



## **PREVENTING RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND PREJUDICE.**

### **ACTION 5.1**



‘ This project has been funded with support from the Turkish National Agency.( [www.ua.gov.tr](http://www.ua.gov.tr))

[www.arqe40.com](http://www.arqe40.com)

Project Reference No: TR-51-48-2011-R3



### **KIRSEHIR**

Kırşehir Province is located in central Turkey, forming part of the central Anatolian region. It stands on the North Anatolian Fault, and is currently in an earthquake warning zone. The average elevation is approximately 985 meters above sea level. The provincial capital is Kırşehir.



"There is no need to discriminate between religions. Religions cause disputes among people. In fact, all religions aim to provide peace and brotherhood on earth" says Bektashi Veli in his opus...

*'He who comes with patience and God,  
Stands by our side.  
He who works with morality and wisdom and passes us,  
And stands our side'. Yunus emre says*

*See all people as equals,  
See the humble as heroes*



Kırşehir Valisi Sayın M.Ufuk Erden Katılımcılarla

It's not the trivet but the fire gives the heat,  
The miracle is not in the crown but in the khirkah (woolen garment worn by a dervish)  
Whatever you're searching for, search in yourself,  
It's neither in Jerusalem, Mecca nor in the Hadj.  
"There is no need to discriminate between religions. Religions cause disputes among people. In fact, all religions aim to provide peace and brotherhood on earth" says Bektashi Veli

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kırşehir District National Education Directorate is a state institution in charge with the planning and coordination of all kinds of educational and training activities in from pre-school to the end of secondary school, vocational high schools, technical schools beside parents' education and training in Kırşehir. We have 158 educational, Vocational, training institutions, 3059 teachers/trainers and 45658 students/learners. Project research and development department helps the educational institutions to prepare LLL projects (Comenius, Leonardo, Grundtvig, Youth Programmes) and find suitable partners from EU countries. It also mediates between the Project coordinators/ partners from EU countries and the most suitable educational institutions looking for partners from the city. Kırşehir National Educational Directorate Project Coordination Team (PKE) – was founded in 2004. It offers internships and assistance in implementing and conducting different projects like youth exchanges, seminars, training courses, study visits, partnership building activities and many more. We can offer support (trainers, facilitators and support staff) in the following fields:

Intercultural learning  
European citizenship  
Project management  
Peer education  
Teamwork, leadership and communication  
Human rights education

(PKE) is active today in the fields of local, national and international youth work, arts and cultural activities and in LLP education through the realisation of different projects and programmes with local, national and international partners. Our aims and objectives are:

To provide high quality non-formal programmes to young people in Turkey and Europe;  
To train young people committed to peace, democracy and solidarity;  
To support the integration of young people into the society and to activate their civil engagement;  
To raise young people's engagement for solving community, educational, environmental and social problems;  
To promote a better understanding of cultural diversity and the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and nationalism.

For those who trully love God and his ways  
All the people of the world are brothers.

## SUMMARY

We coordinated a 7 days of international Youth Meeting in Kirşehir with European countries . Kirşehir District National Education Directorate is a state institution in charge with the planning and coordination of all kinds of educational and training activities in from pre-school to the end of secondary school, vocational high schools, technical schools beside parents' education and training in Kirsehir.

Islam phobia, Anti-Semitism and Christianity are serious phenomenons that currently affect many young people in Europe. Committed to exploring and combating the issue, we planned this Project. The event gathers together 32 young people from European countries from Muslim, Jewish and Christian background to gain knowledge and skills about how to overcome the issue of the project. The main aim of the study session is to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue. The 30 participants (aged 18-30) come from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

This project did not give a promise only on religion side, also, It influenced on delivered our countries truth to the world public, to be tanned our cultures to the EU countries, development of youth and to solve other important problems. To support regional collaboration, erase stereotype among young people of these countries are additional purposes of the project.

This Youth meeting was realized through discussions, workshops, working in groups, excursions focused on history and culture, cultural nights, evening parties and spare time spent together.

The main aim of the study session was to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue and co-operation for overcoming Islamophobia in their national and local contexts.

One of the most important aims of the week was to engage the participants into inter-religious dialogue themselves. Therefore, much work during the week was done in small groups. Working together in changing mixed groups provided participants with numerous opportunities to engage in actual grass-root dialogue and to share experiences and viewpoints. Also the Questions & Answers session in which the participants shared information and experiences contributed greatly to this aim. This participatory approach was very successful and was in general considered to be one of the highlights of the week by the participants. Further, as the week also included regular Muslim and Christian prayers that were open for everyone to attend to, the participants also experienced the practical side of the religions. The prayers were much appreciated by the participants as they provided a unique opportunity to observe the practices of both religions, and many discussions took place related to the prayers. This deepened their understanding of the religions - also of their own.

In addition to the focus on dialogue and participatory learning, theoretical input was an important element of the study session. Many methods ranging from visual presentations, lectures, small group work and creative approaches were used throughout the week to ensure balance in various learning styles

Provided with information about inter-religious dialogue, the psychology of Islamophobia, layers of identity, stereotypes and prejudices etc. the participants were equipped with essential knowledge about the reality of Islamophobia that young people are facing in Europe today.

As to the practical side of the study session, the main tool that was presented during the week for promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation was the "Process of Making an Inter-religious Calendar". Working in small groups, the participants created wall calendars for the year 2012, including holidays from both Islam and various denominations in Christianity, and sharing information and experiences while completing the task. The Calendar process was developed and modified especially for this study session. It is designed to provide space for actual dialogue and mutual learning to take place, to promote co-operation and to create shared experiences. It is a tool the participants could take home and replicate. The Calendar process received both praise and criticism from the participants, indicating that there is potential in this tool, but that it should also be further developed.

The social programme of the week included among other things the Intercultural Banquet and Intercultural Evening, which were full in taste, music and colour. Being hosted in Kirsehir , the week also included an excursion to the town. The participants enjoyed the Kirsehir views and experienced the charming atmosphere of Cappadacia. The inter-cultural and inter-religious aspects were kept in mind in all the social programme and the educational parts of the week. The participants were informed about differences in religious and cultural customs, and these were respected.

In the evaluation of the study session the participants indicated being very pleased with the variety of methods used, and were pleased with the construction of the programme. The week was in general considered to be a very good experience, and the participants felt they had learnt a lot. In particular, the smooth running of the week was appreciated, and the IPC received many thanks for doing a good job. Some criticism was expressed concerning especially the tools provided, language barriers, and the tight schedule of the week. All the suggestions will be valuable for the planning of future events.

The study session was a very intensive and demanding event, but first and foremost a very enjoyable experience for everybody present. As the course director for the event I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the International Planning Committee for all the work they did in planning and implementing the week. Their commitment and enthusiasm made the event possible. I would also like to express my sincerest thanks to our colleagues for thier excellent and professional support during the process.

Aura Nortomaa Course director

14nd February, Kirsehir

SEVKET KARADENİZ  
Director

[www.arge40.com](http://www.arge40.com)

We love the created

For the Creator's sake

Yunus Emre



## *Greetings from the organisations*

*Dear brothers and sisters, dear friends,*

*Kirsehir Educational Directorate is happy to present you the final report of the study session "Overcoming Islamophobia - inter-religious dialogue held in Kirsehir on the dates 10-17 January 2012*

*During the study session Christian and Muslim participants from all over Europe spent together fruitful time. As the theme of the study session was "Islamophobia", participants interacted and exchanged views, formally and especially informally. The structure of the study session helped but also some ad-hoc questions and answers sessions that everyone profited from. Thus the participants could tackle their own "Islamophobia" or, in turn, "Christianophobia". From the very beginning mutual suspicions faded in favour of the availability to listen to each other and to learn more about the other party, in a warm climate of mutual understanding and respect.*

*"Dialogue: the key element to overcome stereotypes and to increase co-operation"*

*The international seminar on "Overcoming Islamophobia: inter-religious dialogue " was especially underlined by the presence of young people. It was a first way of "BREAKING the barriers between the borders", of approaching the other, of visualizing Europe in terms of richness. Certain dynamics and solidarity between the participants were created thanks to the exchange of points of views, their experiences, their lives and the problems encountered in their respective countries related to the education of human rights and Islamophobia. What is more, they were able to express their expectations for the future and for the construction of Europe.*

*The aim of this seminar was to foster inter-religious dialogue, to promote respect amongst youth from diverse backgrounds, to emphasize the equality of rights of all people and to explore further tools and methods useful for overcoming Islamophobia in European societies. We therefore encourage all the initiatives going in this direction and ideas for cooperation between Christian and Muslim youth organisations on local, regional, national and international levels. More significantly, we have to keep in mind that the fight continues and especially within their respective countries, we have to continue to inform other members, to spread our knowledge and to organize actions.*

*With regards to the challenges facing youth and conviction communities in Europe and the broader world, the collaboration with Kirsehir ARGE enabled us to share best practices focusing on youth work and more specifically on a particular identity. We are - and are even more so today- convinced that our fight is about justice, respect, equality, anti-discrimination and the promotion of a more inclusive and cohesive society.*

*1. APPLICANT:*

*KIRŞEHİR MİLLİ EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ STRATEJİ GELİŞTİRME ŞUBESİ*

*2.DATE: 10.01/ 17.01.2011( 7 DAYS)*

*3.PLACE: KIRŞEHİR*



## SUMMARY/ ÖZET

*We coordinated a 7 days of international Youth Meeting in Kırşehir with European countries . Kırşehir District National Education Directorate is a state institution in charge with the planning and coordination of all kinds of educational and training activities in from pre-school to the end of secondary school, vocational high schools, technical schools beside parents' education and training in Kırşehir. Islam phobia, Anti-Semitism and Christianity are serious phenomena that currently affect many young people in Europe. Committed to exploring and combating the issue, we planned this Project. The event gathers together 32 young people from European countries from Muslim, Jewish and Christian background to gain knowledge and skills about how to overcome the issue of the project. The main aim of the study session is to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue.*

*This project doesn't give a promise only on religion side, also, It will influence on delivered our countries truth to the world public, to be tanned our cultures to the EU countries, development of youth and to solve other important problems. To support regional collaboration, erase stereotype among young people of these countries are additional purposes of the project. This Youth meeting will be realized through discussions, workshops, working in groups, excursions focused on history and culture, cultural nights, evening parties and spare time spent together.*

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

1. *ESTRA foundation n.o.: slovakia :*
2. *Europe Direct Mosta Malta ( Genista Foundation)*
3. *Vocational Education Centre in Lublin Polonya*
4. *NGO ZZ Noortekas (Youth Centre of Kambja) Estonya*
5. *DESINCOOP - Desenvolvimento Económico, Sociale Cultural, CRL*  
*desincoop.europe@gmail.com*
6. *YouNet İTALY*
7. *Forumul Cetatenesc pentru Actiune Sociala si Educatie Civica Romania*

## **1-) TARGET GROUP**

This Y.E was opened to youngsters and youth workers in NGO's .

The language of the training course was English, so the participants have a good level of English.

## **2-) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Islamophobia is a serious phenomenon that currently affects many young people in Europe since 11 September actions in New York. Committed to exploring and combating the issue, We organised this youth exchange "Overcoming Islamophobia – promoting interreligious dialogue ". The event gathered together 32 young people from Europe, and neighbour countries from both Muslim and Christian background, to gain knowledge and skills about how to overcome Islamophobia . The main aim of the study session is to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue and co-operation for overcoming Islamophobia in their national and local contexts.

### **MAIN AIMS**

- To provide information, tools, and skills to overcome Islamophobia
- To provide ideas for Muslim-Christian co-operation on local, regional and national level
- To promote tolerance, respect and equality
- To promote true dialogue in the context of inter-religious dialogue
- To engage in direct personal dialogue aimed at overcoming stereotypes
- To further develop an attitude of respect and skills how to deal with religious diversity.
- To find common ethical and religious values that are based on peace and that are aimed at overcoming religiously motivated violence
- To increase active citizenship

## **3- ) METHODOLOGY OF THE YOUTH MEETING**

- Active participation, group and teamwork, learning-by-doing, as well as theoretical inputs, form the basis of the course. There will be mainly workshops where participants will discuss topics in small groups, which best allow disabled people to be included. That will conclude by general reporting to the course group at the end of the workshop.
- Visits and other activities will allow participants to share experiences.

## **4-) PROGRAM OF THE YOUTH MEETING**

### **1 DAY**

#### **ARRIVALS**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> DAY**

#### **MORNING**

The day starts with opening worship with Christian, Jewish and Muslim prayers.

#### **Icebreakers**



### **Market place**

Each participant was asked to bring with them material about their country and organization from home. The participants were given stands and material to make a visual presentation of their countries in their respective country groups. They were asked to present their country, the situation of Islam phobia in their country, and their organization and its work on inter-religious dialogue. Each country has had a chance to present their own stand to everybody as people walk through the market.

### **Expectations and youth action**

Everyone was asked to write down on post-its their expectations for the study session. There were three different colours for three questions: "I want to contribute...", "I would like to...", "I would not like to..."

The post-its will be put on the wall for everyone to see.

Project Aims/ Rules

Official welcoming Speech



## **AFTERNOON**

### **Identity onion**

Using a picture of a layered onion, participants were asked to individually think which factors identify them; what they consider to construct their identity. Next, they were asked to take a look at their neighbour and list things that could describe this person's identity. In small groups people were then asked to share what they thought constituted other people's identity and compare these with how each person describes him/herself. Results were discussed with the whole group.

### **Roots and leaves**

Participants will be asked to discuss in pairs the positives and negatives of living with differences. In groups, they were then asked to share their points and think how the positives could be emphasized and the negatives addressed. These means to take action were written root-shaped (for emphasizing the positives) or leaf-shaped (for addressing the negatives) papers. A big tree was created on a wall of these papers.



### **Islam and Christianity**

In the next session the basics of Islam and Christianity was presented.

We split into two Christian and one Muslim group to talk about the differences we encounter within Christianity (in the first two groups) and within Islam (the third group).

### **Common values**

We then move to talk about the common values we share. In mixed groups of four or five people we will identify three important values we shared (religious, social, political values). Finally, all groups present their values and we formed a flower of values where on each petal was one value.

The values will be, God, Faith in God, One single God, Respect. Respect the others, Respect of Human dignity, Treat others as you would want others to treat you, Desire of knowledge, Justice & Equality, Responsibility, Generosity, Harmony, Hope, Truth, Love



### **Guidelines to dialogue**

In the next activity we talk in three small groups about some guidelines for inter-religious dialogue.

After that we formed three bigger groups to negotiate what the others decided upon and to discuss why it is that guideline and not the other, how we can manage with that in the daily life, what is the experience related to that principle etc.

### **International Banquet**

#### **3<sup>RD</sup> DAY**

#### **MORNING**

Topics of this day are Islamophobia's different aspects: theory and practise – societal and personal

#### **Defining Islamophobia**

The morning's first session was held. The debate handled things like the role of practising the religion in Islam, the role of Imams, the US interests and prejudices and other issues.

#### **Stereotypes and prejudices**

We start the "Psychology of Islamophobia" lecture by commenting on the course

Next, five different pictures were hung on the wall and we ask to write down stereotypes which could be linked with each picture.

We then listen to a lecture where the purpose is to become aware of how prejudices and stereotypes are constructed in our individual minds, and from this perspective to learn how to deal with them in order to overcome them.



### **Common values flower**

In small groups, the participants were discussed which values they hold important and share with one another. Each group will have three pedal-shaped coloured papers and will be asked to write one value on each pedal. The pedals will be then attached together to form a flower or common values.

### **Religion and time circle**

The participants stand in a big circle that has signs for night, morning, day and evening on the floor. They were told to face left, and silently walk around the circle, reflecting on how religion affects their daily life. After coming back to where they start from they will be asked to share their thoughts with those standing close to them, and later shortly with the whole group. The exercise is then repeated with changing the four signs for winter, spring, summer and autumn, and asking people to think how religion affects their year as they walk around the circle again – this time facing right. They will be again asked to share their thoughts first in small groups and then with the whole group.

### **Differences within religions**



To discover the differences within each of the two religions, the participants will be divided into two Christian and one Muslim group. They will be asked to discuss the following questions: What differences are there within our religion? Are there differences in what we believe in? Are there differences in the way we do certain things? Do people have disagreements? The groups then shared their findings.



### **European Cultural Evening**

In the evening we organize an international banquet where everybody presented their traditional food and drinks from their own countries and tasted those of the others.

### **4TH DAY**

#### **Inter-religious dialogue guidelines**

The participants were divided into six groups. Three different sets of for inter-religious dialogue will be handed out to the groups so that two groups will be always discussing the same set. The groups will be asked to choose which guidelines they considered to be most essential for inter-religious dialogue and for the week they were heading for. After this the two groups that working on the same set will be put together and this group will be asked to agree on 5 most essential guidelines together. The three sets of 5 guidelines will be then gathered to a wall to be the interreligiousguidelines for the study session.

#### **Causes and cures of stereotypes**

Five Islam-related pictures were hung on the walls. The participants were asked to go around, look at the pictures and write on sticky notes which stereotypes they thought could be linked with each picture. The notes were put next to the pictures. After an introduction to the psychology of stereotypes, the participants were asked to pick a picture they wanted to work with. All those interested in the same picture were asked to have a look on the stereotypes put on their picture and to select two negative stereotypes of them. Each group will be asked to try to think of possible causes for these stereotypes, and also of possible cures for them. The results (cause-stereotype-cure constructions) will be then shared with the whole group.

## **5TH DAY**

### **Excursion to Cappodacia**

#### **Evening programme ( 19:00-23:00)**

In the evening we organize an international banquet where everybody presented their traditional food and drinks from their own countries and tasted those of the others.

## **6TH DAY**

### **MAKING AN INTER-RELIGIOUS CALENDAR**

The participants were asked to bring with them material, e.g. dates for their religious or denominational holidays, for the calendars. By already gathering material at home the participants start to orient towards the process already before arriving to the venue.

After an in-depth introduction to the activity in the study session, the participants are divided into 5 mixed groups. Each group creates a wall calendar for the year 2012 including holidays of each religion. Participants will be free to choose which holidays to include and how to present the meaning of the holidays in their calendar. Also the physical format is left up to the participants to decide, however keeping in mind that the goal was to scan the calendars later. They will be encouraged to avoid using the computers, since this was thought to allow them more time talking about the actual topics and engaging in dialogue, instead of focusing on layout or technicalities.

All groups provided with access to colors and papers plus other materials, and with an access to digital camera and color printing. They will be given the timeframe but left to organize their work independently, after a team member had helped each group to start.

The calendars and the processes will be presented to all on the last day of the study session.

## **5-) PREPARING FOR THE CONTENT OF THE TRAINING COURSE**

This project is not only based on a "one-way information-flow" but requires a pro-active participation from you. So, we would encourage younsteers to search about the issue in their country/university,NGO

### **YOUTH PROGRAMMES**

For more information about the YOUTH Programme you can visit the following website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html)

For more information on training methodology and approaches you can consult the Training Kit "Training Essentials" on:

<http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/tkits/tkit6/index.html>

## **6-) TRAVEL (ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE)**

The participants arrived to Ankara .

## 7-) ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation was provided at a hotel. <http://www.temurtermalotel.com> .

## 8-) ABOUT TURKEY

### *About Turkey:*

*Location;* Southeastern Europe and Southwestern Asia (that portion of Turkey west of the Bosphorus is geographically part of Europe), bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Georgia, and bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, between Greece and Syria. Turkey has been called "the cradle of civilization".

Turkey has a magnificent past, and is a land full of historic treasures from 13 successive civilizations spanning 10,000 years. Turkey boasts a rich culture that through the centuries has made a lasting impression on modern civilization. The language of Turkey is Turkish.

For more information you can visit;

<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN/>

[http://www.goldenhorn-rotary.com/ercu/ERCU\\_FLASH\\_eng.html](http://www.goldenhorn-rotary.com/ercu/ERCU_FLASH_eng.html)

### *About Ankara:*

Ankara is the capital of Turkey. It is the Turkey's second largest city after Istanbul, with a population of approximately five million people. It is in the middle of the Anatolia Region. Ankara's origins date back to a Hittite settlement in the second millennium BCE.

For more information you can visit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankara>

### *About Kirsehir:*

**Kırşehir**, , is a city in [Turkey](#). It is the capital district of the [Kırşehir Province](#). According to 2000 census, population of the district is 121,947 of which 105,826 live in the city of Kırşehir

In the 19th century, Kırşehir was attached to the sanjak of [Ankara](#). In the year 1921, Kırşehir was made capital of its own province. [Kemal Atatürk](#) visited the city in 1921 and 1931 it is close To Ankara(200km)

## 9-) WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU TO KIRŞEHİR

### ☀ *About Your Organisation:*

During the Training Course, each one will get the opportunity to present own organization in a visual way on Organisational Market Evening

We encourage you to bring as much –relevant- materials as possible

To bring with you:

- English information about your organization; brochures, leaflets,...etc.
- All relevant information you have on the previous international project(s) you've organised / been part off (reports, gadgets, press releases,...).

- Pictures, posters, etc.

#### ☀ *About Your Country/Region/Town:*

Please bring your national food, traditional drinks, music or souvenirs for the intercultural evening on Sunday evening. On this evening you will be able to show what is typical for your country; it can be food drinks or whatever you would like to present from your country.

☀ **PROOF OF ALL THE TRAVEL EXPENSES** and visa costs you wish to reclaim. If you come by plane, please be sure to bring evidence of the sum actually paid (**invoice**) and boarding pass, **Electronic tickets will only be considered as acceptable** on proof of payment (invoice) and on presentation of the boarding pass for the outward journey). Please keep in mind the travel rules of the YOUTH Programme. If you come by train or bus do not forget to buy a return ticket. Please copy your tickets before you leave your homes to Kirsehir.

☀ Medication, shampoo and other personal items.

☀ Standard seminar equipments; An alarm clock, an English dictionary, music cds and tapes, varied and comfortable clothes,... etc.

#### **10-) VISAS**

Should you need visa to come to Turkey, please locate the Turkish Consulate nearest to you and apply for the visa as soon as possible. If you need a separate invitation letter, inform us accordingly.

#### **11-) ABOUT REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS**

To secure full reimbursement of travel costs, you should arrange your journey according to the following rules :

- Participants are requested to arrange their journey by the most economical route.
- Your travel expenses will only be reimbursed upon presentation of documentary evidence of the sum actually paid. For this reason, the **ORIGINAL INVOICE** is necessary (issued by the travel agency or other ticket issuing company). Copies of invoices are not taken into account. Electronic tickets will only be considered as acceptable on proof of payment (invoice) and on presentation of the boarding pass for the outward journey. This evidence of the expenditure will be joined to the claim form for reimbursement together with the relevant travel tickets or copy (plane, train, etc) and boarding passes.
- Please buy return tickets for your full journey, and keep your boarding passes.

Reimbursements will be made in cash, in Euros, during the training course. According to the rules of the YOUTH Programme your travel expenses will be reimbursed in 70% of the total cost of your travel.

#### **12-) WEATHER CONDITIONS IN KIRSEHIR**

Kırşehir is at 950 m, and has a continental climate.

You can check the weather at: <http://www.havayol.com/Home.aspx>

Mystic is what they call me,  
Hate is my only enemy;  
I harbor a grudge against none,  
To me the whole wide world is one.

Religion can be explained as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Featured religions and beliefs

#### Atheism

Atheists are people who believe that god or gods are man-made constructs.

- Baha'i

One of the youngest of the world's major religions.

- Buddhism

A way of living based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.

- Candomblé

A religion based on African beliefs, originating in Brazil.

- Christianity

The world's biggest faith, based on the teaching of Jesus Christ.

- Hinduism

A group of faiths rooted in the religious ideas of India.

- Islam

Revealed in its final form by the Prophet Muhammad.

- Jainism

An ancient philosophy and ethical teaching that originated in India.

- Jehovah's Witnesses

A Christian-based evangelistic religious movement.

- Judaism

Based around the Jewish people's covenant relationship with God.

- Mormonism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

- Paganism

Contemporary religions usually based on reverence for nature.

- Rastafari

A young religion founded in Jamaica in the 1930s.

- Santeria

Afro-Caribbean syncretic religion originating in Cuba.

- Shinto

Japanese folk tradition and ritual with no founder or single sacred scripture.

- Sikhism

The religion founded by Guru Nanak in India in the 15th Century CE.

- Spiritualism

Spiritualists believe in communication with the spirits of people who have died.

- Taoism

An ancient tradition of philosophy and belief rooted in Chinese worldview.

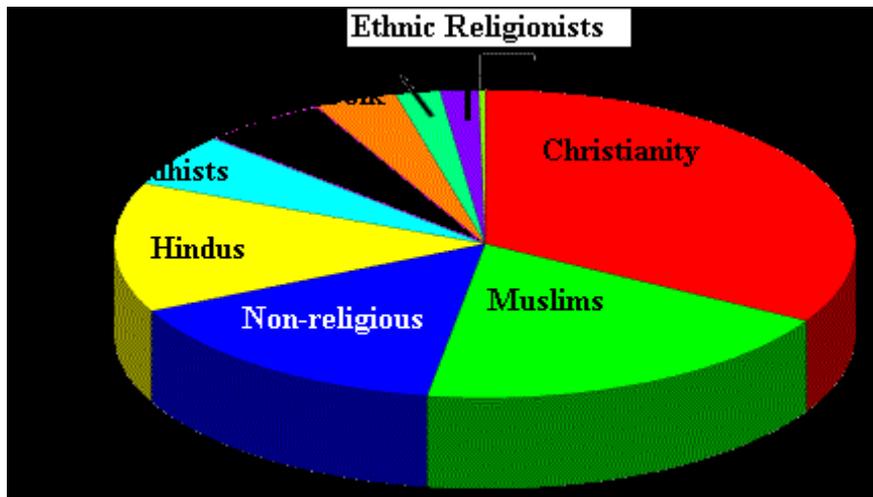
- Unitarianism

An open-minded and individualistic approach to religion.

- Zoroastrianism

One of the oldest monotheistic faiths, founded by the Prophet Zoroaster

### Top 10 World Religions



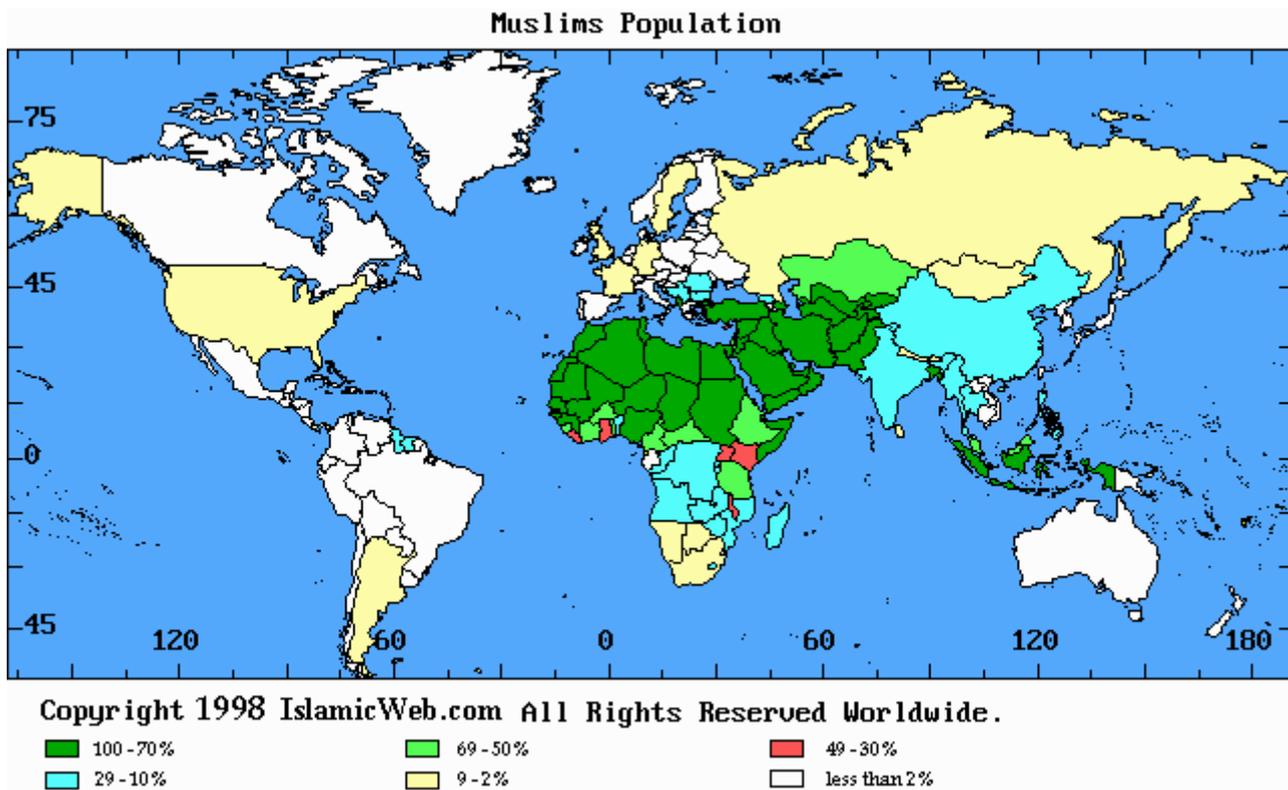
## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

The religion of approximately one billion people worldwide, Islam is the second largest religion in the world (Christianity is the largest).

"Islam" is an Arabic language word that means "peace" or "submission" - specifically, submission to the will of God.

The Arabic word "Muslim" means "one who submits" - a Muslim is a follower of Islam.

Contrary to common perception, Islam is not an Eastern religion. Islam developed in the Near East, not in India or the Far East. Ideologically, Islam has much more in common with Judaism and Christianity than it does with any other major religion. It is but a circumstance of politics and geography that Islam is more prevalent in the Middle East, Asia and Africa than in Europe and the Americas. But geography is not as significant as origins and ideology when it comes to classifying a religion as Eastern or Western.



## ISLAMIC VALUES CAN BE DIVIDED IN THREE GROUPS

These basic values and needs which define the foundations for good individual and social life, are classified into three levels, or hierarchy, namely (1) necessities (dharuriyyat); (2) convenience (hajiat); and (3) refinements (kamaliyat). In the legal theory (usul al fiqh) of Islam there is a maxim "the general aim of legislation" in Islam is to realize values through protecting and guaranteeing their necessities (al dharuriyyat) as well as fulfilling their importance (al hajiyyat) and their embellishments (tahsiniyyat). The human basic values consist of life (al nafs), reason (al 'aql), descent (nasab), property (al mal) and religion (al din). Islam protects these primary human values, and prohibits any violation of them.

Haci Bektasi Veli

Haji Bektashi Veli, united the Christian residents of Anatolia and Turkoman migrants with their educational and developmental activities and played an important role in the formation of cultural unity and central authority in Anatolia. Some holy men migrated to Anatolia, settled on mountains and empty crossroads and opened dervish lodges there. These institutions settled on empty land gradually became centers for culture, development and religious thought. In this manner, religious congregations spread everywhere, rules of morals, good breeding, attitudes and beliefs reached a high standard, knowledge and science were both produced and spread in these centers. The administration encouraged such holy men to settle in villages, and their educational activities gave them some privileges. As a result, even in the most desolate places in Anatolia, dervish lodges emerged, and with the effect of the education they provided, a common cultural structure began to form.

Haji Bektashi Veli was one of those figures who came to Anatolia from Khorasan with this purpose in mind. He was born in Nishabur, Khorasan in 1248, spent his childhood in Khorasan, and was trained in philosophy and social and positive sciences at Hodja Ahmed Yesevi's school. After traveling to Iran, Iraq and Arabia, Haji Bektash settled in Sulucukarahoyuk in 1275/80. At that time, Anatolia was under Mongol occupation, there was a severe social and economic crisis and fighting for political power. In that difficult climate, Haji Bektashi Veli settled in Sulucukarahoyuk, developed his philosophy and began to teach his students. His tolerance and human love based philosophy reached many people, and were taken up by them in the important center of Christianity of Cappadocia.

Any road that doesn't follow science, ends in darkness,  
Give education to women,  
Control on your tongue, hands and waist,  
The greatest book to read is man himself,  
Honesty is the door of a friend,  
Being a teacher is to give, not to take,  
The universe is for man, and man for the universe,  
Science illuminates the paths of truth,  
We travel in the way of science, comprehension and human love,  
Clean where you've settled and deserve the money you've made,  
Let's be one, be big and energetic,  
Don't hurt anyone, even though you've been hurt,  
Don't ask anyone for anything that would be difficult for you to do,  
Don't blame any nation or individual,  
Blessed are those who illuminate the darkness of thought,  
Keep on searching, and you'll find,  
The beauty of the face consists of the words you speak,  
Don't forget that even your enemy is human,  
The biggest God-given miracle is work,  
In the language of friendly conversation, you can't discriminate between man and woman,  
Everything God has created is in order,  
To us, there's no difference between man and woman,  
If you think there is, you're mistaken.

His thoughts are based on human love and human existence. This vision is similar to the 1948 Charter on Human Rights. His thoughts were also shared by M. Kemal Atatürk 600 years later, and the Turkish Republic was built on the principles of secularism, democracy and respect for human rights. His thoughts are still alive and still lighten the way for many people.

It's not the trivet but the fire gives the heat,  
The miracle is not in the crown but in the khirkah (woolen garment worn by a dervish)  
Whatever you're searching for, search in yourself,  
It's neither in Jerusalem, Mecca nor in the Hadj.

"There is no need to discriminate between religions. Religions cause disputes among people. In fact, all religions aim to provide peace and brotherhood on earth" says Bektashi Veli in his opus "Velayetname". Bektashism, which originates from Haji Bektashi Veli's ideas, aims to comprehend the unity of "Universe, God and Man" based on human love. Man is ornamented

with divine characteristics. The first step to success is to know yourself and love yourself because man harbors divine qualities within himself, and the man who loves himself also loves God. This quatrain explains Bektashism's understanding of love in the clearest way:

Students hew stone,  
They hew and present it to their master,  
In every inch of the stone,  
They call God to mind.

Man is independent. His duty is to behave modestly and to feed, refine, mature and fill his spirit with love of God. Bodies are only tools for the main purpose. So discriminating between men and women or classifying people according to their social status or race is a huge mistake. Man or woman, all of mankind is equal. Haji Bektashi Veli's views are still alive today and celebrated with excitement every year on the 15-17th August in the Haji Bektash region of the province of Nevsehir.

#### AHI ORGANIZATION

Another institution that contributes to Anatolian culture unity is ahilik. (rules, manners, attitudes of people sharing same profession) Ahi, who came to Anatolia with the Yesevi dervishes, preferred cities to rural areas because they had professions. Ahilik (being an Ahi), is not only a professional organization but also a sacred institution with its own rules, traditions, conformities and secrets. Ahi Evran Veli was a holy man from Khorasan, like Haji Bektashi Veli, who united Anatolian Ahis and made them an organized force. Ahi Evran's wife, Sister Fatima (known as Woman Mother) set up the first woman's organization in the world, "Baciyan-i Rum". Ahis gathered in Ankara and Kirsehir under the sheik of Evran in the 13th century and spread to all Seljuk cities. Ahis played an important role in the formation of the Ottoman state, and to some researchers they even counted Osman Gazi, who founded the Ottoman state, his son Orhan Gazi and Sultan Murad I among their numbers.

Equality between members is the first Ahi rule. All members are brothers. On the other hand, the institution has many internal rules, and beginners have great respect for their elders. To become a member, one must be invited by an Ahi and people with bad reputations or who have dubious jobs can never be accepted. For example, murderers, people who kill animals (butchers) or people who have committed adultery are not allowed to be members. As with Bektashism, becoming a member is celebrated with a special ritual. In this ritual, the Ahi candidate wears a special belt (Sed) and members instruct him to treat everyone equally and honestly. Absolute affiliation and eternal obedience is expected from all members. Atheists and religious fanatics are not allowed to join. As with Bektashism, the Ahi goes through many stages in which he learns patience, purification of the soul, loyalty, friendship and tolerance. In addition to these qualifications mentioned above, there are six important principles:

Open your hand (be generous to everyone),  
Share your food,  
Open the door of your house when somebody needs shelter,  
Close your eyes (don't be led astray by the artificial beauties of the world),  
Control your waist (Don't be a victim of your sexual impulses),  
Control your tongue.  
He who comes with patience and God,  
Stands by our side.  
He who works with morality and wisdom and passes us,  
And stands our side.

There are many degrees in Ahism. In these, the student learns professional skills, Sufism and religion, reading and writing, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, music, mathematics and the Constitution of Ahi "Futuvvetname" .

The nine degrees of the Ahi are:

Young fellow  
Assistant  
Apprentice  
Experienced Apprentice

Master

Ahi

Caliph

Sheik

Grand Sheik

Although the Ahi institution has now weakened, it is still officially celebrated every year on the second Monday in October.

#### YUNUS EMRE

There is a strong challenge inherent in any attempt to describe a great and influential personality like Yunus Emre in a condensed form such as this. We will, therefore only make an attempt to give an introduction to the man and his philosophy which will tempt you into further reading. Wherever possible we will allow Yunus to speak for himself.

Mystic is what they call me,

Hate is my only enemy;

I harbor a grudge against none,

To me the whole wide world is one.

Yunus Emre was a great folk poet, a sufi (Islamic mystic), a troubadour and a very influential philosopher who had an effect on the Turkish outlook on life that has stayed alive and vital for 700 years. Above all, and in an age of religious repression, he was a humanist who's love for God was integral to his love for humanity. His abhorrence for conflict and his dismissive attitude to riches and material assets have been echoed through the ages, not least in the 'flower power' era of the 1960s and 70s.

I am not here on earth for strife

Love is the mission of my life.

Yunus Emre was more concerned with the reason for living than with the details of how life should be lived. Essentially he thought that people should live modest lives filled with love and friendship, aspiring towards spiritual purity and an indivisible unity with God. He despised the pursuit of fame and riches because none of these could mean anything after death.

Death is a recurring theme in his poetry but without morbid overtones. He wants us to accept that death is inevitable, so that we don't squander our time on earth, but also to realize that death is not the end of the road. For each of us death will demonstrate the futility both of pursuing riches and of filling life with hatred, war and grudges. Our only worthwhile legacy is the product of a life filled with friendship and love.

Firm hands will lose their grip one day

And tongues that talk will soon decay:

The wealth you loved and stored away

Will go to some inheritor

Yunus Emre was the epitome of tolerance in a world dominated, from East and West, by fanaticism and by the idea that human beings are born in sin and have to spend their lives trying to rise above their base natures.

See all people as equals,

See the humble as heroes.

According to the traditional outlook the only path to redemption is a difficult one, narrow and dangerous, and can only be negotiated with the help of qualified guides, the leaders of organized religions. Most religions, moreover, insist that their path is the only possible route to

heaven and that the followers of other paths, no matter how well intentioned, are destined for the other place. Yunus Emre rejected this single path approach.

For those who truly love God and his ways

All the people of the world are brothers.

We regard no one's religion as contrary to ours,

True love is born when all faiths are united as a whole.

True faith is in the heart, not in the headgear.

His beliefs were rooted in religion, and he was undeniably an Islamic sufi, but his philosophy was independent and he taught that every belief and every idea, religious or otherwise, that leads to the creator is sacred.

You better seek God right in your own heart

He is neither in the Holy Land nor in Mecca

Yunus Emre's idea of God (the 'Friend' of his poetry) is that God is everywhere and within each of us. The love of humanity and the love of God are therefore indivisible.

We love the created

For the Creator's sake

In his poems Yunus Emre shows himself to be a humane, sensitive and modest person firmly grounded. His poems were, and remain, great because he uses language beautifully but simply, his images are rich but extremely clear. Yunus Emre wrote in Turkish and his words can be read today in the original with very little difficulty. That is one reason why his influence has remained so strong, his work is accessible to ordinary people, appreciated and kept alive by them. His hymns are still being sung, and his words quoted, by thousands of people in Turkey today while his popularity is growing world wide.

Come, let us all be friends for once

Let us make life easy on us,