



BİLİM AKADEMİSİ

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**THE SCIENCE ACADEMY STATEMENT ON THE SUMMONING OF
PROFESSOR CELAL ŞENGÖR BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR
ON THE COMPLAINT OF THE DIRECTORATE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

Professor Celal Şengör, a prominent scientist, has been summoned by a public prosecutor on a complaint by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs for his words on a TV program. This is a striking new example of misapprehension and violation of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

What Professor Şengör stated on the program is that there are no historical documents on the prophets and events mentioned in the holy books of the abrahamic religions. Professor Şengör distinguished legend and parable from documented historical accounts, referring to Fuad Köprülü's book 'İlk Mutassavvıflar' ('The First Sufis'), and citing sufis 13th Century poet Yunus Emre and Ahmad Yasawi mentioned in this book.

Absence of historical documents or evidence is not a deficiency for believers, nor a matter of respectability of their faith. By definition, faith does not require evidence or documentation. On the other hand, evidence and documentation are essential bases for the academic and practical assessment of worldly matters. History and archeology which progress by investigating proofs and documents, most certainly include religions amongst their research and discussion topics.

A TV program ([Harran kutsal kitaplarda nasıl anlatılıyor? \(Teke Tek Bilim\) - YouTube](#)) discussing the existence of documents has been subjected to penal fines by the Radio and Television Supreme Council; The Directorate of Religious Affairs has filed a complaint after Professor Şengör's statement of the absence of documents; and Professor Şengör has been summoned to the Press Offences Investigation Bureau of the İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to testify on this matter. These are grave violations of the freedom of speech and academic freedoms. Investigating a claim regarding the absence of documents and evidence related to religious beliefs is clearly against reason and against the norms of democracy and secularism. Arguments on documentation and evidence have remained outside the scope of religious institutions' interference in public affairs since the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the development of modern democracy. It is unacceptable that this issue is made into a

subject of complaint by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, which is a state institution of the Turkish Republic, claimed to be a secular state.

Respectfully presented to the public,

Board of Directors of The Science Academy (Bilim Akademisi), Turkey

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