

Press Release

Our Presidency has deemed it necessary to make the following statement due to some news articles published by BBC and other media outlets in the past few days concerning the Hadith project sponsored by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Religious Charitable Foundation of Turkey.

It has been underlined on different occasions and by different agents that provide religious education and services in our country that it is necessary to present the message of the Prophet of Islam (saaw) in a simple and an understandable language. In this context, the Publication Board of the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Religious Charitable Foundation of Turkey took a concrete and comprehensive step to initiate an original study by the name of “Hadith Project According to Subjects”.

In this project, 7 Scientific Committee members, 10 verification and data preparation officials and 85 scholars from different Theology Faculties specialized in the field of Hadith have been working.

The aim of the study is to offer the contemporary audience the Prophet’s message in a comprehensible language while taking into account the interpretations concerning hadith narrations, making necessary amendments in cases of misconceptions and omitting the issues and interpretations which do not have current value.

In preparing the project, the Traditions are explained within the context of the unity of Hadith and the Quranic verses; throughout the course of evaluating the Tradition, attention is given to the reciprocal connection of the basic religious texts and the existing internal coherence between them. Above all, the closeness among the Koran and Hadith is continually reflected in the texts. In interpreting the sayings of the Prophet, the classical Hadith sources are utilized besides making use of the interpretations which have appeared in the Islamic tradition as well as early Qur’anic commentaries, jurisprudence, theology and life of the Prophet of Islam.

The current work takes as its starting point the methodology of Islamic understanding and interpretation that has grown out of the Islamic intellectual tradition. While the Hadith project seeks to establish a connection between Hadith narrations and current thinking and scientific data, it has avoided judging the past on the basis of today’s categories and stayed away from extreme interpretations.

Describing the Hadith project through such words as “reform”, “revision”, or “revolution” is entirely wrong. This mistake appears to developed because of defining Islam and the scholarly dynamism in the Islamic world through the historical and cultural heritage of Christianity. Consequently, our Presidency is surprised and deeply saddened by the description of this project with such baseless allegations as “sorting out the Hadith”, “interpreting the Hadith within the framework of moderate Islam”, associating the project with politics”, “hiring a foreign advisor”, “performing reform in the field of Hadith”, “making the Hadith consistent with the 21st. century”, “changing the theological bases of Islam”, etc.,. Such descriptions are not only against the stated intent and goals of the Hadith project but may also lead to misperceptions in our country as well as the rest of the Islamic world.

The main aim of the Presidency of Religious Affairs is to revitalize the message of the Prophet, as was performed in the past, and offer this blessed tenets to humanity in the most accurate way.

The Hadith Project was initiated and made a good progress with mentioned aim and ideas, and still carried on by numerous scholars working in different Theology Faculties in our country. We surely believe that the Hadith Project which has no connection with internal or external politics is entirely original, academic and scientific in quality. It will constitute an important step for carrying the universal message of the Prophet of Islam to the 21st century.

With deep respect and appreciation.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs