

Therefore, one, some or all of these sins can cause the earthquake. These views were intensively expressed in the Islamic media in the days following the earthquake.
“Religious scholars” appeared and commented on the earthquake from the religious perspective. One of them answered two questions as follows:

**Question:** Why do not these disasters happen in countries populated by non-Muslims? Why do they seem to occur very frequently in Muslim regions?

**Answer:** The chastisement for small sins and errors is made quickly, on the spot, while the punishment for great matters is deferred to a more august assembly. In the same way, God punishes Muslims' less grievous sins in this world immediately while the more serious sins of evildoers are deferred to the Final Judgement.

**Question:** If an earthquake is a punishment for sin, why are the innocent also punished for the sins of a few? How does the justice of God (Allah) permit this?

**Answer:** The issue is bound up with the mystery of Divine determining, so I refer to the Pamphlet of Fate and just can say: “That is: “Fear tumult or oppression, which affects not only those of you who do wrong.” (Kayhan & Atilgan, 2013; 219)

Interestingly, these views have not received any serious criticism. In other words, these are the common prominent views in Islamic literature.

**III. The Marmara Earthquake and “Providence of God”**

The Marmara earthquake has been defined by Muslim authors within the framework of these theoretical approaches: theses and proposals have been developed accordingly. Undoubtedly, the most important of them is analysis of probable factors that make God use this providence. Although God uses his providence according to the general course of human events, he warns people occasionally when they behave against Islam. The necessity of classifying the factors that cause these warnings has emerged from the Marmara earthquake.

The literature on this issue makes it possible, to some extent, to make such a classification. These classifications can be gathered in two groups: deviation of society from religion and anti-religious policies of the political regime.
III.1. Anti-religious Attitude of Political Regime that is Effective in Providence of God

The summary of the views that can be collected under this title is that before the 1999 earthquake in Turkey, the government implemented a cruel policy against religious groups: it interfered in people’s religious life and made it impossible for them to live their religious life. This resulted in a warning from God.

The authors or common people among the Muslim groups have established a link between the earthquake and the political management of Turkey and especially the exclusion policy of the Turkish Armed Forces against religious communities. Below are some examples that we have chosen from comments/analysis in the Islamic media in the aftermath of the earthquake that have particularly included this emphasis:

*Because the epicenter of the earthquake is a place where the process of 28th February was initiated and the confidential documents were stored, in other words the earthquake is so close to the place that is known as the center of Western Working Group, it makes us to form some analogy between these two events.* (Yaşar Kaplan, Akit Newspaper, 21st August, 1999)

*Rumour has it that the programme of decisions of 28th February were done at this institution. We have seen that military quarters are not so resistant in the face of the decision of God Almighty on 17th August.* (Mustafa Kaplan, Akit Newspaper, 23rd August, 1999)

The same sentiment was expressed by another author as follow:

*Who can say that the building of the Fleet are resistant against the earthquake and all contractors of it are thieves? But now, the buildings which are even resistant against the war were razed to the ground. Because the epicenter of the earthquake is Fleet Command. Ahmet Mete Işıkara who is an expert on earthquakes has uttered that Fleet is the point of impact. Vural Bayazıt, former commander, said, “if the epicenter of the earthquake was not right here, these buildings would not have collapsed.”* (Mustafa Ünal, Zaman Newspaper, 27th August, 1999)

Many people, including Islamist intellectuals, have seen the earthquake that happened in Turkey as a result of the policy of the regime against religious people.
The views expressed below are the examples of this perspective:

The earthquake, undoubtedly, is a warning. Allah not only punishes people who do not obey the commandments, revolt, and fight against his commandments, at the day of Judgement but also punishes in the world with calamities. Unfortunately, in our country commandments of Allah have not been obeyed, religious people has been oppressed, despised, punished and exiled since the process of 28th. Dismissal of religious junior officer has become an ordinary case. Nobody can say something… The Turkish Grand National Assembly passed legislation that prohibits learning Quran for children under the age of 12. Of course, these activities offend Allah. (Ali Erkan Kavaklı, Akit Newspaper, 22nd August, 1999)

A system, which seems like huge when it struggles against headscarves, learning of Quran and religious institutions, raised the white flag and knee led down in the face of the earthquake whose magnitude was not even at 8. (Mustafa Kaplan, Akit Newspaper, 24th August, 1999)

It is not possible to say that the situation of the country, which looks askance at “religious people” who have been seen as a threat, is “normal”…It does not need to beat about the bush: The disaster is a divine warning that is exerted over innocent people. (Fehmi Koru, Yeni Şafak Newspaper, 20th August, 1999)

Now let’s think, who cannot find even a word to say something about it? Of course, those who forgive the students provided that they do not wear headscarves again… those who closes the courses for Quran. Those who wage war against religious sensitivity of people under the name of “the struggle against reaction”… The 17th August earthquake is undoubtedly a divine warning! It is a little sign of divine anger who armed with whip of wrath! (Dúcane Cündioğlu, Yeni Şafak Newspaper, 20th August, 1999)

Persecutions against our religion, the closing down of the private Quran courses, closure of Imam-Hatip schools and prohibiting the wearing of headscarf for woman in public should be seen as the one of the reasons of earthquake. (Mevlüt Özcan, Milli (Nationa) Newspaper, 20th August, 1999)
The names of Allah, The Almighty (Al-Aziz), The Irresistible (Al-Jabbar), The Subduer (Al-Qahhar), Avenger (Al-Muntaqim), The Bringer of Death (Al-Mumit) are manifested on 17th August 1999 at 03.02. What do these names mean?

Everybody knows the serious pressure put on Muslims in recent years. Students who wore headscarf have been expelled from school and the officers have been dismissed. Many people have expelled from military service because they perform prayer and their wives wear headscarves. Compulsory Basic Education has been increased from five to eight to prevent children from learning Allah and Islam. Quran courses have been prohibited for those who are under a certain age. (Mutlu, 1999; 16/21)

III.II. Social Corruption or Social Sins that are Effective in Providence of God

Social corruption, like “political sins”, has been extensively mentioned by Muslims as one of the factors that has required a warning from God. “Corruption” has been interpreted as a deviation from a basic principle of religion in this publication, including banned behaviour such as adultery, prostitution, usury, bribery, or alcohol consumption in daily practice. We can read the views given below taken from another study as examples of this common viewpoint:

Fikret: We have deserved it, even we has deserved more than it… But people do not take lesson; adultery is still continuing. People are drinking alcohol as if they are drinking water.

Çoşkun: We have deserved this punishment. Everything has been going wrong lately. However, for many, the earthquake has not been a warning. There is no fault line. When you look at the destruction, you realize it. Why do you interfere in the job of God? But none of the pubs and tavern has collapsed in Adapazarı. All of them are not damage or a little damaged… It is a trial of God. He has left these buildings behind to see, “whether they are going to do it again or they are going to heed the lesson.”

Metin: This is a disaster. Allah does not send disasters in vain. People have become inhuman. They have lost their personalities. There is lots of bribery in society. Adultery is free. Thus God has warned them.

Yılmaz: This is a punishment for us. God reminds us. We meet such people who do not
know God. This is a small signal. He has stopped us at a certain point. God does not kill people without reason.

Yayha: We see the earthquake as a punishment, because human beings have deviated from the right path. Everything has become money and usury. Adultery is everywhere. (Küçükcan & Köse, 2000; 90/100)

Mustafa İslamoğlu: “This disaster is, like other disasters, a message from God to the people. God has “verbal verses of wrath” as he has “actual verses of wrath”. Thus this earthquake is one of the actual verses of God”. (Yeni Şafak Newspaper, 20th August, 1999)

An author has stated much more systematically, the views are expressed in each individual’s diegesis that the earthquake is the result of all these social sins:

Let’s revise the causes of all disasters together, especially the earthquake: Society has deviated from the righteous path. Sin, rebellion, transgression, adultery, cruelty, infidelity, polytheism, infamy have reached an unprecedented extent. Sacred concepts are attacked by official or unofficial people, Azan is jeered, they have snarled at Heaven like a rabid dog. The Shari’a is seen and presented as frightening by official and unofficial people. The detestable mentality that honoured an Armenian woman who sold Turkish women does not hesitate to attack Muslim women with their heads covered. The prohibitions of God have become licit and his licits have become prohibited. Interest, which is forbidden in the Quran, Bible, Old Testament and Tehillim, has been held in high honour and labour has become of secondary importance. Fierceness and rebellion have reached a peak. Acquisitiveness, adultery and prostitution have become rampant. Atheists and sinners apart, some dim witted Muslims can say: “I am Muslim but I am against Shari’a.” When the end of the world comes, there will be a horrible noise. So, the earthquake should be thought of as a warning from God to people and everyone should straighten his/her life out (Mevlüt Özcan, Milli (National) Newspaper, 25th August, 1999).

IV. Affirmation of the Earthquakes and Precaution Suggestions against the Earthquake
All of these approaches and assessments bring to the fore two important points related to the perception and understanding of the earthquake among Muslim
groups. Because of divine providence, one point is the affirmation of the earthquake. The earthquake has also “positive side” as has every deed that comes from God. M. Fettullah Gülen, founder and leader of the Gulen community, considered one of the powerful communities in Turkey, addressed this point as follows:

These warnings masquerade as natural disaster are mercy of God. That is, although they look as if they are disaster, they have positive sides. However, it is almost impossible for anyone to comprehend and perceive it. On the other hand, on the occasion of this earthquake many people have turned to God and have gained proximity to God. I suppose that they cannot acquire this proximity even with thousand rakah of prayer per a day. (M. Fettullah Gülen, Zaman Newspaper, 23rd August 1999)

Another Muslim author has also expressed the “positive side” of the earthquake as follows:

“From now on, we will bear scars of the fire in our heart for a long time and we will resist with faith. If we think as those who died in the earthquake are martyrs and their goods that have been destroyed in the earthquake are charities, this belief will relieve us. Every relative of a martyr will relieve his/her pain by saying, “I have sent a paraclete to the place where I will reach sooner or later.” There is no cure for this except faith. (Ahmed Şahin, Zaman Newspaper, 21st August 1999)

This way of thinking has reached an endpoint in the writings of some authors:

He said, “In this world of mortality I am jealous of those who died in the earthquake. Martyrdom is the highest rank a believer can achieve, so I wish I died in the earthquake and my goods were as charity.” (H. İbrahim Ekiz, 23rd August 1999)

The affirmation approach, of which we have given some examples, seems to be common view of Islamic literature.

The second point is that religious motivation has been mostly decisive in the issue about the precautions that must be taken to prevent disasters in Islamic literature.
The 1999 earthquake have ensured the religious experience. According to Gürsoy, Zaman the daily newspaper and Samanyolu the TV channel, called on people who experienced the horror of the earthquake to prayer, patience, and reading the whole Quran during the next days after the earthquake. Divine melodies broadcast from TV screens comforted people who experienced the shock of the earthquake. (Gürsoy, 2000;221)

Opinions of the people given below have presented the examples of this approach as a precaution against the earthquake:

Even though we have to take necessary precautions against new disasters, we have no other choice than prayer to God who keeps control of everything. Let's turn to God all together.

Thus God decrees that in the verse of Zilzal, ‘O People! Fear your Lord. Verily the earthquake of the Hour is a tremendous thing (Hac. 22/1)’ and he clarifies, “One day, I will shake the earth and all creatures that you have seen will vanish” (Mükremin Albayrak, Zaman Newspaper, 20th August 1999).

At such times, we all need to pray, give alms, offer a sacrifice, perform prayer, keep our favor high, give hand to needy people and fulfill the duties on you in a beautiful way. (Abdullah Aymaz, Zaman Newspaper, 19th August 1999)

“At such times people are so weak.”… We should think that we can encounter such a disaster, too and we should behave so. Beg and pray to God. Read Quran.” (Hakan Yilmaz, Zaman Newspaper, 21.08.1999)

We need to take every precaution as possible as we can. But what end does this go? Let's pray all together, forswear, take a lesson from it and Let's not transgress. Be respectful to God Almighty! (Prof. Dr. Remzi Çetin, Milli (National) Newspaper, 21st August 1999)

These are, as known, divine warnings. Therefore, we who live in this country must take lesson from this warning and must control ourselves and must do what is right.” “God save us from any trouble and disaster. God save our citizens!” (Necmettin Erbakan, Milli (National) Newspaper, 22nd August 1999)
Conclusion
We can summarize the consequences of all discussions on the 1999 earthquake that take place in Islamic literature (books, projects of research, daily newspaper etc.) in the following way:

Earthquakes are mostly God's providence and it is a warning to people who have deviated from religious practices on earth.

This also happened in the 1999 Marmara earthquake. Some causes, such as deviation from the religion of Islam (spread of adultery, gambling, misuse of authority, discrimination, lustfulness, etc.) and intensifying repression of political regime of Muslim society (forbidding the headscarf at schools, dismissal from office of some religious officers, regulating the religious media, removal of the prime minister from office illicitly etc), made God send the earthquake as a warning.

Under these circumstances, the way to prevent earthquakes is to live according to the basic expectations of Islam and the way to protect yourself from an earthquake is to pray to, and beg God continually. Precautions that modern science has recommended can be no more than a palliative.

In order to ascertain whether a change in the views of Islamic groups has occurred since the earthquake, it may be necessary to observe a similar experience again in order to initiate such kind of discussion once more.

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