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Struggle with Increased Alcohol Use
for Psychological Reasons: The Case
of First World War-Green Crescent in
Turkey

Psikolojik Sebeplerle Artan Alkol
Tüketimi ile Mücadele: Türkiye'de
Birinci Dünya Savaşı-Yeşilay Örneği

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ABSTRACT

Efforts to make a human-like being have come from Ancient Greece to the present day. In particular, with the development of computer science, computer-aided machines have been strengthened with artificial intelligence, and they have become able to perform human behavior more flawlessly and faster. Artificial intelligence is tried to be created as an entity that can perform mental operations as well as computing with artificial intelligence studies, and can also perform understanding, interpretation and thinking actions, which are accepted as the metacognitive processes of human beings. When evaluated in this respect, artificial intelligence studies do not only develop in the narrow sense of the concept of intelligence in their name, but also try to fulfill all mental actions. In this sense, it is necessary to know the physiology and chemistry of the human being, because learning human physiology and chemistry will open the way to produce a new artificial biological entity. Such a being will cause the idea of immortality to develop. This being, which will be evaluated in a transhumanist context, will express the transformation of the human being and create a superhuman being category. This will lead to the elimination of the most important issue that makes religions meaningful and will eventually create a conflict with God. Considered in this sense, can the artificial biological entity be considered as a rebellion against the God of the religions thought to have created the universe and its contents? If the universe came into being by itself, this question is considered invalid. However, in our article, this question will be tried to be answered based on religions that think they are the creators of the universe and starting from the history of philosophy.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Immortality, Techno-Bio Entity, Transhumanizm, Technology.

ÖZ

İnsan benzeri varlık yapma çalışmaları Antik Yunan'dan günümüze kadar gelmiştir. Özellikle bilgisayar biliminin gelişmesi ile bilgisayar destekli makineler yapay zekâ ile güçlendirilerek insan davranışlarını daha kusursuz ve daha hızlı bir şekilde yerine getirme durumuna gelmiştir. Yapay zekâ çalışmaları ile hesaplama yapmanın dışında bir de zihinsel işlemleri de başarabilen, insanın üst bilişsel süreçleri olarak kabul edilen anlama, yorumlama ve düşünme eylemlerini de yerine getirebilen bir varlık yaratılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu durumda yapay zekâ çalışmaları, sadece adındaki zekâ kavramının dar anlamıyla bir gelişim göstermez aynı zamanda zihinsel eylemlerin tümünü yerine getirmeye çalışır. Bu yüzden insanın fizyolojisinin ve kimyasının bilinmesi gerekir çünkü insan fizyolojisi ve kimyasının öğrenilmesi ile yeni bir yapay biyolojik varlık üretilmenin yolu açılmış olur. Böyle bir varlık sentetik, yapay, bio-teknolojik olduğundan ölümsüzlük düşüncesinin gelişmesine neden olacaktır. Transhumanist bir bağlamda değerlendirilecek bu varlık, insanın dönüşümünü ifade edecek ve insanüstü bir varlık kategorisi oluşturacaktır. Biyolojik doğal insanın eylemlerini düzenleyen dinlerin etki gücünü ve anlamını oluşturan ölümü ortadan kaldırarak neticede Tanrı ile bir çatışma ortaya çıkartacak gibi görünmektedir. Bu anlamda düşünüldüğünde yapay biyolojik varlık, evreni ve içindekileri yarattığı düşünülen dinlerin Tanrısına karşı bir başkaldırı olarak değerlendirilebilir mi? Evren kendiliğinden meydana gelmiş ise bu soru geçersiz sayılmaktadır. Ancak makalemizde bu soru evrenin yaratıcısının olduğunu düşünen dinler baz alınarak ve felsefe tarihinden yola çıkarak cevaplanmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay Zekâ, Ölümsüzlük, Tekno-Biyo Varlık, Transhümanizm, Teknoloji.

Introduction

Physical, mental, and psychological problems such as isolation at home, social distancing, uncertainty in the course of the epidemic, fear of death, anxiety for the future and worsening economic situation due to COVID-19 increased alcohol use. Studies have shown that this applies to both alcohol addicts and non-addicts.¹

¹ For more information, see The Lancet Gastroenterology Hepatology (2020). "Drinking Alone: COVID-19, Lockdown, and Alcohol-Related Harm", *The Lancet. Gastroenterology&Hepatology*, 5(7), 625. Jin Un Kim; Amir Majid; Rebekah Judge et al. (2020). "Effect of COVID-19 Lockdown on

Not only adults but also vulnerable individuals, such as young adults and children with poor mental function in general, started drinking alcohol or excessive alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 outbreak. A study by Louis Jacob et al. showed that more than one in six adults in the UK increased their alcohol consumption during quarantine, and a higher proportion of these were young adults (Jacob et al., 2021: 219).

Another study conducted by Nora E. Charles et al. on university students shows that although young adults are in the low-risk group for the most serious complications associated with COVID-19, they increased drinking because of experiencing the psychological effects of the pandemic (Charles et al., 2021: 296).

Turkey is in the same situation. Green Crescent civil society organizations in Turkey reported that social isolation based on the Covid-19 outbreak increased alcohol dependence and alcohol sales. According to figures from Turkey's leading supermarket chain; an increase in alcoholic beverage sales was observed during the quarantine period. During the period when citizens were quarantined at their homes (11-22 March 2020), the increase in the sales of wine, sparkling wine, and the champagne group was 83% and in liqueur, it was 74%, compared to the previous 10 days (1-10 March 2020). Liqueur was followed by rum (73% increase), raki (66% increase), gin-vodka-tequila (64% increase), cognac (63% increase), whiskey (61% increase) and beer (35% increase) (Current situation on addictions after the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey, 2021).

Extraordinary events occurring in the world cause unexpected changes in the life of human beings and this situation disrupts the psychological health of people.

While this is the case today due to COVID-19, it was the same during and after the First World War, one of the bloodiest wars in the past. People lost, seriously injured, children orphaned, women exposed to physical and mental pressure, and huge financial losses in the war deeply affected the citizens of the countries participating in the war. Existential inquiries, the inability to semanticize what happened, the pain of what happened, anxiety for the future, the tension of what experienced can be relieved, etc. created despair, anxiety, and fear of death in people and forced people to look for ways to get away from them.

Unfortunately, one of these ways is alcohol usage. The temporary relief of relaxation by drinking alcohol, losing the ability to think and getting away from your fears/worries, etc. becomes addictive over time, which leads to biological deformation and social decline. With this due diligence, Turkey has made significant strides in the fight against alcohol.

Alcohol Consumption in Patients with Pre-Existing Alcohol Use Disorder”, *The Lancet. Gastroenterology&Hepatology*, 5(10), 886-887. William D.S. Killgore; Sara A. Cloonan; Emily C. Taylor et al. (2021). “Alcohol Dependence During COVID-19 Lockdowns”, *Psychiatry Research*, 296, 113676.

Materials and Methods

It was investigated which remedies had been used before regarding alcohol usage under extraordinary conditions in Turkey. Initial sources about civil society organization The Green Crescent, which has been successful in this field and has been continuing its work for 101 years, were reached. These sources were written in Ottoman Turkish. These were translated into Latin letters and analyzed. They were associated with the The Prohibition of Alcohol Law enacted in Turkey at the same period and the acceptances of the era.

Results

In the early 20th century, anti-alcohol studies around the world have increased. Alcohol consumption restrictions were imposed in various countries such as France and England, and alcohol use prohibition were imposed in various countries such as United States, Finland, Norway and Canada.²

The most important reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions are that alcohol consumption causes biological degeneration and social decline. Turkish physicians/intellectuals such as Mazhar Osman Usman, Besim Ömer Akalın, Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, who share the same opinion, aimed to inform the public about the harms of drinking. Therefore, they wrote articles in periodicals, published books and booklets.

Under the leadership of one of these names, Psychiatrist Mazhar Osman, with the permission of Sultan Vahdettin, a more serious step was taken in the fight against alcohol and the Green Crescent Association (Hilal-i Ahdar) was founded on March 5, 1920. Mazhar Osman was the president of the association for 25 years (1920-1945).

1920s, when The Green Crescent was founded, is the year that The Turkish War of Independence continued after The First World War. Therefore, in the founded of The Green Crescent, the aim of responding to the British attempts to distribute alcohol and drugs for free to weaken the resistance against the occupation in İstanbul was also taken into consideration (Corporate History, 2021).

In the same year, on September 14, 1920, Men-i Müskirat Kanunu (The Prohibition of Alcohol Law) was issued in The First National Assembly. Trabzon Deputy Ali Şükrü Bey introduced the law proposal. In his proposal to protect the

² For detailed information on this issue, see Harry G. Levine (1985). "The Birth of American Alcohol Control: Prohibition, the Power Elite, and the Problem of Lawlessness", *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 63, 63-115. David H. Jernigan; Maristela G. Monteiro, Robin Room et al. (2000). "Towards a Global Alcohol Policy: Alcohol, Public Health and the Role of WHO", *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 78(4), 491-499. Jack. S. Blocker, Jr (2006). "Did Prohibition Really Work? Alcohol Prohibition as a Public Health Innovation", *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(2), 233-243. David P. Fidler (2001). "The Globalization of Public Health: The First 100 Years of International Health Diplomacy", *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 79(9), 842-849.

health of the people in 1920, Ali Şükrü Bey used the example of The Prohibition of Alcohol Law in America, although he did not prohibit religions.

The Prohibition of Alcohol Law consisted of the following eight articles.

Article 1: It is forbidden to manufacture, import, sell and use any kind of alcoholic beverage in the Ottoman Empire.

Article 2: Those who manufacture, import, transport and sell alcoholic beverages will be fined fifty lira for each kıyye (1283 grams) of alcoholic drink, and the alcoholic beverages obtained will be destroyed.

Article 3: Those who drink alcohol publicly or secretly will be punished with the penalty specified in Islam or a fine of fifty to two hundred lira or imprisonment from three months to one year. Officers who commit this crime will be dismissed from the civil service and the provisions on this issue cannot be appealed.

Article 4: With the approval and publication of this law, all items used in the production of alcohol will be confiscated. Existing drinks will be immediately sealed and allowed to be taken abroad within two months. At the end of two months, existing alcoholic beverages will be destroyed.

Article 5: Alcoholic substances to be used in medical procedures will be distributed to pharmacies by the Ministry of Health and their consumption will be controlled.

Article 6: A manual will be written by the Ministry of Health about the usage instructions and consumption of the alcohol-containing substances that will be used in medicine.

Article 7: This law is valid from its date of publication.

Article 8: Interior, Justice and Health representatives are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this law.

Ali Şükrü Bey was known as one of the strongest members of parliament to oppose Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For this reason, it has been argued that The Prohibition of Alcohol Law was imposed as a result of conservative and modern political conflict.

According to another view, this law was enacted with religious concerns, not health. Author Falih Rıfkı, one of the names Atatürk's close vicinity, also agreed with this view (Atay, 1961: 183).

The Prohibition of Alcohol Law was not very effective at the time of its implementation. It has even been suggested to have an opposite effect. In a story called Meyhanede Hanımlar (Ladies in Tavern), Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, master of social criticism in Turkish literature, made the hero of the story, Mrs. Bahriye say

that the prohibition of alcohol increased drinking hundred times and even those who did not drink started to drink (Hüseyin Rahmi, 1340: 12).

The Prohibition of Alcohol Law was amended by introducing a restriction instead of a prohibition without being abolished on April 9, 1924, and it was completely abolished on March 22, 1926³, however, The Green Crescent continued its work.

The first charter of The Green Crescent, which was founded about six months before The Prohibition of Alcohol Law and whose only original aim was to fight alcohol was written in Ottoman Turkish, the current language of the year, and was published by the Hilal Kitabevi (Hilal Printing House) in İstanbul in 1336 (1920).

There were 27 articles in The Green Crescent Association Charter. These articles were explained under the following headings:

“The Purpose and Duties of the Association”, “Duties of the Assembly and the Administrative Council”, “General Assembly”, “Election”, “Finance of the Association”.

Article 1: An association called "Green Crescent", headquartered in İstanbul, was founded.

The Purpose and Duties of the Association

Article 2: The aim of the association is the struggle for alcohol. To reach this aim:

First: First: Solutions that will serve as education thoughts e.g. telling the public about the harms of drinking, giving speeches to give advice, publishing brochures and articles, etc. will be implemented.

Second: It will attempt to pay great attention to the health education lessons in schools, starting with small classes.

Third: The association will try to treat alcohol addicts in hospitals, help their families and pay attention to the morality of their children.

Fourth: It will take action before the legislative council and executive power to ensure that the remedies deemed useful and feasible will be adopted and become law.

³ For detailed information on this issue, see Onur Karahanoğulları (2008). *Birinci Meclis'in İçki Yasağı: Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, Phoenix Yayınları: Ankara. Murat Arpacı (2015). “Sağlam Nesiller ya da Dejenerasyon: Türkiye’de Alkol Karşıtı Düşünce ve Hareket (1910-1950)”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 134, s. 30-54. Uğur Üçüncü (2012). *Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Bir Yasak Denemesi Men-i Müskirat (İçki Yasağı) Kanunu ve Toplumsal Hayata Yansımaları*, Çizgi Kitabevi: İstanbul.

Fifth: A congress will be held against alcohol in Turkey, and for this purpose, delegates will be sent that will represent Turkey in international conferences held in other countries.

Duties of the Assembly and the Administrative Council

Article 3: The association will have an honorary president, a president, two vice presidents, a general secretary, a cashier, two secretaries, and a board of directors of sixteen-members, and the other members that will form the board of administration.

a. Honorary president manages the association.

b. The president manages the negotiations, organizes the affairs of the association, and ensures the implementation of the decisions taken. If the honorary president participates in the negotiations, the presidency is given to the named person.

c. The vice president undertakes the duty of the president in the absence of a president.

d. The general secretary represents the association, sets the agenda, manages the correspondence, and records.

e. The cashier is in charge of recording and determining income and expenses regularly and managing the association's financial affairs.

f. The secretaries record and keep the summaries of the negotiations to be held in the board of directors and general assembly.

g. The members are chosen among experts in various fields and form the board of directors together with the board of administration.

h. The board of directors convenes at least once a month and decisions are taken by majority of vote.

General Assembly

Article 4: Anyone, male and female, Muslim and non-Muslim can be a member of the association.

Article 5: In order to become a member, antagonism of alcohol is essential. Anyone who struggles with drinking problems and decides to quit drinking can join the association.

Article 6: A member of The Green Crescent Association should considers not to drink for whatever reason, no matter what species and breed, an honor.

Article 7: The association has two types of members: principal and honorary.

a. Principal members are involved in the struggle with drinking.

b. Honorary members are those whose contributions are significant to success in the struggle with drinking, even though they are not a member of the association.

c. The honorary member is elected upon the proposal of the board of administration and the approval of the general assembly.

d. The general assembly consists of honorary members if they participate with full members.

Article 8: The general assembly convenes at least twice a year and more if deemed necessary, upon the invitation of the board of directors, discusses the agenda prepared and proposed by the board of administration and takes decisions.

Article 9: The general assembly convenes on the specified day, regardless of the number of members attending the meeting, upon the invitation made in the newspapers ten days before.

Article 10: Decisions are taken during the session with the majority of votes of the current members.

Article 11: Those who want to comment on any topic have the right to talk about a topic for a maximum of 15 minutes.

A member is not allowed to speak more than two times on the same topic.

Article 12: In order to discuss any issue other than the agenda, a proposal must be submitted to the presidency with the signatures of ten members.

Article 13: Regulation change proposal is submitted to the board of directors with the signatures of ten principal members.

The board of directors submits its opinions to the general assembly and can be replaced by the decision of two-thirds of the current member.

Election

Article 14: The board of directors is elected every year by secret ballot.

Article 15: The congress is held every october and the general assembly is invited to the congress. In this meeting, the board of directors reads the annual report and resigns after inviting the members to re-elect.

Article 16: In congress, a temporary president and two vice presidents are elected secretly and with a decision by two-thirds to administer the deliberation.

Article 17: Those on the old board of directors can be re-elected.

Article 18: In board of directors elections, one more than half of the current members are considered as the majority. In case of a draw, a draw will be drawn.

Expulsion from Association

Article 19: Those who openly use alcohol and make actions and suggestions that will harm the purpose of the association are considered to be resigned.

Article 20: A jury consisting of seven members, separate from the administrative board, will be formed to discuss this issue. The registration of the member from the association is deleted with the decision of two thirds of the jury.

Finance of the Association

Article 21: The association is managed by dues paid by its members and by external aid.

Article 22: The principal members give one lira a year.

Article 23: No fee is charged from the honorary members.

Additional

Article 24: The association will have branches outside of İstanbul and these branches will follow the program of The Green Crescent.

Article 25: The board of directors of other branches will be elected like the headquarters and in its own location.

Article 26: Other branches will attend the annual congress with delegates chosen by them that are from their locations or from İstanbul and report their annual work to the headquarters.

Article 27: Other branch centers are autonomous in acting with the decision of the board of directors in terms of detail provided as long as they do not deviate from the purpose.

In 1934, with the decision of the Council of Ministers, The Green Crescent has been granted the "publicly beneficial association status". Green Crescent, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2020, which works to protect the society from harmful habits without discrimination, taking into account national and moral values and using scientific methods, plays a leading role in the fight against addiction at national and international level.⁴

The day between March 1st and 7th are celebrated as Green Crescent Week in Turkey since 1953.

The Green Crescent, which started working with these 27 articles, expanded its field of activity. Today Green Crescent, fighting the addiction of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, technology, gambling, etc., is a non-governmental organization that fulfills and improves public health and advocacy tasks.

⁴ For detailed information on this issue, see <https://www.yesilay.org.tr/en/corporate/vision-mission>

Discussion and Conclusion

In order to eliminate the negative effects of alcohol consumption which is increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic today, public service announcements should be made in the visual and written media around the world and help should be offered to especially vulnerable people. For this reason, non-governmental organizations such as The Green Crescent, which work diligently for the same purpose, should be supported in addition to state institutions.

Getting information about other non-governmental organizations established to rehabilitate those who resort to alcohol under difficult and pessimistic conditions such as pandemic and war in the world, and to protect vulnerable groups, especially about the period they were founded, will reveal the social, political, and health-related situation of the period in question more clearly and provide, guide and contribute to today's studies.

Nowadays, when remedies are sought for the spread and increase of alcohol consumption in the COVID-19 pandemic, we tried to show The Green Crescent, which started to fight against alcohol 101 years ago, as an example with its reasons and regulations.

Getting information about other non-governmental organizations founded to rehabilitate those who resort to alcohol under difficult and pessimistic conditions such as pandemic and war in the world, and to protect vulnerable groups, especially about the period they were founded, will reveal the social, political, and health-related situation of the period in question more clearly and provide, guide and contribute to today's studies.

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Çatışma Beyanı/Declaration of Conflict

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