



# SULTAN İLAHİYAT ARAŞTIRMALARI DERGİSİ

Altı Aylık Hakemli Kısa Makale, Araştırma ve İnceleme Dergisi

Vol./Cilt: 3, Issue/Sayı: 1, June/Haziran 2025, pp./ss. 1-16.

## Tillich's Relation of Religion with Other Fields: History and Philosophy of Religion\*

*Tillich'in Din ile Diğer Alanlar Arasındaki İlişkisi: Tarih ve Din Felsefesi*

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### Citation Information/Kaynakça Bilgisi

Turan, Mustafa. "Tillich's Relation of Religion with Other Fields: History and Philosophy of Religion". *Sultan İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi (SİAD)* 3/1 (Haziran 2025), 1-16. <https://zenodo.org/10.5281/zenodo.15776561>

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### Abstract

In our article, we tried to explain Paul Tillich's understanding of history and philosophy. In this article, what Tillich understood from history is explained by quoting from his past sources. While his approach to history exhibits an existential structure, his main focus is on the figure of Jesus, the Messiah, that is, the Jesus of faith. According to him, while whether events are real or not is a subject of another science, as a philosopher who looks at history through religion, the meaning that historical events express for the person is more important. Another approach style is seen in explaining the relationship between religion and philosophy. While conceptually separating the sign and symbol, he also states that these sciences use different styles of expression. For example, while philosophy expresses the reality it investigates with concepts; religion explains by referring to symbols. As a method, we have tried to use a holistic and critical perspective that sees the whole as it is without forcing it. Tillich is a thinker who lived in both America and Europe, experienced big and small cities at the same time, was raised in a liberal family environment from his mother and a conservative family environment from his father, and has also seen both transitional centuries. He aims to use nothing in his method without wasting it, and while doing so, he exhibits an approach that does not resort to reductionist forcing.

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, History, Tillich.

### Highlights

- History records unique events, not repetitive processes that can be retested.
- Historical events are not subject to experimentation.
- Man cannot escape from history. This inability to escape is due to the fact that man is the subject that makes history from within history.
- Faith cannot guarantee truth based on facts, but faith can interpret the meaning of facts from the point of view of man's ultimate concern.

\* Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article, Geliş Tarihi / Date Received: 20.05.2025, Kabul Tarihi / Date Accepted: 29.06.2025, Yayın Tarihi / Date Published: 30.06.2025.

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- Philosophical truth is the truth about the structure of being; the truth of faith is the truth about one's ultimate concern. But the difference is that there is a point of similarity between the ultimate of the philosophical problem and the ultimate of religious concern. In both cases, ultimate reality is sought and expressed - conceptually in philosophy, symbolically in religion.

### Öz

Makalemizde Paul Tillich'in tarih ve felsefe anlayışlarını anlatmaya çalıştık. Bu makalede Tillich'in tarihten ne anladığı geçmişteki kaynaklarından alıntı yapılarak açıklanmıştır. Onun tarih yaklaşımı varoluşçu bir yapı sergilerken ana odağında Mesih olan İsa figürü yani imanın İsa'sı bulunur. Ona göre olayların gerçek olup olmaması başka bir bilimin konusuyken tarihe din üzerinden bakan bir filozof olarak tarihsel olayın kişi için ifade ettiği anlam daha çok önemlidir. Diğer bir yaklaşım tarzı ise din ve felsefe arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklarken görülür. Kavramsal olarak işaret ve sembolü ayırırken aynı zamanda bu bilimlerin farklı ifade tarzları kullandığını belirtir. Örneğin, felsefe araştırdığı gerçekliği kavramlarla ifade ederken; din sembollere atıfta bulunarak açıklama yapar. Yöntem olarak da kullanacağımız bütünü zorlamadan olduğu gibi gören holistik metod olarak kullanılan bütüncül ve eleştirel bakış kullanılmaya çalışılmıştır. Tillich, hem Amerika hem de Avrupa'da yaşayan, büyük ve küçük şehirleri aynı anda teneffüs etmiş, anne tarafından liberal baba tarafından ise muhafazakâr bir aile ortamında yetişmiş, aynı zamanda geçiş yüzyıllarının her ikisini görmüş bir düşünür olarak yönteminde hiçbir şeyi heba etmeden kullanmayı amaçlayan bunu yaparken de indirgemeci zorlamaya kaçmayan bir yaklaşım sergileyen bir düşündürdür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Felsefe, Din Felsefesi, Tarih, Tillich.

### Öne Çıkanlar

- Tarih, tekrar test edilebilen mükerrer süreçleri değil eşsiz olayları kaydeder.
- Tarihsel olaylar deneye tabi değildir.
- İnsan tarihten kaçamaz. Bu kaçamama durumunu ise insanın tarihin içinden tarihi yapan özne olmasıdır.
- İman gerçeğe dayalı hakikati garanti edemez. Fakat iman, gerçeklerin anlamını, insanın nihai kaygısı noktayı nazarından yorumlayabilir.
- Felsefi hakikat, varlığın yapısı hakkındaki hakikattir; imanın hakikati ise birinin nihai kaygısı hakkındaki hakikattir. Fakat fark şudur: felsefi sorunun nihaisi ile dini kaygının nihaisi arasında bir benzerlik noktası bulunmaktadır. Her iki durumda, nihai gerçeklik aranır ve ifade edilir - felsefede kavramsal olarak, dinde ise sembolik olarak.

## 1. Introduction

In this article, we will not discuss Tillich's perspective on the relationship between science and religion, but rather focus and drive purpose on the thinker's relationship of religion with history and philosophy. We use holistic approach while writing this article. The scope of study is only focused on his understanding of science and its relation with philosophy to the extent of religion. The methodology of the study is analytical and historical analyze. The problem of the study is whether the so-called fields are related to each other or not.

## 2. Religion and History

Before moving on to Tillich's understanding of history, it is necessary to specify what history and philosophy of history are. History examines recurring events. The historian progresses by describing events and cataloging information. He examines systematically, not historically. History is used in three different meanings and levels (Özlem, 2010): past human actions and events (social-historical process), a science that deals with these events, explains and interprets

them chronologically (historical science), and the condition for understanding this process as a fact by humans (philosophy of history). In another definition, history as past human and social events is called “*res gestae*”; and the discipline that deals with these events, that is, the science of history, is called “*historia rerum gestarum*” (Ortaylı, 2006).

The method used by history is similar to antiquarianism. *Tamhish al-Ahbar*: This method, which means the criticism of sources, distinguishes truth from falsehood, right from wrong, and the conformity of news with reality is determined and confirmed. *Ta'lil al-Vakayi*: This method, which means the determination of the cause-effect relationship between social facts and events, reveals the way events emerged, their order, and the laws between them (Togan, 1985). It was initially defined as the narration of legends and later as their transmission by writing (historiography). In addition, the philosophy of history interprets this information and reaches whether past events are real or not.

According to Tillich, history records unique events, not repetitive processes that can be tested again. Historical events are not subject to experiment. History describes, explains, and understands. Understanding requires participation. This is the difference between historical and scientific truth. In historical truth, the interpreting subject is involved, while in scientific truth it remains outside. Since the truth of faith implies a complete participation, historical truth has often been compared to the truth of faith. Historical truth is, first of all, a truth based on facts; it differs from the poetic truth of epics or the mythical truth of legends. Faith cannot guarantee truth based on facts. But faith can and must interpret the meaning of facts from the point of view of man's ultimate concern. In doing so, faith transfers historical truth to the dimension of the truth of faith. In the anecdotal parts of the New Testament and the Old Testament; historical, legendary and mythological elements are brought together and are impossible to separate. There is no way to reach the historical events that would reveal the image of Jesus. The truth of faith cannot be made dependent on the historical truth of stories and legends. To identify faith with belief in the historical accuracy of the Biblical narratives is to dangerously distort the meaning of faith. The work of investigating the degree of probability and improbability of the Biblical narrative must be done with all the tools of sound philological and historical method. Deciding whether the original copy of the Quran is the same as the text is not a matter of faith, although it is a fervent belief for the followers of Islam. These are matters of historical truth. (Tillich, 2014). In other words, Tillich's understanding of history is neither history nor philosophy of history. It is what history means to us today from an existential perspective.

According to Tillich, man cannot escape from history. This inability to escape is because man is the subject who makes history from within history. Communism, socialism, national socialism, capitalism, fascism and even transcendentalism open their eyes, live and develop from within history (Adams, 1952). This situation is related to Tillich's phenomenological perspective on history. He does not look at the past as an object. In phenomenology,

phenomena are understood not only in their historical contexts but also in their ideal relationships. The historian cannot understand the absolute nature of religious knowledge in the way that the believer understands it. By researching a religion, one does not become a believer of that religion, only the perspective is limited to describing the perspective of the believer. Because faith is not only a subject of knowledge and what the historian seeks is different. As Van der Leeuw stated, what is the object of religion for the researcher is the subject of religion for the believer (Kuşçu, 2011). The historicity of man is that the person's knowledge about himself can never be completed (Çınar, 2005).

According to Tillich, history is expressed through the eyes of a group with the concept he calls "historical consciousness". According to this concept, in order for an event to be history, it must have a meaning for those who narrate it and those who receive it through tradition. Historical consciousness expresses itself within the culture that is passed down from generation to generation. It exists to meet the needs of the group in the tradition that is lived. In past ages, this consciousness was represented by legends and mythologies. The historical group presents historical reality by combining it with myths. Tradition does not express clear historical reality in the same way. Therefore, it expresses religion as a view of culture. No one writes history with a superior perspective, history is written within culture. However, the science of history does not bother to search for hidden symbolic meaning (Tillich, 1963).

Tillich sees time as "kairos". He defines Kairos as being sufficient to achieve something (Adams, 1952). The Greek worldview before Tillich basically sees existence as "spatial", while the worldview of the Abrahamic tradition sees existence as "temporal". Rationalist philosophers of modern thought argue that two things are necessary to bring the world into being: thought and occupying space. We can say that in a language view that constructs reality and is creative, existence is tied to time, while in an objective and representative language view, existence is explained more spatially (Çınar, 2005). According to Tillich, however, man is not the key to history, a situation beyond history. He actively participates in historical activity within a historical group. The meaning of history can be understood by discovering this meaningful activity. In order to find the meaning of history and for Jesus, whom he refers to as the New Being, to re-emerge; it is necessary to be in a group with we-consciousness. This group is the Church. But without what he calls the "Protestant Principle," even the church can lose touch with the dynamic relationship in Jesus as the Christ, which he calls the center (Adams, 1952).

That is, the past is not more valuable than the present, and is not a model but a substance. The past history of the world cannot be sanctified because it excludes other histories that could actually be. Those histories that could be are of greater importance than "real" history, and perhaps of greater value to our practical conduct (Castoriadis, 1995). Heidegger calls this "the rarity of time." (Buber, 2013, 96) Destiny is what life does to people; history is what people do to life. Since man is neither a God nor a pile of inert matter, he must constantly adapt to the middleness of human existence. The meaning of life is not determined, it is wide open. My life

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will be my own definition of what it means to be human. I will be the possibilities that I help create (Honer, 2003).

Tillich expresses the concept of *kairos*, which exists in Heidegger and Sartre, as living the moment to the fullest as Jesus, the Messiah. He also read the concept of *kairos* as overcoming the “socialist decision” in the crisis he experienced after World War I. In the pre-war preparation period, Tillich tried to combine Christianity and Socialism and called this the “socialist decision”. According to him, this is God’s judgment on the capitalist world (Bayer, 2009). After explaining concept of history, we should now focus a little bit on religion.

Tillich’s perception of religion can be compared to our concept of sharia. Revelation means the same as our concept of religion. In other words, when Tillich says religion, he understands a form that has been interpreted by humans at a historical point. Revelation is Jesus, whom he calls the New Being. According to Tillich, the relationship established with Christ is not a return to the past in terms of time and space. It is the perception of religion as if it were revealed to us again, as it was when it was first revealed (Hanefi, 2004) in the context of ‘reasons of revelation’. This situation means ensuring the cyclicity of revelation turning into an event and event into revelation. The person who will do this is the human being. The human being is not a container waiting to be filled with history, but rather a history-making agent whose individual actions are articulated to history. It is the ‘I’ who constructs history while collectively designing itself historically. As it is put, there are no historically frozen, definite, absolute moments. We say that they are so after a long time has passed. Otherwise, it is not a matter of grasping the grammar of history or the constants set by God. The subject does not have a pre-finished, established and unchanging essence, it is a process. This subject is a subject that transcends a unified and static individuality. Suicide has been viewed negatively because it ends existence and eliminates the subject (Tillich, 2016).

Paul Tillich's approach to history is also influenced by Romanticism. Romanticism is not only a special relationship with nature, but also a special relationship with history. Living in a town where every stone bears witness to history creates a sense of lived reality in which the past is not an object of knowledge but is incorporated into the present. When he came to America, he saw that the distinction was clearer. In the lectures and seminars he gave, the homes he visited and the American students he spoke to, he saw that direct emotional acquaintance with past reality was lacking. The students here had excellent historical knowledge, but this reality did not seem to concern them deeply. They remained as instruments of knowledge and could not become an element of their existence. While America's destiny began with the loss of the burdens and riches of the past and could think of it as the future, Europe's destiny is to experience the joy and suffering of historical existence in each generation and finally to think of it as the past. It is not only the historical awareness emphasized by the Romantic School, but also the special appreciation of the European Middle Ages that has profoundly influenced the intellectual world of Europe in the last hundred years.

Tillich's understanding of history and responsibility is similar to Sartre's. Citizens are not responsible for the crimes committed in the city, but he states that they are responsible as individuals who participate in the fate of the city and the fate of humanity in particular (Tillich, 1957). In their actions where freedom is combined with fate, they contribute to the fate they participate in. According to Tillich, human beings are free to aim for something and pursue it. Man is not bound to the situation he finds himself in. Man has the potential to overcome this situation. The understanding of values cannot be considered independently of man. Tillich distinguishes between arbitrary values and teleological values. According to him, values are not independent of the subject and are not absolute. New creations gain meaning in personalities that have achieved their integrity (Tillich, 1963).

Tillich's historical situation, which he calls "unique events", is similar to Jaspers' self-reinforcement of us humans in our own unique place. We are always in situations. Situations change, some opportunities arise, and if they are missed, they never come back (Akgün, 2015). According to Tillich, individual actions gain meaning in history. If there were no potentials of speech and life, actions would not occur, they would continue to be pure essences. The importance of an event comes from its potential to lead to events greater than itself. For this reason, Jesus' self-sacrifice caused him to become the Messiah.

According to Tillich, an infinite number of events have occurred throughout history. However, not every event that occurs can be called history. In order to call an event historical, that event must be directed towards a purpose. He uses the concept of "heterogony of purposes" for events that are not directed towards a purpose. In addition, in order for an event to be evaluated as history, it must be based on real events and accepted by concrete historical consciousness. The first situation is a method accepted by historians. It does not conflict with the methods of history. However, acceptance by historical consciousness is an effective but unintended situation for historical reality (Tillich, 1963).

According to Tillich, the belief in "eternal life" is a temporal symbol. Everything within the categorical structure is essentially finite. The only thing that is infinite is God or Being-Itself. In order to eliminate the anxieties caused by the shock of nothingness, man sanctifies the afterlife, because nothingness is unbearable. In reality, there is no nothingness and there is only the change of being, death is not nothingness. Man is not a completely separate being from the spiritual, in other words, there are not two separate worlds, there is only one world and man is in this world. "We are what we are and where we came from." When we look at these statements, it is understood that he denies that there could be another world for man. According to Tillich, the past and the future are experienced right now. What is meant by the expression "coming" is nothing but a state of alienation. Therefore, the moment when alienation ends is not a new life that will take place after death, but a moment represented by the name of life after death, but when alienation and deterioration end. "Eternal life does not mean that life continues after death. Eternal life is beyond past, present and future, that is, we

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come from it, we live in it and we will return to it. It is not non-existent, it is the divine life in which we are rooted. For just God his own is eternal. Man should not boast that he has an immortal soul.” (Tokat, 2015)

According to Tillich, historical events are important in three respects. First, they represent the necessary human potential. Second, they direct these potentials to one side. Finally, they represent the moments that are directed towards the target of the symbolized history (Tillich, 1963). If we try to explain the importance Tillich gives to the moment with Kierkegaard's moment category: Human “existence” is a becoming, but only the present (le present) is given to us, only it exists. It is where our life is represented, where we can show our freedom. The present (instant) is not an incomprehensible boundary between the future that does not yet exist and the past that no longer exists. It only exists for an abstract thought. Concretely, the moment has a value that is transcendent to the flow of time, a meaning that is almost vertical: The moment is the attachment (insertion) of eternity in our becoming. It does this with freedom, which is called the category of choice, one of the most basic characteristics of human existence. In a way, it summarizes the characteristics of the past. Because it determines the fate of the present, manages it, unites the becoming and especially forms me. To be truly determined would be not to be in oneself. This would be the simple reflection of the world, the point of competition, the result of natural forces. Individuality is confirmed by freedom and in freedom. In the face of an alternative, one chooses one element to the exclusion of the other. Freedom, then, consists in choosing oneself; on the one hand, one consents to be what one is, to be oneself, and on the other hand, one wishes to be what one is not. But the two aspects overlap, in fact they coincide, because man is a being in the making. Thus freedom appears as a tension (intention) of being (oneself) (Verneaux, 1994). This tension is explained by the concept of the “Protestant Principle”, which never materializes in Tillich.

Tillich also states his opinions on whether Jesus existed or not. He states his views on Jesus as follows:

I asked how Christian doctrine could be understood if the historical Jesus did not exist in history, and then I tried to answer my own question. The basis of Christian faith is not the historical Jesus, but the Christ portrayed in the Bible. The criterion in human thought and action is the image of Jesus rooted in human experience and ecclesiastical belief, not the artifact of historical research, which is changing and artificial (Tillich, 1973, 320).

What is important is not whether history is true or not, but the trace it leaves in religious consciousness. Cultural memory is directed to certain points in the past, but the past does not remain there as it is. It is more concentrated on symbolic figures to which the “moment” is attached. For example, events such as Abraham's sacrifice, Noah's flood, the Exodus from Egypt, the construction of the Kaaba, and festivals are figures that give meaning to the situation a person is in and that experience an excitement by suspending the time in which they are present. In this context, we should not confuse the legends in the holy books with history. For

cultural memory, it is not the truth but the remembered history that is important. And whether they are true or not is not so important. In fact, it can be said that history also turns into remembered history and legend in this context (Assman, 2001). The stories found in Islam can also be read in this context. What is important is not the truth or falsehood of the place, time, and people in which the stories take place. What is important is the effect it has on us and the movement it provides that allows us to surpass ourselves. If it is read literally, it becomes an idol, losing its power that overflows from concepts and the world. The function of the parable is to translate the real into the language of the ideal, the momentary into the language of the eternal and transcendent. The parable accomplishes this task by projecting ritual processes onto the plane of ideal situations. However, objectification and reproduction begin later (Gaster, 2000). Tillich argues that Christianity did not begin with the birth of the person called Jesus, but with people saying to him, “You are the Christ,” and will continue as long as they continue to say so. He states that the historical rejection of Jesus gave birth to the Messiah as a symbol (Tillich, 1957).

The fact that Jesus is a symbol can be understood by referring to his power to unite with the divine. The person who is the historical Jesus is a symbol of the person who is the Messiah, the Jesus of faith. The reason why Jesus who lived in history is mentioned here is that he reminds us of the Jesus of faith (Tillich, 1957). Etymologically, the symbol, which is translated as ‘mashal’ in Hebrew, ‘symballein’ and ‘symbolon’ in Greek, means bringing two halves together. Rather than the word symbol as a noun, ‘symbolize’, etymologically, means bringing together two pieces of a broken coin or medallion that secures an alliance and is its sign. The importance of the symbol comes from the fact that it is not effective by being reunited (sym-ballein). While one of these two parts is at hand, to be reached immediately, the other is ‘elsewhere’ (Heisig, 1987). In other words, while it is open in one sense, it is closed in another. It is this aspect that moves people and attracts their curiosity. This image of Christ as Jesus is not imaginative, but figurative. That is why it is expressed symbolically. That is why Tillich uses the concept of “Gestalt”, which in psychology means filling in the gaps, to try to indicate that there is always a transcendent aspect in Jesus. Instead of a complete portrait of Christ, he uses the concept of “Gestalt of Christ” (Tillich, 1957).

### **3. Religion and Philosophy**

According to Tillich, the truth of faith neither proves nor negates scientific or historical truth. Its relationship with philosophy is also complex. Even theologians who have used a philosophical concept to express the faith of a religious community have been accused of betraying faith. The difficulty of discussing philosophy is that every definition of philosophy is an expression of the philosopher's point of view. Philosophy is not about the nature of a specific field, but about the nature of reality that is valid in all fields, that is, it tries to find universal categories in which existence is experienced (Tillich, 2014).

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According to Tillich, philosophical truth is the truth about the structure of being; the truth of faith is the truth about one's ultimate concern. But the difference is that there is a point of similarity between the ultimate of the philosophical question and the ultimate of religious concern. In both cases, the ultimate truth is sought and expressed – conceptually in philosophy, symbolically in religion. The relation of faith to the ultimate is in principle a mixed expression of concern about the meaning of the ultimate for the believer. The philosopher is a human being concerned with the ultimate. The believer is a human being who needs the power of thought and the effort of conceptual understanding. The way the philosopher asks the question and the priority he gives to particular kinds of answers are determined by cognitive evaluation and a state of ultimate concern. Philosophy in the true sense is carried on by those in whom a passion for ultimate anxiety is combined with a clear and detached observation of the way in which ultimate reality manifests itself in the processes of the universe. The scientist is also a man gripped and seized by an ultimate anxiety, and he asks this kind of question about the universe, that is, a philosophical question. Similarly, the historian is a philosopher, whether he is aware of it or not. Wherever there is philosophy, there is an expression of an ultimate anxiety; there is an element of faith, however hidden it may be, because of the historian's passion for pure events. In every philosophy there is a real unity of philosophical truth and the truth of faith. This unity is called philosophical faith. This term seems to indicate that there is only one philosophical faith, that is, a *philosophia perennis* (permanent philosophy). But only the philosophical question, not the answers, is permanent. In philosophical truth there is the truth of faith, and in the truth of faith there is philosophical truth. In every symbol of faith there is implicit philosophy. But faith does not determine the movement of philosophical thought, any more than philosophy determines the structure of one's ultimate concern. Faith does not prescribe a particular philosophy. The truth of faith and philosophical truth have no authority over each other (Tillich, 2014).

In Tillich, what reaches the mystery of revelation and existence is not concepts, but the mind he calls “ecstatic mind” (Tillich, 1951). This mind does not limit revelation only to concepts, but also includes the aspect that transcends the concept. In Tillich, the concept of religion is similar to our concept of sharia. Revelation is Jesus Christ, it cannot be reached with concepts. Concepts only express a certain aspect of life. There is always an aspect of life called a secret, a code. Only the concept of religion can be defined within cultural elements. The word “conceptum”, which corresponds to the concept seen as an aspect of religion, comes from the Latin meaning to conceive, to fetus (Foulquie, 1998). This means that we must conceive our own concepts. Secondly, it also indicates that concepts are a product.

Tillich has been called postmodern because of this idea. However, if we are to find a definition (label), Richard King's concept of “postwesternism” (King, 1999), which explains that there are individuals and thoughts outside the West, is more appropriate. In accordance with Tillich's correlation method, over time, ancient Eastern religions (Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Hinduism) have transformed into Nationalism, Liberalism and Marxism, and into Modern

Western ideologies and religions; old Jewish sects (Kurrayiye, Rabbaniye, İseviye and Ananiye) have transformed into the Jewish sects of the modern age, which are Zionist, Reformist, Traditionalist and Liberal movements. For the salvation of humanity, from the ancient Messianic theology, which was systematized with theological concepts such as Jesus' redemption through crucifixion, original sin, salvation and the incarnation of God in the form of Jesus, there has been a transition to a different metaphysics based on the death of God, to a modern Messianic theology that is political, secularist, crisis-oriented, developmental and libertarian (Hanefi, 2004).

Tillich distinguishes between “Jesus’ teachings” and “Jesus’ message” to exemplify the inadequacy of concepts. Tillich defines the former as the application of a refined form of natural law to human nature. It has no relation to the concrete situation being discussed. This confines Jesus to the Old Testament, which consists of only words. When we talk about the latter, the “Message of Jesus,” he uses the concept of “Gestalt” again (Tillich, 1963). Words are abstractions. They divide, separate, and destroy. All words are incomplete. Because they divide the total “(being)” into opposites such as white and black, high and low, lost and found, good and bad. Opposites are not real (Honer, 2003). Concepts identify what exists and what is in a very closed way and serve to fill experience with meaning (Verneaux, 1994). The consciousness created by movement is not limited by external forces. There is no freedom in consciousness, freedom is in movement. Because in consciousness there is multiplicity and only the possibility of freedom (Topçu, 2011).

While the abstract intellect tries to understand the concrete in an abstract way, the subjective thinker (or existentialist) wants to grasp the abstract concretely. What existentialism wants is for thoughts to emerge and appear with the umbilical cord of the first enthusiasm. We approach them with the categories we have previously acquired, and what we know prevents us from noticing what we see. In other words, it is not interested in essences, possibilities, and abstract concepts. It wants to return to the real reality that G. Marcel calls the “tooth mark of reality.” (Foulquie, 1998).

Tillich states that faith is unguided and absolute. It cannot be defined, because everything defined is annulled by doubt and meaninglessness. But even absolute faith is not an explosion of subjective feelings or moods that have no objective basis (Tillich, 2014b). Due to the inadequacy of language, Tillich contrasts Jaspers' concept of “code” (Akgün, 2015), which is understood in concrete existence, with the concept of “symbol”.

The symbolic view is based on the fact that the limits of language are not the ultimate limits of experience. In other words, the truths that literal language cannot reach or is inadequate to express can be understood and grasped symbolically (Langer, 1951). Indeed, Aristotle defined man as “animal symbolicum.” (Cassier, 1980).

If we try to explain what Tillich wants to say with the words of Heraclitus, words limit the object they denote. Because they remove the object they denote from the river of formation (Tokat,

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2015). Because when we look at their definitions in languages, we see this situation more clearly. For example, in English, the word definition is the limitation of the infinite. While it abstracts from other beings in one sense, it also leaves it alone and puts it in a mold. This is more evident in Arabic. The word 'hudud', which means definition, also means limitation.

According to Tillich, philosophy uses concepts, and this leaves a missing side in existence. This situation, which Jaspers calls the code and Marcel calls the "secret that eliminates the mechanical structure", (Aydeniz, 2012) gives us religious symbols that have a different meaning than art. Tillich explains this situation with the term "mysterion (secret)" or "Gestalt". Symbols reveal levels of reality that would otherwise remain closed to us. All art creates symbols for a level of reality that cannot be accessed in any other way. A painting and a poem reveal elements of reality that cannot be approached in a scientific manner. In a creative work of art, we encounter reality in a dimension that would remain closed to us without such works (Tillich, 1947). That is why existential writers have generally tried to tell the story through the genres of theater and novel. This opening occurs in two ways, touching life both inside and out. On the one hand, we go into the depths of our existential anxiety, while on the other hand, we rise to new creative perspectives. Thus, it becomes clear that every symbol has two ends, two poles. The symbol reveals both reality and the soul (Tillich, 2002). Existentialists prefer to present their arguments indirectly, rather than as a unified whole in a system. Works of imagination in the form of novels or dramas; intimate diaries and similar works that give an echo of personal life. That is, the main theme is that existential reality cannot be communicated to another (Foulque, 1998). But without the truth of the encounter, all images and symbols are illusions and self-deception (Buber, 2013).

According to Tillich, the inadequacy of concepts is compensated by symbols. If this is the function of symbols, then it is obvious that symbols cannot be replaced by other symbols. Each symbol has its own unique function, which is whatever is appropriate for it. This is different from signs, because in signs it is possible to substitute others. If we find green light not as adequate as blue light (which is not true, but possible), we do not change anything and just put in a blue light. However, a symbolic word (such as "God") cannot be changed. No symbol that fulfills its own function can be replaced. Therefore, we can rightly ask, "How do symbols come into being and come to an end?" Unlike signs, symbols are born and die. Signs are consciously created and dismissed. This is a fundamental distinction. "Where do symbols come from?" Their source is what is nowadays usually called the group unconscious or the collective unconscious, whatever expression you prefer. This thing, this word, this flag, or whatever it may be in its own account, arises from the acceptance of the group. They cannot be created voluntarily, and even if, as sometimes happens, any symbol is created in this way, it is nothing more than a symbol to which the subconscious of a group simply says "yes." This means that it can reveal something in the sense in which I have described it, and rather implies that the moment this internal condition of the human group ceases to exist as a symbol, it dies. The symbol no longer "expresses" anything. All polytheistic gods have perished in this way. When

the conditions under which they arose change or no longer exist, then the symbols also die. But these are phenomena that cannot be described through intention and invention (Tillich, 2002).

For Tillich, religious symbols are not sacred in themselves. Everything sacred that is completely transcendent transcends its symbol. Religious symbols are derived from the infinity of the material that empirical reality gives us. In some periods of the history of religions, everything in space and time becomes a symbol for the sacred. This is naturally so, because everything we encounter in the world is based on the ultimate foundation of being. This is the key that will unlock what seems so incomprehensible in the history of religions. Those who look at the apparent chaos of the history of religions in all periods of history, from the primitive beginnings to the latest developments, will be quite surprised by the complex character of this development. The key that brings this chaos into order is relatively simple. This key is this: everything in reality can itself act as a symbol on a special relationship between the human mind and its own ultimate foundation and meaning. Religious symbols symbolically point to something that transcends them completely. Just like symbols, religious symbols always have the tendency to replace what they signify and to become (in the human mind, of course) the ultimate. When religious symbols become such, they become idols. All idolatry is nothing but the absolutization of the symbols of the sacred, and they are identified with the sacred itself. For example, just as a sacred person becomes a God, so rituals, although they are only the expression of a special situation, acquire an unconditional validity. In all religious rituals, in all sacred objects, in sacred books, in sacred doctrines, in sacred rituals, you can find this danger of what we may call “demonization.” They become demonized at the moment when the sacred itself rises to its unconditional and ultimate character (Tillich, 2002). That is why Tillich interprets Jesus’ self-sacrifice as the Messiah as a symbol that resists idolization.

When we come to the question of the truth of religious symbols, we must distinguish between a negative, a positive and an absolute expression. The first is the negative expression. Symbols are independent of any empirical criticism. You cannot destroy symbols with criticism based on natural science or historical research. As stated before, symbols only disappear when the conditions in which they appear are no longer valid. Symbols do not exist on a plane where empirical criticism can invalidate them. Their truth is their conformity to the religious situation in which they were created, and their incongruity to another situation is their inauthenticity. The last sentence contains both a negative and a positive expression about symbols (Tillich, 2002).

If we want to distinguish between symbols and signs, the fundamental difference between them is this: signs do not participate in any way in the reality and power of what they signify. On the other hand, symbols, although they are not the same as what they symbolize, participate in its meaning and power. Participation in the reality symbolized defines symbols, while non-participation in the “directed” reality defines the sign, which is a distinction between a symbol and a sign. For example, the letters of the alphabet, “A” or an “R”, as written, do not participate

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in the sounds they signify; on the other hand, the flag participates in the power of the king or the nation it represents and symbolizes. For this reason, there has been disagreement since the days of William Tell about how to behave in the face of the flag. If the flag does not participate in the power of what it symbolizes as a symbol, it would be meaningless. If you do not understand the two permanent aspects in the king, that is, on the one hand, a symbol of the power of the society of which he is king, and on the other hand, this power which he partially (of course not completely) exercises, you have not fully understood the idea of a full monarchy. But something very dangerous has happened to all our attempts to find a unit of refinement for the concepts of symbol and sign. The mathematician has usurped the term "symbol" for mathematical "signs," and this confusion is almost impossible to untangle. All we have to do is to distinguish between signs called symbols and real symbols. Mathematical signs are signs that are mistakenly called symbols (Tillich, 2002).

The symbol represents something other than itself; and it substitutes for the power and meaning of that in which it participates. This is a fundamental function of every symbol; and therefore, if the word representation were not used in so many different ways, it could perhaps even be translated as "symbolically" as "representative"; but for some reason this is not possible. If symbols substitute for something other than themselves, why do we not have "what the symbols represent directly? Why do we need symbols?" Perhaps the main function of the symbol is the disclosure, the revealing of levels of reality that are otherwise hidden from us and otherwise incomprehensible. Every symbol discloses a level of reality to which non-symbolic speech is inadequate. If we interpret and explain this situation in terms of artistic symbols. The more we try to penetrate into the meaning of symbols, the more we realize that it is an artistic function that discloses levels of reality; in poetry, in visual art, in music, levels of reality that are otherwise closed to us are disclosed. Now if this is the function of art, then artistic creations are certainly symbolic in character. For example, if you take a painting by Rubens, it is a mediator of something to you. You cannot have this experience in any other way than through this painting by Rubens. This landscape has some tremendous properties; it has the quality of harmony, of colors, of effect, of values, etc. All this is purely visual. What comes to us in this way cannot be explained by anything other than the painting itself. The same applies to the relationship between poetry and philosophy. The temptation to introduce excessively philosophical concepts into poetry can complicate matters. Now this is a serious matter which perhaps cannot be solved. If one uses philosophical language or scientific language, the use in question does not really mediate the same thing that poetic language mediates and carries, without any other language being mixed in with it (Tillich, 2002).

There is another element at the immanent level. The special parts of the church building, the candles, the water at the entrance of the Roman Church, the cross in all churches, especially in Protestant churches, and many other things are essentially signs but become symbols in use; because signs are symbols in use, we may call them signs-symbols (Tillich, 2002).

As can be seen, Tillich's view of philosophy is based on the fact that religion and philosophy, although they investigate the same things, adopt different styles of expression. While religion expresses this reality with symbols, philosophy expresses it with concepts. It has been seen that concepts are necessary, but they are insufficient in terms of comprehending existence in its entirety. This insufficiency is explained with the concept of the symbol, which always contains a secret and a code.

### **Conclusion**

In this article, we have tried to make conclusion on one of the contemporary theologians. He focuses on religion's effect on our lives by giving reasons of his historical and philosophical conceptions. We try to see his holistic model and existential way. To him, it is useless to debate historical Jesus because he focuses on his repercussions on our lives. His way of philosophy is also existential and not only focused on earthly things. So, he examines symbols and signs. The important thing about them is how effectively we can put them into words. Because, we should express them with conceptions in philosophy.

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**Authorship Contribution**

The research was conducted with a single author:

1. Author: Dr. Mustafa TURAN: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Visualization, Analysis and Writing (100%).
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