

# Kalila and Dimna as One of the Traditional Antecedents of Modern Classifications of Values

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## Abstract

*Kalila and Dimna*, which is considered as one of the classic works of the Eastern literature, is a political morality and advice book that is still in effect thanks to the knowledge of wisdom it offers. The aim of this study is to examine this work according to the Western classifications of values (UNESCO, Rokeach, Schwartz, Spranger) since it sheds light on the present age with the wisdom knowledge it holds although it was penned centuries ago. The study was designed as qualitative research and data collection was done with the four value classifications above. During the analysis of the study data, percentage and frequency analyses were used under the content analysis. The results of the study indicate that *Kalila and Dimna* includes all the values contained in abovementioned classifications originating from the Western civilization.

**Keywords:** Kalila and Dimna, values, values education, Bidpai, Eastern classics, fable

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 *Kalila and Dimna*

One of the classic works of the Eastern literature, *Kalila and Dimna* is a book full of stories and tales written with advice to assist rulers in state administration (Batur, 2005: 11). The work, which is inspired by Indian-origin Panchatantra tales, was written by Bidpai, Brahman Priest from the Vishnu religious sect, in Kishmir around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Brokellman, 1977: 290). The work also known as five books on the art of politics and administration consists of five books on politics and administration each of which is called tantra (the case, right way by which man uses his intelligence) (Meriç, 2003: 232). The book was written in Sanskrit language, and it aims to teach wisdom to rulers by means of animal fables (Brokellman, 1977: 290; Campbell, 2003: 342).

The main characters in the book are two jackals named *Kalila and Dimna*. The book was named after these main characters. It was entitled as *Karīrak ud Damanak* in Sanskrit language, which descended the later Syriac version in *Kalilag Darnag*, and has taken its present form as *Kalila and Dimna* (Brokellman, 1977: 552; Kocatürk, 1964: 189). The work was penned by Indian philosopher *Bidpāy*, who is known as *Bidpai* or *Pilpai* in the West, and as *Bidba* or *Bidbah* in Arabic texts, for the reputed sultan *Dābešlim*, meaning ‘the great king’ in Indian language, who reigned over many other countries besides India (Batur, 2005: 11).

The fables of *Kalila and Dimna*, which are descended from the original Sanskrit version, have gone beyond the borders of its birthplace India, spread across large countries and communities, and have been subjected to substantial changes in both content and volume by taking on some characteristics in various countries (Kabaklı, 1972: 6). *Kalila and Dimna* is one of the most widely read, translated and adapted books throughout the history (Aykut, 2007: 9; Kabaklı, 1972: 6; Nahmedov, 2009: 125; Batur, 2005: 11; Bülbül, 2012). Indeed, considered as the first fable collection and one of the most important works of the Indian literature, *Kalila and Dimna* has influenced many famous writers, poets and thinkers like Aesop (Aisopos), La Fontaine, Brothers Grimm, and Rumi, and has also become the source of their fable by being translated into the languages of the world (Oğuzkan, 2010: 64-68; Sınar, 2007: 119-120; Kabaklı, 1972: 6).

During the time of Iranian ruler Khosrov Anuşirev (531-579 AD), the work was brought from India and translated into the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language. It was first translated into Syriac language in 570, then into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa (721-757). However, the original Indian version brought to Iran was lost as well as the first translation into the Middle Persian was lost, the Syriac translation was forgotten. Thus the translation

by Ibn al-Muqaffa replaced the original and served a resource for translations performed in all languages. Then, it was translated into Greek in the 11th century, Old Slavonic in the 12th century, and Hebrew and Latin in the 13th century, through which it influenced the European literatures (Nahmedov, 2009: 125). This work spread broadly after Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa translated the Pahlavi version into Arabic. The work was translated into Turkish in the 14th century for the first time. Nasrallah's Persian translation constituted the source text for the translation by Kul Mesut. *Kalila and Dimna*, titled as *Humâyûn-nâme*, was presented to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and Abdulhamid II. It is understood that the work was presented to sultans during the Ottoman's earliest days (Orak & Berköz, 2013: 210).

As a moral and political book, *Kalila and Dimna* discuss the way not only rulers but also viziers and other dignitaries must act (Toska, 1991: 355). The book describes the qualifications of an ideal executive (ruler, viziers). In general terms, it is about the state, government, management of a state, namely politics. In addition to providing administrators with knowledge about managing the state, this book also contains information necessary for continuation of daily life in a peaceful manner (cited from Keith by Arslan, 1987). In this work, popularly known as Bidpai tales, the Indian philosopher Bidpai intended to convey his moral through wisdom inserted into the tales in which animals are the main characters. Owing to the animal heroes in the tales, the author could imply criticisms and suggestions to rulers, courtiers and the society which could not be brought openly. While seeking solutions to people's problems, this book suggest alternative solutions to issues such as corruption, bribery and destruction through animal heroes (Omran & Sangaki, 2012).

In those fables, each animal symbolizes one sort of human. The ruler is symbolized by the lion, while Vizier Jackal Kalila is the symbol of honesty and Jackal Dimna is the symbol of lie (Eşit, 2010: 1). Apart from this, "the monkey is mettlesome, naughty, disobedient, but charming and intelligent. In addition, the 'donkey' symbolizes pure-mindedness, 'kingfisher' stands for cunning and treacherous people, the 'frog' illustrates quarrelsome and inconsiderate people, and 'crow' and 'mouse' represent shy people. The fables are also a reflection of real life since they reflect various personalities from human life (Çağdaş, 1962: 76).

Key issues in the work are morality and politics. The core of the work is around a conversation between the wise and wise ruler. The main topics covered in the book are proximity/distance to the source of authority, the basic principles that provide continuity of authority; public-ruler relations, ruler-vizier relations, political ambitions, greed, selfishness, responsibility, resourcefulness, betrayal, tricks and so on (Aykut, 2007: 9). In this work, justice is emphasized as the prioritized characteristics of rulers to highlight the best government model. It contains wise information preaching that rulers should always act in a smart and prudent way, choose viziers among smart people, behave intelligently and sensibly, have justice and compassion, keep the national interests above their personal interests, be courageous and combative, friendly and devoted (Arslan, 1987: 138).

### 1.2 Values and Their Classifications

Since the first age up to date, there have been some rules that shape the community by organizing relationships of people with others and with the community. Although these unwritten rules vary from society to society, their common aspects outweigh. These rules including all humanity's common thoughts and feelings are also the values that direct a person's behaviours. According to Katılmış, Ekşi, and Öztürk (2010), for a liveable social life, individuals' characteristics need to be suitable. Likewise, states aim to give their own values to their citizens through education in order to continue to exist.

The definition of value as beliefs about something can be desirable or not (Güngör, 1998) has found much place in the literature in recent years. This fact is associated with modern society's experiencing significant problems regarding social and moral values. These problems are emerging in different sizes in many developed or underdeveloped countries. As an example, indications of moral deterioration can be mentioned such as deterioration of the family institution, increase in theft, corruption and extortion incidents, abuse against children/women/animals, spread of drug use and decreased age of drug use and sexual perversion (Lickona, 1991; Kenan, 2009; Yel & Aladağ, 2009). In this regard, one of the most important social functions of values is considered to act as filters in gaining new experiences and tasting pleasure (Smyth, 2005).

In this century, although people come close to each other both intellectually and spatially with the development of technology, they are getting away from each other in terms of values and moral values, especially at the same extent (Meer, 1999). One of the problems underlying this case is that values cannot find a place for itself in the reality perception of positivism, and they are lost in the modern education. Kenan (2009), especially taking into account the global, political and ecological developments in the world we live as well as new dynamics, emphasizes that moral virtues and values should be taught and internalized away from political, ideological and even theological disputes regardless of the culture or geography. He also stresses the importance of ensuring to

make it possible to select the good and true, besides ensuring realization of these virtues and values.

Value classification is important as it offers an alternative to works related to values education. Values are considered to be guiding in putting forward individuals and societies' value profile, and they are classified mostly according to their contents, features and functionality. The most common and widely accepted classifications are those suggested by Spranger (1928), Rokeach (1973), Schwartz (1994) and UNESCO (1995).

Spranger's (1928) classification is also considered to be the initial value test in psychology. Spranger divided values into six groups as scientific values, economic values, aesthetic values, social values, political values and religious values (Güngör, 1998). The classification was then converted into a scale by Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1951).

Rokeach (1973), in his classification, divided the values into two main groups: terminal goals and instrumental goals. According to the classification, instrumental values represent the qualifications necessary to obtain the terminal goals. Terminal goals include "a comfortable life (a prosperous life), a world at peace (a world free of war and conflict), a sense of accomplishment (a lasting contribution), wisdom (a mature understanding of life), mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy), equality (brotherhood and equal opportunity for all), salvation (saved; eternal life), a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts), an exciting life (a stimulating, active life), inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict), self-respect (self-esteem), health (physical and mental well-being), true friendship (beauty of nature and the arts), freedom (independence and free choice), family security (taking care of loved ones), social recognition (respect and admiration), national security (protection from attack), pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)". The instrumental values are being "independent (self-reliant; self-sufficient), forgiving (willing to pardon others), courageous (standing up for your beliefs), honest (sincere and truthful), intellectual (intelligent and reflective), broad-minded (open-minded), ambitious (hardworking and aspiring), obedient (dutiful; respectful), self-controlled (restrained; self-disciplined), polite (courteous and well-mannered), capable (competent; effective), logical (consistent; rational), loyal (faithful to friends or the group), loving (affectionate and tender), responsible (dependable and reliable), clean (neat and tidy), helpful (working for the welfare of others), imaginative (daring and creative)".

Schwartz (1994) identified ten types of values according to their motivational goals with a total of 56 values. The ten types of values are: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security (Schwartz, 1992). In addition, according to Schwartz's theory, human values are at two levels as cultural and individual. At cultural level, values are described as abstract ideas based on social norms shared by society in general; however, values are discussed in terms of importance in guiding the individual's life at individual level (Schwartz, 1994).

In an international project titled "Living Values Education Programme" supported by UNESCO (1995) for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, emphasis was placed on twelve universal values including 'peace, respect, cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, and unity'. Setting out from the slogan 'Let's share our values for a better world!', the Project has been eventually transformed into a value education program adopted by many countries of the world (Pilav et al., 2005: 21-22).

Review of relevant literature reveals several studies aimed at identifying the religious, moral and educational value of *Kalila and Dimna* which is considered as an Eastern classic. Of these, the study by Orak and Berköz (2013) emphasizes that *Kalila and Dimna* has a high educational value thanks to its characters including moral, the framed narrative technique, the humor element, building stories on wisdom, and the annotated and repeated expression technique. In Bakan's (2006) study "Contributions of the Fables in *Kalila and Dimna* to Religious and Moral Education", the 38 tales in the book one of the classic works of the Eastern culture and Indian Literature are examined in relation with religious and moral messages. It was concluded that the tales can contribute positively to the religious and moral development of children if presented with appropriate teaching methods in Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge courses. Mazid (2009) in his study underlines that the tales of *Kalila and Dimna* need to be re-read from a critical point of view for academic and educational purposes, and relevant literature should be revised again for this purpose. Moreover, such a critical re-evaluation of those fables according to contemporary reality will bring about a rapprochement between different cultures and languages. According to Mazid, the tale of 'The Crow and Partridge' in *Kalila and Dimna* is entertaining and also implies wisdom and philosophy by discussing topics such as 'passive silence, blind obedience and support or acceptance, existence of the existing power structures'.

One of the main purposes of education is to train individuals who have good characters and who have acquired national and universal values. Therefore, there is a close relationship between character development and education. Today, many educators think it is an effective method to use literary works in the transfer of the

targeted core values and character education (Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown, 1996; Andrews, 1994; Bennett, 1995; cited from Wynne and Ryan 1997 by Karatay, 2011: 1439-1454).

According to Bohlin (2005: 179), the discussion of positive character traits in literary works stimulates students' moral imagination that they may face such incidents in their own lives. Therefore, paradoxical situations experienced by heroes in literary texts pose case studies for ethics, value and character education. Those tales in which good and evil, wrong and right, ugly and beautiful, weak and strong, moral and immoral coexists, and these contrasting concepts including rivals, establish a realistic world for children (Karatay, 2011: 1404). In this regard, fable as a literary genre has a strong instructive-didactic aspect particularly in acquiring of good human behavior by children (Oğuzkan, 2010: 63).

In this study, it is aimed to investigate the Eastern classic *Kalila and Dimna* in the framework of the Western theories of values adopted today. Undoubtedly, the work, which has survived for the centuries, will provide a rich educational material in character and values education. Since the book provides wise knowledge for managers as well as the public, it is expected to reveal information covering not only the hosting Eastern geography but the whole world.

## 2. Method

This study was designed in accordance with the qualitative approach. According to this approach, a tool which is eligible for eliciting and interpreting the content is selected to collect data. In this framework, data were collected by using document review in this study as it is thought to be an appropriate tool considering the nature of our study. In a qualitative research, the data obtained from the document can be used in the same way as in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Within this framework, the fables of *Kalila and Dimna* by Indian philosopher Beydeba were subjected to document review to find out the moral and advice in the text. Study data were collected by using the theories of values made under the influence of Western civilization (Spranger, Rokeach, Schwartz and UNESCO) in spite of the universal nature of those values. For analysis of the study data, content analysis was used as it is a tool which is used for careful, detailed and systematic examination of a certain material with the purpose of detecting patterns, themes, prejudices and meanings (Berg and Lune, 2012). To this end, the values contained in this book were presented in tables for each of the four theories after being encoded. In analysis of data, despite being encoded by two researchers, coherence between the encodings proposed by the researchers was found around 81%, which is above the level (70%) set by Miles and Huberman (1994).

The Turkish version of the book used in this study was made by Ensar Publishing. The translation was done from the Arabic version by Abdullah al-Muqaffa. During the research, other versions such as Timaş Publishing, Altın Books, Şule Publishing and Bedir Publishing were also utilized.

## 3. Result

The values embedded in the fables of *Kalila and Dimna* are displayed in Table 1 according to Rokeach's theory of values.

Table 1. *Kalila and Dimna* by Rokeach's classification of values

Terminal Values	f	%	Instrumental Values	F	%
Wisdom	56	13.7	Logical	60	17.1
A Sense of accomplishment	53	13	Ambitious	34	9.7
National security	53	13	Intellectual	31	8.9
Health	38	9.3	Courageous	30	8.6
A world of beauty	25	6.1	Capable	29	8.3
Inner harmony	25	6.1	Honest	25	7.2
True friendship	24	5.9	Broad-minded	24	6.9
A comfortable life	21	5.1	Obedient	24	6.9
A world at peace	19	4.6	Responsible	22	6.3
Mature love	17	4.2	Forgiving	18	5.2
Family security	16	3.9	Helpful	14	4
Social recognition	16	3.9	Loving	12	3.4
Equality	12	2.9	Self-controlled	7	2
Pleasure	11	2.7	Imaginative	5	1.4
An exciting life	8	2	Independent	5	1.4

Freedom	8	2	Polite	4	1.1
Self-respect	4	1	Clean	3	0.9
Salvation	3	0.7	Loyal	2	0.6
Total	409	100	Total	349	100

The findings in Table 1 show that all of Rokeach's terminal and instrumental goals are included in *Kalila and Dimna*. Of terminal goals, the highest importance ratings are assigned to 'wisdom' at 13.7%, 'a sense of accomplishment' at 13% and 'national security' at 13%. As for instrumental values, being 'logical' is found to have the highest rating with 17.1%, followed by being 'ambitious' at 9.7% and being 'intellectual' at 8.9% respectively. The table also illustrates that the terminal goals of 'salvation (0.7%)', 'self-respect' (1%), 'freedom' (2%), and 'an exciting life' (2%) received relatively the lowest level of attribution. In the list of instrumental values, the minimum assignment is made to being 'loyal' (0.6%), 'clean' (0.9%) and 'polite' (1.1%).

Table 2 displays the distribution of the values conveyed in *Kalila and Dimna* by Spranger's classification.

Table 2. *Kalila and Dimna* by Spranger's classification of values

Values	f	%
Religious values	97	25
Social values	87	22.4
Scientific values	72	18.5
Political values	55	14.1
Economic values	46	11.8
Aesthetic values	31	7.9
Total	388	100

Under Spranger's theory, it is noted that *Kalila and Dimna* underline religious values in the first rank (25%), social values (22.4%) in the second rank, and scientific values (18.5%) in the third rank. In addition, the table deserves attention due to the bottom rank of aesthetic values with a rate of 7.9%. It seems to be a considerable finding that political values are in the fourth rank in such a book of advice and policy. In this table, economic values are listed in the eighth rank with the rate of 11.8%. Besides this, when examining Table 2, it is understood that the work contains all of the values in the classification developed by Spanger.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the values in *Kalila and Dimna* according to the classification of Schwartz.

Table 3. *Kalila and Dimna* by Schwartz's classification of values

Defination	Exemplary Values	f	%
Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.	Helpful, honest, forgiving	143	21
Tradition: Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.	Humble, devout, accepting my portion in life	121	17.8
Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.	Successful, capable, ambitious	103	15.1
Security: Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.	National security, social order, Clean	69	10.1
Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.	Broad-minded, social justice, equality, protecting the environment	63	9.2
Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.	Social power, authority, wealth	50	7.3
Stimulation: Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.	Daring, varied life, exciting life	41	6
Self-direction: Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring.	Creativity, curious, freedom	38	5.6

Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.	Politeness, obedient, honoring parents and elders	32	4.7
Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.	Pleasure, enjoying life	18	2.6
Total		678	100

As seen in Table 3, the value of ‘benevolence’ is on the top rank with a rate of 21% covering sub-values such as ‘helpful, honest, forgiving’. Another remarkable finding is that the value ‘tradition’ ranks second with 17.8% in relation with sub-values of ‘humble, devout, accepting my portion in life’. In the third rank is ‘achievement’ with the rate of 15.1% covering ‘successful, capable, ambitious’. Also the table provides the interesting finding that ‘hedonism’ which is about pleasure and enjoyment of life, is in the last order with 2.6%; whereas the other values as ‘conformity’ (4.7%) and ‘self-direction’ (5.6%) are the least conveyed values in the fables.

The values embedded in the fables of *Kalila and Dimna* are displayed in Table 4 according to UNESCO.

Table 4. *Kalila and Dimna* by UNESCO classification of values

Values	F	%
Happiness	38	13.7
Love	29	10.4
Tolerance	27	9.7
Simplicity	26	9.3
Honesty	25	9
Humility	25	9
Responsibility	22	7.9
Respect	20	7.2
Unity	20	7.2
Peace	19	6.8
Cooperation	18	6.4
Freedom	8	2.8
Total	277	100

As seen in Table 4, according to the value classification of UNESCO, the tales in *Kalila and Dimna* convey the message of happiness (13.7%) in first rank, followed by love (10.4%), and simplicity (9.3%). It is remarkable that ‘freedom’ (2.8%) is ranked last in the table. Apart from that, cooperation (6.4%), peace (6.8%), respect (7.2%), and *unity* (7.2%), respectively, are the least conveyed values in this classification. Yet, it seems to be one of the most important results that all of the values in the UNESCO’s list are enshrined in *Kalila and Dimna*.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out to analyze the book titled *Kalila and Dimna* in relation with the values classifications theorized in the Western civilization. Results of the study reveal that the place occupied by values such as human relations, the art of management and administration, happiness, justice, goodness, virtue, honor, courage, and compassion has not changed for centuries. The findings of the study reveal that Rokeach’s terminal values such as ‘wisdom’, ‘a sense of accomplishment’ and ‘national security’ received the most attribution in the book; and ‘logical’, ‘ambitious’ and ‘intellectual’ were the most frequently mentioned items as instrumental values. From Spranger’s classification perspective, the book was observed to predominantly contain religious values. Under Schwartz’s classification, the values of ‘benevolence’, ‘tradition’ and ‘achievement’ come to the forefront in this book. Lastly, it is noteworthy that ‘happiness’ is the most prominent value in the book. However, the book under review was found to contain all of the values in the four classifications.

Mahmoudi and Abedpour (2011), who examined the tales of *Kalila and Dimna* in terms of criminal law in their study, also found out similar results. The researchers indicated the mentioned tales as a useful work for not only improving people’s welfare and preventing crimes but also enrichment of legal rules and regulations.

In another study, Bakan (2006) also found out that *Kalila and Dimna* has a high religious, moral, and educational meaning. The author concluded that the tales of *Kalila and Dimna* emphasize the values such as friendship, love, faith, and wisdom; hence, they will contribute to the moral and religious education of children. Likewise, Orak

and Berköz (2013) analyzed the work *Kelila and Dimna* for literary content and consequently pointed out that the moral of the work could be used in education of masses. In a study conducted by Mazid (2009), it was stated that the tale of the Crow and Partridge in the book is amusing, besides it contains knowledge of wisdom. Thus, it has a high educational value.

## 5. Recommendations

According to Brokellman (1977), although written centuries ago as early as nearly in 300 AD, the book contains most religious, moral, social, aesthetic, national, and universal values that still prevail today. It could be argued that despite formal changes through ages, values continue to exist in essence. Considering that today administrators' decisions affect the whole world, particularly including their own countries, such a book seems to deserve being a bedside book for the present rulers because it emphasizes the concepts of justice, equality, wisdom, compassion and self-sacrifice. On top of that, these tales can also be used as training material in value education for adults, as well as for children in educational institutions. In this sense, *Kalila and Dimna* is a precious book that contains many tales which have a universal appeal thanks to the wise words and advice they contain. As a conclusion, multimedia tools (TV, computer, e-book, etc.) should be used for reaching of this work, which also has traces in Greek and Oriental wisdom to more audiences.

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