

PUBLISHER PRESENTATION

PROTODISM

The Hidden Religion Within Us

Zeki Coşar

Philosophy · Sociology of Religion · Personal/Intellectual Narrative, Non-Fiction, Original Theoretical Framework,
64 Chapters, ~750 pages

"Religion was not humanity's wrong answer. It was the first draft of humanity's right question."

THE BOOK IN ONE SENTENCE

Protodism offers an original theoretical framework arguing that religion is neither a delusion nor a truth, but the first, raw, and inevitably frozen form the human mind's capacity for meaning-making took in history, and from this framework derives a new stance for living, in which meaning can be produced without a mold: Protodism.

WHAT THE BOOK IS ABOUT

A child looks up at the sky and asks "why?" Over millennia, this question turned into one of humanity's greatest answers: religion. But this book's claim is this: religion was not the final answer to that question. It was the first draft of the question itself, poured into an institutional mold.

Author Zeki Coşar, over a year of intensive research and writing, developed the Protodik Hypothesis, building an entirely original framework at the intersection of the sociology of religion, the cognitive science of religion, and the philosophy of religion: the distinction between the theogenic drive (the evolutionarily rooted search oriented toward God) and thumos (the inextinguishable inner life-force of meaning-making). The book's central thesis is that these two capacities become locked together in institutional religion, but can be separated through awareness.

In establishing this distinction, the book addresses, one by one, the gaps that nineteen great thinkers, from Durkheim to Kant, from Nietzsche to Girard, saw but could not complete, and makes direct contact with the most current 2025 literature in political psychology and the sociology of religion (Uzlaner's secularization paradox, Fukuyama's thesis of institutional decay).

The book proves this not on a single plane but across five at once: neuroscience and evolutionary psychology (why the brain produced this mold), history (how the mold institutionalized, who paid its price), philosophy (where the mold's logical limits lie), sociology (how the mold merged with power), and personal experience (the author's own journey, born into an Abrahamic tradition and carrying this question by living it).

WHY THIS BOOK, WHY NOW

The science-religion debate has, over the past fifty years, been squeezed into two poles: voices defending religion, or voices rejecting it wholesale. Protodism proposes a third ground: neither belief nor denial, but a diagnosis and a framework. The book does not ask whether God exists; it asks about the mechanism that produces this question. This stance makes the book a rare work able to speak simultaneously to readers coming from within religious traditions and to scientific/secular readers alike.

The book also makes direct contact with current debates: artificial intelligence's search for consciousness and meaning, how quantum physics is co-opted into the language of religion in popular culture, pseudo-scientific defenses of religion circulating on social media, and Generation Z's new, questioning relationship with religion. This is not an academic history book; it is a living work seeking direct answers to the questions today's reader encounters on social media, at the family table, and within their own mind.

STRUCTURE

The book proceeds in 64 chapters, across six main groups:

History and Origin	The birth of mythology, religions' breaking points, a historical reading of the prophetic phenomenon. Featured: "The Prophetic Phenomenon: A Historical Reading"
Cognitive Ground	Consciousness, perception, evolution, DNA, and, where these intersect with religion, the neuroscientific and philosophical root of the idea of God. <i>Featured: "The Hard Problem of Consciousness," "The Root of the God Idea," "God's Logical Trial"</i>
Institutional Critique	Power, repression, the psychology of deconversion: the price religion pays and exacts when it institutionalizes. <i>Featured: "Religion's Dark Legacy: Repression, Violence, and Sacrifice," "Religion, Body, and Gender"</i>
Philosophical Deepening	Fate, free will, death, transhumanism, multiple universes: the book's most speculative and boldest chapters. <i>Featured: "Taking Over God's Job: Immortality and Transhumanism," "Infinite Universes, One God," "Cosmic Consciousness and Humanity's Place"</i>
Geographic and Current	Figures who used religion as a tool, geopolitical reckonings, Atatürk's legacy of secularism. <i>Featured: "Those Who Paid the Price," "Secularism, Prophecy, and Atatürk's Legacy"</i>
Core Thesis	The full formulation of the Protodik Hypothesis, the process of theolysis, and the construction of Protodism as a framework for living. <i>Featured: "The Protodik Hypothesis: Religion Killed God While Searching for Him," "Artificial Intelligence and Prototype Religion," "Afterword: Carrying the Torch"</i>

The book is designed to support both an academic reading and a single-sitting read: each chapter can be read independently, but accumulates into a complete theoretical structure. It also opens with a "Chain Reading Guide" offering six distinct reading routes tailored to reader type (the faithful, the atheist, the academic, the deconverted, the researcher, the never-believed).

THE BOOK'S BACKBONE: SEVEN PRINCIPLES

The book's philosophical framework rests on seven principles that feed and test one another, each preparing the ground for the next, beginning with a biological observation and ending in a self-critique that tests the book's own claims:

I	The Prototype Principle	Religion is the first draft of humanity's capacity for meaning-making, neither an error nor a final answer.
II	The Crystallization Paradox	Every successful belief system freezes precisely because of its success: to grow is to solidify.
III	Coordinate Limitation	No definition can encompass an infinite reality; to define is to limit.
IV	The Necessity of Interiority	Meaning does not come from outside, it is produced within; even revelation is not meaning until it takes root inside.
V	Awareness of Safe Mode	Seeing that the shield is not a capacity is the one thing that makes decision possible.
VI	The Invisible Step Principle	Every argument carries more steps than it appears to; making those steps visible shortens the conversation.
VII	The Breaking Principle	No mold may be sanctified, including the book's own principles; this is the inevitable requirement of consistency.

MECHANISM: FROM INDIVIDUAL TO COLLECTIVE

The Protodik Hypothesis was first developed to explain the crystallization mechanism of the theogenic drive at the individual level: how belief freezes in a person's mind, how it is questioned, how it is set free. But the book's real claim is broader: the same mechanism, the same four layers, carries a pattern that can be mapped one-to-one onto any community, from a family to a civilization.

At the center of this claim is MADAD: the book's original concept, the mind's capacity to monitor its own belief layer. It operates in four layers: logical (is this proposition consistent?), analytical (what do I find if I break this structure into its parts?), regulatory (why do I hold this thought, did I choose it?); and the most critical, the fourth layer: perceptual. Here the mind begins to see not merely a thought, but the very filter through which it perceives reality itself. Making direct contact with the academic metacognition literature (Flavell, Nelson and Narens, Fleming) while diverging from it, this framework positions MADAD not as a clinical observation but as a testable capacity with a neural ground.

The most current test of this framework concerns democracy. The book reads democracy as the institutional counterpart of a society's ability to see its own crystallization: elections are the institutional form of the ability to question power itself; press freedom, the ability to produce views from outside power; an independent judiciary, the ability to open power's own decisions to challenge: the societal-scale reconstruction of individual MADAD. This reading has a concrete piece of evidence published in 2025: a study documented the pattern in which voters forgive their own leader's ethical violation while fiercely condemning the identical violation by a rival leader. The book reads this as MADAD falling selectively silent: once a leader becomes part of one's identity, questioning them no longer means questioning a policy, but questioning one's own identity.

The book shows that this individual-level mechanism operates through the same four steps at large scale too, calling this the "Fractal Mechanism": the pattern by which the process of reform operates through the same four variables regardless of scale. Moses grew up speaking the language of the Egyptian court, then used that very language to stand against the court. Jesus preached inside the temple, not tearing the institution down from outside but redefining it from within. Muhammad gave birth to a new moral language out of Mecca's language of trade. A parent within a family makes the same four moves as these historical figures: learning the system's own language, correctly gauging the threshold of change, preparing an alternative before tearing down what exists, waiting for the right moment. The reformer speaks from within the system they break, not from outside it. The book demonstrates this pattern in three separate places, at three separate scales: first through concrete historical cases (from Hammurabi to Ambedkar), then as a theoretical synthesis in the book's core-thesis section, and finally as a theory of institutions explaining the origin of modern law.

The most audacious consequence of this fractal pattern (the institutional outcome of the paradox the book calls the Silent Founder, in which the founder is quietly erased from the memory of the very institution they founded) is the Constitutional Residue Theory: the origin of all five modern secular institutions of freedom (individual legal responsibility, the separation of powers, universal human rights, the inviolability of human dignity, judicial independence) traces back to the same pattern. Each began as a religious principle; institutional religion crystallized that principle; theolysis came, the institution broke; but the principle's form survived and migrated into secular law. "No soul shall bear another's burden" became individual criminal responsibility; "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's" became the separation of powers; "All souls are equal before God" became the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The book presents this as a gap Max Weber could not complete: Weber saw the fragility of charismatic authority but could not explain why it broke; because he lacked the concept of the theogenic drive.

An individual mind questioning its own belief and a civilization writing its constitution are, by the book's claim, different scales of the same mechanism. This is the step that turns Protodism from merely a personal-development framework into a theory of history and institutions.

The same mechanism also carries a duality: the constructive power of reform and the destructive use of that same power. The book resolves this distinction through the Religion-Fuel Framework: the theogenic drive is in itself neither good nor bad; like fuel, it can carry both an ambulance and a bomb. The distinction lies not in intention but in structure: whether the goal is to liberate the capacity or to capture it, whether the method is transparent or concealed, whether crystallization is treated as a risk or deliberately accelerated. The same reformer (as with Luther) can carry one in one act and the other in another; the book resolves this symmetry by looking at structure, not the person.

VOICE AND TONE

The book is not an academic thesis; it carries a structure that opens with personal testimony, widens into an analytical framework, and closes again in a personal voice. From the Preface:

"Every child is a philosopher. They look up at the sky and say, 'Why?'... And then an adult arrives; not holding a key, but a lock. That lock, closing over the question, freezes the universe within."

Throughout the book, this dual voice is maintained: on one hand, the rigorous, sourced, refutable arguments of philosophy, neuroscience, and history; on the other, a warm narrating voice that never judges the reader and always leaves the decision to them. In the book's own words: "This book does not hand you a key. It only shows you the lock; because the key is already yours."

TARGET AUDIENCE

The book deliberately speaks to a broad readership: the reader at peace with their faith yet still questioning; the reader who has drifted from belief and is seeking a framework for that process; the academic reader interested in the sociology and philosophy of religion; and the secular reader who never grew up within any religious tradition but carries the question of "meaning." The book's inclusive, non-accusatory tone (never positioning any group of readers against another) is what makes this breadth possible.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zeki Coşar completed Protodism: The Hidden Religion Within Us over a year of intensive research and writing. The book presents an interdisciplinary framework born from the author's own intellectual and personal journey; the concepts of the Protodik Hypothesis and Protodism are named and formulated for the first time in this book.