

Reading the Book of Nature



July 14-19, 2025



Çamdağı & Barla
Isparta province, Türkiye



Welcome to “Reading the Book of Nature” Summer Retreat.

Reconnect with Nature Through the Qur'anic Lens

Embark on a transformative journey in the serene landscapes of Çamdağı and Barla, Türkiye, from July 14-19, 2025. The “Reading the Book of Nature” Summer Retreat invites you to explore the Qur'anic concept of nature as Divine signs (ayāt) and discover how to read these signs with heart and mind. Set against the breathtaking backdrop of lush forests and tranquil vistas, this retreat is designed for English-speaking Muslims, academics, and professionals seeking a deeper connection to both faith and the natural world. Through engaging lectures, reflective discussions, and immersive experiences, you'll gain a renewed appreciation for the harmony between Islamic spirituality and ecological stewardship. Join us for an unforgettable week of learning, inspiration, and renewal in one of Türkiye's most spiritually significant landscapes.

What You'll Experience:

Reflect on nature through an Islamic lens – uncover the Qur'anic invitation to observe and learn from the world around us.

Engage in guided nature walks and discussions – interpret the Revelation in light of Allah's signs in nature.

Find tranquility and inner peace – reconnect, refresh and restore your mind, body, and soul in peaceful country landscapes.

Build meaningful connections – meet like-minded individuals passionate about faith, nature, and personal growth.



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Discover the Divine in Nature

The “Reading the Book of Nature” Summer Retreat is a one-of-a-kind, week-long journey designed to awaken your soul and deepen your connection with the natural world through the lens of Islam. Inspired by the notion of ‘ayah’ (sign) in the Qur'an, Islamic teleological approach, and the profound language of nature, this retreat is aimed at transforming the way you perceive, appreciate, and interact with the environment.

Objectives:

- ★ **Uncover nature as a living tapestry of Allah's signs (ayāt).**
- ★ **Cultivate inner peace and spiritual awareness** through immersive experiences in breathtaking natural settings.
- ★ **Learn to harmonize Islamic principles with ecological stewardship,** empowering you to become a responsible khalifah on this Earth.
- ★ **Forge lasting connections** with a vibrant community of like-minded individuals who share your passion for faith and nature.



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Speakers and Experts

Learn from Leading Voices in Islamic Ecology

Our distinguished speakers bring together a unique blend of expertise in science, spirituality, and environmental studies.



Shaikh Muhammad Foulds (Hearts SEE, UK)

An Islamic environmentalist with a deep connection to nature, Shaikh Muhammad Foulds is a trained safari guide, tracker, and falconer who integrates Islamic spirituality with ecological stewardship. His retreats and teachings inspire a profound appreciation for the natural world as a divine revelation with its own language.



Dr. Yamina Bouguenaya (Receiving Nur, USA)

A passionate educator and researcher, Dr. Bouguenaya is dedicated to exploring the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of Islamic teachings. Her work emphasizes the transformative power of faith in understanding the natural world and our place within it.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tuna (Duke University, USA)

A leading scholar in contemporary Muslim thought and the history of Islam in Russia, Dr. Tuna specializes in Said Nursi studies and the rich heritage of the Kazan Tatars. His work bridges historical insights with modern challenges, offering a unique perspective on Islamic intellectual traditions.



Mr. Said Yüce (Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture, Türkiye)

An esteemed expert in Risale-i Nur studies and President of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture (IFSC), Mr. Yüce is a leading voice in promoting the integration of faith and reason and an expert in Said Nursi studies. His insights illuminate the profound connections between Islamic spirituality and the natural sciences.



Dr. Ildus Rafikov (Maqasid Institute, USA)

An interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. Rafikov explores the connections between economics, philosophy, history, and science through an Islamic lens. His innovative approach uncovers the harmony between divine wisdom and human inquiry.



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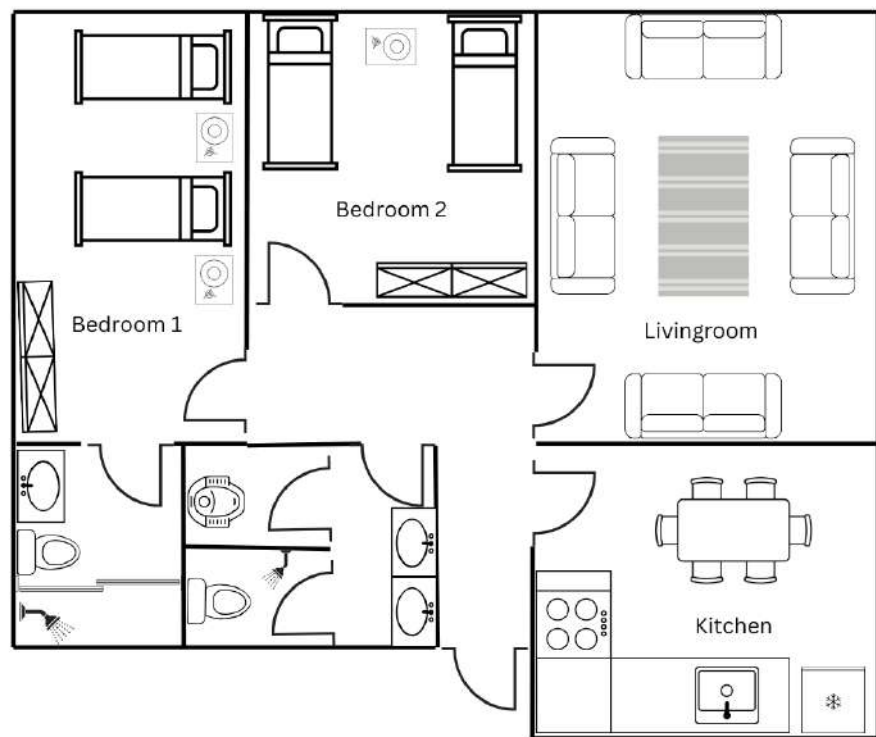


Nature's Sanctuary: A Place of Reflection & Inspiration

Nestled in the heart of Türkiye, Çamdağı ("Pine Mountain") and Barla provide the perfect setting for spiritual retreat and ecological discovery. These landscapes, once an inspiration for Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur, offer breathtaking views, pristine forests, and a peaceful environment for learning and personal growth.

Accommodation in Barla: "Istanbul Apartments" by Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture – 2 bedrooms with 2 single beds in each room, 2 bathrooms, large living room, and a fully equipped modern kitchen.

Floor Plan: "Istanbul Aparments" in Barla

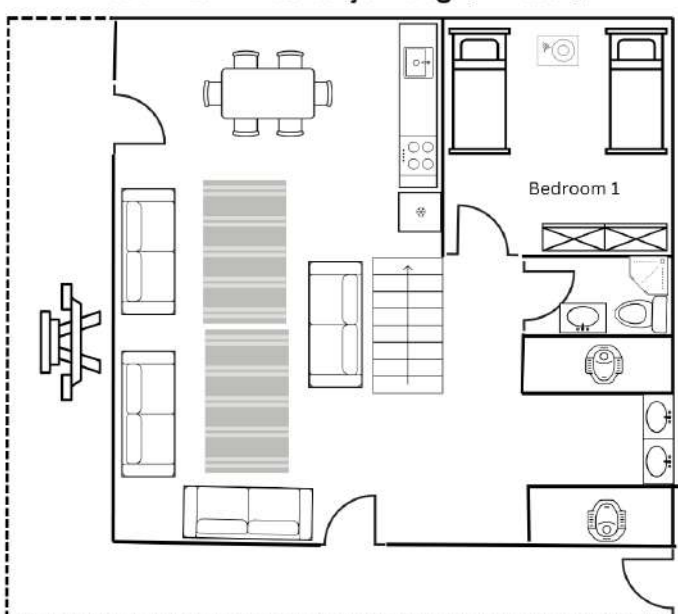


Approximate visualisation, not according to scale



Accommodation in Çamdağı: villas by Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture – 3 bedrooms (2 single beds per bedroom) with large living room, a fully equipped kitchen, large veranda, one full bathroom and two "a la turka" (eastern) toilets.

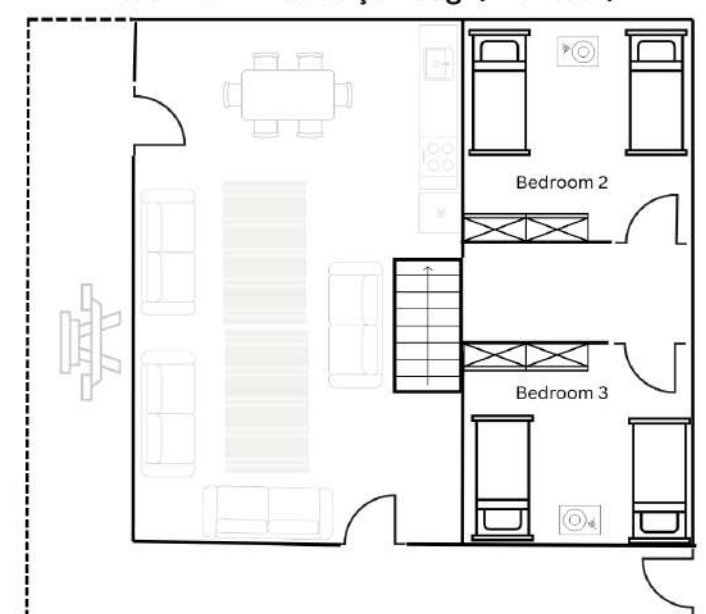
Floor Plan: Villa at Çamdağı (1st floor)



Approximate visualisation, not according to scale



Floor Plan: Villa at Çamdağı (2nd floor)



Approximate visualisation, not according to scale



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Topics of this Retreat:



Shaikh Muhammad Foulds

Outdoor activities:

1. Critique of the contemporary worldview of natural sciences
2. Viewing nature through the Qur'anic lens of ayat
3. Using senses to read the ayats in nature
4. Connecting the Qur'an, the Sunnah and our perception of nature

Dr. Yamina Bouguenaya

1. Reading the Signs (Ayaat) in Nature
2. Witnessing the Beautiful Names (al-asma al-husna) (in nature)
3. Reflecting with the Heart

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tuna

1. Knowing God in the Secular Age: Why Read the Cosmos?
2. Reflective Observation: Reading the Cosmos to Know God
3. On Beauty: Reflective Observation in Practice

Dr. Ildus Rafikov

1. The Good Life (Hayyat Al-Tayyibah): a Qur'anic Guidance
2. Nature as a Dynamic System: an Islamic View
3. Imarat Al-Ard and Al-Mizan: Human ontological reality

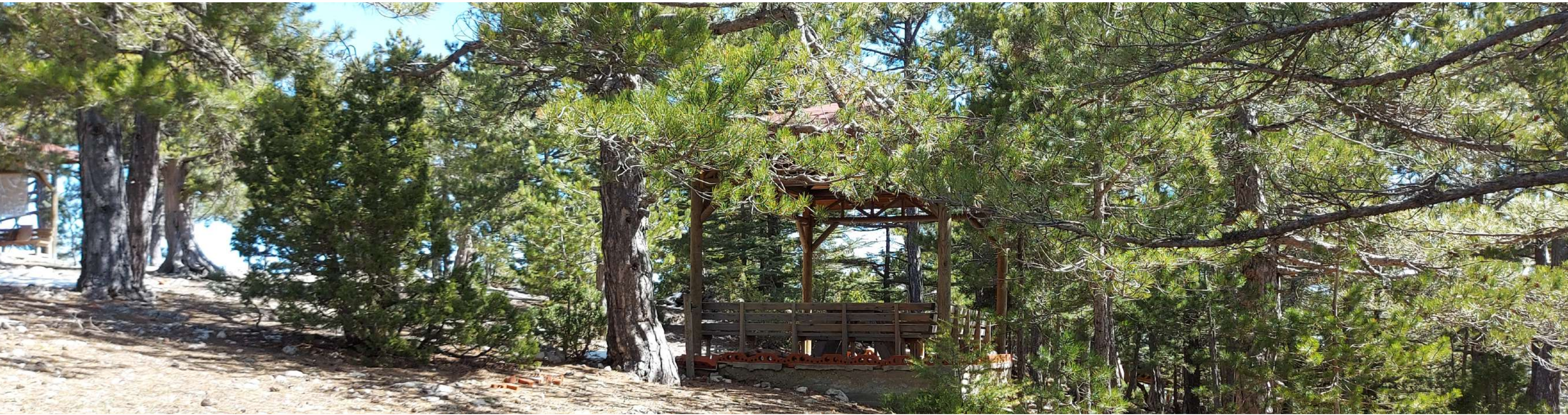
Said Yuce

1. Said Nursi: life and Risale-i Nur



Program Overview

A Week of Immersive Learning & Reflection



The retreat is thoughtfully structured to blend learning, reflection, and relaxation. Highlights include:

Day 1: Arrival, Orientation, and Introductions.

Day 2: Cultivating the Qur'anic worldview and reading the ayats of Allah in nature.

Day 3: Foundations of Observing Nature: Sensory Connection & Reflection.

Day 4: Role of the heart and perception in observing beauty.

Day 5: Qur'an, Sunnah and perception of nature.

Day 6: Civilizational and environmental message of Islam; farewell lunch and departure.

Includes: Daily interactive sessions, hands-on learning experiences, and outdoor exploration.

Expected Outcomes:

- ★ Renewed appreciation for nature as a manifestation of Allah's signs.
- ★ Acquisition of practical skills in environmental navigation and stewardship.
- ★ Enhanced spiritual connection with the natural world, promoting mental and spiritual well-being.
- ★ Strengthened community of environmentally conscious Muslim professionals and academics committed to applying Islamic principles to ecological concerns.





Costs & Registration

Participation Fees

Early Bird:

\$950 per participant if you register by May 31, 2025

Last Minute:

\$1250 per participant if you register between June 1 – 30, 2025

Includes:

Accommodation for 6 days / 5 nights

All meals (locally sourced and fresh)

Transportation within Turkiye (Istanbul-Barla-Istanbul)

Guided nature walks, workshops, and cultural activities



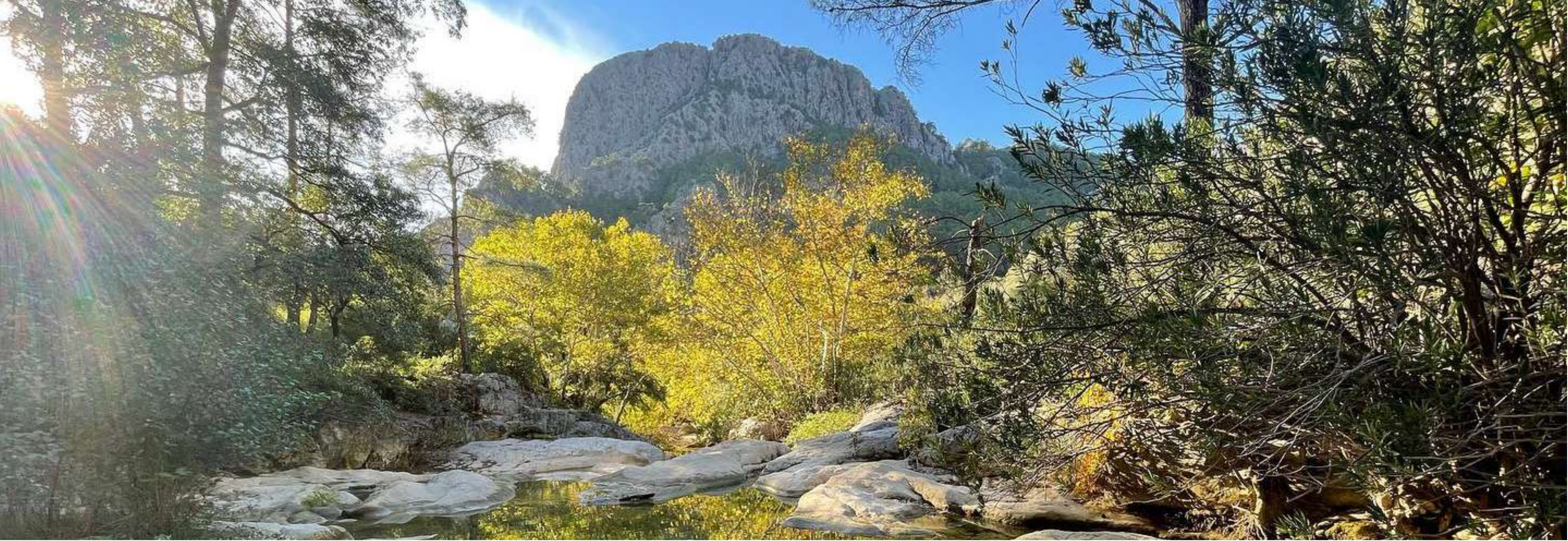
Registration Process:

1. Fill out the online application form.
2. Pay the full amount of \$950.00 to secure your spot.
3. Receive confirmation and pre-arrival instructions within 48 hours.



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Important Information & FAQs

Who Can Join?

- ★ English-speaking Muslims passionate about faith and nature.
- ★ Open to academics, professionals, and individuals seeking spiritual and ecological enrichment.
- ★ Participants must be 18 years or older.

Is There Internet Access?

Barla offers full 4.5G coverage and Wi-Fi in the apartment building. Çamdağı also has mobile connectivity, though the signal is weaker—stronger at higher points. Türkcell generally performs better than other networks. Participants are encouraged to limit digital distractions to fully benefit from the retreat.

How's the Weather in Barla in July?

July in Barla and Çamdağı is hot and dry, with average highs of 28°C (82°F) and lows of 14°C (58°F) and plenty of sunshine—perfect for outdoor activities.

Can Families Join?

The program is tailored for individuals aged 18 and above who will be participating as students in the retreat. If you wish to bring your family, please, contact us.

Is Transportation Provided?

Participants will be transferred to Isparta via local flight (Turkish Airlines) and bus, organized by the retreat team. International flights to Istanbul are self-arranged.





Contact Information

A Journey of Discovery Awaits You!

Join us for a life-changing experience where spirituality meets nature. Secure your spot today and embark on a journey of learning, reflection, and growth.



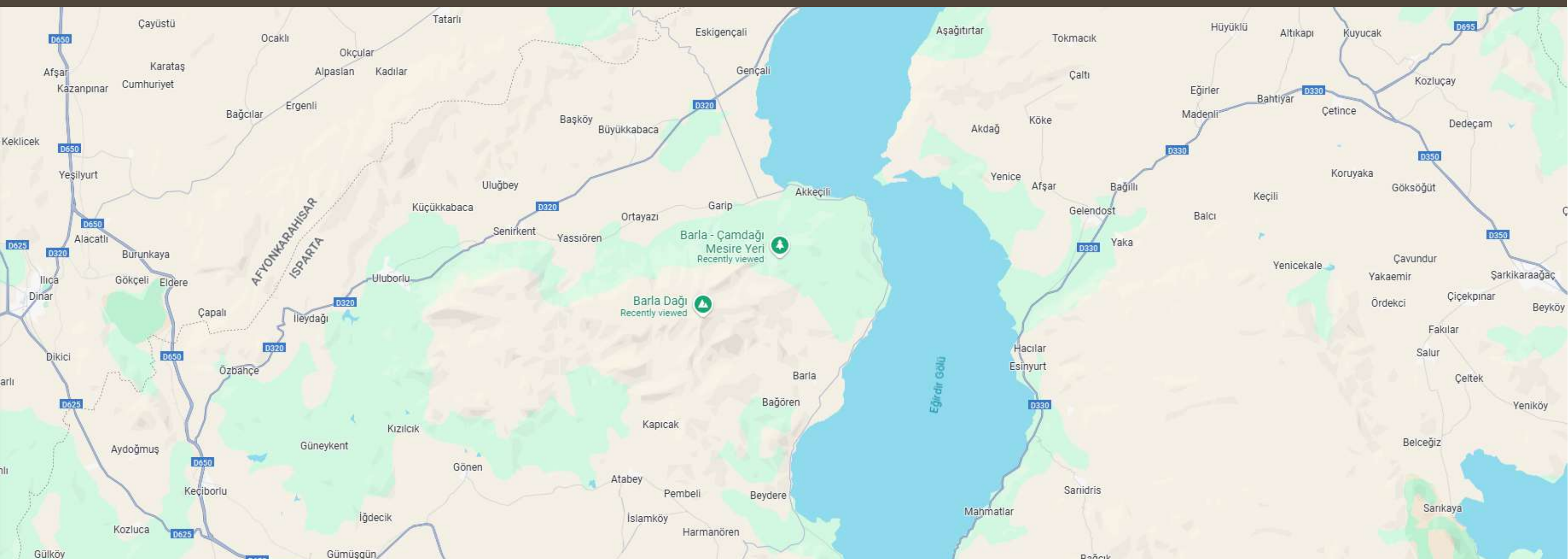
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For inquiries & registration:

Website: <https://maqasid.org/education/rbn-retreat/>

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