

RELIGIOUS VIRTUAL LIVING AND METAVERSE ON THE REAL WORLD

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Mustafa YİĞİTOĞLU

Assoc. Dr. Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University,

Theology Faculty, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

E-mail: myigitoglu@hotmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0001-6308-1475

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Phone: +90 – 212 395 0000 Fax: +90 – 212 – 395 0001 E-mail: aes@musiad.org.tr

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Reel Dünya Üzerinde Dini Sanal Yaşamak ve Metaverse

ÖZ

Dinlere ve birçok inanışa göre üzerinde yaşanılan dünya insanlığın imtihanının bir mekanıdır ve burada tüm inananlar aşkın olan varlığa kulluğunu göstermek arzusunda. Bunun için insanlar çeşitli tapınaklar, sunaklar vb. yer ve mekanlar oluşturmaktadır. Böylece bu gibi yerlerde inançları gereği çeşitli ritüellerini, ibadetlerini yapmaya gayret göstermektedir. İnsanoğlu, bütün bu ritüelleri gerçekleştirirken belirlenen usul ve kurallara göre hareket etmek durumundadır. Günümüze ağların ağı olarak nitelendirilen ve sade bir şekilde insanlığın hayatına giren internet, dini, sosyal, ekonomik vb. gibi pek çok hususta tahayyül dahi edilemeyecek değişikliklere neden olan bir başlangıca kapı aralamıştır. İnsan, fiziki alemde yaptığı birçok uygulamaları, mekân, zaman gibi çeşitli faktörlerden kaynaklanan engellerden ötürü, internet vasıtasıyla sanal dünyaya taşımış durumdadır. Böylelikle dindaşların birbiriyle iletişimi kolaylaşmış, hızlı iletişimle birlikte, dini birçok faaliyetlerin yapılabilmesi daha mümkün olmuştur. Mekân olarak bir araya gelmesi pek mümkün olunmasa da internet vasıtasıyla dünyanın bir ucundan diğer ucuna sanal ortamlarda bir araya gelmeler veya yine mekânsal faktörlerden ötürü icra edemedikleri ritüellerini dijital sahada ifa edebilmeleri imkânı doğmuştur. Bu çalışmada internetin insanoğluna sunduğu imkanlarla birlikte reelde yapılagelen ibadet ve ritüellerin sanalda da icra edilmesinin cevazlığına girmeden çeşitli coğrafyada bunların yapıyor olmasının gerçekliği üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bütün ağların bir platformda şekillenmesi olarak kurgulanan Metaverse ile birlikte ritüellerin icra edilebilmesi ve burada ayrıca çeşitli hislerin insanlara yaşatılabilmesi de pek çok dindarın dikkatini çekmesi açısından dikkate değer bir konudur. Henüz oluşumunu tamamlamamış ikiz evren ve sınırsız dünya olarak tanımlanan ve çoğunluğu genç nüfusu barındıran Metaverse dini niteliğe haiz kişi ve kuruluşların göz ardı etmemesi gereken bir platformdur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Metaverse, Sanal Din, İkiz Dünya, Sonsuz Evren, Meta-evren, Avatar.

Religious Virtual Living and Metaverse on the Real World

ABSTRACT

According to the religions and lots of beliefs, the world that is lived on it is a place the test of humanity and all believers desire to show their servitude to the transcendent being here. Therefore, people built various temples, altar place and spaces etc. So, they try to give their all the various rituals and worship in such places as per their beliefs. The human being has to act according to the determined procedures and rules while they are performing all these rituals. The internet, which is described as the network of networks at the present time and simply entered the life of humanity, has religious, social, economic and etc. People have carried many of their applications in the physical world to the virtual world by way of the internet due to the obstacles caused by various factors such as space and time. In this way, the communications of the coreligionists became so easier with each other and it became possible to carry out many religious activities with the fast communication. Although it is not possible to come together in a place, it has become possible for them to come together in virtual environments from one end of the world to the other by way of the internet. Beside, it has become possible to perform their rituals in the digital field, which they could not perform due to spatial factors by way of the internet. People worship accordingly their beliefs, the same action is done in virtual life. In various geographies, especially this matter is emphasized. The associated with the Metaverse, which is designed as the shaping of all networks on a platform is performing rituals and making people experience various feelings here is an important matter with regards to attracting the attention of many religious people. The Metaverse, which is defined as a twin universe and an unlimited world that has not yet completed its formation, and that has a young population, is a platform that should not be ignored by religious people and organizations.

Keywords: Metaverse, Virtual Religion, Twin World, Infinite Universe, Meta Universe, Avatar.

Introduction

The real world is a place where human beings are sent by Allah, the almighty creator, for a certain purpose and desistence of life in a limited time. Human beings are born here, live, and eventually go to from this universe to the eternity. People also feel the need to believe in and worship a being in the meantime. Thus, people by their nature take charge of themselves the transcendent. The billions people around the world the world live according to this reality. Undoubtedly that, this reality which we are talking about is "religion".

Religion is a phenomenon that has existed with human beings. Human being and religion are in the indissociable situation from each other. Even though people do not accept it, they are helpness and they are weak in the face of the events. Therefore, human being has to intend to a religion that created by themselves or created by God. So, whatever religion human being may belong to, the being he believed in became the only refuge of man. Human being always wishes to present his condition to the being that he cares about and blesses, to ask for certain things from him and to communicate with him. For this reason, it creates various dwellings, temples and places in the real world. In addition to these, it acts within the framework of rules and procedures so that they can perform their rituals in this direction. These are the rules established for real people living in this physical world.

Virtualization and Religion

Although people live on the real world, they have diversified their needs, especially with the use of the internet, together with computers, thanks to the knowledge and technological advances that we have achieved today. Undoubtedly, this situation has opened a door to the virtual world as well as the real world.

The intention of the virtual world is the matter of facts that originate from the needs of today's internet age, occuring in the physical world, but are called virtual in the modern sense. The expression of virtual is so different from the material and spiritual classification and it can be contain material and spiritual contents. But, the main purpose of this classification here, is to establishment a connection from a remote location to another location over the internet. It has become inevitable that everything we needed for life take its place in today's internet world with the birth of the virtual world. Because there is a virtual space that has become visibled beyond the real world at the present time. A life has been created here which takes place in the physical world and created by real people in virtual environments. Human become able to do his actions on many issues over the internet such as religious, social, economic, etc, in this new world established in this way.

Undoubtedly that these innovations which created by man have been one of the issues that should be emphasized a lots. The worship/rituals performed in the real Physical acts on which we breathe, wander and the likes of these many actions, are now carried out on the internet, which we describe as virtual. People have carried their practices in the physical world to the virtual world due to space, time and some obstacles. It is not entered into the discussion of the permissibility of what believers and religious people around the world doing in the virtual World in this study. The reality of the orientation of different beliefs to virtual life is emphasized in various geographies.

The expression of virtual which is the title of this study, has become the most widely used instrument of today's internet age. Because this kinds of actions that take place on the internet are called virtual. It has also attracted the attention of many religious people and organizations because of the internet is used by almost every household in the world and is a facilitating part of life. The Internet has added

a different dimension to people's religious life, as it offers the user the opportunity to using it comfortably and is the most functional of the communication networks. The person and people from all religious communities and religious orders can freely constitute their own or sites, forum, blogs etc of institutions. (Ramo/Chama, 1996) Thus, religious persons and institutions became more visible and known everywhere. The beliefs and religions solicited by individuals have increased or lost their importance in the internet environment. Because the information easily obtained has become more easily discussed and questioned in this virtual world. Also, this virtual world has been transformed into a missionary arena by making it a propaganda tool for beliefs of people by various organizations.

Undoubtedly, the using of internet in the world the communications of the coreligionists became so easier with each other and it became possible to carry out many religious activities with the fast communication. Although it is not possible to come together in a place, it has become possible for them to come together in virtual environments from one end of the world to the other by way of the internet.

It is an example for the our matter that creating a virtual altar with the purpose of giving various offerings to the gods of Puja, which is a part of the Hindu religion. The people of the Hindu religion to pray and perform their worship by eliminating in this belief. ("Ganesh Puja", n.d.)

The internet sites have been prepared for Jews living in the world who have not had the opportunity to go to Jerusalem, and allowing them to pray about Jerusalem and the Wailing Wall by virtue of the internet network. The people or organizations that provide to the opportunity to send their prayers to the holy places for a fee or free of charge from their location. . ("Aish", 2022; Haberli, 2013, s. 27)

The rituals were realised on the Internet through forums, various social networking sites and online church web networks are also important for Christians to using the virtual format. There are a lots of websites which allow a worshiper to participate in the church visually and audibly, both as a spectator and a listener. ("Online Christian Global Church", n.d.)

There are lots of rituals from different religions performed virtually on the internet, examples of which we have presented above, which widely performed in the world. The Various social networking sites have also been added such as twitter, facebook, instagram, etc which created on the internet, with such services for the believers. By way of these, the prayers that people share with each other, salat-ı tafriciye, salawat, tasbihat, and chapter divisions, as well as good or evil discourses against each other, congratulatory messages on blessed days or nights can quickly circulate among the masses. The tweet that a twitter user sent to his/her followers to read, pray and spread to others can be an example of this issue that we have mentioned. (Personal Communication, August 1, 2013) A manin Sürgüncüler Town of Midyat District of Mardin who stated that he visits the graves of his deceased relatives every year, photographed all the tombstones in his town and conveyed this visit to the internet with his own website. Thus, he stated that he and those concerned could visit virtually any city he was in and that he could send his prayers to his deceased. (Ayaz, 2007)

In the real world, altars should be created in web networks with the intention of presenting various offerings to the gods of Puja, which is an element of Indian religion, and various offerings should be presented online by religious followers without going to temples. (Yığıtoğlu, 2015, p. 178) It is very important for people to be able to pray as if they are on a wailing wall, to organize online communions by church communities in various geographies and for believers to participate in it, in terms of showing the extent reached in religious virtual life.

Beyond The Virtual Metaverse

The point that virtuality has reached since the birth of the Internet has not been fully shaped in the minds of many people. Because it is not easy to predict where this adventure, which started as plain and simple as Web 01/02, will evolve. The current stop of the virtual world on the Internet is the Metaverse, that is, the Meta-universe for now. It is used as the beyond/other universe in Turkish. Metaverse has been one of the most talked about concepts all over the world. This was first raised in 1992 novel of Neal Stephenson Snow Crash. With the innovation the brought by rapid technological advances, an online multidimensional fictional world has been created. This; It is an environment where the real and virtual worlds are brought together, where users can shop, communicate with other users, trade and maintain their daily lives through their avatars, that is, their digital representatives, regardless of a physical place. This platform, which rapidly increases the number of users in our country, has a great interest in the world. (Narin, 2021, p. 17)

There is a network form has been created has been created, which is defined as the network of networks in the world and is called beyond the internet, has been used for a long time in the service of humanity, that is, aims to include all virtual worlds. It is a virtual universe where digital innovations like virtual reality come together. The activities in Metaverse are done in the form of video games by using avatars in the digital twin world, in contradiction to regular browsing on the Internet or taking part in social media. It is important using virtual reality (VR-Virtual Reality) and augmented reality (AR-Augmented Reality) to make all these more realistic at this point. (Haberli, t.y.)

In this new constructed universe, lots of things are bought and sold similar to the real world and generally the trading transactions are carried out with cryptocurrencies and NFT (non-fungible tokens) that have just entered the real world here. This realm is defined as a set of 3D virtual worlds, where users will constantly interact by socializing, and whose vitality will continue at any moment. (Tsui, 2021, s. 82) It is also seen as a digital twin of the world where real transactions can be made and many things can be bought. It is presented that as a platform that opens the door to having an infinite number of worlds like Second Life. Metaverse is also mentioned as a parallel universe with its own economy, consisting of virtual worlds, rooms and people. Undoubtedly, the humanity will gradually begin to spend most of their daily lives as avatars inside a virtual world over the next 100 years, (Calandra, 2021, pp. 17-18). As a matter of fact these involved in the Metaverse will be able to experience a lost of the real feelings they experience in the beyond through wearable technologies such as VR and AR. There are a lots of definitions have been made about the Metaverse. In fact, while it is touted as the second universe or alternative life created by technology giants; It is seen by some as a concept with no future.

When the concept of Metaverse was first came emerged some large and small businesses started to be interested in it, and then companies started to take big steps about Metaverse with huge budgets. Facebook unified all its companies under the name of "Meta" and announced its visions for the future in October 2021. The founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, left his CEO position and bought the music service Tidal and the payment system Square, and named all these companies "Block", in the same year, in November. It is meaningful that these companies own both the Metaverse of Metaverse and the name Block of Blockchain technology. In case of January 2022, Microsoft has been bought a game company called Activision Blizzard for 69 billion dollars, which is higher than hundreds of state economies. (Özcan, 2022) If it is analyzed that Microsoft has invested the huge budget in such a game company, it will be understood how open to a medium Metaverse. When we look at the meanings of

Metaverse, it is understood that it consists of unlimited rooms. It is seen that these rooms are composed of games that have existed for years. For instance, on the Roblox game platform, where 202 million people spend their time, more than twenty-five million virtual vehicles have been created and bought and changed hands 5,8 billion times within this game. ("How do Roblox Users Express Themselves", t.y.) So, spending time of people who found billions in this virtual world and sell the objects they have created virtually, which whets the appetite of many businesses, from clothing to accessories. Therefore, Metaverse has become a center of attraction as a commodity of capitalist world at this time.

The humanity has tried to carry out all its work in the virtual environment, due to the worldwide coronavirus epidemic experienced in recent years. The officer, the assigned duties, the order of the product to be sold by an operator, the education activities of teachers and students, and moreover, lots of sectors have had to turn to do all their work from digital platforms. The life has become virtually virtual with a virus. Young and old alike, everybody is connected to the Internet every day, and therefore they stay loyal to virtual life. It is known that not only companies in the real world but also people who are not avatars are looking for different areas in the virtual world, With the internet being an inseparable part of humanity. The prevision of many actions done in virtual has started to be seen as well in real life. The food, beverages, clothing, etc. which is ordered from virtual platforms. needs came to the door in a short time. The symposiums, the congresses and lectures held with the panels have been rewarded thanks to this digital. For this reason, people have come to a point where they can not separate the real life from the virtual and they have become even more dependent on it. It will be inevitable for all humanity that turns to this field to have their own values and religious sensitivities. Therefore, the religious people will make an effort about protecting the real. At the same time they will maintain its sensitivity and include moral and ethical elements on the platforms here by not allowing the idleness. Metaverse is an open area to referring the every freedom areas. While it will be a center of interest for commercial persons and organizations, it will also become a center of attraction for people and institutions with religious beliefs and thoughts to carry out their activities.

While the services presented by the internet to people of religioner, cannot be denied if it is considered the point internet's has reached, it can be more or less predicted what kind of opportunities the internet will offer to people. These platforms will host representatives of a lots of religions in the world and will provide opportunities for various activities. The basic internet which carries its worship and rituals to its current position without any obstacles to its coreligionists, has been used very effectively with the examples, In the transition process of Web 01 to Web 02, the simple internet. Thanks to the Metaverse, it is very important to be able to perform rituals with virtual reality and also to make people experience various feelings, in terms of attracting the attention of many religious people.

Protection of Humanity and Values in the Other-Universe

The fact that the internet is using as a facilitating factor in almost every part of human life, increases the religious knowledge skills of people in their religious life, and the actual application of these, , increases the importance of this medium, especially in the virtual. The religious individuals and institutions are also trying to seize new opportunities in parallel, along with the new charms created by the internet in the world.

Of course, the new discussions on religion and beliefs have been inevitable and it will be inevitable, while all this is going on. While different beliefs and religions could not fully complete their evolution, especially in terms of living and performing religion in the real world, the emergence of the virtual

world, contrary to reality, brought with it very serious problems. The most important of these is the preservation of religion, life, property, mind and generation, which almost all beliefs and religions try to establish, and aiming to protect humanity and the values that it believes in. The preservation of these interests, which must be protected, also constitutes the infrastructure of the legal systems in religions. In cases such as the usurpation of rights by individuals against each other, people are both reacted by the society and punished within the framework of the determined legal rules. (Yiğitoğlu and Habergetiren, 2016, p. 271)

It is not known how religion can be practiced and the rights and responsibilities of people in many issues with virtualization, while this is the case in reality. It is a complete mystery where the internet and many opportunities provided by virtualization will reach people. It is seen that the founders of the virtual platform include pagan, animist or shaman elements in some of their fictions. In addition, contrary to the institutional religions based on rules in the virtual universe, people's religion, belief, etc, based on their own self comfort. Undoubtedly that it can create forms. Therefore, it is possible for people with religious sensitivities to be affected by such formations. It is a very important issue in terms of the degeneration of generations that institutions and organizations representing religion do not leave this channel unattended in order to protect their followers from such forms.

It should be known that there should be limits within the scope of religion and people, although the opportunities of the Internet are perceived as limitless. It would be unacceptable for the virtual world to be created in a way that would contradict the values people believe in. It is the human being who will live the virtual world. It is unthinkable to think of a virtual world that does not contain law and does not include religious values and facts, just as there is no world without rules. Therefore, it is the most basic right of people to present a framework that will not deny religious values and phenomena in an environment like Metaverse where networks meet. In addition to this, it is essential to prevent many unlawful acts that have occurred or may occur in the future.

As a matter of fact, harassment of a female user in the "Metaverse"-based online video game "Horizon Worlds", which is shown as a social environment, entertainment, or business virtual platform where users will spend time with their virtual avatars ("Sexual Harassment in Metaverse", 2022), is a sign of unlimited freedom. It proves that the virtual world, which is presented as an address, is also unlawful and idleness causes chaos.

It is a reality that the widespread and functional use of Metaverse creates opportunities in many areas. It is also a platform that can be used very effectively in education and training. The study in which "The Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers Towards Religious Education Based on Virtual Reality Glasses" is discussed, as a good example of this effective using. It is important that religious places, which are difficult to go to as a class, are visited through VR and have an easier experience about these places. (Demir, n.d.) As a matter of fact, pretending to be there with virtual reality rather than looking at a visual picture can be more effective and permanent in terms of education of the students. Consequently, the using of such a tool for education is a positive method for both teachers and learners. Because all the tools that can be useful in education and training are important materials.

It is considering that the majority of internet users are made up of the young population of school age. So, it would be a great loss not to use such tools in education. It is an opportunity to increase the permanence of learning, to provide such trainings to pilgrim candidates during Umrah and Hajj visits to holy places. For this reason, it is so important that for Muslim societies to understand the Metaverse well and to adapt to this development before it is too late, so, to produce various projects regarding its positive aspects, and taking the necessary measures so that its followers are not adversely affected

on its negative sides. Otherwise, the point that this platform will reach cannot be known exactly, it may cause problems that may cost all generations. It is possible that the new generations, who cannot be made conscious and spend their lives in the virtual, with the Metaverse created, will emerge with different demands, although the view of the Islamic religion on virtual worship is known. As a matter of the fact, the passages of the study, the Puja ritual in Hinduism, the prayer of a Jew at the Wailing Wall from a distant place, the online communion of Christians in some churches were described in the previous pages. It is seen that this type of virtual worship began to take shape in a separate format and gained prevalence, with the formation of Metaverse.

Conclusion

Human being; he is star to other beings with his intelligence, wisdom and many features. We can easily see this with its dominance over the real world, , he is also a helpless being but by nature, that is, by nature. It is originated that human being was sent to the real world for a certain time, to live for a certain purpose. The person who born with this purpose lives only until the appointed time. Also, human being acts with the feeling of believing and worshipping a transcendent being, during this period. For this reason, human being creates various temples and places on earth. Human beings try to make life easier and overcome various obstacles, which they have invented with the experience and knowledge gained over time with the internet. Thus, people try to perform many worships and rituals, which they see as obstacles and cannot attend by virtue of the various reasons, through virtual platforms. This shows that people tend to make a lots of innovative discoveries every day by tending to research the new one that makes life easier. The internet, which was discovered in the last century, and the last stop of the internet, Metaverse is just one of them. Metaverse is also the most open-ended and unpredictable invention of recent times for humanity.

When the internet was first discovered, it was used only as a simple network. However, it has started to take place in many fields due to the fact that it is a facilitating factor in terms of its discovery by the users. The internet, which started in areas such as simple messaging and communication; It has become more widespread with websites, blogs and social networks. Especially, it has been indicated the attention of large and small companies with the discovery of its commercial benefits, innovations in many issues. This platform, which has become a source of income now, has also increased the appetite of the huge enterprises. Thus, the internet has been transformed into a medium where large companies can direct the feelings, thoughts and needs of the people. Metaverse has also been a digital platform created with the intention of large companies to act with the desire to earn much more.

There is a virtual world has been created in which future generations will take part, spend most of their time and become more dependent. This place has been described by its creators as a twin world, and as an infinite universe. In the Metaverse which is defined as a parallel universe A lot of things related to human needs can be bought and sold through avatars. These kinds of trades can be made with cryptocurrencies or NFT.

Metaverse has become a platform where many qualified individuals and organizations understand its importance, although it attracted the attention of commercial individuals or businesses over time, in the first place. This virtual world, which is already growing rapidly, should be discussed in detail by experts with its positive and negative aspects. It should be transformed into an area to be knitted with both its legal infrastructure and its religious and moral values. All people can not be deprived of unlawful moral and spiritual values in the real world. In the same way, they should not be deprived of all these in virtual life. The chaos occurs in a real environment where there are no rules and moral and moral values and so on it is impossible that the chaos and anarchy not to arise in digital areas.

Therefore, the individuals and institutions that can represent religious moral rules in the world should pay attention to the Metaverse. Otherwise, it is already clear that young people will face many problems such as religion, spirituality, morality, socialization, etc, considering that the majority of its users are young people, who are the future generations. Being able to giving the answer to the tendencies and demands that may arise for the performance of many religious worships and rituals in the virtual is an important problem for people or institutions representing religion.

The Metaverse which newly created and has not yet completed its formation, is also met with great interest in our country. Therefore, the government administrators, academics, informatics and many related individuals and organizations should not be indifferent to this newly known and rapidly gaining user platform. It should be possible to find solutions to all kinds of problems that may be encountered, and also to take advantage of every opportunity. The possibilities of the virtual world should be used In order to make education more effective. If the online panels, symposiums, congresses can be held remotely during pandemic periods, these can be done more realistically with wearable equipment such as VR-AR in Metaverse. Thus, the obstacles such as place, time, economy and distance will be easily overcome.

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