

Center for Global Islamic Studies

Religion, the Secular and Din: Between Public State and Private Belief

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The secular state guarantees freedom of religion, while at the same time policing the legitimate limits of religion. Freedom of religion rests on defining religion as privatized, disembodied belief, the proper space of which is the private realm. But not all understandings of religion fit into this mold. I suggest the Qur'anic term *din* as a conceptual alternative to the concept of religion. *Din* opens up space for alternative (non-privatized, non-secular) practices of religion that are not configured by the public/private binary of secular liberal politics. From Turkish President Erdogan's persecution of the Hizmet Party, to the Sacred Stone and Red Warrior camps proclaiming "water is sacred," the secular state generates contradictions for privatized religion. Religions claim that there is appeal to authority beyond the State: this is the political crisis of the secular today.

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