

THE TEARS OF YOUTH



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Muhammed Mustafa ERKMEN

Editor-in-Chief: Hayati Bayrak

Publishing Coordinator: Erol Şahnacı

Editor: Fatih Şafak

Page Layout: Burhan Maden

Cover Design: Enis Ak

Hayat Publications: 811

Current Titles: 35

First Edition: İstanbul / October 2025

ISBN: 978-605-151-604-2

Publisher's Certificate No: 75092

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Printing: Alioğlu Printing

Certificate No: 45121



Molla Gürani Mahallesi, Oğuzhan Street No: 15, Floor: 3, Apartment: 5

34093 Fındıkzade - Fatih / İstanbul, Türkiye

34093 Fındıkzade - Fatih / İstanbul Tel: (212) 613 11 00 | Gsm: (530) 259 80 96

www.hayatyayinlari.com | e-posta: hayat@hayatyayinlari.com



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Muhammed Mustafa ERKMEN



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Who is Muhammed Mustafa ERKMEN?

My name is Muhammed Mustafa ERKMEN. I was born on September 30, 1980, in Erkmen, a town in the city of Afyon, Türkiye. My father, Ali, was a Hajji, a teacher and an imam; my mother, Ehlinaz, was the daughter of an imam. As the eldest of five children, I spent most of my life in Austria. I am married and a father of three children.

From childhood, I was drawn to learning, discovery and serving others. My journey through life has shown me that knowledge elevates a person, but without practice, it is easily lost. That is why I have always sought to expand my understanding and to share what I have learned with others.

I studied English Language and Literature at the University of Vienna and later Economics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Yet what truly fulfilled me was helping young people to build lives that are conscious, strong and guided by values.

For this reason, I deepened my education in the fields of Pedagogy at Arel University in Istanbul, Family Counseling at Biruni University and Spiritual Coaching at the Şişli Vocational Academy. Through my work in practice, I came to understand that academic knowledge alone is never enough; a teacher must first live the values they seek to impart.

On July 24, 2020, we founded **Interaktiv.J — an educational, integration, cultural and humanitarian association** for young people with a migration background. Its purpose was to work directly with youth, to help them overcome challenges, discover themselves and develop their character.

At the same time, I worked in various departments of the City of Vienna, in the areas of mosque pedagogy, integration coaching and adult education. There, I experienced firsthand how valuable it is to walk alongside people and to support them practically and humanely.

For me, education is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a way of life.

Values should not only be taught in words but lived through example in everyday life.

True teaching lies in authentic representation: Our values must be professed by the tongue, believed in the heart and proven through our actions.

With this awareness, I continue to strive to raise young people who are not only professionally competent but also responsible, conscientious and guided by moral integrity.

For I believe that change begins with a single person. If I can grow within myself, live sincerely and inspire even one soul, then I have already changed the world. One does not need superhuman powers to make a difference; only a good, honest and serving heart.

Just like that merchant in Indonesia, whose single act became the means by which 241 million people embraced Islam.

*“One flower does not make a spring,
but every spring begins with a single
flower.”*

Prof. Dr. Necmeddin ERBAKAN

And I will remain faithful to this principle throughout my life.



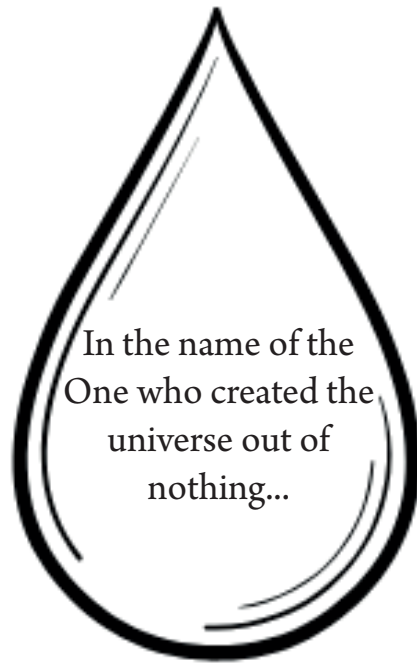
Dedicated to my beloved family...



Note: All proceeds from this book will be donated
by the author to the **Vienna Interaktiv,J Youth
Association.**

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In the name of the
One who created the
universe out of
nothing...

Introduction

A young heart, filled with boundless dreams and the search for its true self.

Yet for a young person growing up in Europe, this search often feels like sailing through a storm. The waves of religion and culture rise on one side, while from the other, the digital spirit of the age crashes in.

At the same time, you try to hold on to your identity, to resist the seduction of the modern world. It is an inner conflict that leaves deep traces on the heart.

Amid all of this, one can find the tears of young people, sometimes hidden in silent prayers, sometimes soaking the pillow at night and sometimes reflected in a foreign, disdainful glance on the street. When a young person begins to feel like a stranger, they start to ask themselves: “Who am I really? Do I belong here? How can I remain strong without losing my values?” For many young people in Europe, these questions are not mere thoughts; they are a quiet struggle for survival.

The wave of challenges makes it increasingly difficult for young people to find their place in society. This affects not only their religious practice but also their inner and emotional balance. In an environment where wealth and possessions define a person’s worth, it becomes hard to nurture the inner values of kindness and goodness. Now, many young hearts are losing their strength. Between the

religious and cultural values inherited from their families and the modern Western lifestyle that tries to lure them away, a gap opens, one that threatens to tear them apart. Some slowly drift away from their identity, while others cling even more tightly to their faith and their roots.

But is it possible to dry these tears? What do young people need to live with confidence, steadfastness and strength in their identity, without losing themselves?

This book speaks to you; yes, to you:

“You are not alone in your struggle for identity. Never give up.”

Because you are not just an individual; you are part of a community. And within you lies the power to change the world.

Never forget:

Your tears are a sign of your inner strength.

And your story may be the hope that saves someone tomorrow.

Come, let us, together, wipe away the tears of our youth.

My Mother’s Answer

“One question, one answer, one destiny...”

I was barely ten years old. My young mind was searching for answers to the questions that had quietly gathered in my heart.

One day, I asked my mother with innocent curiosity:

“Mom, didn’t Dad study at the Faculty of Theology in Konya? And didn’t he have a position at a good high school in Ankara with a decent salary, too? Then why did we come to this foreign country, just because a friend said, ‘Hoca, would you like to serve as an imam in Vienna for one Ramadan?’ Why don’t we go back to our homeland? What are we even doing here in Austria?”

There was a sorrowful yet gentle smile in my mother's eyes. She remained silent for a moment, took a deep breath and then gave me an answer that shook my soul:

“My son... There are sixty million people living in Türkiye.
So why us? Why here?”

You see, guiding even a single soul toward the truth is more precious than everything that exists between heaven and earth.

Do you remember our ancestors, who, with faith and courage, journeyed all the way to the gates of Vienna?

Perhaps you are part of that same blessed journey.

Have you ever tried to see it from that perspective?”

Her words lit a spark within me. In that moment, I realized that our being here was no coincidence, it was a calling.

Even though the longing for my homeland burned deeply in my heart, her words taught me to embrace and love the country in which I lived with the heart of a believer and the humility of a servant.

From then on, this foreign land was no longer merely a place of separation

it became a responsibility,

a trust,

a legacy.

And the wise words of my mother became the compass that has guided my life ever since.

